

# CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 15

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

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*A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 15, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

90 Chapters

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## Christian Truth Volume 15

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## Adolph Eichmann — Jews

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Shortly before midnight on May 31st, Adolph Eichmann died on the gallows in the Ramleh prison, not far from Tel. Aviv, Israel. During Hitler's ill-fated European wars, Eichmann had been an important cog in that part of the machinery charged with the elimination of the Jews who came within its reach. Many of the high officials of the Hitler regime were tried by an allied court at Nuremberg, Germany; and some were at that time condemned to death and executed. Adolph Eichmann, however, eluded capture and was apprehended only two years ago in Argentina, and spirited out of the country to Israel. As for all the legal aspects of his arrest, trial, and death, we are not concerned.

The subject matter that concerns us is the history of the Jewish people through the ages. Many attempts have been made on their lives, and the first of record is that of Pharaoh the mighty king of Egypt. Joseph, one of the twelve patriarchs, was sold by his brothers to some Midianitish merchants, who evidently trafficked in slaves as well as merchandise. He was sold as slave in Egypt, but by divine providence he was later elevated to a position next to the king. In those years Egypt was really indebted to Joseph, but another dynasty came into power after all of Joseph's brothers and their families had immigrated there. Satan moving behind the scenes, moved the reigning power to seek to exterminate them; and only divine intervention preserved them.

One may ask, Why was Satan desirous of their destruction? The answer seems fairly obvious. Satan had heard his doom pronounced in the garden of Eden, and was doubtless acquainted with God's promise. O Abraham, that of his seed would One arise in whom all families of the earth would be Blessed. It was thus easy for the wily foe of God and of man to see that in Israel's race the promised deliverer would come - the One who would also bruise the serpent's head. If therefore, by the malice of Satan, the people of Israel could be destroyed, God's promise and purpose would be frustrated. By God's intervention, a deliverer (Moses) arose; and in the end Pharaoh and all his host were drowned in the sea.

Satan moved Athaliah, in the days of the kingdom of Judah, to attempt to destroy all of the royal family; for by that time the prophetic utterances had designated the house of David as the one through which the deliverer of man and the destroyer of Satan's power would come. But divine intervention preserved Joash, through whom the Messiah came.

In the days of the dispersion of Judah throughout the Persian Empire, a man of the seed of Amalek arose. Of old, God had decreed that He would have war with Amalek from generation to generation; for they were the early antagonists of Israel. When the Persian Empire was at its zenith, an Amalekite was the prime minister, with much more than ordinary power for one in his position. But a God-fearing Jew by the name of Mordecai (meaning, a little man) refused to do obeisance to Haman, the proud son of Amalek. It was not mere stubbornness on the part of Mordecai, but a recognition of God's settled decree on the one hand, and of simple obedience to it on the other.

Times had changed since God's earthly people marched triumphantly out of Egypt, for by this time God had pronounced that solemn sentence on them, of "Lo-ammi" (meaning, "not My people"). This was by the mouth of their prophet Hosea. Hence the book of Esther stands alone in the Bible, for it shows God's providential care over the Jews when He had publicly disowned them. They were still His people, and woe be to the man or the nation who oppressed them. The name of God is not mentioned in the book of Esther, for He is hidden; and only His providential workings are seen. Accordingly, the godly Jewish maiden Esther is brought forward. She is as beautiful in her place as Mordecai is in his.

Here again, Satan is active for the destruction of the whole people, for it would be a master stroke to cut off all hope for a Messiah after God's order if the people could be destroyed. Haman builds a gallows on which to hang Mordecai, and makes it fifty cubits high. The number fifty is of old connected by God with the jubilee, for in the fiftieth year the people were to return to their original inheritance. If Satan's scheme in the hands of Haman had worked, then there would be no jubilee for the people of Israel. But instead of Mordecai, Haman was hanged on the gallows. Since that day, Haman has been a symbol to the Jews of their survival; and it is not without significance that Adolph Eichmann was hanged as the first person to be put to death in the nation of Israel, and put to death on a gallows. We have noted comments on this modern Haman in the Jewish press, so the lesson of the book of Esther has been by no means lost on them.

Since the days of the Persian Empire, the Jews have been persecuted by many nations - to name only a few, the Roman Empire, Russia, Spain, and Germany. We read in the New Testament that Claudius Caesar expelled all Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2).

There is one great difference between the past dispersion and the one of this era. God allowed the dispersion of the kingdom of Judah for their sins and idolatry, but they have not been idolaters since their return in the days of Nehemiah.

The present dispersion, which began with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, has been on account of their failure to recognize their Messiah when He came. They rejected Him, and so God says, they "shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." Luke 21:24. There has been a continuity of fulfillment of this verse since those days of A.D. 70. It is true that a remnant of them are back in their land and have a stable government again, and Jerusalem is again their capital city; but God's word is daily being fulfilled, for the old city of Jerusalem, with its temple area, is still in the hands of the Gentiles.

After the Nuremberg trials, a notable high official, Julius Streicher, was hanged in 1946. At that time there were ten Nazi officials hanged for crimes against humanity, according to the international tribunal. Julius Streicher was the only one who that day made any trouble; and according to reports at the time, he had to be pushed to the scaffold, shouting out, "Purimfest, 1946." The implication of the feast of Purim, when the Jews each year celebrate the hanging of their enemy Haman, was not lost on him. At that time, Julius Streicher was constantly referred to in the secular press as the Jew baiter, and we noticed in a Jewish newspaper that Adolph Eichmann was referred to as "the No. 1 Nazi Jew-baiter." How or in what way they vied with each other for the number one place, we do not presume to say.

One thing is clear, however, that God has His eye on that people, even though they are outwardly disowned by Him at present. He will avenge them on their oppressors. We might say that no nation or ruler that has persecuted them has prospered in the end. Not that we are seeking to vindicate them or any other race if ills have been committed by them. We leave all that with the "judge of all the earth" who will in His time and way act according to truth.

That we are living in the last days of this era, when God in grace is saving souls, there can be no doubt. We are at the very end. The conditions of the nations of the world, the apostasy in Christendom, the lethargy of real Christians - all of these, and more, indicate the imminence of the coming of the Lord to take His saints home. The great world tribulation will follow, only to end by the coming of the Son of man to execute judgment and reign. After these judgments, Israel will be restored (or, rather, a remnant of them, for only a repentant remnant of the Jews will be brought into the fullness of Messianic blessing). Zechariah tells us plainly that "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem... and the land shall mourn, every family apart.... In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness." Chaps. 12:10 to 13:1.

Let no Christian say that God is through with Israel. All His promises concerning them will be fulfilled, but the remnant will pass through deep repentance and humiliation when they look upon that same Jesus when He comes to reign. But the Jews at large are not as yet ready to concede anything concerning Jesus having been their Messiah. The Jewish press indicates as much. An editorial in the B'nai B'rith, Los Angeles, of August 18, 1961 speaks very disparagingly of Christian missionaries who have gone to Israel seeking to bring any of them to the acknowledgment of Jesus as their Savior. Here is one quotation:

"At least no normal, well-adjusted Israeli, no Israeli delivered from the murder factories of the so-called Christian nations, because of his Jewishness, finding a haven in Israel, will fall to his knees at the plea of even the most fervent of missionaries."

The editorial then speaks of the Christian Crusaders and the Spanish Inquisition. How sad it is that the Jewish people can with truth refer to atrocities against them, that have been done in the name of Jesus Christ! Yes, they were so-called Christian nations and people that caused untold suffering to the Jews. But let the Jew who looks at these things, also think that the same wicked deeds have been practiced against Christians by other so-called Christians. There are no more heinous crimes than those perpetrated by religious bigotry. Thousands upon thousands of Christians have been put to death since the days of pagan Rome for simple confession of faith in Him who was "born king of the Jews." Let the Jew also recognize that the vast majority of that which parades under the banner of Christianity is spurious. We have no sympathy with anti-Semitism (more correctly, anti-Jewism), and we can quote an excerpt from our last month's issue to substantiate this:

"The whole idea of the crusades was a fundamental mistake from beginning to end, and arose from Christians fancying that they were Jews, taking the place of God's people and, consequently, denying Israel's place. The greatest enemies the Jews had were those same crusaders who fought against the Turks. The place of the true Christian is the very contrary. We ought to be a shelter of the Jew.... We ought to mourn deeply the unbelief of Israel; but, at the same time, we

ought to protect them and show them all kindness 'for the fathers' sakes.' " p. 147, June issue.

Their unbelief is shown in such remarks as these from the same Jewish paper:

"Missionaries can be lumped in the same fetid frame with the communists, the Nazis and the facist. The unholy quartet have but one object in mind - the destruction of the Jew.... All of them want to make it impossible for the Jew to live as a Jew, or to live at all."

Such blanket indictments of all missionaries, or of all Christians, is wide of the mark, and only detracts from just criticisms that they do have. Doubtless some real Christians have fallen into the snare of misappropriating the Jews' position for themselves, and consequently of showing disfavor to the Jewish people.

The Jews will again, under their true Messiah, be the head of the nations; but Christians need not be envious of them, for their place is a better and a heavenly portion. Jews will not automatically be brought into Messianic blessing, for they must first acknowledge Him whom they once spurned. The Old Testament abounds with references to the basis of their future blessing. But before that time comes, the nation at large will receive the antichrist, the one who will come in his own name, in sharp contrast to Him who came in His Father's name. It does seem that while Christendom is heading directly toward apostasy, so the Jewish people are being readied for acceptance of their apostate head.

Another editorial from the Los Angeles B'nai B'rith shows a deep antipathy toward the Lord Jesus. It says:

"Thus it is with those Christians who accept the myth of the Jew as the 'Christ-killer.' So deeply is it imbedded by religious indoctrination of a sort, by catechisms, by paternal example, that it would require a major act of spiritual surgery, of mental rehabilitation, to remove this cancerous lesion from the Christian world." May 4, 1962.

Let us ask, Where do they find the charge of "Christ-killer" in the New Testament? Is that inspired part of the Word of God to blame? If they would read the four gospels, they would find that there is an unbiased account of the rejection of Christ by both the Jews and the Gentiles. Both were and are guilty. Did not both the Jews and the Gentiles spit in His blessed face? Did not the Gentile governor condemn Him to death after having rendered a verdict of acquittal? Did not the Gentile soldiers nail Him to the cross, and one of them pierce His side? Yes, indeed! But the Jews were more guilty in this respect, that He came of the seed of David after the flesh, according to all the promises of the Old Testament. They should have recognized Him according to their own scriptures; and so the Lord said to Pilate, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." Pilate and the Gentiles could not absolve themselves of the guilt. For Gentiles to hurl the epithet of "Christ-killer" at the Jews, while they also reject Him, is similar to having one criminal accuse his partner in crime of the very thing for which he himself is being tried. Well did God render the verdict, "ALL have sinned." And any person, Jew or Gentile, who rejects Christ will share the fate of all those who cast Him out.

The same Jewish editorial lauds a feeble step of Catholics to remove "from the Jews the stigma of slayers of God." If Augustin Cardinal Bea made such a remark, it is a mistake; for no one could or can kill God. In John's Gospel, where the Lord Jesus is presented as the Son of God, He says,

"No man taketh it [life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He delivered up His own spirit to His Father, saying, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." We fully admit that all mankind stands arraigned before God as guilty of the full intent to cast His Son out of the world. As far as was in their power, they performed the act; but they did not actually take His life, and they could not "kill God."

In further answer to the B'nai B'rith editorial, we do not believe the charge of "Christ-killer" is a "principal reason for anti-Semitic persecution." A real Christian could be misled, we know, but one would have reason to question the Christianity of a persecutor of Jews. Much has been done in the name of Christianity, but it is a pseudo-Christianity that can so act. Would anyone in his right mind call Hitler or Eichmann Christians? Shall Christians be blamed for what imposters have done?

Gentiles and Jews alike can only be saved from the just judgment of God against sin by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Savior - by receiving Him as their only substitute before God. They need to be able to say, as the saved remnant of the Jews will: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." Isa. 53:5. Yes, Israel's race will yet behold its glorified Messiah, and truly repent for having rejected Him when He came in lowliness and grace. The saved of the nation will then see that He whom the nation once rejected is their only hope and salvation. Then it will be true, as Isaiah said, "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this

is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Chap. 25:9. And that salvation could only be accomplished by His atoning sufferings, death, and blood-shedding.

## All Speak the Same Thing

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"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (mark the mighty moral force of this appeal) "that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Now the question is, How was this most blessed result to be reached? Was it by each one exercising the right of private judgment? Alas! it was this very thing that gave birth to all the division and contention in the assembly at Corinth, and drew forth the sharp rebuke of the Holy Ghost. Those poor Corinthians thought they had a right to think and judge and choose for themselves, and what was the result? "It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided?"

## An Altar of Earth: a Word on Worship or Earthy Altar

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"Ye shall not make with Me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold. 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. And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon." Exod. 20:23-26.

In this well-known chapter the Lord is presenting Himself to the people of Israel in two distinct characters. In the first part of the chapter He is seen in His majesty as the righteous dispenser of law. In the close of it He exhibits Himself as the attractive source of grace. The correspondent effects of the one revelation and of the other on the minds of the people are also given.

When the majesty of the Lawgiver is before them with His holy requisitions, the effect is to fill the minds of the people with terror, and to throw them to a distance from God. "All the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off." Chap. 20:18. Thus, in a figure, we are presented with the truth that under the dispensation of the law there exists no possible ground of a sinner's approach to God. For in the first place it may be observed that the commands of the law, almost without an exception, are prohibitory and are as a hedge of restraint around the rights of God, either in direct connection with Himself or in connection with man as His creature. And in the next place, if it were possible that all the requisitions of the law could be fulfilled, it does not appear that under it there is any ground of communion or intercourse with God. It leaves man, so far as appears, in the distance of a creature under subjection to authoritative commands of the sovereign Creator.

Hence it is said in Heb. 12, which is an inspired commentary on this chapter: "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire," etc. Their fathers were gathered to mount Sinai, with the effect that we have seen. For even "Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." But it is emphatically said that they were not come to this mount, which was the symbol of law and of terror, but to mount Zion, the symbol of heavenly grace, and to all the array of blessing which follows, and which inspires the heart with confidence and joy.

So here. For while it is said the people "stood afar off," it is added that "Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." How striking is this expression in contrast with the words, "Having... boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus... let us draw near." As mediator he receives the instructions of grace for the people; and in connection with the altar we read the gracious declaration of God, "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." The altar is the meeting place of the worshiper with God.

The first thing that is presented in these directions about the altar and worship relates to the absolute separation of God from every rival object of man's esteem. "Ye shall not make with Me

gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold." No symbol of creature holiness, nor expression of righteousness in the creature, is for a moment to be associated with God. "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings," etc. Whatever is expressive of acceptance on the part of God, as the burnt offering, or of communion between the worshiper and God and the priest who offers it, as in the peace offering, is connected with the altar of earth. For it was on earth that "Christ" gave "Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." And on earth He made peace through the blood of the cross, and came and preached peace to those that were afar off and to them that were nigh.

It is in the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ in His Person and accomplished work, as accepted of God, that we find the elements and grounds of worship. It is for the soul to be occupied with these in the presence of God, in the expression of wonder, gratitude, joy, thanksgiving, delight, anticipation, hope, and desire, in order to present true and acceptable worship. The altar of earth is surely found in the cross, the symbol of which Christ has ordained, and should constantly be brought before us when we gather together in His name. And so, exactly answering to the declaration here, "In all places where I record My name," is the promise of the Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

But in connection with this worship of the altar of earth, two things expressive of man's work and man's order, are forbidden. "If thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it. Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon."

Nothing can be more important than for our souls to bear in mind that in worship we have nothing to bring to God, nothing to work out by way of effort, nothing by way of external form, or by an effort of internal feeling, to raise ourselves up to God. He meets us at the altar of earth. God comes to us where we are. It is to have our souls filled with the sense of what His grace has done, and how He has come down to meet us where we are, and to be occupied with the sweet savor of Christ, "who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." For worship is the reflex of this, the heart expressing its delight and satisfaction, its adoration and praise for what Christ is for us as this blessed provision of God.

Now it may very well be that where human works are rejected, and human order in worship is eschewed, there is still the presence of the two things, in a more subtle form, that are here forbidden. The bowings, and crossings, and sprinklings, the attitudes and order of ritual may be refused, while, at the same time, there may be an attempt to raise the feelings in order to come to God by some mental process, altogether different from the occupation of the heart in God's presence with what Christ is and what He has accomplished. It may be thought indeed that the generality of the saints are so occupied in the world during the week that it is necessary to act on their feelings when they come together, in order to produce in them the tone of worship on the Lord's day. But this is a wrong assumption. A life of leisure is not necessarily a life of greater spirituality than one of toil. Where the Lord is owned as ordering our worldly circumstances, and is acknowledged in our daily walk of life, the heart, when brought into His presence, will naturally respond to the exhibitions which He gives of His grace when gathered to worship in His name. Moreover, worship, if true, is that of the assembly, and not the effort of an individual to act on the

minds and feelings of the saints in order to bring them up to his sense of what is fitting in the tone of worship.

In the first place, the very constitution of the assembly, as composed of the children of God, is that they may be able to worship; for "the Father seeketh such to worship Him." Another thing is, that being possessed of a nature in common that can delight in God, it is the proper and spontaneous action of that nature to worship when brought into His presence. Besides this, believers being partakers of the Holy Spirit, each member in his measure is made responsible for the worship of the assembly. Worship is for spiritual persons who are led by the Spirit. To lower the character of communion in order to meet the assumed unspiritual condition of some who may be supposed to be present, is emphatically to make steps up to the altar. Rather let spiritual worship proceed; and if there be souls that cannot join in it, let them judge their condition in the Lord's presence on account of it; but let us not attempt to set up that which God forbids.

## Antichrist — Dan Gilbert L.L.D

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One of our subscribers, who lives on the eastern coast of Canada, sent us a pamphlet, on the front cover of which is found the following:

"Who Will Be the ANTICHRIST

Human Ignorance says:

`Nobody Knows'

But the Word of God says:

`Everybody Ought to Know!'

The book will astound you, as it

tells exactly who the Antichrist will be

by DAN GILBERT, LL.D."

These words on the cover of this small book are very sensational, and many Christians eagerly grasp for such literature. It is seldom, if ever, however, that sensationalism and spiritual truth come bound in the same book or package. Real spiritual truth does not need human sensationalism to commend it, or to attract readers. Elijah, a man of God, had a lesson to learn when he found out that God was not in the earthquake, the fire, or the wind, but in the still small voice which spoke to him.

As might be expected, Mr. Gilbert's first chapter is devoted to belittling all who came before him. He speaks of "prophetic experts" as "those who let their imaginations run riot"; but it would be hard indeed to find a more pronounced case of this very thing than that exhibited in Mr. Gilbert's book. Now let us proceed to look at the subject of "the antichrist" which Mr. Gilbert has reduced to an equation that distinguishes him. We wonder if he is not one of those of whom the Apostle Paul spoke as coming: "And from among your own selves shall rise up men speaking perverted things to draw away the disciples after them." Acts 20:30; J. N. D. Trans.

Let us examine the word antichrist. It is found only five times in the 'Word of God, and one of them is, "even now are there many antichrists." All five occurrences are in the first and second epistles of John. It was an anti-Christian doctrine then present of denying Jesus as the Christ, and denying the Father and the Son. It has increased until today the very atmosphere of Christendom is permeated with it.

Mr. Gilbert will say that we know what he means by "the antichrist," but in all the confusion of his book that is hard to tell. We know that the term has generally come to be applied to either of two men who will appear at the end - one the head of the revived Roman Empire, and the other the king of the Jews in Jerusalem at the same time. But notice the confusion of the book in question.

Mr. Gilbert quotes: "And the king shall do according to his will," from Dan. 11:36, where "the king" is the king in Palestine at the end - he is a Jew, and the head of an apostate people.

He calls him "The Idol Shepherd," and this term comes from Zech. 11, where Christ is prophetically commissioned of Jehovah as the Shepherd of Israel; but on being refused, by them, they will get the false shepherd, the idol shepherd, or shepherd of nothingness. He is the same man spoken of in John 10 as the "hireling," for both leave the flock when it is in trouble; whereas Christ as the true Shepherd of Israel gave Himself for the sheep.

But Mr. Gilbert goes into the bog when he says: "Antichrist is 'The Vile Person,' " who is mentioned only in Dan. 11:21. While it was prophecy when it was given, it is old history now. The "Vile Person" called himself "Antiochus Epiphanes," or "Antiochus the Illustrious," but his subjects called him "Epimanes," or the "mad man." He was the hater of the Jews in the days of the Maccabees. He was from Syria, the land to the north of Palestine.

Mr. Gilbert's antichrist is also called "The Spoiler." That expression is found in Jer. 51:56, and there it is the destroyer of Babylon in the past. His application is certainly wrong usage. Other uses of "spoiler" in nearby passages are also connected with the past.

In Mr. Gilbert's same sentence with "The Spoiler," is linked "The Desolator." The only reference to this that we know of is found in Dan. 9:27: "and because of the protection of abominations [or, idols] there shall be a desolator." J. N. D. Trans. In other words, because the Jews under their "king" will work hand in glove with the Roman beast, and even put his image in the temple, there will be a desolator; that is, the Assyrian, or "king of the north," will come down against Palestine as a desolator. How then is the antichrist called "The Desolator"? It is compounded folly.

And, again, Mr. Gilbert goes awry and says: "Antichrist is... 'The Wicked and Profane Prince.' " And where does he get this expression? Eze. 21:25. It says, "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel." Shall we call this folly, or plain ignorance? The man in question in this chapter is Zedekiah, a former king of Israel, who made a promise to Nebuchadnezzar in the name of Jehovah and broke it. This was solemn. God calls him a profane and wicked prince. And yet this modern, last word of prophetic teachers applies it to a man he calls the antichrist.

But why should we waste time pointing out one incongruity after another? Is not this book the work of one whose imagination has "run riot"?

We just noticed another remark of Mr. Gilbert's:

"He [antichrist] will perform great wonders and prodigious marvels, and will deceive the very elect into worshiping him as God."

Perhaps he will call this a printer's error; but the Lord said, that the false prophet, the coming king of the Jews, will perform such miracles "that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). No, he will not deceive God's elect, and the Word does not say so; but "if it were possible" his miracles would do it; it is not possible. Then this neo-prophet goes on in the same paragraph and connects this false king of the Jews with the head of the revived Roman Empire, as though they were one and the same. He goes on to Rev. 13 to speak of, "He is 'wounded to death; and his deadly wound is healed.' "

This is not the Jew in Jerusalem, but a Gentile political head of the great Western confederacy.

And here Mr. Gilbert quotes Arthur W. Pink (calling him Reverend, although he had no such title), saying that this man will raise himself from the dead. Preposterous! Is he God? Who but God has the power of resurrection?

Mr. Gilbert not only mixes in confusion many ugly names and applies them to the man he calls "the antichrist," although, as we have seen, Scripture uses them to designate Zedekiah, Antiochus Epiphanes, the future northern enemy of Israel - "the king of the north" - the one beast of Revelation 13 and then the other; but he applies certain names and titles to the Lord Jesus Christ that are not applicable. In the Song of Solomon, it is the bride who says, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." Chap. 2:1. Mr. Gilbert says that these are names of Christ. A careful perusal of this verse in its connection will prove him to be wrong.

Now let us look at more fantastic error. Mr. Gilbert says, "Antichrist will be Judas come to earth again."

In order to make this point, he says that, "Christ plainly and clearly taught that Judas was the Devil-man. In Matt. 26:24 and elsewhere, Christ calls Judas 'a man.' But he also called him 'a Devil.' John 6:70. 'Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil?' The correct translation of course, is the Devil. There is only one Devil, although there are many demons. Christ did not say that Judas was led or influenced or controlled by the Devil. He said he was the Devil - incarnate in human form." (Italics Mr. Gilbert's.)

Would Mr. Gilbert say that Peter was also a devil-man because the Lord on one occasion said to him, "Get thee behind Me, Satan"? Peter in that instance was speaking for Satan. It means that and nothing more. Judas was to do the work of the devil in betraying his Lord with a kiss - a most despicable thing, an infamous act.

There is no such thing in Scripture as a devil-man, but Mr. Gilbert takes John 8:44 ("When he [Satan] speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it") to attempt to prove that because he is called the father of a lie, or of lies, he must have a son. From this he jumps off on the tangent that Judas was Satan incarnate. This is not even wishful thinking; it is an aberration; it is worse than nonsense. Has God enabled Satan to reproduce a half-devil, half-man being on earth? But Mr. Gilbert says:

"Judas was more-than-man. He was Devil-man."

Then he speaks of Satan sending his son Judas to the earth to counter Christ's work. And yet the man who says such irrational things refers to those who have other thoughts as having "deranged imagination"!! He does not hesitate to call those who disagree with him, "prophetic theorists, schemers, and day-dreamers."

From this bold step of calling Judas the son of Satan, he jumps to another untenable position. He calls his "antichrist" (It is hard to tell just who he is supposed to be after his naming Antiochus, Zedekiah, the "king of the north," etc., besides the Jewish king in Jerusalem, and the head of the revived Roman Empire) the "perfect blending" of the human and the Satanic, that he will be the very Son of Satan,"

and then claims that this is "clearly taught in Scripture."

Our comment is that people who will accept this will believe almost anything. He further says that antichrist

"will be Satan come to earth and clothed in flesh as Christ was God come to earth and tabernacled in flesh." This borders on blasphemy!

This self-appointed prophetic teacher - more prophet himself than teacher - says, "As God is preparing to send His Son to earth, so Satan is preparing to send his son to earth."

Then in another place we get this consummate nonsense: "It not only is logical; it is plainly taught in Scripture! Satan's son has already been to earth; and when he comes again, it will be his second coming."

What did this writer say about "deranged imaginations"?

Mr. Gilbert takes Eze. 28, which most sound writers have taken to be an indirect way of God's telling us of Satan's origin and fall, correctly as to the "king of Tyrus"; but when the same chapter speaks of the "prince of Tyrus," it speaks of its then proud king who was to be brought down by God's judgment. The city of Tere fell, as God had appointed. There is this connection, that Tere was filled with pride, and Satan fell through pride; BUT THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO BASIS IN FACT for supposing that "the prince of Tyrus" is Satan's son. The old "prince of Tyrus" no doubt acted in a similar way to that of the future "king" in Jerusalem. But much of Mr. Gilbert's foible as to the antichrist depends on this inexcusable interpretation of Eze. 28

This innovator of strange things uses "Satan manifest in flesh" in quotation marks as though it were in Scripture. It is a perversion of "God manifest in the flesh." It is an unlawful paraphrase.

Many prophetic teachers have applied Rev. 13:18 to the antichrist; it does apply to the head of the revived Roman Empire, so if that is their view the verse would be applicable, although many of the best teachers prefer, in using the name antichrist, to apply it to the religious Jew in Palestine who comes as their Messiah, albeit he is entirely false. This is also our considered judgment. But let us look at this verse:

"Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six." If Mr. Gilbert had understanding, he might have given us the meaning of 666, but this he carefully avoids. Many people have been puzzled to find a solution for this, but no sensible one has yet appeared. (The number "six" denotes man, and it is short of "seven," which is used for perfection in Scripture.) Needless to say, when the time comes, those on earth who have faith in God will be able to perceive it. The Christians will not be here then, so we need not know. We look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, not for either beast of Rev. 13, and certainly not for a reincarnated Judas Iscariot. His soul and spirit have long since been in torment in hades; and hell will be his final portion after the last resurrection. There the whole wicked man will be - body, soul, and spirit.

Dear Christian reader, beware of teachers of new things, that come newly up (Deut. 32:17), and attract many. We have the perfect and abiding Word of God, and we have good, solid written ministry based on the Bible. May we be careful of the writers whose writings we read. Paul said to

Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." 2 Tim. 3:10. He warned his son in the faith of false teachers, and gave his own credentials. We have a responsibility to check on the authors of what we read, and to prove all things by the Holy Scriptures. It is better not to get false and erroneous ideas into our minds. Our only reason for speaking of them is to warn others and at the same time point out some elements of sound doctrine.

"Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Pro. 19:27.

#### Extract

Never cut the knot of a difficulty in Scripture, but wait until God unties it for you. There are difficulties in His Word. What is to be done with them? Submit to them; own that you do not understand; pray to God till, in the use of all right means, He clears them up. But never force the Word of God.

## The Assimilating Power of Christ

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1 John 3:2

There is one very precious feature that is found in John's epistle, and indeed elsewhere in his writings, that we cannot see Christ really as He was and is without being wrought upon and formed according to Him. There is such an assimilating power in Christ that it is impossible to have to do with Him without feeling His constraining influence and becoming like Him. The Apostle even traces this through the main particulars of His life and glory. Thus knowing Him as the life, we have life ourselves. Again, He is the Son; and knowing Him thus, we too become sons of God. So in Rev. 1 If He is the King, if He is the Priest, as none other ever was or can be but Himself, He has made us kings, He has made us priests, and given us to be kings and priests as none can be, save those who are made so by Him.

But this is also true morally, because as He is our life, and we have even life eternal in Him; so also He is our righteousness, and we are righteous in Him and by Him, yea, made the righteousness of God in Him. And this is not only true as to the present, but as to the future. We have seen Him now by faith, and all the blessing comes by faith. But we shall see Him soon face to face, as well as now inwardly by the Holy Spirit, we shall be both outwardly and inwardly conformed to Him. Thus does the Apostle preserve this most precious thought everywhere, bringing it out and applying it to us in the most unexpectedly full manner.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." It never was so displayed before. It was predicted that it was to be, but it never was so brought out, till Himself, the Son of God, really and properly came. And we then become not only sons in title, but children (for such is the true force of it), as being really born of God. To be sons, glorious as it is, is not so intimate a thing as to be children, born of God. A person might have the title of a son without being of the family. But while we are and shall be owned as sons of God, we are children. "Therefore," he says, "the world knoweth us not." There we have the very same thought again. If it is nearness to God, there never was any one so near to God as He was; but now we are brought into the very same nearness, as He says, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." John 20:17. Thus what is His becomes ours. But now, looking at the other side, the world does not know us. How comes this? For the most precious reason - because it knew Him not. Whatever was His portion, is our portion. If the world cast Him out, must I wonder if it cast us out also? If the world called Him every bad name, we must expect no better. Only let us take care that we do not deserve it. The Lord give us more and more faith, that we may know what it is to be outcast for Christ's sake! It was His portion from the manger to the cross.

Having given us these two portions, He distinguishes what is, from what shall be. "Beloved, now are we the sons [children] of God." As he had before simply said, "that we should be called the sons [children] of God," there might have been a question whether it was really so or not. But now he adds, "Now are we the sons [children] of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." It

does not appear to the world; it does perfectly appear to us. He is not speaking of what we know, but of what is to be manifested to the world. For we ought to know it now as perfectly as we shall in the glory. It rests upon God's Word, as it flows from His grace; and God's Word will not be plainer in heaven than it is upon earth. Nothing can make the Word of God plainer or surer. There may be the putting down of opposing influences, but "the word of God... liveth and abideth forever" (1 Pet. 1:23). And this is the strength of our Christian health and well-being, the very spring that gives us power of separation unto God, that we wait for no signs, that we accept His Word and rejoice in it, and take it as our sure portion, not because we deserve such grace, but because Christ does; and Christ deserves it now as much as ever He will. And as it is nothing but the fruit of the grace of Christ, he says, "Beloved, now are we the sons [children] of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." And why? Because it is guaranteed by His infinite power? No; true as this may be, it is not the reason. "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." We see Him now as He was, and this constrains and conforms us into the likeness of what He was; surely then we shall see Him as He is, and we shall be like Him as He is. Yes, in spirit we see Him as He is now, and are even now changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

## At That Time Jesus Answered: David — Josiah — Jesus

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There is one, and only one, life that ever gave forth its unvarying answer to God.

If we think of a David, Jehovah's anointed king over the hosts of Israel, we have in sorrow to read: "It came to pass... at the time when kings go forth to battle,... David tarried still at Jerusalem." 2 Sam. 11:1. That is to say, he gave up conflict; and, having so done, we have the record of the sad sequel.

Later on in the checkered history of that favored people, we read of another of their kings, Josiah by name, who, in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of David his father. In the twelfth he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from idolatry; and in the eighteenth, to repair the house of Jehovah his God, displaying great energy as to the keeping of the passover. But, turning to the next page of his history, what meets the eye? "After all this" (2 Chron. 35:20). The one who at eight years of age declined neither to the right hand nor to the left, from that tender age was characterized as one that sought after the God of David his father, consequently set his face against idolatry, even to the purging of the land and the house, until, in the eighteenth year of his reign, he cared for the house of Jehovah his God, and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the first month. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the day of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept. "After all this" of such a one it has to be recorded, that he went out in a conflict unwarranted by Jehovah his God; and (as with David, so with Josiah) down he falls. David failed to maintain conflict at the time of conflict, "at the time when kings go forth to battle," and Josiah became involved in a conflict that brought him into variance with God Himself. (2 Chron. 35:21, 22.) And such is the blotted history of the first man, look at it where we may.

Beloved! what volumes do those three words, "after all this," speak to one's heart! If perchance, through grace, a measure of steadiness may have marked our pathway hitherto, while many leaders have fallen, what sorrow, if after so much grace shown us, the Spirit of God should have to write an "after all this" in our history, to chronicle our declension of heart (for surely that is where declension has its start) as exhibited in our ways. Assuredly it is a time of going "forth to battle," "to earnestly contend," and to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." And the conflict has to be maintained until with a Paul we are given to say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth"-not conflict, but-"a crown." But if on the other hand we are found meddling with the world in one way or another, even it may be with the view of setting it right (as Josiah got involved, as we have seen, with Egypt's king), just as Josiah was brought down under the forces of Egypt, so will we succumb to the forces of the world and its prince.

"After all this," what a relief to the sorrowful heart to turn to the record of that one life which in all its minute details met the eye of God and was well pleasing to Him.

A king truly, yea, the King of Israel (and never had such a one been presented to Israel before), but what glories come before our eyes in the perusal of the pages of His sojourn. And, look at His pathway where we may, it is only to discover the unvarying answer to God, not from His lips only, but in every look of His eye, in His every footstep, yea, in every movement of His heart and hand.

View Him for a moment in Matt. 11-a King, truly, as we have said, but without a kingdom-despised and rejected of His subjects, His testimony and His mighty works unheeded. What then? "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father." "Answered" to what, beloved, or rather to whom, seeing there was no audible voice at the moment? Ah! but here as elsewhere, He recognizes in circumstances themselves most untoward, His Father's voice and answers to God in all.

Or if, with adoring reverence, we view Him hanging on the tree, what is it to find? That, while in all the bitterness of that moment, He owns Himself the forsaken One, forsaken of God, yet, in unswerving fidelity, He owns the One who had forsaken Him: "My God, My God." And the very question He raises in the hour of the travail of His soul, He waits not for His God to give the answer to; but, in all that sorrow, He Himself answers it and, in answering it, answers to God, and (blessed be His glorious name forever) answers to God for us (Psalm 22:3).

Beloved saints of God, what a voice has all this for us! We each, in our individual pathway, have encountered difficult circumstances, sorrows, and trials; but has there been in all, from our hearts and lips, the answering to God?

The Blessed One, who in revealing the Father to us has given us rest, has also graciously made known to us how these-in themselves-commonplace, everyday lives of ours can yield to the Father the answer our hearts would delight to render, even by taking His yoke upon us and learning of Him, the One meek and lowly in heart, and thus finding rest unto our souls day by day under His easy yoke.

## A Letter on Atonement

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In John 14:9, the Son presents Himself as the display of the Father. Fundamental truth! which every believer receives and rejoices in. Without doubt, he who rejects it denies the glory of Him who came to effect atonement, and undermines the atonement itself. It is the dignity of the Person which gave divine capacity for the work, and infinite efficacy to the work when accomplished.

But atonement demanded far more than either the divine rights of the Lord, or the sinner's appropriation of Him and His work by faith apart from works. Hence, reasoning from the words of the Lord, which do not touch the question, can only mislead. What does Scripture say of the atonement? Does it not make it depend on the cross of Christ? On His blood shed for the remission of our sins? On His suffering once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God? Here is an ample array of clear New Testament testimonies: Rom. 3:25; 4:25; 5:9, 10 Cor. 15:3 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 3:16; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; 4:32; 5:2; Col. 1:14, 20 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; Heb. 1:3; 2:9, 14; 9:12, 14, 15, 24-28; 10:5-10, 12-19; 12:24; 13:12, 20 Pet. 1:2, 18-21; 2:24; 3:18 John 1:7; 2:2; 4:10; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14, etc. Need one add the anticipatory words in the gospels, Matt. 20:28; 26:28; John 1:29, or other such scriptures?

Yet it may be well to notice briefly a few indisputable types in the Old Testament. The blood of the slain lamb on the paschal night was sprinkled without, not within; on the lintel and doorposts, not for Israel to see, but for God. "When I see the blood, I will pass over." So in the sacrifices the blood was put on the horns of God's altar, presented to God, never to man. In certain cases men (lepers, priests, etc.) were sprinkled with blood that they might be cleansed; that is, that they might be judicially clean before God. Thus on the greatest of all occasions it was carried in, and put before the mercy seat, on atonement day; but it only the more establishes the principle, that it was for man before God, and not a mere token of God's love to man. In the New Testament application, Christ is declared to have entered in by His own blood. To have come down and died in love to man is equally true, but quite distinct.

There is no doubt, then, of love in God more than in Christ; Scripture is explicit. The Father sent the Son; God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten. But it is equally true that the Son of man must be lifted up; and that necessity was not merely man's evil, but God's word and righteous character and holy nature and majesty which must be vindicated in order to a righteous forgiveness. The cross of Christ meets all this, and much more. He was forsaken of God because of sin (Psalm 22). It was no question here of the Jews or Gentiles, of Herod or Pontius Pilate, save as guilty persecutors. God too was at the cross, and made Christ sin for us, that we might become His righteousness in Christ. He had suffered for righteousness and holiness and grace before. He suffered for sins then. This is atonement, the sole ground of expiating the guilt of the believer. Nor was this a novel expectation, though a new fact. He was wounded for our transgressions, said the prince of prophets; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. "For the transgression of My people was He stricken." Isa. 53:8. "It pleased the LORD [Jehovah] to bruise

Him; He hath put Him to grief: when thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed," etc. v. 10. He shall bear their iniquities. He bare the sin of many.

Thus law, psalms, and prophets agree; Old and New Testaments alike proclaim Christ's suffering from God, and before God, because of our sins. The Lord announced it; the apostles - Paul especially - are full of it; and not least, the beloved disciple, who most presses God's love which is really enhanced by it, of which the depth and strength are only there known where Christ's drinking this cup from the Father is owned. Divine love is not all the truth, nor man's hatred, nor Satan's power; but deeper than all is Christ's offering Himself to God as a sacrifice for sins. Love indeed is enfeebled incalculably by not seeing the truth that Christ bore the judgment of our sins at God's hand. Rather is love degraded into indifference to man's sins, and disregard of God's holiness and majesty, and of such warnings as are in Deut. 27:26; Rom. 2:9; Heb. 10:31. The scriptures cited prove, on the contrary, that expiation was essential for God's honor if He would save guilty man, even though he believed. Judgment was born by Christ that grace might flow out to the sinner. It is therefore now God's righteousness as well as His grace.

When it is argued, then, that all theology is false which makes the image of the Son different from that of the Father, is it denied that God bruised Christ, and that Christ was forsaken by God? that Christ died in expiation of our guilt before God, who raised Him from the dead? If so, this is abusing one truth to contradict another no less momentous. Justification is by faith, not works; but did Christ accomplish the work typified by the sacrifices for sin on atonement day? Isa. 53 predicts, and Matthew and Mark record, our Lord's suffering, as He says, by God's abandonment of Him - the bitterest of all punishment for our sins. Is God's punishing, and Christ's enduring, the same image? I should have thought them the greatest contrast; yet the counsel of peace was between Them both. What has been used, therefore, is only a misuse of John 14:9, which in truth regards Christ's Person and not His work. To apply it to the cross, so as to get rid of the Lord's suffering from God for our sins, is really to explain away the Scripture truth and Christian foundation of atonement. If this be not the meaning of the argument, what is?

Further, it is assumed that righteousness in God must be the same thing as in Jesus, and that the assertion of a good quality in the Father, which the Son lacks, in effect denies that the latter is God, or like Him. But this is quite a mistake. Righteousness is, as always, consistency with the relationship in which each stands. Evidently, therefore, as among men it is modified in the servant as compared with the master, in the child with the parent, in the wife with the husband, in the subject with the sovereign, so it is with Him who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, became in the likeness of men, and found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death of the cross: wherefore also God exalted Him exceedingly. As man, therefore, the Son, far from lacking what is the Father's morally, has what the Father has not and could not have, as He never became incarnate. The righteousness which directs or commands is one thing; that which obeys is another. "Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again." It was His act, yet it was obedience of His Father (John 10:17, 18). The mystery of His Person finds its answer in His death. To reason from one aspect of it exclusively, whether divine or human, is to divide the Person, to neutralize the work, and to lose the truth. "No man [one] knoweth the Son, but the Father." We must be subject to His Word, but to it all, and not to a part only. Jesus is the Son, who is not like God merely (Scripture

never saying so), for He really is God, and as fully God as are the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Moreover, all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him - does dwell in Him bodily - yet, while the Persons in the Godhead have not only unity of nature, but one mind and counsel and purpose, so they act distinctly in manifesting it, as we see; for example, in Matt. 3:16, 17, for they are three as well as one. And though Jesus were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. There could not but be therefore qualities, perfect in their kind, in Him which were not in the Father, nor in Him (the Son) till He took the place of servant as man on earth. Still more is this true of Him on the cross, where He entered on a new work, unique in its character, and infinite in its consequences of grace and glory everlasting, as the sufferings in which it was wrought. This in no way compromises the Godhead of Christ, any more than it impeaches His manifestation of the Father or expression of God....

We must not, with the theologians, confound purchase with redemption. All the world, all mankind, even the wicked, are bought by Christ's blood; but none save believers have redemption (apolutrosis) through His blood, the forgiveness of sins though the antilutron be *peri pantos*. Purchase makes all to be His property or slaves; by redemption we are freed from Satan, Christ's freedmen, to serve God in liberty. Is it seriously questioned by the figure of the King dying in victory for His army, that the blood of Christ shed as a sacrifice for sin was not presented to God as well as for man? It is in vain to reason on God's loving the world, and so loving it as to send His Son to give the believer eternal life; but this is distinct from the other truth, that He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Now sacrifice in Scripture is to God, and never to the creature, which is heathenism, as the negation of sacrifice is infidelity. And assuredly the work of redemption, the forgiveness of sins, is by blood, by suffering atoningly on the cross, not by all authority in heaven and earth conferred on the Risen Man by God. And it is important to see that when all is made subject by Christ, and He hands back the kingdom, it is that not the Father but God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) should be all in all.

## Attacks on the Word of God

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Often a man of intelligence produces human infidelity, while a man of imagination will give us human superstition, colored over with the haze of antiquity, for fear what it really is should be too clearly seen. Both give me man. The Scriptures alone give me God. Hence the peculiar form of modern infidelity is attack on the written Word-the Scriptures. Superstition takes exactly the same ground. The cry of "Bibliolatry!" sounds alike from the intellectual and from the superstitious infidel. Both have the same object of attack, both are infidels--one an intellectual, the other an imaginative one. Both would persuade me that the Bible cannot itself command my conscience and oblige me to faith as coming from God. Do they not both seek to do this? Is it not infidelity? Doubtless, through the sinfulness of man's will, without divine grace, he never will really receive the Word as it is in truth-the Word of God. But is that his fault or the Word's? Infidels and superstitious persons will both tell me that the Word itself has not divine authority over my soul; that I cannot receive it as such on its own authority without something more to prove it. It is hard to say who is guiltiest here: he who denies it is the Word of God, or he who, not denying that it is, declares that what God has said cannot bind the conscience of man unless validated by some authority other than its own.

## Be Not Afraid

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"And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. While He yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe." Mark 5:34-36.

It is at once interesting and instructive to mark that, at the very moment in which the Lord was dismissing the poor woman with words of peace and consolation, a messenger arrived from the ruler's house, saying, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?" This was in reality a fiery dart from the wicked one to shake the ruler's confidence. He had come to Jesus in the confidence of His ability and readiness to heal the sick, but could he trust Him to raise the dead? Could his faith carry him into the dreary domain of death and there enable him to gaze upon the Son of God acting in His glorious capacity as the quickener of the dead?

We are not told what passed through the ruler's mind at the moment in which the depressing tidings of death fell upon his ear; but we can easily imagine a dark cloud passing over his spirit. But, ah! the tender, loving heart of Jesus was thinking of the poor, tried, and tempted one. His eye was upon him. He caught the earliest symptom of the gathering cloud: "As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe." The Lord took no notice of the messenger. He thought only of the effect of the message upon the ruler's heart; and in His infinite grace He immediately covered him with the shield of faith. "Be not afraid, only believe." Precious words! Words which can carry the soul through every difficulty and every danger - words for a sickbed or a chamber of death - words for all circumstances, all places, and all conditions - words of comfort and consolation for the poor, sinking, fainting, tottering heart. "Be not afraid, only believe."

Dear Christian reader, are you assaulted by dark thoughts of unbelief? Have you arrived at a point in your earthly path at which you see graver difficulties before you than you ever anticipated? Do you feel the dark waters of sorrow, trial, and temptation deepening around you, and the heavy clouds of unbelief and despondency gathering more thickly above you? Then, remember, the loving heart of Jesus is occupied about you. His eye is resting solicitously upon you. He knows what you are feeling. He sees every fiery dart that the tempter is leveling at you; and He says to you, as He said to the ruler, "Be not afraid, only believe" - "Hold the beginning of" your "confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14) - "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward" (Heb. 10:35) - "Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16). What we want is confidence in God, come what may. Simple faith can lift the head above the deepest waters, and pierce through the thickest gloom that ever enwrapped the soul. "Be not afraid, only believe." May these words fall with power on every doubting, trembling heart!

The closing lines of our chapter display to us the moral glories of Christ as the quickener of the dead. Death, disease, and Satan all flee before the majesty of His presence. We can track His marvelous path from scene to scene of this sin-stricken world; and, in every act, in every word, in every look, we see divine perfection. "He hath done all things well" must ever be the adoring language of our hearts. Nothing is beyond His power. Nothing escapes His tender care. "Talitha cumi" is the display of His majesty; Give her to eat, exhibits His tender, thoughtful care. The former bows the soul in worship; the latter melts the heart in grateful love.

## Be Vigilant

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Christian reader, remember Peter's fall, and beware of self-confidence. Cultivate a prayerful spirit. Keep close to Jesus. Keep away from the influence of this world's favor. "Keep thyself pure." Beware of dropping into a sleepy, torpid condition of soul. Be earnest and watchful. Be occupied with Christ. This is a true safeguard.

Do not be satisfied with mere avoidance of open sin. Do not rest in mere blamelessness of conduct and character. Cherish lively, warm affections toward Christ. One who follows Jesus "afar off" may deny Him before long. Let us think of this. Let us profit by the case of Peter. He himself afterward tells us to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith." 1 Pet. 5:8, 9. These are weighty words, coming as they do from one who had suffered so much from lack of "vigilance."

## Changed Flavor

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After the children of Israel despised the manna, its taste was never the same again. At first it was like "wafers made with honey," and afterward like "fresh oil." (Exod. 16; Numb. 11)

I would just remark here what it was that preceded this notice of the change in the taste of the manna, in Numb. 11:5: "We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." Was it not a dangerous retrospect? I do not believe we can be thus engaged, even for a moment, unless self judgment is promptly exercised, without suffering from it. It should be ever "forgetting those things which are behind " If we allow our desires to go back to the domains of our old taskmaster, we too shall be led to imagine that the food we there sought after was eaten "freely," being blinded to the recollection of the vexation of spirit and cruel bondage that the prince of that land laid upon us, while we earned it.

Let us not tarry at such an occupation, or we shall loathe the manna. "The serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety ," and "we are not ignorant of his devices." Lot's wife only "looked back." We are on slippery places., while our eyes look not right on, with our eyelids straight before us, unto Jesus, who is in the glory.

## The Child of the Bridechamber

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Matt. 9:9-17

The conversion of Matthew the publican will not, I believe, be fully enjoyed if we do not continue with it in our view to the end of verse 17; for I regard Matthew as being in that moment in the thoughts of the Lord, a new bottle with new wine in it.

The Lord met him in the place where the world had put him. He was a publican and was sitting at the receipt of custom. But He passed by, and it was a day of power; and Matthew was made willing. He hearkened diligently to Christ, and his soul at once delighted itself in fatness; for he arose and followed the Lord, and then spread a feast for Him.

This was joy and liberty, and Jesus sanctioned it. He sat at Matthew's table. This was done suddenly, it is true, but though sudden, it was not premature - though unbidden, it did not remain unsanctioned. The eunuch in his day went on his way rejoicing; and that rejoicing, like this of Matthew, was early and sudden, but it was not premature.

And in Matthew there was light and the mind of Christ, as well as liberty and the joy of Christ. He seated at the same table the publicans and sinners who had been following Jesus - the very people who had brought the Lord of glory from heaven, and the very people whom the Lord Himself will have at His own table in the day of the marriage supper - a company of redeemed sinners.

Matthew thus justly and beautifully understood the mind of Christ. He knew Him, though he had but just then been introduced to Him (like the dying thief), A short moment is time enough to carry the light and liberty of Christ into the dark and distant heart of either a thief or a publican.

Matthew was in Christ's presence in joy. He was a child of the bridechamber. He feasted the Lord. The King was sitting at his table, because, in spirit, Jesus had already brought Matthew to His banqueting house. This was the time of the kindness of his youth, or, the love of his espousals; and in that joy he had risen up, left all, and followed Christ. The world might, therefore, be to him a wilderness, a land not sown (Jer. 2:2). But with Jesus he feasted. The word of power, the invitation of grace, he had listened to; and to his soul it had been "a feast of fat things" (Isa. 25:6), wine and milk of the King's providing. It was as a bridegroom, as a lover of his soul, Matthew had apprehended Christ, and was now entertaining Him at his table; and because of this newly found liberty and joy, Matthew is among the children of the bridechamber, a new bottle with the new wine in it.

Neither Moses nor John the Baptist could have made such a bottle as this. The word of Christ, heard in the light and energy of the Holy Ghost, could alone have provided it. On Him only, all the vessels of the Lord's house hang - the "flagons" and the "cups." The Pharisees and the disciples of John do not even understand this. The one object to the feast with sinners - the other, that the feast is not a fast. The legalist and the religionist, neither of them, can brook the publican's, that is,

the sinner's, feast. The elder brother complains of the fatted calf. The music and the dancing, as the cheerful sound reaches him in his outside place, vex him - as the sight of the table and the company in the house of our Levi irritates the Pharisees as they look on and will not sit.

The Lord, however, vindicates both the feast and the guests. He lets it be heard, there on the spot and at the moment, that He had come to gather such a scene. And He thereby vindicates the host as having done the part of a child of the bridechamber, and as having done it well.

A simple, sweet story of grace! Would that one's heart realized the joy that the mind is tracing! Jesus found a publican, a sinner, just at his place in this wretched, self-seeking world; He took him up at once, made him a new bottle, and filled him with new wine, like the Samaritan at Jacob's well. She was taken up just as she was and where she was; and as another child of the bridechamber, she was sent on her way rejoicing. The world will "fret" itself, and be "driven to darkness," as the prophet speaks (Isa. 8). The heart of the Pharisee is rent by vexation at such a sight. The publican's feast is lost upon such, the new wine is spilled; as the Lord adds, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish."

But then, days of absence and therefore days of sorrow of heart were to come after these feast days of His presence; but they had not come then. That day in Matthew's house was one of "the days of the Son of man." But the heart that can feast a present Jesus will mourn an absent Lord. The children of the bridechamber will fast during the Bridegroom's absence, because He is dear to them. It is not the Pharisee's fast of religious service and merit, but the fast of a heart that has been weaned away from other objects, and for the present has lost the presence of its own object.

It is not from experience but from desire only, one's heart traces the path of a child of the bridechamber. There are occasions and seasons when the state of the affections to Christ are sorrowfully discovered; and sure I am, we need more earnest eye for Him. Our look at Him has need to be a nearer one, more fixed and personal. Our sight of Him is too commonly conducted as by the light of others. We are prone to have Him in company, in the reflections and by the help of the scene and circumstances in which we place ourselves. I covet a more earnest look at Him - a look that can reach Him very closely and personally, without aid or countenance or company. The single eye knows Him only; the earnest eye enjoys Him deeply.

Mary at the sepulcher had it, when she could pass by the shining ones while looking for Him. The sinner of the city had it, when she could let the scorn of the Pharisee pass over her without moving her. The Samaritan had it, when she could forget her water pot; and the eunuch, when he went on heedless of the loss of Philip. Our Matthew had it. And it is this which not only realizes Christ, but puts Him in His due supreme place, and chief room both of attraction and authority.

## Christ As a Son Over His Own House

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### Heb. 3

The constant tendency of our hearts, even when brought up to our privileges, is to slip off from them. When Satan finds he cannot resist the introduction of the power of the gospel by false doctrine, he then seeks to get something before the mind - vanity, worldliness, the cares of the world, and a thousand things to keep the soul from simply looking to Jesus. When the truth is first presented to the soul, he tries to hinder its reception; but when it is received, his effort is to diminish its power in some way or other; and the only remedy for this, is the heart being occupied with Christ Himself. We need an increasing knowledge of Christ. For the heart that is learning Christ, cannot be satisfied with the things that the world presents, but desires to know Him more fully. In looking to Jesus, it is not knowing a doctrine merely, but it is Himself we want to know. It is "as the truth is in Jesus" that has a charm for the soul, for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; and it is never known in the power of faith out of Him. And never can there be that power which detects the course of false doctrine, but as the soul is dwelling in Himself, "rooted and built up in Him." The heart centered in Him is able to look out and see all the extent of the divine revelations to the soul. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," etc.

There is always a tendency to slip back and thus lose all practical power. But because of this, does the Apostle try to shake their confidence as to what they are? Not in the least. God never does this, but He shows us our inconsistency with what we are; and so the Apostle calls back their hearts to the place of grace where God was dealing with them. As with the Corinthians, the Apostle says, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ." Now they were puffed up by evil. It is not that the Apostle would allow the evil to pass, but he first sets them on the ground where God had set them. So he comes to our hearts and says, Do not you turn away from the ground where God has set you. He calls us up to the spring of

it all, in the heart of God, and then says, Now, can you be seeking the world and what it has to give, when you have such a portion in God?

I would now say a word on the manner in which he presents Christ. He is going to speak of Christ in the most glorious way he can; but, observe, he does not begin with it. He first speaks of what is a link between their hearts and this blessed and glorious One; and having knit up our hearts to this, he then shows us His glory. Now there is great grace in this. It is not merely as an abstract truth, a system of theology, saying, "This is God." No, he says, I am going to speak about One who brought God nigh to you, who was among you, the One between you and God, and who stood for you toward God. I am going to talk to you about Him "who was faithful to Him that appointed Him." Here we get this glorious Person in an official character; and so He was appointed, and we look at this blessed, glorious One in office, who "was faithful in all his house... whose house are we." And this is of the greatest comfort to us, for it is thus we get this glorious One so very near to us - so close to us as to be interested in everything that concerns us. "But Christ as a son over His own

house" was interested in carrying on all God had entrusted to Him, as Moses, the servant, was interested in bringing Israel up out of Egypt. But he presents Christ to us as worthy of more glory than Moses, "inasmuch as He who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house. For every house is builded by some man [one]; but He that built all things is God." Thus I find myself brought into union with Him who created all things. I was brought close to Christ, where I get this blessed intimacy, and then I find that the One who condescended to be in this blessed place of nighness to me, was God. Thus I learn that all my concerns are in His hands who is God.

Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ is faithful as a Son who knows the house belongs to Him. "As a son over His own house; whose house are we." It is His own house, for Christ as a Son over His own house, is not only the God who created all things, but the One who takes an interest in everything that concerns us, just as a Son over His own house. Thus I find myself brought into the whole universe in Him that created it.

And now, beloved, this is the way the Spirit of God would carry us on through the world, not as merely leading us through the world, but keeping our hearts above the things of the world while passing through it. As the Son cannot but be faithful to Him who appointed Him, when I see the One who is thus interested in His house is the glorious One who created all things, I learn it is God Himself, and I can trust Him. He also makes us see it is the interest of the Son, and not merely an official appointment; thus the heart knows Christ has all the interest in it as a Son over His own house. And as our hearts are fixed on Him, and enlarged toward Him, our affections are drawn out and enlarged in their own proper sphere; and the heart thus kept from worldliness is enlarged in a divine way. And that is what is such a comfort that the most ignorant soul, if taught of God, gets enlarged and sanctified affections.

## Christ Died for Our Sins

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1 Cor. 15:3

That is the brief record of the greatest and most wonderful event in God's moral universe. "Christ died for our sins"! The patriot dies for his country; the martyr dies for his faith; the loving and devoted mother would willingly die for her suffering child; and "peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die." Self-sacrifice is common enough, and it is noble, beautiful. But, the self-sacrifice of Christ! Is there anything to compare with it? Comparison is impossible. It has no parallel, and can have none. It is altogether exceptional and unique. Christ died for OUR SINS. Of no one else can that be said in the sense in which it is said of Him. Of no one is it said. Of no other being in the universe could it be said. And it could not have been said of Him if He had not been God as well as man. And now, "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified."

## Christian Character

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The courage, patience, firmness, and zeal of a Christian are a perfectly distinct order of character from the courage, firmness, patience, and zeal of a natural man - self-confidence, self-glory, self-preservation, self-exaltation, are the essential principles of one; confidence in God, self-renunciation, subjection to God, glory to God, abasement of self, being essential principles of the other. So the essential principles that formed the character of Paul as a natural man were destroyed through the cross, in order that his soul should imbibe the life of Christ, which was the principle that formed his character as a Christian - "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Though Christ was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered. In any instance in which we give up our own wills without sacrificing conscience, we are gainers. If but my dog exercises my patience and makes me yield my will, he is a blessing to me. Christ never willed anything but what was good and holy; yet how often His will was thwarted, how often hindered in designs of good! "How often would I have gathered thy children together.... and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37).

## Christ's Good Confession

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Paul, in giving his son Timothy a solemn injunction to keep "this commandment without spot" (1 Tim. 6:14), charged him "in the sight of God" and of "Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession." He links Christ Jesus with God in the wording of this solemn charge. God is spoken of as the quickener [or, sustainer] of all things, and the one feature that marks the Lord Jesus Christ is the "good confession" He made before the Roman governor. No reference is made to His glorious resurrection or ascension, nor indeed to any of the miracles which He wrought, bearing, as each of them did, so rich a testimony to His power and grace; but special notice is taken of His conduct before the judge.

We may ask ourselves, Why is this? Was there anything in that confession that could be placed on a par with His acts of power, or His resurrection? In reading the details of His manner before Pilate, we might, perhaps, fail to see the reason of this inspired reference. If we examine the first three gospels, we find that when asked by Pilate if He were "the King of the Jews," He quietly but firmly admitted the fact. He could not do otherwise. He had been born King of the Jews (see Matt. 2), and as such He died, the superscription on the cross giving the public emblazonment of it.

But that was not all. Though charged with many things, He answered nothing; and Pilate marveled. He made no defense. The accusations, falsely preferred, fell back on the consciences of the accusers. Many there were to condemn; none, alas, to befriend! Where were the nine? Where were the crowds of healed, and fed, and forgiven? Where were those who had shared His benefactions, and heard His accents of love? He looked for pity, and found none! He stood alone and was ominously silent before the governor. He could have repelled every charge, and vindicated Himself against each accuser; but self-defense was not His object when self-surrender, absolute and unequivocal, was the business of His blessed life below.

Washing his hands of the case, Pilate, with sad culpability, gave Him over to His enemies; and, so far as these gospels teach us, other confession the Lord did not make before Pilate. But when we turn to John (see chap. 18) we find the same confession clearly made, enlarged upon, and presented in the manner peculiar to the fourth Gospel. The blessed Lord admits that He is King of the Jews; but, as ever in this Gospel, rejected by them, He, in turn, intimates that He cannot acknowledge the nation. Rejection is mutual, how unwillingly so on His part need not be said. How often would He have gathered them, but as often they would not! That being so, He answered Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence." John 18:36. Notice, He does not say that His servants would have fought that He should not be delivered to the Gentiles. That would have been insurrection; but it was the Jews who, instead of accepting this their true King, were bitterly and implacably opposed to Him. Had the Lord, therefore, sought to establish His kingdom by force, there would have been conflict between His followers and the nation. (He was, like David, the rejected King.) Hence He said, "Now is My kingdom not from hence." It was not of this world. Its spring and character were of a new and

heavenly order, one to which the idea of carnal warfare was completely foreign. He attaches to His kingdom a new, and moral, and heavenly character. He does not relinquish His claim as King of Israel-that ever abides-but He rises into a higher region, and declares that He came for something more than to reign on the earth.

"To this end," He says, "was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice." v. 37. And now, assuredly, we reach the "good confession."

The commandment that Paul enjoined so earnestly on Timothy was that he should keep the truth-that Christianity in its pure and heavenly nature, in its close relation with the new creation, and in its unworldly source and character, should be strenuously maintained by him.

The Church is "the pillar and ground of the truth"-the witness to it-so that, if not found in her, it cannot be found anywhere. And Timothy, too, had an individual part to bear in this sacred witness. Now, says the Lord, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

That, amid a thousand other most gracious objects, was the one grand point in His birth and entrance into the world. Quite true, He was "born King of the Jews," but He was quite as truly born a witness to the truth.

"The Word became flesh" indeed, but here He is seen as born. His manhood is simply stated, though He, thus born, said also, "For this cause came I into the world."

To come into the world, He must have existed before that coming. And thus we have His Godhead stated as simply. We have the "I" who was born, and the "I" who came-the "I" of Bethlehem, and the "I" who was before Abraham. Yet, He it was who stood in human form and in lowly grace before Pontius Pilate. And had no one the eye to see, in that lowly form, One who was infinitely more than "the Man Christ Jesus," who had been sent by the High Priest as a prisoner to the judge? An opened eye was assuredly needed.

To he of the truth is needed for this-then, and only then, is His voice heard.

"What is truth?" said Pilate, as he passed away from His presence who was the Truth.

The same quiet firmness marks our blessed Lord in bearing witness to the truth, as marked Him in acknowledging His kingship. His confession before Pilate was unflinching; it was "good."

And now, we may see, perhaps, why Paul adduced to Timothy the instance of the Master's confession before Pilate, as an incentive to his own testimony. The bright example of Jesus is ever the truest encouragement and stimulus to the faith of His followers.

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life" -says Paul. The fight is good, though stiff; and the life is true, and precious, and, eternal, "whereunto," he adds, "thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Words of comfort and cheer (not of flattery) for the oft-tried heart of this faithful young soldier.

And only think, dear reader, that Christ Jesus witnessed a "good confession" before Pontius Pilate, as an example to ourselves that we should do the same. May we follow Him!

## Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

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### 1 Chron. 20-22

In chapter 20 we see David tarrying at Jerusalem, and Joab leading forth the army against Rabbah. This was a sad epoch for David; but, strikingly enough, the book of Chronicles says nothing about it. Its object is not at all to refer to a single sin, except what was connected with the purpose of God. I do not mean by this that God ever prompts a man to sin, but there are those sorrowful passages in our history which God connects with His great mercy and His purpose respecting us. Others are merely the willfulness of our nature without any such connection. Hence, therefore, we find that there is not a word here said about the matter of Bath-sheba.

But the next chapter (21) shows us the effort of Satan, too successful, to entice David into what was a grievous sin, particularly in him-reckoning up the strength of Israel. Was he a Gentile then? Could David allow the thought that it was his own prowess, or his people's, that had wrought these great victories? Was it not God? No doubt He had employed David and his servants. He had put honor upon them all. But it was God. Hence, therefore, David's wishing to number Israel was a very grievous evil in the eyes of a worldly politician like Joab. It was not that Joab would trouble much about a sin, provided he could see any good result of it; but he could not understand how a man like David should compromise himself so deeply without the smallest change; for, after all, the numbering of the people would not bring one more man. Why, therefore, take so much trouble and run the risk of a sin, without any practical fruit? This was Joab's reasoning. But the king's word prevailed against Joab, and Joab goes on his mission and gives the sum of the number of the people. It was not completed, but he brought the sum.

"And Joab gave the sum of the number of the people unto David. And all they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew the sword; and Judah was four hundred threescore and ten thousand men that drew sword. But Levi and Benjamin counted he not among them." The plans of men do not succeed, more particularly among God's people. "The king's word was abominable to Joab. And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He smote Israel." This seems extraordinary at first sight-why God should smite Israel-but God was wise. It was Israel that became a snare and a boast to the king. Did he not number them? They must be decimated now. God would reduce the number, and would make David feel that, instead of being a blessing to His people, he was a curse through his folly and his pride. David, therefore, was obliged to own to God, "I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech Thee, do away the iniquity of Thy servant; for I have done very foolishly."

But no! Confession does not always hinder the chastening of God. The mind of Jehovah was made up. "I offer thee three things," said He: "choose one of them-either three years' famine, or three months to be destroyed before the foe, or three days of the sword of Jehovah "not of the enemy-"even the pestilence in the land." David owns the great strait and perplexity of his soul, but he chooses the last; and he was right. "Let me fall into the hand of Jehovah, for very great are His mercies. Let me not fall into the hand of man." David preferred-and justly, in my opinion-the direct

hand of Jehovah. What was secondary. he felt repulsive-the famine. He could not bear that God should appear to be starving His people and condemning them to this slow death; or, on the other hand, that the foe should exalt themselves over Israel. This was abominable to his soul. But that there should be an evident chastening inflicted by God's hand, by the destroying angel-this he chose. "So Jehovah sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men." In the course of it "God sent an angel unto Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, Jehovah beheld, and He repented Him of the evil and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough; stay now thine hand."

This occurred by the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite, for the Jebusite was in the land. The Canaanites still dwelt in the land. It will be so till Jesus comes and reigns, and then the Canaanite will be no longer in the land. And, what is more, God marks His grace; for all is in grace here. It was there He stopped he last place where one would have expected it-at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Why there? Because there God meant to mark sovereign grace. "And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of Jehovah stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem." God gave him to see this. "Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. And David said unto God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? let Thine hand, I pray Thee, O Jehovah my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on Thy people, that they should be plagued."

Thus he takes the consequence of the sin upon himself. This was beautiful in David; we may say that it was natural; it was right. It was far, immeasurably, inferior to the Lord Jesus. There there was no sin, and yet He took all the sin upon Himself-suffered for sins "just for unjust, that He might bring us to God." But here it was the king that had been unjust, that had brought this scourge upon the people. Nevertheless, now at least, he is used by the grace of God. Now he presents himself for the blow, but sovereign grace must reign. "Then the angel of Jehovah commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar unto Jehovah in the threshingfloor of Oman the Jebusite." The place where mercy rejoiced against judgment becomes the locality of the altar. This shows where the temple was afterward to be built-where the plague was stayed by divine mercy. "David went up at the saying of Gad."

We find an interesting scene between David and Oman who was willing that all should be given; but no; it must be David's gift, not a Jebusite's. "And king David said to Oman, Nay; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is thine for Jehovah, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there an altar unto Jehovah, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings." How striking! The man that had brought all the trouble-the guilty king, but the type of the Holy One of Israel-the type of Him that gave up His life a ransom for many.

Then in the 22nd chapter he opens his lips in the Spirit of God, and says, "This is the house of Jehovah God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel." Here he had found the place. Such was the way of God. The numbering of the people was a sin, no doubt, on David's part; but it was a sin that was now completely lost in the grace of God who had thus shown Himself for the people, and also made Jerusalem to be the evident spot where God would hearken to man upon the earth. And God would bring in that which would stay the judgment, even for the guilty. The

temple was to be built there.

David, therefore, orders everything from this to the end of the book, in view of the temple that was to be built, and the son that was to build it. All from this, however, is the preparation for his departure and for this work that was to be done by the son-that could not be left to David-but it is not Solomon that prepares for the house, but David. David and Solomon give us the two grand truths as to Christ-Christ both. In man it must be separate; in man we see the difference. But still it is beautiful to see that it is not Solomon that arranges all; it is the wisdom of David. And so it will be with Christ. It is not merely that Christ will be the wisdom of God by-and-by, or the power of God by-and-by; but Christ is the power of God-is the wisdom of God-Christ viewed as the crucified One, which is precisely the way in which the Apostle Paul speaks of the Lord in contrast with the wisdom of man. David, therefore, arranges everything beforehand for the temple, the house of God.

And it is a remarkable thing-as I may just observe-that the house is always supposed to be one and the same house. Even that striking passage in Haggai (2:9), which is given so confusedly in our common Bibles, preserves the same thought. It is not "the glory of this latter house," but "the latter glory of this house." It is viewed as the same house from the beginning to the end. No doubt Assyrians or Babylonians may ravage and destroy; no doubt the Romans may even plow up the very foundations; but it is the same house in God's mind. So complete do we see the line of God's purpose. God ignores these dreadful clouds that have gathered over the house from time to time; but when the day comes by-and-by for the glory to dwell in the land, it will be the house of God-so regarded all through. Antichrist even may have been there before, but it is the house of God; and the latter glory of the house shall be greater than the former. The "latter glory" is clearly when the Lord Jesus returns by-and-by. There was a preliminary accomplishment when He came to the house on His first advent; but the full meaning will be when He shakes the heavens and earth which are connected with this glory of the latter house; and this will only be when He comes again.

Well then. David prepares all with a view to what was to be built by his son. "And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew wrought stones to build the house of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight; also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tire brought much cedar wood to David. And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be builded for Jehovah must be exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for Jehovah God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of Jehovah my God: But the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto My name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. He shall build an house for My name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever." You see the purpose of God. So he explains that this was the reason why, as he was not to build, he nevertheless was permitted to prepare. David would sow; Solomon was to reap. The

details of this arrangement are given us in the next chapter to the end.

## Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

### 2 Chron. 1-2:3

We have seen that the first book of Chronicles has for its great object the setting aside of the fleshly choice of man in the kingdom for the man of God's choice - David. Nevertheless there was a purpose of God brought out by David's request to build the house of Jehovah. God meant it for another very near to David, but who was not David - not for him who had served Him so faithfully in suffering, but for the son about to reign in glory. The second book of Chronicles accordingly shows us the son come to the throne, and the temple accordingly built. But although there was this difference between David and his son - the combined types of our Lord Jesus Christ in His sufferings and His glory - nevertheless, we should greatly err if we supposed that David had not before God a better portion than his son. Faith is better than its own results, and if we could have heaven without the pathway of faith upon earth, we should never be so blest as we hope to be. It is here that we know God as none in heaven ever can know Him. When we go to heaven, we shall not lose this, but have it in its perfection. Thus God gives us the best place everywhere - the best place on earth, the best place in heaven - and this not because we deserve anything, but because Christ does.

But it is Christ suffering first, and this has the priority. First must He suffer, and then must He be raised from the dead. His glory is the consequence of His sufferings. I do not speak, of course, of His personal external glory. That is another thing. I speak of the glory that He takes as man, for this is what brings us in, although it could not have been, had He not been God. But still, what belongs to God in itself, is incapable of being a matter of gift to man. It is impossible for anyone to become God. Jesus was God. He was God as the Word before He was the Man Christ Jesus-God from eternity to eternity. But here we are speaking of the type of the Lord as man and as king - in this, too, son - the son of the true

beloved. But then it was David (which means "beloved"), not Solomon. Solomon was the man of peace that flowed from the special object of Jehovah's love. Hence, therefore, as David enjoyed the love of God and His complacency in a way that Solomon did not, in a deeper and fuller way, in his sorrows and sufferings upon the earth in the path of faith, so also did David own God and cleave to God in a deeper way than Solomon ever did. This was remarkably shown by what we see in the earlier verses of this second book of Chronicles.

The ark characterizes David; the brazen altar, Solomon. The difference is manifest. The ark was what no human eye saw, but it was nearest to God. The brazen altar was a great sight. It was there that the thousand bullocks were sacrificed. It was there that the people could witness a great and holy sight. But still, the one was before the people; the other was before God. This makes a mighty difference; and you will find just the same difference now between two Christians, one of whom is spiritual and the other unspiritual. It is not that they do not both love the Lord Jesus, for he is no Christian who loves Him not. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." But although there be no difference, at bottom, in the fact of love, still there is a very great difference in the measure of it; and the grand difference shows itself in this - that the unspiritual man loves the Lord because of what He is to him; the spiritual man appreciates what

He is to God. This is no loss to himself, but very great gain, because what we are before God is very much more than what we are before men.

Hence, therefore, the ark was very dear to David - much dearer than his throne. Solomon, I have no doubt, greatly valued his throne; but he valued also the altar of God. I say not that he did not value the ark, but after all it is "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks"; and when we find men occupied with any one thing more than another, we may be sure that that object has the heart, because we are always characterized by what we seek. And hence the importance of our words. So the Lord teaches in the 12th of Matthew. Our words, if we are honest, are the expression of the mind. I do not speak of dishonest people; but when people are sincere - and it is hoped that Christians, at any rate, seek with all their hearts thus to be - the mouth discloses the state of the heart; and therefore when we speak of ourselves, it is evident what is before us. When we are filled with the Lord Jesus, the mouth will not fail in its testimony; but it is the appreciation of Christ in His nearness to God rather than in His immediate bearing upon ourselves that marks the difference between spirituality and the want of it.

"And so Solomon went up thither to the brazen altar before Jehovah which was at the tabernacle of the congregation" (1:6) - just as the ark was brought up to the place which David had prepared for it - "and he offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it." There all the congregation met God. It was the place of approach to God - not the place where God revealed Himself, but the place where man approached as near as he could to God. Nevertheless, God owns this, for it was good, though it was not the best - not the more excellent way.

"In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast showed great mercy unto David my father." Just as Moses and Joshua make up a compound type of Christ in the beginning of the history, so David and Solomon, now when the kingdom is set up. He therefore lays all the stress upon David.

"And hast made me to reign in his stead. Now, O Jehovah God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for Thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this Thy people, that is so great?" This was excellent. He did value the people; and he valued the people not because they were his people, but because they were God's people. It makes all the difference now.

Suppose in our relationship to the Church of God we regard any people as our people, we shall always be jealous about them - always be afraid of their listening to anybody but ourselves - always be anxious to mold and fashion their opinions according to our own, perhaps very narrow, minds. At any rate, no man - I care not how great - no man contains all the gifts; and this is not the order of God for His Church. The principle of God is directly the contrary. All things are ours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas; and therefore anything that hinders the action of all the gifts that God gives for God's people is false in principle; and God's people ought to hold themselves not only free, but bound to seek profit from all that God gives for their good, because they are God's people. They do not belong to any man. It matters not how owned and honored of God he might be, still the more honored the more he would feel they are God's people.

And this is the very point that Peter so earnestly presses. It is rather badly given in our version. I will just draw attention to it for a moment. In the last chapter of his first epistle, Peter says to the elders, "Feed the flock of God." That is the point that keeps us right. They are God's flock, and we must take care what we do with God's flock. We must take care that we have a right mind and a right object as to God's flock. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind; neither as being lords" - not "over God's heritage." You observe the word "God's" is put in by the translators. It does not mean God's heritage at all. The flock is God's flock, but the point in the third verse is not at all that question, but what they were not to do. They were to feed the flock of God. That is the positive side. But here we have the negative side. "Neither as lording it over their own heritage" would be really the idea; that is, not treating it as a thing belonging to them - "neither as being lords over their own belongings" - if I may paraphrase the verse - "but as being ensamples to the flock." That is, they were not to treat them as their own. This gives the force of the exhortation to the elders. They were to feed them as God's flock; they were not to lord over them as their own belongings - their own heritage.

Now, Solomon entered into this in his measure. He did not regard the people as his people, his to govern, his to serve God in, but God's people entrusted to him. This gives seriousness; and, further, it exercises conscience. So he asked for wisdom, for surely he needed it. Had it been his own people, he might have had wisdom enough; but, being God's people, he required wisdom from God; and therefore this is what he asked -not wealth or length of years. So God, accepting this request of Solomon's heart, says, "Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honor, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge My people, over whom I have made thee king."

How wonderful the grace of God! "My people." He was not ashamed of it. We shall see how poor and failing they were, but they were God's people. Then it was a question of an earthly people - now of a heavenly - and our responsibility is as much greater than Israel's as the heavens are above the earth. I mean that, as to our place now, we are put on a different rule -under a different regime altogether! - "wisdom and knowledge are granted unto thee; and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honor, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like."

And hence, therefore, we find that the Apostle feels the need of a new kind of wisdom; and God grants it and gives it, not merely to him; but we all need it, each in his place and for his mission. And where is that wisdom, and what? "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Hence, therefore, we have got a wholly different kind of wisdom. Solomon's wisdom was exercised from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grew on the wall. It was of the earth; it had to do with the human heart as well as all objects that were here below. And so we find it most divinely exercised in the book of Proverbs, which is a matchless collection of divine wisdom in earthly things. But it is another kind of wisdom that we find, now that Christ has been revealed and has taken His place in heaven, because the question is not what suits the earth, but what suits heaven - what suits the Lord Jesus glorified at the right hand of God. The Church is the body of Christ at the right hand of God.

"Then Solomon came from his journey to the high place that was at Gibeon to Jerusalem from before the tabernacle of the congregation, and reigned over Israel. And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem. And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance." There was the grandest witness of magnificence that ever was found in any city upon earth. Not even Augustus's finding Rome brick and making it marble, was to be compared with Solomon. "And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And they fetched up and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so brought they out horses for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means."

That is, we find everything here related, but not so as to manifest his faults. We know very well that these horses, and, above all, the multiplying of his wives, became a great snare to Solomon; but the object of Chronicles is not to mention the king's responsibility and the ways in which he broke down, so much as to bear witness to his being the witness of God's purpose. In Kings, as I have already shown, we have the question of responsibility; in Chronicles, of divine counsel. That is the difference between the two books. They are not a mere repetition of each other. There is a sensible difference in the way in which even the same events are recorded; but this was not the will of man, but really the power of God, and God's wisdom. And as David was hindered from the thought of his heart in building a temple, which was reserved for Solomon, so the Spirit of God soon lets us know that the grand point for which Solomon indeed reigns was the building of Jehovah's house. "And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of Jehovah, and an house for his kingdom. And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them. And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tire, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me." Chap. 2:1-3.

So it will be in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus by-and-by.

He, the head of Israel, will make use of the Gentiles; and the Gentiles, represented here by the king of Tire, will bring of all their means, their wealth, their glory, in allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords. But it would be a great mistake to confound the character of that day with the principle of this. I know there are many dear children of God who think that it is for the glory of God to have architecture of a grand and imposing description, and music of the finest character to please the ear, and all things accordingly; but this is really the Jewish method of honoring God, and not the Christian one. On the contrary, that which is proper to us is prayer and singing in the Spirit and in the understanding; and whatever is not characterized by the Holy Ghost, and is not taken up directly by the Spirit to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ - whatever is not of faith now - is a total failure.

Hence, mere imagery to represent truth, although an admirable thing in Jewish days, is altogether out of season in the present. It is going back to the nursery after we have attained our majority. It is playing at children again in divine things, which was exactly what the children of Israel were. They

were in their minority, and they had the picture books that were suitable for the nursery. It was God's nursery then, but it is a great mistake to go back to the nursery now; and this is exactly the mistake of ritualism in every form and in every measure. It is the greatest blunder to suppose that, because a thing is in the Bible, therefore it is always of the same authority. If that were the case, we ought to offer our he-goats and our bullocks much more; for there was, after all, a much more important witness to the sacrifice of Christ in these than in any other portion of the Jewish economy, as, indeed, they were before it. They were not merely the temporary institution of Israel; they were practiced by the faithful ever since sin came into the world. There would be very much more plausible ground, therefore, for an argument in favor of material sacrifices than for the mere splendor of the temple, or even the more modified show of the tabernacle. But the truth is, for us the true holy place is in the heavens; and it is, therefore, through the rent veil that we draw nigh, if we draw nigh to God at all; and any thought of an earthly holy place or sanctuary is a retrogression from Christianity to Judaism. I mention this because it is of all practical importance; and no Christian ought, therefore, to shrink from fairly looking at these things in the face. Is it not true? Is it not the very object of the Holy Ghost to bring even the Jews out of this? - not to lead the Gentiles back into it. Ritualism is the reversal of the instruction of the epistle to the Hebrews. It is apostasy in fact - apostasy from the truth of God that is revealed there - and therefore I hold that ritualism is not a mere harmless power. Nor do I at all agree with those that say, Well, I can worship God as well in a cathedral as in a hut. I answer that I cannot worship Him at all where show suited to the world is the object, and

that wherever I can be in unison with the crucified and rejected Savior is the true place for a man of faith.

#### Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

##### 2 Chron. 4-6

So in the next chapter (4) we find all the appurtenances the altar and the sea of brass, and the pots and shovels and basins - for everything has its place. And, further, all the golden vessels were made by Solomon. Hiram, a Gentile, might be entrusted with the outside vessels; but "Solomon made all the vessels that were for the house of God" (v. 19). They were under his own superintendence directly as it became him.

"Thus," it is said in chapter 5, "all the work that Solomon made for the house of Jehovah was finished: and Solomon brought in [all] the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God." v. 1.

And then comes the assembling of the elders of Israel and the bringing up of the ark, for that remains unchanged - "Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, to-day, and forever" - the grand central witness of the Lord Jesus. The ark of the tabernacle is the ark of the temple. The cherubs may differ, but not the ark itself. "And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of Jehovah unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy [place, even] under the wings of the cherubim: for the cherubim spread forth [their] wings over the place of the ark and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves [of the ark], that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle: but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day. [There was] nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put

[therein] at Horeb, when Jehovah made [a covenant] with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt." vv. 7-10.

This is very striking Aaron's rod was not there now; neither do we find the pot of manna, but only the tables of stone. Why this difference? Why do we find the former in the tabernacle, and not in the temple? The reason is the change from the present dealings of God in grace, and the future dealings of God in judgment. The authority of God must govern now as always. The man that shrinks from the authority of God's Word is not born of God, for what are we born for but to obey? And if to obey, to obey whom but God? We may have our duty with our parents, with our sovereign, and the like, with all lawful authority; but whomsoever we obey, the great One that we have to obey is God Himself. And this gives us a limit, therefore, and shows us where we are not to obey. It is never right to disobey, save where we are to obey God rather than men - for there may be such a collision - and we must then take the consequence. The great point of the Christian is in everything to find the point of obedience. That is his place, and what is to govern. Hence, therefore, always, whether it is the heavenly people or the earthly with tables of stone, there must be the expression of God's authority over His people. They are found now, and they will be found in the kingdom; and the kingdom of God will be indeed a most grand expression of the authority of God over the earth, because the nation and kingdom that will not serve - that goes not up to Jerusalem, to the people and city of His choice - will be visited by His judgments. God will maintain righteousness all over the world. There will be only one Sovereign then; and although there may be different kings, they will be all the servants of God or they will be destroyed at once if they are not.

But it is a different state of things now. We have now to do with the authority of God. We must always have that in whatever shape it comes; and we have now the authority of God expressed in God's Word. But, further, there was the pot of manna, and there was the rod - the witness of the rejected Christ glorified; for that is the meaning of the hidden manna - Christ that came down in humiliation, that is now gone up glorified on high. That is what we know. You will understand why it could not be then. At that time He would have left the heavenly glory and taken the earth; and, therefore, there would be no sense in it then. This, then, is of importance. As the One who came down is the manna from heaven and went back to heaven, so the pot of manna is in the ark in the most holy place, in the sanctuary of God. Second, while Christ is there on high, He is acting as the priest. And the rod of Aaron that budded was the witness of the unfailing priesthood of Christ which alone can bear fruit. The other rods were powerless and lifeless. The human priest is good for nothing; but this divine priest - this Son of God that became man, and entered upon His priesthood on high - is good for everything; and so, accordingly, the stick or rod that was dead bore fruit at once. All fruitfulness then is inseparable from the priesthood of Christ, and there is nothing which destroys fruit to God more than the substitution of an earthly dead priest for the true living one in the presence of God.

Well, you observe, that is not the point now, because the Lord will then be taking His place as King. That will be a permanent one; and although I do not deny that He will be priest - for He is to sit as a priest upon His throne when He takes His place by-and-by - still He will be no longer a hidden one. It is no longer a rod hidden in the most holy place out of the sight of man. He will be then displayed. Every eye will see Him. We must leave room, therefore, for the different dispensations of God.

Then we find the glory of the house. The glory of Jehovah filled it, just as He filled it at the time when the priests were consecrated; for there is a remarkable analogy between these two events. When the high priest was consecrated, and the priests, then the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle; and now, when the king consecrates the house, the Jehovah-glory comes down again. I am referring, of course, to the 9th of Leviticus, and comparing it with this. How has that been accomplished? Why, it is true now, and the glory of the Lord fills the Church in connection with the priesthood of Christ as truly as it will fill the house of God by-and-by - the great center of Israel's worship under the King. In short, the glory of God is given in answer to priesthood as well as the kingdom or kingship.

What is the meaning of Pentecost? There we find God's coming down to dwell in connection with priesthood, just as, by-and-by, God will dwell in connection with the kingdom. The one is visible, it is true; the other is not so. There was a visible sign of Jehovah's presence in the Holy Ghost being given to us, but of nothing more. But during the kingdom there will be a visible glory on mount Zion, and the world will know it. The most distant nations will hear of it. There will be a testimony everywhere of the glory of Jehovah in connection with the people that He blesses.

So, in the 6th chapter we have Solomon's grand outpouring of his heart to the Lord, in which he spreads before Jehovah this new state of things that he so well understood. "The king turned his face and blessed the whole congregation of Israel" - for it is not the priest now; it is the king. A remarkable change. In the previous days it was the priest. We too have the priest in these days; we have Christ. He is never called our King. It is a great mistake to speak of the Lord as our King. He is the King, but He is the King of Israel; He is the King of the nations. He is never called the King of the Church. King is not the relationship of the Lord to the Church or to the saint. The one verse in the 16th of Revelation that seems to give it, I have already explained. It means "king of nations," not of "saints"; and a very important error it is to be expunged. There is no doubt of it. There is not a scholar who knows anything at all about these matters who would not agree with me. But anyone - whether he is Roman Catholic, or Tractarian, or anything else - would agree with me in this; and he would not require to be told it because every scholar knows it. The notion of "king of saints" is very unscriptural; and it is a very important mistake because the proper notion of the relation of a king to his people is one of distance and of graduated ranks in the kingdom. The word "king" implies graduated ranks, all having their place and their measure of nearness or of distance; and, consequently, there are all kinds of relative distances among themselves.

That is not the case in the Church of God, because the least Christian is as much a member of Christ's body as the greatest. You see the fact of the membership of the body puts aside all these questions of relative or different distances. In the kingdom there will be these differences. And this is the reason why so many people misunderstand the Church of God. Take Scotland. That is a very Bible-reading people, and yet there is not a people in Europe that goes more wrong about "the King of the Church."

It was the great cry at the time that the Free Church came into existence. They thought that the matter which was in dispute at the time between them interfered with Christ's rights as King of the Church. That was the grand thing, and, as loyal men, they naturally stood up for the King. That was the idea. I do not say this because I do not sympathize with their fidelity. It is not that. I have the greatest sympathy with their fidelity; but they do not understand the vitality of our relationship

to Christ. Our relationship is not that of a people to a king, but of members of a body to the Head of the body. Christ and the Church make one body, and that makes all the difference to the Christian, because it shows that we are brought into a new place altogether, and that this place is one not of relative, but of absolute nearness. That is the reason why Peter, where he is not speaking, about the body at all, says that "Christ suffered, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That is what puts aside earthly priesthood, because if I have an earthly priest between me and God I am not absolutely near; and if I am absolutely near, I have no earthly priest. And so the assertion of an earthly priesthood is absolutely contradicted by the assertion of the plain simple truth of the gospel. It is not that the Lord Jesus Christ is not entitled to command us, because the head governs the body. There is not a member of my body but what is governed by my head, much more than people are governed by a king or queen, because, I am sorry to say, they do not obey very heartily; and they are rather refractory at the present day. But that is not the case with the members of the body; they must obey. And so it is with Christ and the Church. The obedience is one of the most intimate kind. The Spirit of God is given to maintain that union between the Head and the body.

However, I do not mean to illustrate it more. It is enough at the present time to refer to it. It is a very important practical matter, for you will find that if you give up as your grand thought in your relationship that you are a member of Christ's body, and sink into the place of a people governed by the king, you will get into distance; you will get into earthly thoughts of it. You will, practically, become a Jew instead of a Christian, because that is the relationship of the Jew. But the relationship of a Christian is a totally different one; and the substitution of the Jewish relationship for the Christian one, unconsciously Judaizes the Church instead of preserving us in our own proper relationship to God. And I suppose that all here are aware that the accomplishment of our duty always depends upon our relationship - always depends upon the sense and attention that we give to our relationship. For instance, a wife has a totally different relationship from a daughter or from a mother; and each person does his own duty only as he is true to his own relationship. There is the great moment of it, and I do most earnestly entreat every Christian to search and see in the Word of God whether these things be not so.

Well, then, Solomon blesses the whole of the congregation of Israel, and all of them stood. "And he said, Blessed [be] Jehovah God of Israel, who hath with His hands fulfilled [that] which He spake with His mouth to my father David, saying, Since the day that I brought forth My people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build a house in, that My name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over My people Israel: but I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name might be there; and have chosen David to be over My people Israel." Chap. 6:4-6.

He recounts how God had chosen from the beginning, and how as He chose Jerusalem, and not any other city, to be the metropolis; so also He chose David's house and no other family, and of David's family He chose Solomon himself. Everything depends upon the election of God; there is nothing good that is not founded upon God's election - nothing. The whole blessedness and strength of the believer depends upon it; and that is what delivers a person from self. I do not mean by that, that one ought to put election before an unconverted soul. Far from it. That would be, indeed, to add to his misery, if he feels his misery. But the moment a soul receives Christ, then I can tell him that he is the chosen of God; and an immense strength and encouragement it is to

his heart that he knows that it is not his own will, else it would be weak; and it is not his own choice, else he might flatter himself that it was good, but that it was God's grace and God's election that accounts for his being brought who never deserved it.

Solomon, therefore, struck the right note when he touched this great point of election. And, on the other hand, he shows how God, having taken this house to dwell in, could be always prayed to - always looked to in every trouble. No matter what might be the sin or the affliction - whether it was personal or national - God was there to be prayed to. And so we find Israel did. Even if they were out of the land, they looked to it as a witness of this great truth. But just think of the folly of Christians taking up such things. Just think of the folly of a Christian turning to the east because a Jew did it, or doing anything else of the sort, just as if the God who is revealed to us is in the east more than any other spot of the earth. Never was there such insensate folly as that which has been prevalent in Christendom. No, we belong to heaven, and we look there if we look anywhere; but that, alas! is just where people do not look.

#### Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

#### 2 Chron. 7-12

But in the next chapter (7), after he makes an end of praying, the fire comes down. For we read: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house. And the priests could not enter into the house of Jehovah, because the glory of Jehovah had filled Jehovah's house." And so there is nothing but worship according to their measure. "And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of Jehovah upon the house, they bowed themselves with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshiped, and praised Jehovah, [saying], For [He is] good; for His mercy [endureth] forever. Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before Jehovah. And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen" - the nation was so very great that a thousand would not do now - "and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and all the people dedicated the house of God."

And this was most admirable in its season. The admirable thing then for an earthly people was to pour out all the wealth of the earth at the feet of God. The admirable thing now for a heavenly people is to count whatever we have as nothing for the sake of Christ. That is, it is suffering now. As the Apostle Paul said, "What things were gain to me [as a Jew], I counted loss for Christ." He counted them dung; and not only did he so begin, but, as he adds, "and I do count them." He counted them so when he began, and he counted them so still. There is many a man that counts them so at first; but he begins to like them afterward. But it was not so with Paul - "I counted," and "I do count." It is a great thing to make a good start and to continue accordingly. So did Paul, but so has not done the Church of God. The Church of God began well, but where are we now?

So "Solomon finished the house of Jehovah, and the king's house: and all that came into Solomon's heart to make in the house of Jehovah, and in his own house, he prosperously affected." And then Jehovah appears to him again and confirms what he has done. "I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to Myself for a house of sacrifice." And so He not only says this, but "now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever: and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." Now I take that as it plainly means. You will

tell me, Well, the Gentiles are there now; some of the most wicked of the Gentiles are there now. But faith can wait. It need not be in a hurry. "He that believeth shall not make haste," and, therefore, as sure as God has spoken it, Jerusalem will be recovered - not by foolish crusaders, not by the power of man, but by the power of God. He means to have the glory to Himself. The whole idea of the crusades was a fundamental mistake from beginning to end, and arose from Christians fancying that they were Jews, taking the place of God's people and, consequently, denying Israel's place. The greatest enemies the Jews had were those same crusaders who fought against the Turks. The place of the true Christian is the very contrary. We ought to be the shelter of the Jew; we ought to be a sort of city of refuge to the Jew, till the day comes for the Jew to enter upon his heritage. We ought always to plead the rights of Israel as we know the wrongs of Israel. We ought to mourn deeply the unbelief of Israel; but, at the same time, we ought to protect them and show them all kindness "for the fathers' sake." The Church of God can afford to do so. If we were an earthly people, we might be a little jealous of those who are going to be put in the highest earthly places; but the heavenly people have no need for it. And that is what delivers Christians from foolish vanity in competing with the Gentile, and from jealousy as we think about the Jew.

So, the next chapter shows us Solomon after he had built all. Here we have the grand object of Solomon's coming to the throne. It was this great type of the kingdom. "And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of Jehovah, and his own house, that the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there. And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it. And he built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the store cities, which he built in Hamath. Also he built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities, with walls, gates and bars; and Baalath, and all the store cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities, and the cities of the horsemen, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and throughout all the land of his dominion. [As for] all the people [that were] left of the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which [were] not of Israel, [but] of their children, who were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel consumed not, them did Solomon make to pay tribute until this day." Chap. 8:1-8.

Thus we have every kind of right exercised and the restoration of what had been wrong. "But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work." A very remarkable statement. He made the Gentiles servants. The Jews will, then, be lords upon the earth, not slaves. The Gentiles will be obliged to take the place of the tail when Israel are at the head, according to the prophet. And all this beautiful order we find carried out socially and in a family order, and religiously, throughout the chapter.

But further (chap. 9), it was impossible that the fame of Solomon, the type of Christ, could be within such narrow bounds. The queen of Sheba herself comes, not merely to share in royal pomp - not merely to enter into what, alas! we know to be frivolous and most transient - but to hear the wisdom of Solomon. The Lord Jesus Himself singles her out. It was a queenly errand on which she came - most worthy - and indeed her rank gave the greater luster to it. But the object put additional luster on herself. She came to hear king Solomon, and she was in no way disappointed.

"When the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon" (that is the attractive object), "and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel" (for even the least and lowest things bore the stamp of his royal grandeur) - "and his ascent by which he went up into the house of Jehovah" - (for this was the grandest of all) - "there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, [It was] a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen; and behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: thou exceedest the fame that I heard. Happy [are] thy men, and happy [are] these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." vv. 1-7.

That made a great impression upon her. "Blessed be Jehovah thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on His throne [to be] king for Jehovah thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore made He thee king over them, to do judgment and justice."

This may seem somewhat strong; but we can, I think, appreciate the delight of God in tracing, such a remarkable witness to the future glory of His own Son. No doubt it was true - most true - and what is divine will bear inspection. What is human fades the more we look into it. But the glory which God puts forth is the more seen to be perfect the more it is approached and understood. But still, for all that, whatever might he true of Solomon was only a shadow of Christ - of what Christ will be on the earth. Remember, I am not speaking of what is still higher. I admit that there is a deeper glory in the heavens; and we must carefully remember that the same millennial day will see the Church glorified in heaven, and the Jew blessed upon the earth, and the nations also. All will be under Christ. Consequently, it is not a question of their asserting heavenly glory exclusively, or earthly glory exclusively, but both, each in their own and for their object. That is the truth. And you will always find if you look at mistakes or at heresy (which is the same thing), that there is always a part of the truth, and that part is set against another part; but the full truth of God is never possessed about anything until it puts everything else in its place.

I am persuaded that what I have now said on the kingdom is the only right thought of it - that the kingdom, in short, according to our Lord's own intimation to Nicodemus, consists of heavenly things as well as earthly things. Nicodemus thought only of the earthly things, and the Lord assured him that there must be new birth to possess even the earthly things. If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" It was useless. But there are heavenly things as well as earthly, and they are not confounded or changed into one another. The earthly does not become heavenly, nor does the heavenly become earthly. They are both separate parts; and that is the meaning of a very important scripture in the 1st of Ephesians - "That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in Him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance." vv. 10, 11. There is the double order of the future inheritance. There are the heavenly things which we shall have, as risen from the dead and glorified with Christ; and there will be the earthly things, the head of which will be the Jews as the people of the Lord Jesus Christ; but the Church, which is His body, will share the heavenly things.

Then the rest of the chapter follows it up, for while the queen of Sheba gives the king a royal present suitable to her station and her means, the king, I need not say, was not to be behind her in

nobleness of generosity; and the greatness of his throne is described, and the vastness of his shipping as well, and the abundance that was the result for all the people, even as it is said, he "made silver and gold in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycamore trees that are in the vale for abundance. And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt" and "he reigned over all the kings from the river unto the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt." You know that when Joshua has the word given at the beginning, the Euphrates is the extreme boundary. The Jordan was the proper one. Some of the tribes coveted what was on the other side, and so much the worse for them. They did not gain by it, but lost. But the Euphrates is the extreme limit, and that awaits the Lord Jesus.

In the next chapter (10) we find what, alas! is in all human types - failure. Rehoboam the king, the son of Solomon, inherits not his father's wisdom, but whatever was foolish and wrong in Solomon. For Rehoboam took counsel not with the men of experience who might have helped his youth, but with

the young men who only urged on his impetuosity. "He forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him that stood before him. And he said unto them, What advice give ye that we may return answer to this people, which have spoken to me, saying, Ease somewhat the yoke that thy father did put upon us? And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou [it] somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little [finger] shall be thicker than my father's loins. For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I [will chastise you] with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day. And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men, and answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I [will chastise] you with scorpions" (vv. 8-14), according to his own foolish word; and the consequence was that God chastised him, for he rent away ten out of the twelve tribes and gave them over to his enemy Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.

Rehoboam would fight (chap. 11), but God hinders him. It was his fault, and it did not become him to fight. God never hindered the other kings, that I recollect, from fighting with Israel similarly; but Rehoboam must not fight. He that is guilty of a fault is not the man that can well or righteously reprove another. At any rate, he must be thoroughly brought down about his own fault before he is in a moral condition to do it. Rehoboam was, therefore, disciplined of the Lord in that his hands were tied and he was not permitted even to punish his rebellious subjects; but he has the sorrow of seeing his people leaving him, although there were the priests and Levites for a while, and faithful Israelites, who still resorted to Jerusalem to sacrifice there.

He was not left without some consolation from hearts in whom allegiance to the king shall not die away. "He loved Maachah," it is said, "the daughter of Absalom, above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and three-score concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons and three-score daughters. And Rehoboam made Abijah, the son of Maachah, the chief, [to be] ruler among his brethren: for [he thought] to make him king. And he dealt wisely, and

dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives." vv. 21-23.

"And it came to pass when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of Jehovah, and all Israel with him" (chap. 12) - for such is the manner of men, not so quick to follow in good, but so ready in evil. And so God sent an unexpected enemy upon him in the person of the king of Egypt, who took away the treasures that Solomon had amassed. Such was the righteous government of God, so that poor king Rehoboam was driven to make shields of brass instead of shields of gold, which were now being carried down into Egypt. "And when he humbled himself, the wrath of Jehovah turned from him that He would not destroy him altogether: and also in Judah things went well." How gracious of the Lord! Every little act of repentance brought its blessing.

#### Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

##### 2 Chron. 13-20

Abijah follows (chap. 13), and he sets the battle in array against Jeroboam, and calls upon the men of Israel to follow. "But Jeroboam caused an ambushment," and, in consequence, we find Judah looking back; but they cried unto Jehovah, and He was with them; and "God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand," in spite of all their prudent arrangements and their numerous host. "So there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men." The slaughter was prodigious; and not only so, but Abijah pursues his advantage and takes cities from them, so that Jeroboam never recovered strength again. Jehovah was against him.

Thus we see that God, after reproofing the fault of Rehoboam by tying up his hands, was pleased to judge the fault of Jeroboam with a complete destruction of his men of war - the very thing in which he prided himself. God's government is always righteous. I am speaking now of His providential ways; and, I say, they are always wise and good.

Then in chapter 14 we have Asa. "And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Jehovah his God: for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: and commanded Judah to seek Jehovah God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. And he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. And he built fenced cities in Judah." And, further, we find that he was blest of God in his day of trial when the Ethiopians came against him. "And Asa cried unto Jehovah his God, and said, Jehovah, [it is] nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power: help us, O Jehovah our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy name we go against this multitude. O Jehovah, Thou [art] our God; let not man prevail against Thee. So Jehovah smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people that [were] with him pursued them into Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before Jehovah, and before His host; and they carried away very much spoil. And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of Jehovah came upon them; and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them."

Nevertheless, Asa has a warning from Azariah, who says, "Jehovah is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you. Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God and without a teaching priest, and without law. But when they in their trouble did turn unto Jehovah, God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found of them. And in those times [there was] no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations [were] upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity. Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded" (chap. 15). Asa takes courage from this for the time, and puts away still more of the abominations out of Judah and Benjamin. And, further, he even put down his mother from being queen - no doubt a most serious trial to the son, but she was an idolatress. "And Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burned it at the brook Kidron. But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless, the heart of Asa was perfect all his days." He was sincere, upright. "And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels."

But Asa's day of failure comes (chap. 16). When Baasha, king of Israel, came up against Judah, and built Ramah in order to hinder the Israelites from going up to the temple, Asa makes a league with Syria. He has recourse to Ben-hadad and says, "There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father; behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league with Baasha, king of Israel, that he may depart from me." Ben-hadad accordingly stopped the building of Ramah by the king of Israel. "And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa, king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on Jehovah thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thy hand."

How remarkable is the government of God. Whatever wrong step we do to accomplish an end, not only does it not accomplish it, but it brings its own chastening with it. The very thing we least desire comes upon us. God would not only have hindered Israel, but Syria. Instead of this, the host of the king of Syria escaped out of his hands. The consequence was that, convicted of his folly as well as of his sin, Asa was wroth with the seer and put him in a prison house; and as one evil leads on to another, Asa oppressed some of the people at the same time. But God oppressed him, or, at any rate, chastised him, for he was diseased in his feet; and the same unbelief that sent him to Ben-hadad sent him now to men when he ought to have looked to Jehovah. We must remember that the grand point in Israel was that they had God to care for them. It was not like the case of men now who look to God to bless the means that are at hand; but in Israel there was a special testimony of God's being looked to in every trouble; and in this, Asa, although he had been a faithful man, failed seriously, and very solemnly too, at the close. I do not say that he was not a man of God, but I do say that there was great and grievous failure.

Jehoshaphat his son reigns (chap. 17). And here we find very beautiful grace and piety. I should say that piety more particularly is what characterizes this good son. He was a man, too, whose heart was toward the Lord. Jehoshaphat is established by Jehovah in the kingdom, and all Judah brought him presents; and he had riches and honor in abundance. But although all this is true, "His heart was lifted up in the ways of Jehovah: moreover, he took away the high places and groves out of Judah." Nevertheless, there was no removing of all the evil. There was a greater fidelity than had been found before. "And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of Jehovah with them, and went about through all the cities of Judah and taught the people." It was a very

important thing. "And the fear of Jehovah fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah." There was a great moral effect produced.

Still there was, as we see in the next chapter (18), a feebleness in Jehoshaphat that showed itself in this way, that he made affinity not with Syria, but with Israel. This was a grievous sin in the sight of God; for although it was an enormous thing to form a league with the Gentiles offensive and defensive, it was a most serious thing to take ground with an idolater. I do not speak of making use of the Gentiles. That was right. But Israel stood in a peculiar position (with its golden calves set up in Bethel and Dan) so that Jehoshaphat's affinity with Ahab its king was in a certain sense more guilty than a league with Syria. Why? Because they were the people of God in an idolatrous state. It is just the same thing now in tampering with Romanism, because the gravamen of the guilt of Romanism is not merely because Romanists are idolaters, but because they are idolaters, professing Christ, and baptized in His name. That is what makes them much more guilty in the sight of God than any heathens who have not heard His name and glory.

So it is in this case then. Jehoshaphat having formed this league comes into nothing but trouble through it; though, apparently, there might be an outward prosperity. A messenger is sent to him (chap. 19) who warns him solemnly but in vain. He suffers the consequence of it. The king of Israel was smitten. The king of Judah returns and dwells at Jerusalem.

God, however, graciously met his faith when greatly tried, as we find in the 20th chapter, where the Moabites and Ammonites and others came; and a beautiful instance of the piety of faith is shown us here in this way - for I shall only mention one single feature in this mere sketch of these chapters. It is that in going forth they went singing the song of victory. It was not like the Greek who raised his paeon to frighten the enemy; but here it was the piety that ventured and counted upon the Lord. How blessed is faith, in the people of God! The consequence need scarcely be told. "The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy [them]; and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another." So when the men of Judah came, there was nothing to do but to reap the fruits. And well might they call it the valley of Berachah - the valley of praise. "For there they blessed Jehovah: therefore the name of the same place was called the valley of Berachah unto this day."

So then ends the course of Jehoshaphat with one solitary tale more; namely, the attempt to join with "Ahaziah, king of Israel, who did very wickedly. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish: And they made the ships in Ezion-gaber. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, Jehovah hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken, and they were not able to go to Tarshish (chap. 20:35-37).

What a contrast with Jehoshaphat's going forth and the victory made ready to his hand by the Lord God. And this is all instructive to us. May the Lord keep us true to His name and glory!

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

2 Chron. 21-25

We have seen, then, the sad fruits of a pious man's joining himself with one who is untrue to God - a union which always turns to God's dishonor and the injury of him who loves God, as we find in Jehoshaphat himself. And this, too, not merely that he united with Ahaziah, but where he united even for commercial purposes - one of the most important points for a saint, not only for a Christian, but for a saint before Christianity, where his testimony was separation to God. But the separation of a Christian is of another order - higher and deeper and closer - yet not so external as the Jews'. We might even feel at liberty - as we know the Apostle puts the case - to dine with an infidel. "If thou be disposed to go" - we must take care how we go, and why. Now this might, to the outward eye, seem the very contrary of separateness, and many mistakes are often made in the thoughts of men who judge by outward appearance. But the separation of a Christian is really deeper, although it may not strike the eye as a Jew's. We shall see further proofs of the same evil, for it is a growing one, as the state of Judah became worse and worse before its judgment.

Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, reigns in his father's stead. "Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword." Chap. 21:4. Such did not Jehoshaphat. Howbeit, although he went even farther than his father in alliance with evil - "for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: for he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of Jehovah" - yet, "Jehovah would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David." Hence, therefore, we find that when the Edomites revolted, and Jehoram went forth, he smote them. Nevertheless, God chastised him, for "the same time did Libnah revolt under his hand, because he had forsaken Jehovah God of his fathers."

We see in all this history how much turns upon the king. It was no question of the people now, for they had completely failed long ago. There is a new trial. Suppose the blessing turns upon - not the people, for, it might be said, there are enormous probabilities against their fidelity; but take the family of a faithful man, take the family of the most faithful man in the deep distresses of evil, David, the progenitor of the Messiah- perhaps, if it turns upon that family, one might be found faithful! Not so; there is unfaithfulness everywhere. There was only one faithful witness, and He was not yet come; but those who preceded Him, and who ought to have been the witnesses of the coming Messiah in truth, only precipitated the downfall, first, of Israel as a whole, then of Judah that remained. Hence, Jehoram, we find, "made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah [thereto]." For this was part of the wickedness of heathenism - that it made men more immoral than they would have been on principle and as a matter of honor to their gods.

God sent him now a writing from Elijah the prophet, saying, "Thus saith Jehovah God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself: behold, with a great plague will Jehovah smite thy people and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: and thou [shalt have] great sickness." And so he was to die, and outward troubles came upon him. "Jehovah stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and of the Arabians." In fine, "Jehovah smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease," and thus he died. "And his people made no burning for him like the burning of his fathers." He had gone on in sin, and he died in sorrow and shame. Such was the end of a son of David, really and literally the son of Jehoshaphat

("Jehovah is judge").

"And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, his youngest son, king in his stead" (chap. 22). And "he reigned,... he also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab." His mother was that infamous Athaliah, the daughter of Omri. "His mother was his counselor to do wickedly." "He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel to war." That is, the first evil begun by a pious king continues. The practice of his son is far from pious, for the bad example of a good man has immense influence, especially with those who are not good. It hardens them, and therefore works deep and ineradicable mischief. "The destruction of Ahaziah was of God," as we are told, "by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu." And thus he came under the same judgment.

Athaliah, in resentment, now enters upon a most cruel project - the destruction of the royal seed - for she was an idolatress, and she hated the word and the purpose of God. Who but she could have done it so well; for she had all power, apparently, and she had no conscience. Nay, further, hatred and bitterness filled her heart against the true God and the house of David, although she was herself a mother of that house; but still, what will not hatred of God do in reversing all the affections of nature?

So Athaliah, when she saw that her son was dead, "arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah." But God watched her and led Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, to take Joash, a child, from among the king's sons that were slain, and secretly bring him up. "And he was with them hid in the house of God six years," just as the Lord Jesus is now taken away from the midst of the wicked people who slew Him. For it was not merely a murderous intent as against Joash; but the Lord, as we know, was crucified by the hands of lawless men, and now He is hid in the house of God; but He will as surely come forth from that hiding place as Joash did.

When the seventh year came - the complete time according to the ways of God - "in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself" (chap. 23). He was the priest. The priest is prominent while the king is hidden. How truly it is so now in our Lord's case - in His own Person combining both the high priest that is in action and the King that will be by-and-by. And then in this chapter we have further, the most animated picture of this stirring scene - the young king now seated on his throne when the due moment was come. The trusty servants that were prepared by the high priest, and finally, the last of her, the murderous queen mother, king-destroyer, Athaliah, and the jubilant cries of Israel. When she comes forth, she comes forth crying "Treason," but in truth it was she who had been guilty of both treason and murder to the full; but we see the purpose of God. There cannot be a more lively proof of how thoroughly we may trust Him, for never seemed a more helpless object than this young king Joash before Athaliah. Never were the fortunes of a king of Judah at a lower ebb; but men have said not untruly that "man's extremity is God's opportunity." This only furnishes the occasion to show the supremacy of God. Nothing can hinder His purpose. How truly, therefore, we should trust Him as well as His purpose. He has a purpose about us, and He Himself has a love to our souls. Why should we not always trust Him?

If Joash was brought thus prosperously to the throne through a sea of royal blood, and if judgment inaugurated the judgment of enemies, and if idolatry was put down, and if all now was apparently so bright and hopeful for the king of Judah, it was but for a passing season. "And Joash did what was right in the sight of Jehovah all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (chap. 24). Yes, but it was

more the influence of Jehoiada than faith in the living God. An influence, sooner or later, must fail. The influence of man is not the faith of God's elect.

Jehoiada then passes away, after the king had called him to task; for such was his zeal for a little while. Flesh may be even more zealous than faith, but then there is this difference: faith continues; the effort of flesh is transient. It may begin well, but the question is whether it continues. Its continuance is always the grand proof of what is divine. Joash did not continue according to his beginnings; for we are told that after his fair effort in behalf of the neglected repairs of the house of Jehovah, he relaxed, though this is given more elsewhere than here. But here, even, we find the influences, the malignant influences, of the princes of Judah. "The king hearkened unto them," it is said, after the death of Jehoiada. "And they left the house of Jehovah, God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass." Nevertheless, God still testified by His prophets, and more particularly by Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest. "And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones, at the commandment of the king."

What ingratitude! What perfidy toward the son of his own near relative and the guardian of his own life! "Thus Joash the king," says the Spirit of God most touchingly, "remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died he said, Jehovah look upon it and require it." And so He did, for "it came to pass at the end of the year that the host of Syria came up against him, and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus. For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men." It was not, therefore, might or power; it was God. "And Jehovah delivered a great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the Jehovah God of their fathers." What was a host against Jehovah guiding His people; but now even a small company overwhelms the great host of Judah. "So they executed judgment against Joash." Nor was this all, for he was left in great disease, and his own servants conspired against him who had shed the blood of Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, and they "slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchers of the kings."

Thus we see a downward progress. In the former case they made no burning for Jehoram, as they did for his fathers. Now, they do not even bury Joash in the sepulchers of the kings. And if God gives the names of the conspirators, it was not that He had any complacency in them, though their act might not be without righteous judgment. He lets us know that they were those who had not the feeling of Israel, but the heart of an enemy under an Israelitish name; for Zabad was the son of Shimeath, an Ammonitess, and Jozabad, the son of Shimrith, a Moabitess. On the mother's side, the stock was evil, and a mother has enormous influence for good or evil.

Amaziah follows. "And he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, but not with a perfect heart" (chap. 25). "Now it came to pass when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king, his father. But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where Jehovah commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin. Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds." Thus he strengthened himself after a human sort. He also had a hired

army. Mercenaries served him - a strange thing for a king of Judah. "But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee." For these mercenaries were Israel. How fallen were both - Judah to hire, and Israel to be hired. The only thing they agreed in was indifference to God. What a state for God's people, and do you suppose that it is a strange thing?

Do you suppose that it is different now? Do you think that Christendom is in a better state as Christendom, than Israel was then as Israel? I do not believe so. We, all of us, feel that the ancient bodies are fallen into idolatry - not more truly Israel into the worship of the calves and of Baal, and all the other abominations, than Greek church or Roman into the worship, the one of pictures and the other of images. What difference? Both are idols - equally idols. But it is not merely so; if the Word of God be possessed (as, thanks be to God, it is) in Protestantism, if not in the same way in the older bodies, nevertheless denominationalism has eaten out the heart of the children of God, and their energies go forth in mere efforts, benevolent, excellent; but meanwhile the glory of God is unthought of. It is work now, not Christ; or if there be a thought, it hardly goes beyond the salvation of souls. The glory of God and those that are saved are forgotten. It is not only that we need, therefore, a call to the unconverted; we need a call to the converted now. It is they more especially that fail to answer to the glory of God, just as Judah did here.

And here we find them joining, and this is one of the greatest snares of the present day. People fancy such wonders are to be done because there is a desire after union. Yes, but a union with abominations, a union with infidelity, a union with sacerdotalism, a union with anything under the sun, provided people only unite in good faith. Where is God? Where is the truth?

Where is the grace of God? Where is the place of the Holy Ghost in all this? Not thought of. I say this only because I believe that many persons read these books of scripture without practical profit; or, if they do take any, they fasten upon merely the good points, forgetting that God has a question about the evil; and in a day of evil it is a bad sign to flatter ourselves that we are cleaving to the good, for invariably, where there is evil there must be repentance; and there cannot be a worse sign than putting off, therefore, the solemn lesson that God is reading us about sin. I do not say that to throw it at others, but to take my full share myself; because I am fully persuaded that where there is the strongest desire even to be separated from evil, there will be the deepest feeling of the evil. There was nobody who felt the evil of Israel so much as Daniel, though there was no one who was more personally separate from it. And yet he always says "we." He does not say "you." He does not say, "It is your sin," but "our sin." It is "we have sinned." He held to the unity of the people of God. We ought to hold to the unity of the Church.

And so, in the same way, it is no use for people to say, I have nothing to do with Popery; I have nothing to do with the Greek church; I have nothing to do with ritualism or the like. That is an improper way to speak. We have a great deal to do with them, because all this is done under the name of Christ. It is like a vast company that has got a common share; and we are partners in the firm unless, indeed, we cut the connection; that is, unless we renounce utterly all the shame and sin of the thing before God, but, at the same time, bear the burden of it. Suppose we have renounced the company in matters of action; we ought to feel the shame and the grief of it if we have any love in our souls for them, or any care for the glory of the Lord. I conceive, therefore, that those who read these sad tales of Israel's, and above all, of Judah's, sin, without making a personal application to Christendom - to the state of God's people now - are putting aside a most

solemn admonition that God gives for the conscience, and a sign and token too of the analogy between what is now and what was then. The only difference is that we have incomparably greater privileges and, therefore, a deeper responsibility.

Further, the Word of God is explicit that the Lord Jesus is about to return in judgment; and when He does judge, where will His sternest judgment be? On the heathen? On the Jew? No, on Christendom! I grant you that Jerusalem will be the scene of the tremendous judgment of God; but then Jerusalem was the birthplace of Christianity, as well as the capital of Judaism; and I have not the slightest doubt that at that moment when the Lord returns in judgment the same men will have acquired headship over Christendom as well as over the Jews. Things are coming to that now. Ritualism will soon land Christendom into acknowledgment of Judaism. What an amalgam! A hateful amalgam, not merely an amalgam of unfaithful Christians, but even of Judaism along with Christianity, because the false prophet who is destroyed at the end will be setting himself up in the temple of God, and will be acknowledged in Christendom as well as by the Jews. This is a tremendous catastrophe to look onward to, and I have no doubt of it; and this shows, therefore, how truly the wickedness of Israel portends also not only their future wickedness, but that which is found in Christendom. All will be united in this dreadful union at the close.

Well then this 25th chapter shows us the end of Amaziah after his unholy union with Israel - bought to their own shame, but to his greater shame who could employ them - and the end is strife between the two who had unlawfully joined. And further, Judah who ought to have been the more faithful, as they had the truth in a way that Israel had not, are put to flight before the men of Israel.

What confusion when God was obliged to be against His people -when God was morally compelled to smite even those who had most of His sympathies, but now the more guilty, just because they had more light!

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

2 Chron. 26-31 - Part 1

Then follows Uzziah (chap. 26). "And he did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, according to all that his father Amaziah did. And he sought God in the days of Zechariah who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper. And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and break down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines. And God helped him against the Philistines, and against the Arabians that dwelt in Gur-Baal, and the Mehunims. And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly. Moreover, Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them. Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Cannel: for he loved husbandry. Moreover, Uzziah had a host of fighting men" - a standing army.

All this, no doubt, looked fair. "But when he was strong his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against Jehovah his God, and went into the temple of Jehovah to burn incense upon the altar of incense. And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of Jehovah, that were valiant men: and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It

appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah to burn incense unto Jehovah, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honor from Jehovah, God. Then Uzziah was wroth," and although he stood with a censer in his hand, even at that moment, "the leprosy rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of Jehovah from beside the incense altar. And Azariah, the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because Jehovah had smitten him." It was a signal judgment, even in this day of weakness and unfaithfulness. So he lived a leper to the day of his death.

His son Jotham (chap. 27) follows in the right way in a measure as his father did. He entered not into the temple of Jehovah as his father had done; but the people did yet corruptly. However, he builds and wars and becomes mighty, because he prepared his ways before Jehovah his God.

Jotham dies, and Ahaz succeeds him - an impious son who "walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim" (chap. 28). Not satisfied with that, he, even as we know, brought down the pattern of a new altar from Damascus into the very house of God; but God smote him. "Pekah, the son of Remaliah, slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken Jehovah God of their fathers." And so we find further sorrows without end upon Ahaz, so that in the extremity of his distress he sends for a little help to the king of Assyria, only to add to his sorrows.

I need not dwell upon this, though it is one of the most important points in the history of Judah; for it was the great crisis when the magnificent burst of prophecy came from God. Isaiah had begun, no doubt, before, in the days of Uzziah and Jotham; but it was in Ahaz's time that the prophecy of Emmanuel was given; yea, it was to Ahaz himself. What grace! that a wicked man should bring forth from God the distinctest pledge of the glory of the Messiah! Yet, so it was. How completely God moves above the evil of man! And if God be so to the evil, what is He not to the righteous? How should we not then ever confide in His love?

Ahaz, after a most distressful as well as guilty reign, comes to his end; and Hezekiah reigns in his stead (chap. 29). Here we have a man of faith - a man of singular confidence in the Lord -and Hezekiah "in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of Jehovah and repaired them." There was no time lost. In the first year and the first month! "And he brought in the priests and the Levites and gathered them together into the east street, and said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of Jehovah God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of Jehovah our God, and have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of Jehovah, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel. Wherefore the wrath of Jehovah was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes. For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this. Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with Jehovah God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons, be not now negligent: for Jehovah hath chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that ye should

minister unto Him, and burn incense."

What a state! Yet there was the law; but such was the practice. The people of today wonder at the departure in Christendom since the time of the apostles. The departure was not so easy under Israel, because Israel's worship consisted so very much of external observances; and they might be done even by unconverted men. But in the Church everything depends upon the Spirit of God, and therefore the departure is incomparably more easy in the Church than it was under Israel. Yet people wonder that the Church has gone astray. To what purpose have they read their Bibles, and why has God given us this most solemn departure in Israel but to warn us of ours? Has He not in the New Testament put forward prophecy after prophecy of the departure that He saw at hand? "Otherwise thou shalt be cut off." What did it depend upon? On what condition? Except the Gentile continued in the goodness of God, he should be cut off like the Jew. Has the Gentile continued in the goodness of God? Is Protestant devotion and the splitting up of the Church of God without a care? Is Popish or Greek idolatry continuing in the goodness of God? The Gentile has not continued in the goodness of God, and must be cut off no less than Israel and Judah.

Well, here was a pious man; and what a mercy to think that God raises up individuals in Christendom, as He did in Israel. But you will observe this: no piety of Jehoshaphat, no faith of Hezekiah, turned the current of evil. There is a stay: they find a footing in the midst of the current and they resist it. They are sustained of God, but the current of evil still passes on till it ends in the gulf of judgment. And so we find now. Hezekiah no doubt gave a fair and beautiful promise of a better day. But it was only the morning cloud and passing dew; so he calls upon them not to be negligent, and the Levites answer to his call to cleanse the house of Jehovah.

This was the great thing. It was not merely personal cleansing, but cleansing the house of Jehovah. The house of Jehovah answers to our being gathered together. It is not enough to be personally pure; we ought to be pure in our associations; we ought to be pure in our worship. If there is anything in which we ought to be pure, it is in the worship of God. I cannot understand the piety of persons that are content with what they know is wrong in the worship of God. It seems to me sadly inconsistent, to say the least. I know there are difficulties. Faith always has difficulties but faith always surmounts them. So it was with Hezekiah. No doubt it seemed a very strange thing to be blaming everybody for so long a time; but he did not think of that, and I am persuaded that Hezekiah was not a high-minded, but a most lowly man. It is a mere stigma and calumny to call faith proud. The world always does. Christians ought not to do so; they ought to know better.

So they began on the first day of the first month. What alacrity! "Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of Jehovah: so they sanctified the house of Jehovah in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end." v. 17. Then they went unto Hezekiah the king and told him. Hezekiah prepares accordingly. "Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city and went up to the house of Jehovah." It is all the same stamp. It was a man filled with a sense of the glory of God, and there was not a moment to be lost. If I want to obey, why should I not begin at once? What am I waiting for? "And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he-goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary and for Judah. And he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of Jehovah. So they killed the bullocks, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled it on the altar: likewise, when they had

killed the rams they sprinkled the blood upon the altar: they killed also the lambs and they sprinkled the blood upon the altar. And they brought forth the he-goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them. And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel."

Let me call your attention to what is said here - "for all Israel," as we also have it in the 21st verse - "for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah." Not for Judah only, but for the whole nation, Israel and Judah. This is a fine action of Hezekiah's faith. Personally pure and devoted in his own sphere, his heart went out toward all that belonged to God. They might be idolaters, but he makes an atonement. The more, therefore, they needed the atonement, the more they needed that others should feel for them if they felt not for themselves and for God.

And so we should feel now. We ought not to care merely for the Christians that we know. Surely we ought to love them; but our hearts ought always, in private and in public, to take in the whole Church of God. We are never right if we do not. There is sectarian leaven in our hearts if we do not go out toward all that are of God. So with Hezekiah. It was for all Israel - for the king commanded. It was the king, you see. The priests, no doubt, did not think about it. They were so accustomed merely to offer up sacrifices for Judah that they, no doubt, never thought about "all Israel"; but the king did. "The king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel." And everything was done in its proper order. There was no neglect of what was seemly or decent. "And he set the Levites in the house of Jehovah with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the commandment of Jehovah by His prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of Jehovah began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded, and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped. Moreover, Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises unto Jehovah with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped."

And thus all was done in beautiful order and, as we are told in the last verses, "the service of the house of Jehovah was set in order. And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly." But it was none the worse for that. There had been nothing like this since the days of king Solomon; so long had care for the house of God fallen into disuse.

Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

2 Chron. 26-31 - Part 2

But Hezekiah was not content with this (chap. 30). "He sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem to keep the passover unto Jehovah God of Israel." This seemed, no doubt, a very bold

thing, and I have not a doubt that they considered that the king was behaving in a very presumptuous manner. What business had he to send to all Israel? He was only the king of Judah! Why should he not be content with his own people? He was proselyting. They did not like it. They thought it was exceedingly improper to be taking away the Israelites to Jerusalem. But Hezekiah was thinking of God. Hezekiah was filled with a sense of what was due to the claims of Jehovah. Jehovah had set His house in one place for all Israel.

Now there is nothing that gives a person such boldness as this, and nothing, also, that sets love to work so earnestly as this. If we are merely contending for doctrines of our own, it does seem rather strong to expect other people to receive them. If it is merely my own doctrine, I had better make myself happy with my own affairs. But if it is God's grace, if it is God's worship, if it is God's way, has it not a claim upon all that are God's? The moment you see that, you can go forward; and you can appeal to the conscience of all that belong to God, that they should be faithful to God's own will and Word. And what I want the children of God to see now clearly, and all the children of God as far as He is pleased to give it efficacy, is that they are set not merely upon something better than what other people have, but upon what is God's will, because that must be the best of all; and inasmuch as they have got the Book of God, they can see and are responsible to find this out for themselves. Anything that is herein has a claim upon a child of God - and more particularly as regards the worship of God. I grant you that in human things what is of man has a claim; but not so in divine things. "Render, therefore, to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

I think it was in this spirit, therefore, not trying to be a Caesar over Israel, or even recalling Israelites to their allegiance to himself, which perhaps he might have done, that Hezekiah so acted. He was a man of faith, and he knew well that it was of God, the rending of the ten tribes from the house of David; and therefore he did not ask the tribes for himself, but he did ask them for God. He sent out "to all Israel and Judah" (chap. 30). And so should we do now. We ought not to desire the world. Let men, if they will, seek the world and the pretended worship of the world. Let them seek "the masses," as they say. Let them have the masses if they will, and if the masses are weak enough to follow them. But the business of faith is to call upon all who have faith in the name of the Lord, and to get them to follow His Word. So did Hezekiah now, according to what God gave him. "And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation." What I call your attention particularly to is this: nobody thought of all this for all these years - nobody thought of it but Hezekiah. The more you draw near to God, the more you love the people of God. It was because God was so great in Hezekiah's eyes that the people of God were so dear to Hezekiah; and so he claimed them for God, and called them to come out from their abominations. "They established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto Jehovah God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written!" How quickly people departed from what was written!

"So the posts went with the letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah, and according to the commandment of the king, saying, Ye children of Israel" - not merely, "Ye children of Judah," but "Ye children of Israel" - "turn again unto Jehovah God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and He will return to the remnant of you that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria. And be not ye like your fathers and like your brethren which trespassed against Jehovah God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation as ye see. Now, be ye not

stiff-necked, as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto Jehovah, and enter into His sanctuary, which He hath sanctified forever." God's principles do not change. It is all a mistake that because the apostles are gone, the apostles' truth is gone. Not so; it abides, and forever. It is always binding on the people of God. So here with the sanctuary in Jerusalem. "So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun: but they laughed them to scorn and mocked them."

As it was then, so it is now. The more true, the more it be according to God, so the more is the contempt of men who have chosen to blend the world with Christ. "Nevertheless, divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem." In the most unlikely and distant quarters, and where no one could possibly look for them, there are those that have humbled themselves and have come. "Also in Judah the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the king, and of the princes, by the word of Jehovah." And there they assembled. "And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem, and all the altars for incense took they away and cast them into the brook Kidron. Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month, and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of Jehovah, and they stood in their place" - because this was in consequence of some not being ready. The priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently. The second month was the gracious provision that God made in the case of uncleanness in the wilderness, as we may see in Numb. 9:10, 11.

How good is the word of the Lord! They must keep the passover; but, on the other hand, they could not keep it if they were unclean. This provision came in, therefore, when they were consciously unclean, that they might purify themselves and keep it so now. But there is no lowering the standard. There ought to be consideration for the weakness, and there is given them time to learn; but the standard must not be lowered. And so we find, further, that "the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised Jehovah day by day, singing with loud instruments unto Jehovah. And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites"; and, in fact, there was a happy and a holy time come, "for Hezekiah king of Judah did give to the congregation a thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep; and the princes gave to the congregation a thousand bullocks and ten thousand sheep: and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. And all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced. So there was great joy in Jerusalem."

In the next chapter (31), we find that this faithfulness on the part of the Jews of Judah gave a great impulse to their fidelity. True faithfulness always flows from faith, and if we are right in the worship of God, we shall seek to be right in our walk. A low worship always goes with a low walk. It would be an awful thing and most condemnatory if there was carelessness of God's worship and a want of care of our personal ways and walk. We have to see to that. "Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his own possession, into their own cities. And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests," for he was not content with what he had done. He carries out the work still more fully. And we are told in the end of the 31st chapter, "Thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before Jehovah his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments,

to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered."

## Lectures on the Books of Chronicles

### 2 Chron. 32-36

But now we find the Assyrian (chap. 32). "And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water. Also he strengthened himself, and built up all the wall that was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance. And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spake comfortably to them, saying, Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is Jehovah our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah." vv. 2-8.

So Sennacherib sends his servants with a most insulting message, and these letters and oral insults were meant to alarm and stir up the people even against the king. "For this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz prayed and cried to heaven. And Jehovah sent an angel which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword. Thus Jehovah saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib."

We are told very briefly, also, of the sickness of Hezekiah and of the Lord's marvelous recovery of him. "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up"; and even this good king thus brings wrath upon Israel. Again, it is the king that decides all. How blessed when there is a king reigning in righteousness, when all will be decided in favor of the people, without a flaw. That is the purpose of God, and these kings on whom the burden rested then were the witnesses of the King that is coming; for I trust that all here believe that the Lord Jesus will not only be exalted in heaven, but in the earth. It is a great failure in the faith of any man, and a sad gap in the creed of those who do not believe that the Lord Jesus is going to reign over the earth. What has God made the earth for? For the devil? It would look like it if the Lord is not going to reign, for Satan has had it in his own way ever since sin came into the world [of course, within limits]. Is the earth for Satan even in the midst of God's people? Oh, no! All things were made for Christ. All things are by Him. In all things He will have the preeminence.

In the dispensation of the fullness of times, all will be gathered under the headship of Christ - not merely things in heaven, but things on earth - and then will be the blessed time which people vainly hope for now - the time when nation will not war against nation, and when men will learn war no more.

There will be such a day; but it is reserved for Christ, not for the Church. It is reserved for Christ when the Church is out of the world. In fact, so far from the Church correcting the world. she has

not been able to keep her own purity. The Church has sold herself to the world, and is now merely like all unfaithful spouses that have betrayed their true husbands. Now the world is tired of her, and is beating her away with shame and scorn. This is going on in all lands. The days are fast coming when there will not be a land in the world where the Church - for which Christ gave Himself - is not cast off. I do not say that to excuse the world, but I do say it to take the shame of it to ourselves. For, undoubtedly, had the Church walked in purity, she would never have sought the world's glory, nor have been in the world's embraces, and would never have been exposed to the world's casting her off as a wretched and corrupt woman.

Well (chap. 33), Manasseh follows this pious king who now has been called to sleep. The ways of Manasseh were first, a most painful outburst of all abomination, yet of the mercy of God at the last. For this very Manasseh, after his sin - after he had made Judah and Jerusalem to sin and do worse than the heathen - is taken by the king of Assyria and carried to Babylon, and there taught with thorns. But in affliction he humbles himself before the God of his fathers and prays to Him; and God heard and brought him back again. "Then Manasseh knew that Jehovah He was God." v. 13. This is a history most peculiar. Others, alas! had begun well and ended ill. He began as ill as any had ever done, and worse than any before; but he had a blessed end. He took away the strange gods and idols which he had himself set up, and the altars that he had made; and he repaired the altar and offered peace offerings and thank offerings, and commanded Judah to serve Jehovah. And "so Manasseh slept with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house; and Amon his son reigned in his stead." But Amon did that which was evil, according to his father's beginning, not according to his end; "and his servants conspired against him and slew him in his own house, and made his son Josiah king in his stead."

Josiah was a king as remarkable for conscientious service to God as any man that ever reigned in Judah. How remarkable - not, alas! that a pious king should have an impious son, but that an impious father should have a pious son. This indeed was grace.

Josiah, then, and his reformation is brought before us (chap. 34). He was young when he began to reign - only eight years old - and "in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence, and the images that were on high above them, he-cut down: and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars" - nothing could be more thorough-going than this action against the false gods - "and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. And so did he in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem."

For, you observe, he goes beyond his own sphere. He goes out into "the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali."

There is amazing vigor in this young king. "And in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor

of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of Jehovah his God." And God shows him signal mercy, for there it was that the priest Hilkiah found the book of the law of Jehovah given to Moses. "And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of Jehovah. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan." The king hears of it and, just as I have said, his conscience is the remarkable part of this good king; for when he hears the words of Jehovah, he rends his clothes. Had he not been pious? Had he not been faithful? Yes, but he forgot the things that were behind, and he pressed toward those that were before. He did not think of the good that he had done, but of the evil that, alas! was still around him, and of the good that he had not done and that remained before him.

So he sends, saying, "Go, inquire of Jehovah for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found, for great is the wrath of Jehovah that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of Jehovah, to do after all that is written in this book." And God answers his desires. "And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath," and she gives the answer from Jehovah, and the king acts upon it, and humbles himself before the Lord. "And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers."

He too keeps a passover (chap. 35). He kept it, as we are told, on the fourteenth day of the first month, for now things are more in order as far as this was concerned. The preparations were made more orderly than in the hurried preparations of king Hezekiah, which they were obliged to keep in the second month. This chapter gives us a full account of this striking passover. There was no passover, we are told, like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet. Of Hezekiah's it was said there had been none such since the days of Solomon; but of Josiah's it is said, "since the days of Samuel." We have to go up to earlier times to find with what to compare it. The reformation, therefore, was remarkably complete in appearance. Alas! what was beneath the surface was corrupt and vile - not in Josiah, nor in certain godly ones that gathered in sympathy round the king, but in the mass of the people - and Josiah himself shows, after this, the usual failure of man; for he goes out unbidden against the king of Egypt when he had come against Charchemish. And, though he is warned by Pharaoh that he does not wish to fight with him, Josiah would not turn back. "He disguised himself that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away, for I am sore wounded. His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchers of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah." Yet not they only; there was one heart more true than any - Jeremiah. Jeremiah knew from the Lord that there was buried the last worthy representative of the house of David. All that followed was only a shame and a scandal. It was but the filling up of the measure of their sins that they might be carried away into Babylon. Josiah was taken from the evil to come. "Jeremiah lamented for Josiah; and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel; and behold they are written in the Lamentations."

"Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz" - for, indeed, it could not be said to be God now in any sense. "The people of the land took Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, and made him king in his

father's stead in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem" (chap. 36). And his brother, or near relative at any rate, Eliakim, was made king, with his name changed to Jehoiakim. But as the king of Egypt made him king, so the king of Babylon unmade him; for he comes up and carries him to Babylon, and sets up Jehoiachin his son in his stead. And he too did what was evil and was brought to Babylon; and Zedekiah his brother, as we are told, was made king over Judah and Jerusalem. He brings the disasters of Jerusalem to their last crisis, for he it was who was sworn by the oath of Jehovah, and broke it, and gave the awful spectacle before the world, that a heathen had more respect for the name of Jehovah than the king of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar trusted that that name, at least, would have moral weight. Zedekiah feared it less than Nebuchadnezzar. Impossible, therefore, that God should allow such a stain to remain upon the throne and the house of David; so destruction came to the uttermost, and the last portion of Judah was swept away by the Chaldees, and the land must enjoy her sabbaths, "for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath to fulfill threescore and ten years." And thus we see them back in captivity till God raises up Cyrus to make the way back for a remnant of Judah.

## Lectures on the Books of Chronicles: 1 Chronicles 23-29

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### 1 Chron. 23-29

"So when David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel. And he gathered together all the princes of Israel, with the priests and the Levites." Chap. 23:1, 2. And a remarkable act of David's appears here, quite in consistency with what we have seen before. He first numbers the Levites; and he numbers them according to Moses, from thirty years old and upward. But even Moses himself gives us a modification of this; namely, from twenty-five years. David goes further. He is the king, and all now depends upon the king. Hence (v. 24), "These were the sons of Levi after the house of their fathers; even the chief of the fathers, as they were counted by number of names by their polls, that did the work for the service of the house of Jehovah, from the age of twenty years and upward."

Thus David showed sovereign right to act for Jehovah. He only did so because he is the type of Christ. There was One greater than Moses that was in the view of the Spirit of God, and David typifies Him. It is said, "For, by the last words of David, the Levites were numbered from twenty years old and above: because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of Jehovah." No doubt their duties were greatly enlarged; and, great as their numbers might be now, the magnificence of the temple would call for every man from twenty years. And, besides, David would give them all a place in it. It was an honor as well as a duty, and so one can conceive grace acting in calling in the younger men.

In the 24th chapter we have the divisions of the sons of Aaron, and they are now divided into twenty-four courses. Zadok takes his place as the high priest, and this we know will be the line when the Lord Jesus comes to reign by-and-by. It is not only that the house of David will enjoy its right and glory according to the word of Jehovah, but the family of Zadok will be actually in the administration of the priesthood in that future day of blessedness on the earth. This we know from the book of Ezekiel, who expressly lets us see that so it will be (chap. 44:15). "But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near to Me to minister unto Me, and they shall stand before Me to offer unto Me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord Jehovah." We can see the reason of this. They were faithful. But there is another reason, too, that does not appear in the prophecy. They were the proper descendants. They were the lineal descendants of Phinehas; and God had sworn in the wilderness (so far did it go back beyond David) that there should be an everlasting covenant with the priesthood and the family of Phinehas. If God remembers His promises, so does He not forget His covenant with man. It is not, therefore, the promise to the fathers only; but even what may come in because of the fidelity of His people in any great time of trouble is never forgotten of the Lord.

In the 25th chapter we have the service of song. "Moreover, David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals." It is called "prophesying" because it so

directly brought in God, which is the emphatic meaning of prophesying. "And the number of the workmen according to their service was" - so and so. There were twenty-four courses of the singers. Now, this was another remarkable change. In the tabernacle, song was not the characteristic feature, but sacrifice; but in the temple in the day of glory, the song of triumph is the new and suitable feature. It is not but what the sacrifices abide, as we find; and so they will be on the earth - no longer, as they were, mere legal offerings, but commemorations - commemorations of the great sacrifice, no doubt. God will condescend to use for an earthly people an earthly sign. The heavenly people need none. That is the reason why we have no sacrifices now - because we see what the sacrifice of Christ is in the mind of heaven. We enjoy heaven's estimate of Christ. Hence, as there is no sacrifice in heaven, we have none; but, when the earth comes in, the earthly people will have earthly sacrifices.

In the 26th chapter we have the porters, for it is a part of majesty to think of what is least. The Spirit of God condescends to arrange by David for the porters, just as truly as He did for the high priest, or for the different courses of priesthood. All has its place, and whatever has to do with the service of God is great in God's eyes. Indeed, it is only we who make so much of the differences between great and small. To God, the smallest thing has a value.

In the 27th chapter we have more the kingdom in its outward regulations. "Now the children of Israel, after their number, to wit, the chief fathers and captains of thousands and hundreds, and their officers that served the king in any matter of the courses, which came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, of every course were twenty and four thousand." We find the number twenty-four whether it be actual, or in its thousands, very prominent here. Twelve is the number devoted to perfection in human government - in government by man. In the Church, seven, because it is spiritual administration. In Israel, twelve - twelve tribes, not seven. So here in the kingdom by-and-by; only there is a double witness of it. It is twenty-four. Nothing was established when it was only twelve. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." The Millennium will be the great establishment of the kingdom. And so we have not perfection. Perfection will be in eternity, but still there will be establishment.

The end of the chapter shows us the various ministers of the king - the rulers of his substance - those that were over the king's treasures - those that were over the work of the field, his agriculture, his vineyards, his domains as we would call them, the sycamore trees, and so on, the olive yards, the herds, the camels, flocks, asses, and the other chief ministers of the king.

In the 28th chapter we have the assembly of the princes, where David stands and addresses them, although he was now drawing near the close. "As for me," he says, "I had in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of Jehovah, and for the footstool of our God." This was a great word which it is well to dwell upon for a moment. "A house of rest for the ark." It was not so in the wilderness. It was either "Rise up, O Jehovah," or "Return." It was always motion - motion actually, or motion in prospect. But the blessed feature of the day that is coming will be rest - rest after toil - rest after sorrow. And this will be the fruit of the suffering of the true Son of David. We see it beautifully in the 132nd Psalm, where David, who has been afflicted, prays for Solomon. And Solomon will bring in the rest, but only as a sign. True rest is yet to come. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." This is not yet accomplished; it will be in due time.

David, then, here looks forward to the ark of the covenant of Jehovah having a house of rest. "But," says he, "God said unto me, Thou shalt not build an house for My name, because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood. Howbeit Jehovah, God of Israel, chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever: for He hath chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He liked me to make me king over all Israel." He had given him a good work. He was not to build the house; but he, above all, had the preparation of the material and the ordering of it, even when it was built - not Solomon, but David. Solomon carried out the regulations of David. Therefore, whatever may be the future glory of the kingdom, we must remember that the sufferings of Christ morally take an incomparably higher place. David was more important than Solomon. Solomon was only the fruit, so to speak, of David. The glory of the kingdom was only the result of the one who had glorified God as the outcast and rejected one, but the real establisher, of the kingdom. Then he says, "And He said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build My house and My courts: for I have chosen him." David therefore gives to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch and of the houses.

We see how completely David is the source of everything here. "The pattern of all that he had by the Spirit." It was not any question of his own will. "And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of Jehovah, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things. Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of Jehovah, and for all the vessels of service in the house of Jehovah." Nay, more than that, he gave by weight of the gold for the various vessels, and the silver for those that were to be made of silver - the tables, for instance; "also pure gold for the fleshhooks and for the bowls, and the cups." Everything was to a nicety arranged by David. "All this, said David, Jehovah made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." It was really God arranging all by His servant. On this ground David charges Solomon. "Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for Jehovah God, even my God, will be with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of Jehovah." It was the great prospect of David's declining years. It was not his own house, but Jehovah's house. He had no doubt about his own; he was not troubled about it; he did not think about it. He prays God for it; he could rest upon God's word. God would surely establish the house of David, but David looked for the building of the house of Jehovah. David could not rest without God being glorified, and he desired at any rate to have his own part. And God gave him a good part - not the building, but all things gathered in view of it, and ordered too.

The last chapter (29) gives us the final charge of David. In this he fully states how he had prepared with all his might for the house of his God. "Now I have prepared with all my might for the house of my God, the gold for things to be made of gold, and the silver for things of silver, and the brass for things of brass, the iron for things of iron, and wood for things of wood; onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistening stones, and of divers colors, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance. Moreover, because I have set my affection to the house of my God, I have of mine own proper good, of gold and silver, which I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house" - that is, it was not only what he drew from the kingdom, but what he gave of his own personal property and estate - "even three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of

the houses withal."

And now, in the face of this, he asks, "Who is willing to consecrate his service this day unto Jehovah?" The noble generosity of the king acts powerfully upon the people. "Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly, and gave for the service of the house of God, of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. And they with whom precious stones were found, gave them to the treasure of the house of Jehovah, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite." All this is enumerated with the greatest care. "Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to Jehovah: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy."

Thus we see how grace draws out grace, and how much deeper the joy of David was over God's glory than over anything of his own. We never hear of anything like such an expression of joy for what befell himself. "Wherefore David blessed Jehovah before all the congregation." It is the king, not the, priest, now, but the king. "And David said, Blessed be Thou, Jehovah God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Thine, O Jehovah, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O Jehovah, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee and praise Thy glorious name." "But who am I?" says he, for there is nothing that produces so much humility, such true sense of nothingness, as the rich blessing of Jehovah. "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding " So he prays for Solomon. "O Jehovah God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee: and give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes."

Then he calls the congregation to bless Jehovah; and so they all do, bowing down their heads in worshiping Jehovah and the king. The king, you see, is now the proper representative of Jehovah. And they sacrifice according to the greatness of the day. "Even a thousand bullocks, a thousand rams, and a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and sacrifices in abundance for all Israel: and did eat and drink before Jehovah on that day with great gladness. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time."

"The second time." Not a word is here introduced about Adonijah's attempt to get the kingdom. It was all left out. The troubles and sins of the house of David are left out, unless they are bound up with some purpose of God. That is the key to it; but here is given simply the result; namely, that Solomon is anointed the second time. The first time was after the house was determined upon. Solomon was bound up with the glory of the house. "Then Solomon sat on the throne of Jehovah" - a remarkable expression - "sat on the throne of Jehovah as king, instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons

likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king. And Jehovah magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel."

"Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honor: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."

## Collyrium

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Rev. 3:18

It is hard to imagine a greater loss in the whole realm of nature than that of the eyesight. The blind man can no longer look on familiar scenes or on loved and cherished faces; he is doomed to perpetual darkness. The exquisite organ which has played so prominent a part in his life and fortune is unavailing now, and he is necessarily dependent on the kindly guiding hand of another. A greater privation cannot be conceived.

Now, Christendom has lost its spiritual eyesight. It has become blind!

This was not always the case. It was not always "dull of hearing," nor spiritually insensible; but, alas, when as a system it is outwardly triumphant and can boast of learning, wealth, and worldly position, He who walks among the seven golden candlesticks says to Laodicea, "Thou... knowest not that thou art... blind"! Solemn charge! And, just as we see in Ephesus the Church in her first and fairest phase, so we find in Laodicea her final condition; while in the intervening histories of Revelation 2 and 3 we see her varied stages of spiritual decline, relieved, albeit, by a bright remnant testimony in the dark days of Smyrna, and a yet still brighter and fuller expression in Philadelphia. But the trend, the deep undercurrent, is ever steadily downward. The fatal lapse was in Ephesus leaving her first love. Nothing could be more serious than this. Labor and endurance, even for the name's sake of the Lord, could not compensate for the loss of first love.

The slow but sure result of such a loss is found in the absolute carelessness of Laodicea to Christ. His truth, His grace,

His interests, are all, alas! heartlessly ignored, while self fills their place.

How sad thus to report, and how humbling to feel, as we should, the dishonor and sorrow brought upon our blessed Lord, as we daily learn the true character of this closing Laodicean phase! Yet hearts that love Him cannot but thus feel or mourn the dreadful corruption of the very best thing ever communicated to man. Such hearts are truly Philadelphian, and will not cease to beat until the Lord shall come.

Two facts demonstrate the absoluteness of the ruin; first, Christendom says, "I have need of nothing"; and second, and as a consequence, Christ says, "I stand at the door and knock." Where there is no felt need, there can be no place for the Lord. Grace may knock forever while self-sufficiency reigns within.

Need of nothing is, alas! the boast of the day; and that which is desired least of all by Christendom is the holy presence and operation of the Lord.

And what is Collyrium (some may prefer the spelling, Kollourion). It is a transliteration of the Greek word for "eye-salve." "Buy of Me," says the Lord, "eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou mayest see" (J.N.D. Trans.). Yes, He who charged her with being blind, bids her buy of Him eye-salve, so

that the blinded eye might be anointed and spiritual perception gained. Gold, and white raiment, too, were equally required; and each was to be bought. The purchase might be costly. There would certainly be the humbling acknowledgment of poverty and nakedness, as well as blindness; but such was His counsel.

What is this eye-salve? How can the film be removed from the eye? How is spiritual perception to be acquired?

The first part of the payment is to confess your need, your fall, your destitution, and to admit that the world and pride have dimmed and blurred the eye till, like Isaac of old, you mistake man for man, and error for truth.

And may we expect even this first part of the price to be paid by Christendom? I fear not! Too long has that patient and tender hand been knocking outside her firmly closed door; too long she has said, "I have no need of Thee"; too long has abundance sated her and pride blinded her eyes to make us expect from this fallen system any general humiliation; but He who knocks so patiently appeals at last individually, and generously adds, "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."

To him! Charming exception! To him who hears and opens shall this grace be given! What the proud mass shall lose, the lowly soul shall enjoy.

To such a one is this Collyrium, sold-this precious, heavenly eye-salve which produces clearness of spiritual vision and a blessed appreciation of Christ as rejected and outside of His own house, but as unchanged as ever in His unspeakably patient love and grace.

The true perception of Christ, who He is, where He is actually and morally, and what He is in holiness and love, is the highest and most commanding privilege of the Christian in this day of ecclesiastical corruption and difficulty. But this perception has to be bought; it will surely cost something.

## Confession of Sin: a Perfect Standing Before God

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It is most needful in handling any truth of God to cultivate the habit of calmly weighing all our conclusions in the balance of Holy Scripture. In this way we are preserved from the evil of hastily seizing one side of a question and using it in such a way as to mar the integrity of divine truth, and damage the souls of men.

Such is the case as between the perfect acceptance in Christ of the believer and of his confession of sins to his God and Father whenever he has sinned. It is quite true that all our sins were atoned for on the cross; and hence the very moment we believe, through grace, on the Son of God, we pass out of a condition of guilt and condemnation into a condition of perfect forgiveness and acceptance. The believer is united to Christ. He is complete as to his standing before God, so that the Word is "As He is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). "Ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:10), "Accepted in the beloved" (Eph. 1). Nor can we ever lose this perfect standing. It is impossible that a single member of Christ's body can ever for one moment be out of that condition of perfect favor in which he has been set by God's free grace in union with a crucified, risen, and glorified Head.

He may lose the sense of it, the comfort of it, the power of it; but the thing itself he cannot lose. It is his unalterable standing in Christ. Clouds may overcast the sun and hide from our view his genial beams; but the sun shines all the while with undiminished luster. The believer is accepted, once and forever, in Christ. He is united to Him by a link that can never be severed.

All this is divinely true, and is clearly laid down in the Word in passages too numerous to quote here. But, be it remembered, it is not until we believe that we enter into this blessed position. The foundation of it all was laid in the death and resurrection of Christ; but it is only when we, by the power of the Holy Ghost, receive into our hearts the precious truth of the gospel that we enter into the enjoyment of it. "In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. 1:13.

And we have further to bear in mind that, though complete in Christ as to our standing and title, so that at any moment we are ready to pass into divine presence, and though possessed of the divine nature which cannot sin because it is born of God, yet we have sin in us. We carry about with us a sinful nature, and are liable, if not watchful, to commit sin in thought, word, and deed. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [...] the whole world." 1 John 1:8-2: 2.

Here then we have the doctrine of confession laid down. "If we," believers, "confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Mark, he says, "faithful and just," not merely gracious and merciful. That He is, blessed be His name, but He is

more; He is faithful and just. On what ground? On the ground of atonement. It is wonderful to think that God can be so presented to us in connection with the forgiveness and cleansing of one who has committed sin.

But there must be confession. The conscience must be kept clear. It will not do for a believer to commit sin, and say, Oh! my sins are all forgiven, and I need not trouble myself about this matter. This will never do. A single sinful thought is sufficient to interrupt the believer's communion. It cannot touch his life or interfere with his security in Christ, but it can interfere with his communion and mar his comfort. He cannot possibly have fellowship with God while there is the smallest unconfessed sin on his conscience. What is he to do? Let him pour out his heart in confession; let him make a clean breast of it. And what follows? Full forgiveness and cleansing according to the faithfulness and justice of God.

## Death Working in the Apostles

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"So that death worketh in us, but life in you." 2 Cor. 4:8. It is death to him who in the work shares the affections and thoughts of Christ. Continual exposure to trial, habitual experience of grief, ridicule, detraction, opposition, enmity on the one hand; on the other, hopes, fears and disappointments; a never ceasing succession of all that can draw out, and withal distress, the spirit cannot fail to do their work in him who thus serves Christ and the saints for His sake. But in the face of all, in spite of evil, and in virtue of grace, the saints are helped, strengthened, cleared, comforted, and blessed. "Death worketh in us, and life in you." The Apostle habitually toiling and suffering was thoroughly content, and rejoiced in the gain of others: if he was wearing away bodily, those ministered to were being led on in what is imperishable. The service of Christ truly carried out costs all here below, but the blessing is commensurate even now; and what will be the result in glory? Not only was life in Christ given to those that believed, but it was fed, exercised, and developed by ministrations of truth, of which grace was the spring and character and power, in presence of deepest shame and pain and all calculated to dishearten, yet ever rising above the obstacles and persevering, no matter what the weakness, not only in view of death, but death working already.

## Discerning the Times

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God's Word does not give to the believers of this age - the Church - any signs that are to be looked for as a prelude to the coming of the Lord for His own. We can say with the poet, "No sign to be looked for." The Christian of an early day - the year A.D. 70 - had a specific sign to introduce the destruction of Jerusalem and the razing of the beautiful marble temple: "When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh." Luke 21:20. This was to be a positive sign of the approach of the destruction of Jerusalem, and at that sign they were to flee. Unbelief might have argued that with a besieging army outside the walls, escape would be impossible; but God's Word never fails. The Roman general withdrew his armies for a short season, thus giving the believing Jews the opportunity to escape. This they did, and went out to a place called Pella where they were preserved.

The God-fearing Jews of a future day are to flee from Jerusalem and its environs when they "shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place [of the temple].... Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains." Matt. 24:15, 16. This will be a visible sign to the godly Jewish remnant at the beginning of what is accurately called, "the great tribulation."

Now it is evident that neither of these signs are for us, for we are not in Jerusalem or Judea. In Rev. 13 we are told more about this abomination of desolation; it will be an image of the beast of the revived Roman Empire which will be set in the holy place of the temple in Jerusalem. By some means the Jews will have a temple by then, and this idol (called "abomination") will bring on desolation - "because of the protection of abominations [or idols] there shall be a desolator" (Dan. 9:27; J. N. D. Trans.). Desolation will be the sure result.

Now, while no signs are given to us to indicate the moment of the Lord's coming for His own, we are not to be ignorant of the trend of these days. These are "the days" of this dispensation, and we should be able to discern the last times. Everything around should tell us that the age of grace is about over. Mankind in general has despised the grace of God, and God's judgments will soon break over this world that cast out His beloved Son. The laxity and lukewarmness of real Christians, the great moral decline which is on every side, the growing power of the Church of Rome, the increase of atheism and the general inculcation of atheistic evolution through the school systems, the pride and arrogance of man, his boastfulness amounting almost to his human deification - everything tells us that we have come down to the very end.

The Apostle Paul, when refuting a false report among the Thessalonians that their sufferings were the result of having reached the dreadful "day of the Lord," reminds them that they had no need for him to write concerning this error; for they knew perfectly that the day of the Lord would come as a thief in the night. They belonged to the day and would be gone before the night of judgment set in. He said, "yourselves know perfectly." Are there not some areas concerning the future that we know perfectly? Are we not assured that after the true Church of God - all believers in the Lord Jesus - have been taken home to be with Christ in the Father's house, this world will be divided

into armed camps? Are we not assured that the Roman Empire, which for centuries controlled most of the known world, will be revived in a different form? Has not God told us plainly in Dan. 2 that the last state of the image which represents Gentile supremacy will be composed of ten toes of iron and clay? And the ten horns of the great beast of Dan. 7, and the ten horns of the beast of Rev. 13, all remind us of a European confederation of ten nations? There should not be a question about what will actually take place after we are gone to be with Christ. It is as sure as if it were already accomplished. Therefore, when the European trends, which we have many times commented on in this column, are daily becoming more apparent, should we not be looking up in confident expectation of seeing Him? Every fresh indication of the shaping of things here in preparation for those dreadful days which are to follow our departure to heaven, and everything that points forward to His coming back with His saints to execute judgment and reign, should cheer our hearts.

We refer our readers to previous issues which called attention to the European Common Market (EEC) development (it is also published in separate pamphlet form under the title of "European Trends"). Now the latest word on this great forerunner of the revived Roman Empire is that it has developed more strength and sinew. It is not a receding prospect, but a constantly growing power. Recent state visits of French and German leaders have done much to cement an inner core of solid steel in the European Economic Community. To see France and Germany so firmly welded together is an astonishing feat in itself after centuries of the bitterest rivalries and many wars-two bitter wars of attrition in this century alone.

There has been much talk about Britain joining the select club; now there is no more doubt about it, although there may be some hurdles to jump yet. Britain's chief difficulty lay in her previous commitments to her commonwealth partners, whose lands were once a part of the world-wide empire. It was a matter of national pride to preserve at least the semblance of the old grandeur of the British Empire, but the realization has come upon Britain's rulers that self-preservation demands her alignment with the European union. Prime Minister MacMillan said recently, "Britain cannot isolate herself from Europe.... History has made that clear." - Newsweek. Sept. 24, 1962. Another comment from the secular press indicates which way and with what determination the union of Europe is going, speaking of the British Prime Minister:

"With greater confidence than he has shown the nation in months - and looking, in the daily Mirror's words, 'like a genial bloodhound' - MacMillan took to TV to warn that a Britain excluded from Europe would become a pigmy 'in a world of giants.' In fact, his government has already crossed the Rubicon. MacMillan admitted as much by declaring that Britain will ultimately have to act in its own best interests - not the Commonwealth's. 'After all,' said he, 'we're independent too.'" -Time, Sept. 28, 1962.

According to the same source, as soon as Britain's conference in London with its 15-nation partnership Prime Ministers ended without giving public censure against MacMillan's plans for entry into the European Common Market, Edward Heath, Deputy Foreign Secretary, a special negotiator for Britain with the EEC, went to Europe and a round of conferences with the officials of the great new alliance.

A new Europe is in the making. One British businessman recently said: "there will soon be no more difference between the English and the French than there is between the English and the

Scots.... A new Europe where national tastes and economic expectations are increasingly giving way to a single European pattern.... The roster of top European executives today reflects profound changes in Europe's business community." - Time, Sept. 14, 1962.

We do not want to forget that the new European Community has been forged in a compact called "the Rome treaty." The name of Rome is prominent in this gigantic step toward the revived Roman Empire. Italian businessmen have taken the lead in many ways; for instance: "Since Genoa Industrialist Enrico Piaggio sent his Vespa motor scooters swarming through Europe as the first postwar apostles of the Italian look, Italy has become firmly established as the fountainhead of European design. •.. British Motor Corp.'s Harriman turned to Italian Stylist Pinin Farina to design autos that would sell better on the Continent." - Time, Sept. 14, 1962.

Another paper recently received by us stresses the importance of the EEC. We quote from one dated July 31, 1962, and published by the Philadelphia INTER-National Bank:

"The European Common Market was born of the enlightened recognition that Europe could not realize its economic potential and the growth to which its people aspire under the old system of independent national policies.... Political motives were also discernible in the formation of the EEC. Among its architects were those who saw in it the first steps toward a United States of Europe. The preamble of the treaty contains the words, 'Determined to establish the foundations of an ever closer union among the European peoples... "

In another paragraph we read this: "Some leaders recognized that these [earlier European joint efforts] cooperative arrangements among independent states were insufficient. It was felt that a bolder move was needed, a move that would involve the transfer of some elements of national sovereignty to a European organization acting on behalf of the constituent states." This treaty of Rome went into effect on January 1, 1958, and its development is considerably ahead of the planned schedule; there seems to be a determined effort to proceed at all speed.

Again we quote from the Philadelphia bank's letter: "This is no loose confederation of nations cooperating in the economic sphere as it seems to serve their current purposes. Rather, it is a bold venture in institutional innovation - the creation of an organization with a considerable measure of sovereignty in its own right, reaching deeply into all principal aspects of economic life. In view of this, the rate of progress achieved thus far in building the EEC is remarkable. It seems inevitable that such complete economic integration will result in closer social and political ties." - PNB PHILADELPHIA Inter-NATIONAL BANK NEWS LETTER, July, 1962.

History records many instances of complete subjugation of a nation or of nations by conquest of another nation or group of nations, but we are not aware of any such case in all history where proud, strong nations have joined in an effort that required the sacrifice of their individual sovereignty in such a degree. We except the alliances founded in times of war for defense against a common foe. But this present development is a sure precursor of the fulfillment of prophetic events. Not that such events must precede the coming of the Lord for His own; but since His coming must precede the full prophetic development, and we see this much now, the moment of His coming must be almost here - perhaps before this reaches our subscribers. We are not prophets, but we see what we never expected to see before His coming. O glorious prospect!

A remark by a representative of a giant financial institution shows how some businessmen rate the importance of the Common Market. We herewith quote Dr. George Mehren, Director of the Giannini Foundation. "The establishment of the European Common Market is the most important event in the Twentieth Century.... In four years, there has developed among the Common Market nations the second strongest economic entity in the world." He says that it is greater in importance than the development of the nuclear bombs, or the invasion of outer space. This is as reported by the Orange County, California, Farm Bureau News of June, 1962. And all this has developed in the last few years. Surely we can "discern this time."

Another angle of the Common Market is the recent reaction of Russia to it. We quote the following: "A new specter has arisen to haunt the Kremlin - the Common Market and its vision of European unity. Only recently has Moscow begun to appreciate the significance of the Common Market and the threat it poses to Communist objectives." - U. S. News and World Report, Aug. 13, 1962. At first Moscow did not consider it seriously, but now that it is in operation with accelerated pace, Moscow is plainly worried. Yes, the revived Roman Empire is to be a behemoth; and when its full strength is achieved, it will be headed by a man Scripture calls "the beast." He will be a man who will at the end seize the full power of the super government and defy men and God. But his end will be inglorious in the extreme, as the Christ of God comes to accept the kingdoms of this world from the hand of God (Psalm 2:8, 9). His armies will be destroyed and he will be cast into the lake of fire without a trial. Such will be the end of the world's greatest MAN, and of man's greatest pool of resources. It will all come to nothing before Him who was once "despised and rejected of men." That will be the day of His appearing; do we "love His appearing" when He will right the wrongs of ages?

## The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved

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John 13:23, 19:26; 20:2: 21:7-20

"That disciple whom Jesus loved." I have been just feeling that I can fully enjoy the truth which these words convey. And I would cherish such an experience, and ask the Lord to fix and enlarge it.

It is far from intimating that one is more interested than another in the grace or salvation of God, or loved with a more faithful and enduring love. But it does intimate that there may be a more personal attachment between the Master and some of His disciples, than between Him and others. All, I may say, sat at supper with Him, while only one leaned then on His bosom. All continued with Him in His temptations, and are to receive the kingdom together; but only three were in the garden or on the holy hill with Him. For there is more personal oneness of thought and feeling in some than in others - more of that which, as among ourselves, draws the willing heart along.

If I look at a brother whose way savors much of that which I know Jesus must delight in, being meek, and self-renouncing, and unaffectedly humble, and withal devoted and unworldly, I may remember John, and see that disciple whom Jesus loved reflected in my brother. But then how happy it is to remember that John himself was but one of a company whom the same Jesus had chosen and called, and bound to Himself forever! Did John exclude Thomas or Bartholomew? Thomas and Bartholomew, in the great evangelical sense, were as much to Christ as John. The one was not a whit more accepted man than the other.

This is sure and blessed, as well as plain and simple. I may rejoice in it with all certainty. And if I have any love to Him who has called me to such assured and eternal blessedness, will I not rejoice in this, that He has an object in which He can take more delight than I must well know I and my way can afford Him?

Thus do I find reasons for enjoying that expression, again and again repeated, "that disciple whom Jesus loved," and for delighting also in the thought that such a truth finds its illustration among the saints now, as it did in the midst of the apostles in earlier days.

The love with which we have to do is too perfect to be partial. It does not act irregularly or carelessly. We are all the objects of it. Thomas is not neglected because John is thus loved. But because this love is real, it is moved in this way by a John. But when I see a John leaning on Jesus while I myself am at a distance, let me have grace to look still, and to delight in the vision, and to say, It is good for me to be here. If I am not in the same experience, still it is blessed to enjoy the thought that another is there. Peter was gladdened by the vision of a glory in Moses and Elias, though it was all beyond him. So is my happy and thankful spirit to entertain the thought of my more heavenly brother pressing the bosom of our common Lord.

## Endeavoring to Keep the Unity of the Spirit

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Eph. 4:3

The question naturally arises, What is the "unity of the Spirit" we are exhorted to keep? Surely God has not told us to use diligence to keep a unity respecting the nature and extent of which He has given us no instruction. This cannot be; what the unity embraces must be in the Word of God, though it may not lie on the surface.

May we not gather instruction on the subject from the nature and scope of the Scriptures themselves? Let us remember that they were written at different times extending over some two thousand years, written by persons whose status was different, some learned and some unlettered (Acts 4:13), written in different styles, and embracing a great variety of subjects; yet there is not throughout a single clash, nor two parts in the least disjointed. It forms one beautiful and perfect whole, evincing in the clearest manner the unity of the Spirit. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1:21. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"; and "No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20). It thus all forms one beautiful exhibit of the unity of that Spirit, nothing from the holy men themselves being allowed to come in and mar that unity. The men wrote, but the Holy Ghost guided.

Now will not this help us to answer the question as to what is the unity of the Spirit we are exhorted to keep?

It is clear that if "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. 12:13), we must own every one thus united as being a part of that body, or we shall not "keep" the unity. The unity of the body, we cannot break; but we may break the unity of the Spirit which has formed that body. This would be the case if we held that there were many bodies, or more than one, when God says there is but one.

Another step leads us to the Lord's supper - "We being many are one bread" (1 Cor. 10:17). If we break bread as a separate body, we are not endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, for God says we being many are one loaf, one body.

If we look into the New Testament it is easy to find examples where the unity was broken, examples which are full of instruction. For instance, the assembly at Corinth was maintaining in their midst a wicked person. Was this keeping the unity of the Spirit? Surely not. Paul demanded that the man should be put out, and we know that Paul was right; so it is clear that the assembly at Corinth was not, for a time, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, or they would have had the same judgment as Paul, and have acted thereon.

We see here that the unity of the Spirit may at times be maintained only by cutting off a wicked person. And we gather further instruction on this point by the directions given to the elect lady in 2 John John, where she is told not to receive one into her house, nor wish him Godspeed, if he did not bring the doctrine of Christ.

In the first of these cases we see holiness is demanded; in the second truth is demanded. And these exactly agree with the character of the blessed Spirit. He is the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is truth (1 John 5:6).

Now if these illustrations point out, in some respects at least, the nature of the unity, the question returns, To what extent is this carried? or over what sphere should this unity be looked for?

This leads us to other things named in Scripture. For instance, we are to be of the same mind one toward another (Rom. 12:16); we are to be joined together in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10); we are all to speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10); and to walk by the same rule, and mind the same things (Phil. 3:16). Now how is all this possible when we remember how different our minds and tendencies are as men, except by the fact that we are all indwelt by the one selfsame Spirit who can accomplish in us all this?

We get a beautiful intimation of all this unity in Phil. 3:15. "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

There is no room for the thought that a difference of mind was to continue. The Apostle had the fullest confidence that God would teach others what He had taught him. At times we may not be sure that something we have learned is of God, and therefore we should be glad to know if it commends itself to other godly persons who are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If He has taught it to one, will He not teach it to others also?

But let it be noted that this wonderful sameness does not bring all down to one dead level. The Apostle Peter found in Paul's writings "things hard to be understood" (2 Pet. 3:16), but this did not create a breach of the unity. A difficulty is not a disagreement. With grace reigning in our hearts, there will be no breach of the unity of the Spirit, though some are much more advanced than others; and these latter should also be desirous of being taught.

There was a breach of the unity exemplified in the history of these same two apostles when Peter, with others, "dissembled"; and Paul had to withstand him to the face because he was to be blamed (Gal. 2:11, 13). This was not simply because Paul was in advance of Peter, but because the latter dissembled.

It might have seemed a very small thing to Peter to eat with the Gentiles, and then to refuse to do so when some came from James. It was being all things to all men, in a bad sense. But it was not a small thing to break the unity of the Spirit; and the rebuke was not only administered, but it has been handed down to us for our instruction.

In the family of God there are babes, young men, and fathers; but there is nothing in these differences of growth to make a breach of the unity.

There are also different lines of service - evangelists, pastors, and teachers - wherein each has his own work to do, but all leading to one and the same end - "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Eph. 4:12, 13.

There are also different parts of the body, each with his own appointed work, but all made to maintain the unity of the Spirit. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." 1 Cor. 12:4-6. Mark how the sameness is here enforced; it is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God. These may all have been in operation in producing the Holy Scriptures; and yet, as we have seen, there is the most perfect harmony in the whole. Will there not in like manner be the same harmony in all the operations of the whole body of Christ, where there is the diligence to maintain the unity of the Spirit? Indeed, this passage proves that where it is God who is working there must be harmony. How sensitive then we should be that when there is not harmony, there must be something of man somewhere; and how slow we ought to be to press our judgment when it does not commend itself to godly Christians. Maintaining the unity of the Spirit is linked with "the bond of peace."

Does not the passage itself show that the "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit" (which, indeed, is only a part of a sentence) should not be confined simply to the question of reception at the Lord's table. Its context exhorts us:

To walk worthy of the calling wherewith we have been called;

To do this with all meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another in love;

Using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace.

There is one body and one Spirit, as ye have been also called in one hope of your calling.

One Lord, one faith, one baptism.

One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in you all.

The unity of the Spirit then embraces everything in the sphere wherein the Holy Ghost acts, both in the individual Christian - "one toward another" - and in the whole body of Christ in all that pertains to the same.

Using diligence to maintain this unity will surely redound to the glory of God and to the welfare of the saints, while it will also strengthen the "bond of peace."

## Lessons From the Book of Esther

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"The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom; and before honor is humility." Pro. 15:33.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Pro. 16:18.

Suffering first, and then glory, mark the due path or history of the saint. This has been illustrated from old time. Joseph, Moses, and David may be remembered in connection with this truth. But it is the common history, in a great moral sense the necessary history, of those who adhere to God in a system or world that has departed from Him and set up its own thoughts. For such must ever be stemming a contrary current.

But there is more than this. The moment of deepest depression has commonly been the eve of deliverance.

In Egypt, the burdens of the Israelites had grown to their highest just when the Lord was preparing Moses's deliverance for them. In the ministry of the Lord, just as He was bringing redemption, the devil would commonly throw his poor captive in the midst, or cause him to cry out under a still sorer affliction. Our own souls are led to Jesus and salvation by a light which has discovered to us our full moral ruin and degradation; and in the latter day, when Israel's strength is gone, and there is none shut up and left (1 Kings 14:10), and the enemy is coming in "like a flood," then the Spirit of the Lord will lift up His standard (Isa. 59:19). For, as has been said, the hour of preparation for a better order of things is not a time of favorable appearances, but the reverse.

All this, however, is happy and encouraging. The bud is bitter the very moment before it opens to the scented flower. So it is not only sufferings first, and then glory, but sufferings commonly in their sorest form just before the glory and salvation break forth.

But there is a truth standing in company with this, yet over against it, as I may say. I mean the pride first, and then the overthrow or judgment of the man of the world, and that too in the hour of his highest, loftiest arrogance.

The builders of Babel were in one great confederacy, and the proud design which filled their heart, and which their hand was stretched out to accomplish, was nothing less than to raise a tower that was to reach to heaven. But in that hour of proudest daring, the Lord comes down in judgment (Gen. 11). Pharaoh had been raised to be the first man in the world, and in the thought of his greatness, and in the pride of his independency, had forgotten Joseph, and declared that he knew not the God of Israel. But it was then that the vials of wrath from the Lord's hand began to be poured out upon him (Exod. 5). Nebuchadnezzar walked in his palace and admired its magnificence, and said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?" But the Lord was watching that evil, and while the word of pride and importance was in his mouth, he that exalted himself was abased (Dan. 4). And Herod, after all this, was lauded as a god; and in a moment the judgment of God made a spectacle of him (Acts 12).

These were awful visitations in the hour of such prosperity and mighty pride of heart. And such things are foretold in prophecies, as well as illustrated in histories. The "Lucifer" of Isa. 14, the "prince of Tyrus" of Eze. 28, the "man of sin" of 2 Thess. 2, and the "beast" of the Apocalypse, are all prophetic of the doom of a proud one in the moment of loftiest presumption.

These serious and interesting truths (the exaltation of the righteous in the moment of deepest depression, and the abasement of the proud in the hour of their stoutest self-sufficiency) may easily connect themselves with our recollections of the book of Esther. It closes the volume of the historical books of the Old Testament, and it is, of all parts of Scripture, the most full and vivid expression of these two great principles; and thus, at the close of the histories, we get in full and beautiful season, the most complete illustration of the sweet springs of the whole movement.

In the catalog of those proud ones who meet their doom in their height of pride, I might have mentioned Haman, the Agagite. He was of the genuine seed of Amalek, with whom the Lord had a controversy forever, and who of old defied the glory as it began to unfold its brightness in the gloomy desert in the freshest moments of Israel's history (Exod. 17).

Prosperity had indeed attended Haman in a remarkable manner. He had the ear, the hand, and the ring of his master, the Persian (the chiefest monarch upon earth) at his command. And his pride, because of all this, could brook no refusal; and if the servant of God will not worship, the whole nation of God's people must pay the penalty.

In the day of this Amalekite, the Jewish maiden, Esther, appears in the scene. She had been a poor captive from the land of Israel, and was now in the land of the Persian; not only, however, in the common sorrow and degradation of her people, but with a grief and affliction that were peculiarly her own. She was an orphan, and in every sense a destitute one, save in the kindness and care of her godly kinsman, Mordecai.

In process of time, without any effort or desire on her part, she became the favorite wife of the Persian king - not only without effort or desire, but after she had, like another Daniel, purposed, though in the court of the Gentile, to preserve her Nazaritism, or separation to God from the customs of the people (chap. 2:15). She will be no debtor to man. She will not, as it were, take from the king of Sodom beyond the necessary things (Gen. 14). It is the Lord, and not ornaments, that gives her favor in the eyes of all who behold her; the king himself is won, and the crown royal is put upon her head.

And yet she is simply as the Jewish maiden still, and obedient to Mordecai, in the character of the day when she was brought up by him in his own house.

This was a happy beginning. She began with herself, with a full purpose to keep herself pure. And such will be found fit for the Master's use (2 Tim. 2). Jerusalem might have boasted of such a daughter, though in the palace at Shushan. She might have stood a witness of the prophet's truth: "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire." Lam. 4:7. And when in further process of time she heard of the sorrows of her people, like another Moses or Nehemiah, she forgets all that was her own, the ease and security and honors of the palace, and went forth to look only on their burdens.

This was going on happily.

She who had kept herself from defilement was the one to throw herself amid the afflictions of others. She had watched against personal entanglements, and was thus free to serve. She was already girded, and waited only for a call. Right condition of every follower of Jesus. The only due and suited attitude of one called to the holy honor of serving in God's house. Esther the queen now carefully acquaints herself with the state of her people throughout the realm of the king's dominion, and casts herself at once under their burdens.

I have before hinted at the occasion of these burdens of Israel, and it is well-known. The haughtiness of the great Agagite, who at this time had the Persian monarch at command, had not brooked the holy refusal of Mordecai, the Jew, to bow down to him; and he had prevailed so far as to get the whole nation of Israel (then scattered captives through the Persian provinces) under sentence of death, which was to be executed upon them on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of that current year.

Every Jew therefore, it may be said, carried the sentence of death in himself; a sentence, too, pronounced by a power which thought it scorn ever to change its decrees (chap. 1:19).

We might say that this same nation of Israel has been, after this manner, wonderful from the beginning and hitherto. The burning, unconsumed bush was their symbol of old, and is their symbol still (Exod. 3). They were a people under sentence of death in Egypt, as much as afterward in Persia, and have been of late centuries in Christendom. Did not Pharaoh utter another edict for their destruction? And was not God, who raises the dead, or who can dwell in a burning bush, or walk in a fiery furnace, their only helper? And have they not in the times of modern Europe been alike wonderful? This decree of the Persian was but the expression of the common history of this people, scattered and peeled, and meted out and trodden down, whose land all the rivers in their turn, in the pride of their overflowings, have spoiled (Isa. 18).

And as to Mordecai, the distinguished and godly Israelite of his day, the present faithful and lonely branch of the tree of God's planting, he seems to have been a genuine son of Abraham. He believed in Him who could raise the dead. "Abide ye here with the ass," said the patriarch to his servants, "and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you," though the lad was at that moment under the sentence of death (Gen. 22). And so Mordecai can surely count on deliverance coming, though the decree for destruction was speeding its way (chap. 4:14).

That time therefore was a moment of Israel's deepest depression. But the Lord, as we have been seeing, had an arrow hidden in His quiver, or the appointed, though as yet unnoticed, stone of help, amid the smoothing, polishing waters of the brook, soon to be ready for the sling (1 Sam. 17:40).

We have seen Esther beginning well, and going on well. She was in the school of God. Communion was light and strength from the Lord Himself to her. She had strange and very blessed intimacy with Him. Not that I speak of visions, or audiences, or trances, or anything of that nature; no, nothing of the kind. In these days, I may say, "there was no open vision" (1 Sam. 3:1). But there was within her reach, what is within the reach of faith in every age, communion with God.

She could trust God, like another Shadrach (Dan. 3). If He pleased, she doubted not that He could deliver her; but whether He pleased it or not, she had but to do her duty. She could and would venture all in the cause of His service. Her soul, like Shadrach and his dear companions, was

prepared for any consequences. "If I perish, I perish," says she. Precious, beautiful workmanship of the hand of God! fashioned and graven indeed as both a lovely and serviceable vessel of His house.

But more than this. Esther may be observed to stand in very near fellowship with the mind of God. She seems as though she had observed the divine method with these proud adversaries, for she takes God's own way exactly with wicked Haman. She is not in haste. She lays her plans to let the heart of that Amalekite fill itself to the brim with pride, that, according to the divine way, he might fall in the moment of its most towering presumption.

She has "the golden scepter" on her side, and with it the king's promise to give her whatever she might ask, even to the half of his kingdom. But she is patient. She bids the king and Haman to her banquet of wine. They come, and again the half of the kingdom is put within her grasp. But she is still patient, and bids them a second time.

Is this, I ask, mere patience? Is this mere calmness and self-possession, or nothing more (however excellent that would be) than the contradiction of the heat and impatience of the wicked? Is this merely virtue and a well-regulated heart, as opposed to the passionate way of a Herodias when in possession of the same offer (Mark 6:23)?

It may have been all this, but it was more. It was the way of one who knew and imitated God's ways in like cases. The Lord, in possession, as He is, of all power, is patient, and even for four hundred years can bear with an Amorite till the measure of his sin be filled up (Gen. 15:13-16). So here, the one who had learned from Him, the one who had been in the school of communion, can, though in the possession of the resources of a kingdom, be patient also, and let "the man of the earth" go on to the full measure of his sin. She bids Haman and the king a second time to her banquet.

And Haman that day went forth joyful and with a glad heart. He called his wife and his friends, and rehearsed all his greatness and prosperity to them, telling them moreover, as the very climax of his haughty thoughts and self complacency, how queen Esther had again invited him and the king alone to her banquet of wine on the morrow.

This is to be much observed. I need not say how all this loftiness of man was brought down in a moment. The story is known well among us. The day of the Lord was signally upon it all.

#### Lessons From the Book of Esther

History has been said to be "the narrative of the prevalence, by turns, of the several counteractive powers that sway the world; and ordinarily it happens that at the very moment when a certain power, as with a flourish of trumpets, is proclaiming its triumph, it does in that blast of pride announce the appearance of its rival. Despotisms have on many signal occasions thus boasted, and thus fallen, in one and the same day."

How true is this in God's histories, which a thoughtful, reflective mind thus discovers in the general course of the world's affairs! And how have we found it so in this history of Haman! Esther and Esther's people were delivered in the moment of deepest depression, and the controversy between hope and fear ended in the most glorious and wonderful triumph of hope.

The Jews had the sentence of death in themselves; but there is One who raises the dead, and turns the shadow of death into the morning. "The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honor. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day" (chap. 8:16, 17).

The month was turned to them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day. Esther was queen; and, as for Mordecai, he was "next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed." Chap. 10:3.

This I need not more exactly notice. But how profitable it is to watch the spirit and the path of this dear and honored woman! Her care to preserve herself pure, her deep sympathies with her brethren, her trust in the Lord, with decision of soul to do His will at all hazard! How full and instructive an example does all this set before us! And yet circumstances, as we speak, were much opposed to her. She was, I may say, "of Caesar's household" - a condition in life which must have cost a true Israelite, a real decided Nazarite, much watchfulness of spirit and self-mortifying. But her walk with God was so close and so genuine that she appears to have reached some of the deepest secrets of His mind, acting on the great adversary, as I was noticing, precisely in God's own way, nay, in very near fellowship with Him; for we see that as soon as her plan had ripened the heart of Haman, that moment the Lord began to act upon him and prepare the instruments of his destruction. For it was the very night which intervened between the two days of queen Esther's feasts that the Lord sent sleeplessness to Ahasuerus, which led to the humbling of the haughty Amalekite (chap. 6).

Let none say, then, that their circumstances are against them. Hers were eminently so. But decision of heart and singleness of eye brought her that strength which is a match for all circumstances.

This was a time of crisis. There have been others like it in the progress of the government of the world - a time when the master of the house rose up to shut the door, or to discern between the righteous and the wicked. And in this crisis, in the days of Haman and Esther, the great principles of God were expressed with peculiar decision - the exaltation of the righteous in the moment of deepest depression, and the humbling of the mighty in the hour of their proudest thoughts - characteristics which are given with striking and seasonable fitness to this little book which closes the historical volume in the Old Testament.

But the subject addresses itself to us. There is to be another crisis in the earth's history, fearful and far extended beyond all. Every previous crisis will have been but a rehearsal and a shadow of it. Deep and deadly security, like that in which the generation of Noah was folded, who "knew not" in the midst of their marriage feasts and buying and selling speculations, till the flood came, will be one feature of that day. Prosperity and its companion, pride, will give form to that day also.

Is not the mystery of such a day now working? Are not things taking a strong direction that way? If one may speak for another, the heart is conscious that the world is prospering. Are not the accommodations and embellishments of human life increasing to wonder? Is not this generation very loudly congratulating itself on what it has attained, silently pitying those who spent their days before present advantages were known, and boasting in expectation of refining and multiplying the

resources of every future hour?

The world is prospering; and we know not how soon it may be that if anyone refuse to help forward the common self-satisfaction, he must be treated as a common enemy. And what a mistake we may judge it to be (as another has expressed it) to think "that the suavity, the tolerance, the blind indifference, and the enlightened liberality, which are now the garb of an infidel spirit, belong to it by nature, or would be retained a day after it had nothing to fear."

This is all solemn. The sentence of death has not gone out yet from the wounded pride of the Amalekite against the whole company of the godly. No; it has not worked to that. The day will not come yet, but the mystery of it is abroad. The pride itself has begun to labor in the heart; the throes and energies of that passion which is to be the parent of such a decree may even now be moving secretly, and be felt, and welcomed, and nourished.

Where is strength to be gathered? If pride and intolerance be nourished in some hearts, is faith in ours? Esther may read us a lesson upon victory in an evil day. She stood in such a day, and stood more than a conqueror. Before it came, she had kept herself, and refused to defile her garments. She had been in the school of God and learned the way of strength and victory there, in communion with Himself when circumstances were all against her.

And let me add, that this communion is to be simple and affectionate; not such as will feed itself with high thoughts and strange thoughts, but such as will find Christ in the sureness and perfection of His work for sinners the great thought, the precious thought, the animating, invigorating, though simple truth that tells upon the heart with divine and wondrous virtue.

There is danger (as another has warned us) of this ceasing to give character to an age like the present, where there is a vast and varied quantity of qualifications and arguments, rather than fervor and simplicity of spirit, where, as the natural result of intellectual and religious progress, "the glory of Christ, as Savior of man, which should be always as the sun in the heavens, shines only with an astral luster."

But times of difficulty demand simple, nutritious, strengthening truth: "A different order of things around us would presently bring into play the more powerful elements of the moral life. Events may be imagined which would mar our levity, and break up the polished surface that reflects our case, and lead us home to the first principles of the gospel, and quite sicken our taste for everything but those principles; and it is under such an impression that the gospel (the simple, plain truth of God's grace and salvation) will assume its just dimensions in our sight, and the glad tidings of mercy be listened to with a new and genuine joy."

True, and also seasonable in this day of many a busy speculation, are these meditations. And most seasonable are the words of the blessed Lord Himself to His disciples, in the day that He began to talk to them of their coming troubles. "What is a man profited," He said to them, "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matt. 16:26.

Here is truth for the strengthening of the heart against the day of evil, for these words speak the excellency and the value of the glories which are to follow the day of evil. Our Lord uses the language of the merchant; He speaks of profit and loss and exchange. He contemplates a bargain;

and for the comfort of the believer He decides what a bad bargain that man would make, who would take the whole world (supposing that he could get it) in exchange for a share in the glory that is to be revealed. He is not (though this is the general apprehension) in this passage so much settling the question of personal safety, as of profit and loss.

And we all know the power of bright and sure expectations, though they may be still distant. Man will toil through dangers, weariness, and mortification, to reach such. And the Lord here witnesses to us the sureness and the brightness of our expectations, affirming His word, shortly after, by unveiling for a moment, on the holy hill, the very region of these promised glories (Matt. 17). If we believe His competence to handle these weights and measures, and to try comparative values, and then if we believe that He is able to bring suited results out of each trial, our hearts will be further fortified for every trying hour.

Peter, as it were, unconsciously vindicated the Lord's verdict on the value of the glory when he said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here."

## Evil Only Judged Fully in the Light

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The Lord's purpose in trials is often to get at the root of evil. When the fruit from that evil root is seen, the saint himself is shocked and mourns over it very sincerely. But then fresh fruit springs and will spring from it as long as the root remains untouched; but coming to the light, it is discovered and judged. A Christian may be doing a great deal out of the presence of God. Look at Job, and hear all his words; but at last the pressure brings him into the very presence of God. Then his words of repining and complaint are stopped. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself," etc. Nearness to God never lessens responsibility. When in the light, every speck will be seen - to the saint when caught up to meet the Lord - to the world when judged before the throne.

Light must make manifest. It could not hinder our joy because of our standing in such fullness of grace, and the grace too that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Peter never judged the self-confidence of his heart, that which had led to his fall, till the searching question of the Lord's which brought out his reply, "Thou knowest all things." Sadly as he had failed, yet at the bottom of his heart, the Lord's searching eye could see that he loved the Lord. Notwithstanding his going out and weeping bitterly, or the love for his Master manifested by his visit to the sepulcher, and his casting his coat about him and going through the sea to Him, Peter was not restored till the searching of the Lord brought from him, at the third inquiry, "Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

But is there not a time when the counsels of every heart will be made manifest? Yes; when this comes, every one will have praise of God. The counsels of each will have praise of God; for the desire of every saint's heart, however he may fail, is to glorify the Lord. We may make many mistakes and be drawn aside; but after all the counsel of his heart, his inmost desire is to glorify God.

Peter could no longer appeal to his purposes (his acts of course not), but simply cast himself on the Lord's all searching power. "Thou knowest all things."

Then, whereas Peter had formerly in the energy of nature professed to be ready to suffer even to death, the Lord, now that He had searched him, shows that he should serve in the breaking down of his own will, even unto the very death he, from true love to his Master, desired to suffer. Then, and not till then, Jesus says, after this full revelation of what is involved, "Follow Me." Had there been any very deep work wrought in Peter's heart by the Lord's look that melted him to tears, he would not have been the first to say, "I go a fishing."

## For All Ages

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The narratives of the Bible are not merely inspired records of what actually occurred, but presentations of great principles of action and types of character; living illustrations of human nature and of the world; mighty moral truths which have their application in all ages of man's history, and in all stages of man's condition. It is of the utmost importance that we should take this large and comprehensive view of Holy Scripture, else we shall regard the inspired volume merely as a book of one age, instead of THE BOOK for all ages.

## For Me and Thee

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Matt. 17:25-27

With a short review of some other chapters of Matthew

This chapter, when the connection is clearly seen, is of profound and touching interest. The transfiguration spoken of in the earlier part of the chapter was a turning point in the life and ministry of the blessed Lord.

After the character of those who were suited to the kingdom had been unfolded, the divinity of His Person and character of His ministry are brought before us. His disciples are then sent out with the ministry of the kingdom to the Jews - at least the poor of His flock, in His lifetime, and then till He came as Son of man. Then we have the record of the rejection of John the Baptist's ministry, and that of His own, as come in grace; and standing on the edge, so to speak, of the world, He is witness that no dealings of God could reach where His grace found, like Noah's dove, no place there for the sole of her foot. He declares that the world has been tried, and He could find no entrance for divine goodness, and they must come to Him if they would know the Father, and have rest (for the Son revealed Him in grace), and learn of Him as the Man meek and lowly of heart, and find rest to their souls in the world - a world where evil ruled, and no rest could be found, as He knew.

In chapter 12 the Jews are finally rejected, under Satan's power as a people in the last days; and the Lord disowns association with them according to the flesh; relationship with Him was by the word He preached. He leaves the house, goes to the seaside, not any longer seeking fruit in His vineyard, which bore none but bad - sowing that from which fruit was to come. The kingdom of heaven in its mystery, with an absent king, takes the place of Messiah upon earth.

In chapter 14 we have the whole scene ripening historically. John the Baptist is actually put to death, and the sovereign grace of Christ continues while the coming scene is opened. He satisfies, according to Psalm 132, the "poor with bread"; but there, I believe, according to the Messiah order. Then He dismisses the mass of Israel, and sends His disciples off, and goes up on high (a priest on high); and the disciples are tossed on the sea. Peter goes on the sea to meet Him; as soon as He is entered into the ship the wind ceases, and He is gladly received where once He had been rejected.

In chapter 15 the hollow and false religion of the Pharisees is rejected, while fully owning Israel's privileges; and sovereign grace goes out to awaken and meet faith in the rejected race of the Gentiles- according to Jewish standard, the accursed race. He was a minister of the circumcision for the faith of God, but God would not be Himself if only the God of the Jews; and the Gentiles were to glorify God for His mercy. We have then the five thousand fed, the same general principle; only now, I believe, it is the sovereign patience of God.

In chapter 16 the Church, as built by Himself, takes the place of Jewish Messiahship, and chapter 17 the kingdom in glory. Thus we have the kingdom as it is at present, the Church as built by Christ, and the heavenly glory of the kingdom, taking the place of the earthly Messiah. This is the point I desired to reach, which, indeed, characterizes all that follows - the revelation of the heavenly glory on earth, what will be in the world to come, and was now revealed to establish the faith of the disciples, though the Father's house is yet a better portion. It is found in the description of this scene in Luke 9, where they enter into the cloud from which the Father's voice came. For the scene itself, see 2 Pet. 1:16-19, reading "the word of prophecy confirmed." I have gone through the previous chapters because they lead up to the rejection of the Jews, and the new character in which Christ's Person and work were to be displayed. Here (chap. 16:20), they are forbidden to say to anyone that He was the Christ. We find the same injunction in Luke 9:21; that ministry was over. Here He tells them the Son of man must suffer and rise again. The Son of man was about to come in the glory of His Father with His angels. So Luke 9:22-27.

In a word, the suffering Son of man and the glory that should follow take the place of Messiah on earth, now disowned there, and even forbidden to be any more preached. Thus the beginning of Psalm 2 was now before Him, bringing about in another way the purposes there spoken of, and Psalm 8 in part accomplished as spoken of in Heb. 2 But the old things of Messiah on earth were over, redemption was about to be accomplished, and the new things of a glorified Man introduced. In Matt. 17:22, 23 this rejection is pressed on the disciples, and then comes the blessed and touching way in which He shows them their association with Himself as Son of God in the new place into which He is introducing His people.

The tribute here spoken of is not tribute to the civil power, but the didrachma which every grown-up Jew paid for the temple service, and which they had voluntarily imposed upon themselves in Ezra's time a tribute to Jehovah. The question which the collectors put to Peter was really whether his Master was a good Jew according to the earthly system now passing away. Peter, with the zeal so often there, yet in ignorance, at once answers, Yes. The Lord then shows divine knowledge of what had been passing by anticipating Peter, to introduce in touching grace the new place He was giving to Peter and those with him. "Of whom," says the Lord, "do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" Peter replies, "Of strangers." "Then," says the Lord, "are the children free." We are the children, you and I, of the great king of the temple, and as such, free from the tribute. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend" - bringing in Peter, as one of the children of the great king with Himself free, but not willing to offend, and then shows not divine knowledge but divine power over creation. "Go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money [a stater, two didrachmas], that take, and give unto them for

Me and thee"; showing now His divine power over creation, making the fish bring just what was wanted. And then again He puts Peter with Himself in the place of sonship by the overwhelming but unspeakably gracious words, "Give unto them for Me and thee."

Do our hearts echo these words, moved to their foundations? If Christ said "Me and thee" to us, how should we feel it? Yet He does say it. It is when a rejected Messiah, His Person and the effect of His work too (but the expression of His boundless grace in it) come forth to give us our place in

the purposes of God, that His heart delights to see it and make us see it too. Oh! for the Son of God to say to such a one as me, "Me and thee." I know it is the effect of redemption, but of a redemption He has accomplished, and a redemption which gives us a place where He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied - in seeing us in a blessing which only His heart, which answers to the Father's counsels, could have thought of for us. But what a comment of Christ's heart on the ways of God unfolded in the foregoing chapter! Thinking first of us to apply it.

## Full of Christ

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I do not know that if anyone wanted to be to the praise of God, he could do it better than by being full of Christ. I meet some aged saints full of Christ, saying, "I've done with this world, but I have Christ. The only thing I have got to speak of is what this Christ of God is-He is All." I do not believe anything is better than that. If I look around me, I see in saints, not want of intelligence, not lack of knowledge, not want of activity, but what they lack is the affections full of Christ. There is plenty of oil in the machine that is full of Christ. If the heart is full of Christ, and full of joy in the Holy Ghost, then we have got our other portion, our real portion. The early Christians were so full of Christ that all their trials, all their difficulties, sank down into nothing. Why is it not so with us?

## God Is Just in Saving or in Judging

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That it should be a righteous thing for God to judge the guilty, none can deny. Did He allow sin to pass unpunished, there would be an end to His moral government. But His throne ever maintains its authority and holiness; and, therefore, every violation of this is brought into judgment. "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?" Rom. 3:6. But the wonderful thing is, that God is as righteous in saving as in judging. He is "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (v. 26).

Now this is a marvelous fact, and demands our deepest consideration. Granted that I am guilty, that I have sinned and come short of His glory (v. 23), I have, by this means, justly incurred His wrath. How then can God, with equal justice, exempt me from that judgment, acquit me of my guilt, and give me to stand before Him justified?

This profoundly important question, one that is of vital and eternal moment to each- to you, my reader, and to myself - is fully answered in the chapter referred to; namely, Rom. 3. Let me quote at length the three blessed verses that contain the answer: "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission [passing over, margin] of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." vv. 24-26.

"At this time." What time? Well, the time subsequent to the cross. Before that point, the saints of the Old Testament enjoyed the passing over of their sins by God's forbearance, in view, doubtless, of the cross, but not the conscious forgiveness of them; but now, at the cross, full satisfaction to the throne of God was made by the death of His blessed Son and the judgment He bore on the tree, so that believers, in these New Testament times, are not passed over as to their sins, but are justified from them. The cross, therefore, furnished that which enabled God in righteousness to justify the ungodly. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus is the divine answer to our question. Leave out that redemption, and the God who can in justice save must then in justice damn; as, indeed, the soul that refuses this redemption shuts itself up to judgment. But the cross makes all the difference. The death of Him, the eternal Son of God, sent by Him, yet voluntarily coming, has met all the claims of justice. The sword is sheathed. The way is made in the blood of Christ, whereby the greatest sinner can be saved, a dying thief go to paradise, and a holy

God declare that He is just in justifying such. True, it is "by His grace," for that is the source of all. It is the spring and fount of all the rest. But it is not merely grace. It is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Hence, the ground is certain. I have not a mere vague hope in God's mercy now that, by His grace, I am a believer. He is not only merciful, but just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. His justice seals my security. The whole moral character of God enlists itself on the behalf of the weakest believer in Jesus. What comfort! what strength! what a source of song! How gladly the heart, thus divinely set free, seeks that, as justified by faith before God, it may, at the same time, be justified by works before men. See Jas. 2

What a wonderful thing that God should be just in justifying! That He is just in judging, all can see; but think how wondrous must that redemption be, that maintains His holiness while it makes us who believe "the righteousness of God" in Christ! It is all God's work.

## God's Counsels and Man's Responsibility

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The counsel and foreknowledge of God in no way lessen the responsibility of men, though superficial minds may be disposed to think so. For example: Long even before Isaac was born, God told Abraham that his seed should be strangers in a land that was not theirs, and be held down and oppressed four hundred years. Their stay in Egypt, therefore, was foreseen. Now God can, if He please, make the devices of evil men work out His ways. In saying this we do not mean that He originates them; for that would make Him the author of evil, which could never be. In process of time the brethren of Joseph conspired against him, and he was sold as a slave and carried down to Egypt, whither Jacob and the rest subsequently followed. Thus, by their hateful devices, they helped to fulfill that which had been foreseen and foretold. But did that excuse their evil deed? Not at all. God's hand was not in their wickedness, though He made it subserve His ends - a very different thing.

So with the putting to death of the Lord Jesus. He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, but this did not make those who crucified Him less responsible. God certainly did not move their hearts to do this - the devil did - but He made Satan's malice and man's hatred to work out His counsel, thus showing His wisdom, and leaving them wholly responsible for their deeds.

## God's Love Demonstrated

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Wretched man thought that God did not wish to give him something through jealousy of his happiness, but this was the lie of Satan. God who seemed to refuse a fruit to man innocent has given His Son to man a sinner. And the heart of man is so perverted that he has no confidence though God has given His Son. The effect of the death of Jesus is to inspire us with perfect confidence. The death of Jesus puts us in relationship with God without fear and without difficulty, because it clothes us when we are naked and miserable. This confidence gives us peace and obedience, because nothing is more precious than the love of God; and this love makes us prefer obedience and its consequences in spite of all the difficulties.

## A Good Conscience Before God: the Apostle Had It

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### Acts 22

The Holy Spirit often puts Paul forward because in him are manifested the ways of the heart, and this under grace. He displayed a patience truly admirable in caring for the Church. We can sound the ways of God and of the human heart in the history that the Holy Spirit has given us of Paul. He had an immense activity and great force of character. This chapter contains circumstances which show what a good conscience before God is.

If the conscience is not good, the Holy Spirit is grieved; and some, having put it away, have even made shipwreck concerning faith. If a child has offended his father, he is no more at ease before him, and cannot open his heart.

In the history of Paul, we see his conversion in verses 316. Then he is in a trance, or ecstasy (vv. 17-21), in which the Lord commands him to depart from Jerusalem. It is for Him to regulate these things. Paul in his answer says to the Lord that he is precisely the man suited to bear witness for Him at Jerusalem. I have persecuted Thee, and they know it; will they not see in me the efficacy of Thy grace? Such was the reasoning of Paul. But the Lord takes no account of it.

That which strikes one most is that Paul recalls to the Lord all his iniquity; and this, because his conscience was perfectly purged before God. It is necessary that it should be thus if one would dare to speak to God in detail of all our offenses, of all our sins. There is a false repose in a child of God when the conscience is not perfectly good and opened out before God. Paul recounts before the eyes of the Lord all the detail of his sin. He does not confine himself to saying, Thou knowest all; he puts all before God, without having the idea that anything can be imputed to him. He talks about his sins as of an affair irrevocably settled. He can even present these sins as being a motive for an apostle for bearing testimony to Jesus in Jerusalem. Paul reasons with the Lord as a person with his intimate friend. This is what Ananias also does (Acts 9:13-16).

When God has purified the conscience for us by His perfect grace, the interests of Jesus are ours. Jesus is no longer our judge; He has taken our sins, He has united us to Himself, having taken our cause in hand. Instead of seeing in Jesus our judge, we see in Him a friend. Instead of being affrighted at Christ, we are full of confidence in Him, because we are assured of His love. There is in the heart a complete change.

The reasoning of Paul was true, as we see in 1 Tim. 1:15. God had prepared Paul, in that he had been the greatest enemy of the Lord Jesus, and chief of sinners; because if Paul had spoken of other things than God's righteousness by faith, and man's perfect pardon on believing God's testimony concerning His Son, his mouth must have been closed.

Peter was prepared by denying Christ. That closed his mouth for every other thing than preaching grace. They had, the one and the other, a profound conviction of sin. If we would be strong and bear testimony to grace, we need to have the sense of the evil from whence God has taken us up.

If the occasion presents itself, we can speak before men of our sins, provided that all has been laid clearly before God. The Christian converts at Ephesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit, brought their books of magic and confessed all their actions. If the love of God is shed about in our hearts, we have more shame for our sins before God than before men. To have a good conscience, we must keep the conscience pure. Paul exercised himself to have in everything a conscience without offense toward God and man. When we have grieved the Holy Spirit, we do not feel the love of God in the same way. A conscience defiled cannot be at its ease before God; and when God enters, there are dark corners that one hides from Him. It is impossible then to have that perfect confidence in reasoning with God as a friend (see 1 John 3:19-21). If we have beforehand the sense of our feebleness, we shall be forced to seek strength in God.

Can we with boldness recall before God all we have thought, said, and done? To be unable to do so, is not to be in the presence of God; to do so, is to recall to God His immense grace in having pardoned us. Without Christ, who would venture such things? Sin hidden corrupts the heart, hardens the conscience, and renders us blind and proud. It is of all moment for us that our conscience should be entirely emptied before God. We can afterward forget these things; we shall not be judged because of it. Be faithful in this sense - to have a pure conscience before God and men.

## Great Joy

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Luke 2:10

Joy is as characteristic of God's people, as its absence is marked in human systems. Oriental reveries, platonic dialogs, and, in short, all philosophies, ancient or modern, know nothing of this coveted emotion. Yet moderns know less of it than ancients. This would be but natural, seeing that now there is a turning away from the One True Light; whereas of old there was but the warning of conscience, and that often dimmed. It is vain then to turn to ancient literature for holy, overflowing joy; although much of the sweet and pathetic is to be found, clad too with a perfection of form that few moderns have attained, and none have surpassed. So likewise may there not be somewhat of sweetness to be found in literature of our day, such as hovers on the borderland of night and day, beautiful twilight lines, when it is open to the weavers of these fancies to emerge into the clear light of Christian truth? But, however it be as to this, by positive statement as to Scripture, as by negative inference from non-Christian writers, there is abundant ground for saying that joy is a distinctive mark of Christianity, as it will be of restored Israel. Do we not often forget this?

"Great joy"! How fittingly these words are found thus early in this most delightful Gospel wherein the thoughts of so many hearts stand revealed- thoughts gladdened and renewed by holy joy. How different is the experience of Anna and Simeon, of the woman that was a sinner, of the prodigal (though doubtless the joy of the father exceeded), of the converted robber on the cross, of the two favored ones with whom the Lord companied on the wonderful journey to Emmaus -how different the experience of each and all of these from the sad misgivings and perplexities and confessions of heathen sages! I speak with some little knowledge, and am bold to say nothing any of them ever said could comfort the heart, let alone give such joy. How could they? For divine comfort and joy we must go to the Word of God, to the Psalm of David preeminently in the Old Testament, to the New Testament generally. Nor anywhere in the later oracles shall we find more gladness than in this exquisite Gospel of Luke, which a brilliant writer of the last century, but an apostate from the faith, called "the most beautiful book in existence."

Are we not too much afraid of joy? There is much to sadden in life - our failure as believers, the state of the world, the confusion of the Church, the comparative fewness of believers, the myriads who are indifferent - all this should be deeply felt.

## The Holiness of Grace

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It is well to cherish the fact that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," and that in Christianity we have God's nature declared - that is love. But it is equally important to remember that "God is light"; and hence the remarkable statement in Heb. 12:29, "Our God is a consuming fire."

Notice it does not say that God is such, nor that the God of Israel was a consuming fire, but that our God, the God revealed in Christianity, is not only a fire, but one that consumes.

The full force of this searching truth must never be toned down nor explained away. It must never be affirmed that God out of Christ is a consuming fire; for such a God cannot be conceived. There is no God out of Christ, no idea of God but as seen in our Lord Jesus Christ. He was "God manifest in... flesh" - the full and perfect expression of all that God is.

Could it be that the law, given as it was amid the lightnings and terrors of Sinai, was a system of greater essential purity and holiness than Christianity? Far be the thought!

Can grace be unholy? No; it may be, and alas! often is, turned into lasciviousness and its character sadly traduced by its would-be professors; but grace is as intrinsically holy and as separate from sin as the law. It teaches the very highest lessons of purity (see Titus 2:12), while, on the other hand, it does for the poor sinner what the law could never do - it saves him. No, mount Zion in its wealth of grace is just as holy as mount Sinai in its unsparing condemnation of the transgressor. The two "mounts" are equally holy, as are the covenants which they represent, and the ministries which flow from them.

But grace may be abused, and its patience misconstrued. Hence the deep meaning and value of the statement that "our God is a consuming fire."

God in grace, though He bears with the sinner and with an unfaithful Church, is as intolerant of evil as God presented in the law. He is the same God in His essential abhorrence of sin at all times, and hence the perfect suitability of the exhortation, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Beloved, we need such reverence and godly fear today. Grace has for many years been clearly unfolded, and myriads of souls have enjoyed its precious liberty; but we may see on all hands a lightness, a levity, a trifling with divine things, that tells too plainly the lack of reverence and godly fear. May there be no surrender of the liberty of grace, but let us remember that the God whom we serve in grace is a "consuming fire."

## The Holy Mount — Place Which Is Called Calvary: a Solemn Contrast

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"Behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. 17:5.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Matt. 27:45, 46.

The time had come for His disciples to be plainly warned of all that was about to happen. So it is written, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Matt. 16:21. It is the cross, but the cross rather from man's side; for there is no mention here of those deeper sufferings in which atonement was wrought. The tide of human hate and rebellion against the Lord and against His Anointed was rising rapidly, and was about to culminate in the final rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God.

From every point of view it was an awful ending to such a path as His had been, so full of grace and blessing for sinful men - awful, I mean, for those who were the instruments of bringing it all about. For think of the amazing fact that the Son of God was here on earth. Not with outward pomp and splendor had He come; not in flaming fire such as attended the giving of the law on Sinai's solemn mount; not with hosts of mighty angels such as shall swell His train in the approaching day of judgment. He came not thus; for sin was here, and men were alienated from God, duped and blinded by their malignant foe; and He would free them from this hateful yoke. Therefore He came in the fashion of a lowly man, His deity enshrouded in a tabernacle of flesh and blood. He came, full of grace and truth.

No words like His had ever fallen on mortal ears, nor since the world began had deeds been seen such as were witnessed wherever the Savior went. Yet was He despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. They that sat in the gate spoke against Him, and He was the song of the drunkards. Nor would the heart of man, energized by Satan, be content till He had been apprehended like a thief, crowned in derision with a bramble crown, and crucified with malefactors for His companions. What an ending! and what an exhibition of humanity was there!

Behold Him then - the One who had given eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, tongues to the dumb, and life to the dead - who had cleansed the leper, wiped the tears from weeping eyes, bound up the broken heart, and whose words were words of eternal life - behold Him, I say, upon a common Roman cross, and that cross the only reward that man gave for all He had said and done!

But all this, so plainly foreseen and foretold by the Lord, is but the dark background of the picture, and serves to throw into bolder, brighter relief the lovely scene on the holy mount. Taking with Him Peter, James, and John, He went into a high mountain apart and was transfigured before them. They gaze upon Him, and, lo! His face shines as the sun, and His raiment is white as the light. And as they look, being eyewitnesses of His majesty, a cloud of glory overshadows them; and they

fear, and fall on their faces. Then from out of that cloud a voice is heard; it is the voice of God the Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

It is thus that God the Father gave honor and glory to Jesus. Thus did He confess Him as His beloved Son, and the One in whom He found His good pleasure. Every thought, every word, every impulse of his heart, was, like incense pure and sweet, ever ascending to God the Father, and furnishing, so to speak, fresh motives for the Father's love.

But we must turn from "the holy mount," where the heart, captivated by its beauty, loves to linger, and betake ourselves to "the place which is called Calvary," where we shall see Jesus in other scenes. On the cross we behold Him now. Tread gently, O my soul, for thou art on holy ground. There is no overshadowing cloud of glory here, no voice from heaven, no Moses, no Elias, no angel such as ministered unto Him in dark Gethsemane. Instead of a face shining as the sun, we see the One who was marred more than any man. Gloom and darkness without, answered by greater gloom and darkness within, which at last found utterance in the piercing cry of "Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani?" Passing with rapidity of thought from Calvary to the mount of transfiguration, and from the mount of transfiguration back to Calvary, we can but exclaim, What a mighty revolution is here! On that mount honored and glorified, on this bruised and forsaken; there God the Father saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; here the Son crying, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Say, my soul, dost thou understand this great mystery?

How this utterly destroys the dishonoring thought that the cross to Christ was only a martyr's death! Who has ever heard of God's martyrs being abandoned, and obliged to confess in a loud voice, and in presence of their foes, that they were forsaken of God in the hour of their extremity? No; have they not gone boldly to the stake, and joyously welcomed the fagot and the flame? Sustained by the power and presence of God, they have sung songs of holy triumph while the devouring fire has been doing its deadly work, and their faces have shone like an angel's. But it was not so with Jesus, though none had served as He had served, or loved as He had loved.

We are not left to find a solution for all of this. In vain would be the task, did heaven throw no light upon the otherwise dark problem. One verse in Isa. 53 explains it all. Let me quote it: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." With that verse in view, the mystery which enshrouds the cross passes away; and we understand how "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."

## The Image of His Person

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God prohibited man's making any image of God; but He presented Himself to us in the face of Jesus His Son, so perfectly, so identically, so completely one with Himself, that the Son could say, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Wonder of wonders! In a Man was presented down here all that could delight the Father! To think that my feet tread the earth that His feet trod, who came out from the Father! How very close He comes to men, leaving them without excuse; but men care not for Him!

## In the Family

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It is of little use attempting to teach our children the Word of God if our lives are not governed by that Word. We do not believe in making the blessed Word of God a mere schoolbook for our children; to do so is to turn a delightful privilege into a wearisome drudgery. Our children should see that we live in the very atmosphere of Scripture-that it forms the material of our conversation when we sit in the bosom of the family, in our moments of relaxation. Have we not rather to be deeply humbled in the presence of God when we reflect upon the general character and tone of our conversation at the table, and in the family circle? How little there is of Deut. 6:7! How much of "foolish talking" and "jesting, which are not convenient"! How much evil speaking of our brethren, our neighbors, servants of Christ! How much idle gossip! How much worthless small talk!

## Isaac

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It has been the common experience of all ages among the elect of God to see in some a feebleness of expression of the same mind than in others. We see it all about us every day, and find the witness of it in Scripture abundantly.

It is found in Isaac, in contrast with his father Abraham.

Abraham had been called out of his country and from among his kindred, detached from all the associations of nature and life and circumstances which the world had made important to him. He was to go into a land where he was a perfect stranger, and there lead a life, the springs of which were in God, and which had to be formed by faith and not by nature.

Isaac was not such a one. He was to live where he had been born. He was never called from home. But still his faith was tried, as it had been in Abraham. God's Word was to be his rule and his life, as it had been his father's, though in circumstances not so striking and peculiar.

A famine touched the land where Isaac was born, and it was Isaac's calling under God to abide there. If Abraham had been called from his home, Isaac's call kept him at home. And the famine came to test Isaac's faith and obedience there, as Abraham's had been tested in Mesopotamia by the call of God.

And Isaac stood this test, as Abraham had. It was not so fine and bold an expression, but it was an expression of the same principle, or life, of faith. "Get thee out of thy country," God had said to Abraham, and I will do so and so with thee; but to Isaac, God now says, "Sojourn in this land," and I will do so and so with thee.

Here was a different word, but it was exactly the like test of the same principle of faith. It was not so bold and striking, I grant; it had not so much of the martyr character in it. It does not elevate Isaac so high in our thoughts. But so it is now, as it was then; and there is comfort in all this. The small and the great are alike before Him. To some it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake. But the small and the great are alike before Him. There is the eye, and there is the foot in the body. Nay, there is the thirtyfold, and the sixtyfold, and the hundredfold in the husbandry. There is, indeed, the sowing bountifully; and there is the sowing sparingly.

Let not the weak say, I am not of God, because I am not strong. Let not Isaac, because he is not Abraham, forget that the God of grace, yea, and the God of glory, has said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

And we find in the 26th chapter of Genesis that as Isaac by faith continued in that land, because of God's word, though there was a famine there, God blessed him as He had said unto him - just as He blessed Abraham, who, because of the same word, left his own land; for we read, "Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him."

## Jeremiah and His Times: the Christian and These Times

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The Christian should sense the character of this present time through which we are passing. The great powers that are destined to fill out the action of Christendom's closing day are practicing themselves, each in its several sphere, with great earnestness and skill. These powers are the Civil and the Ecclesiastical.

I do not doubt but that for a season the Ecclesiastical will prevail. The woman is to ride for a while, and is the symbol, as I surely judge, which signifies the supremacy of that which takes the place of the Church. And this present moment is marked by her efforts to mount the saddle. And she is so adroitly directing those efforts that I doubt not success will soon attend them, and then the blood of the saints may flow afresh.

The civil power, however, is not idle. The wondrous advance that it is making every day in the cultivation of the world is the proof of great skill and activity on its part. It is largely boasting and showing what it can do, and pledging what further it means to do.

At this moment each of these powers is abroad in the scene of action, and men's minds are divided between them. They are, in a sense, rivals and opposed. There is the commercial energy and the religious energy, the one erecting its fairs and exhibitions and such like, and the other its religious entrenchment. The attention of the children of men is divided between them; but the saints who know the cross of Christ as the relief of their conscience, and the ground of their separation from the world, are equally apart from both.

I doubt not but that the civil power will yield to the religious for a time; and the woman will ride again, though her state and greatness will be but short, for the civil power will take offense and remove her.

For between these powers there is at times confederacy, and then at times there is enmity.

If we, in God's grace, keep a good conscience toward Christ and the truth, we may count upon it that no inheritance or portion in the earth is worth many years' purchase (Lev. 25:15).

I have been sensible lately how much the language and spirit of Jeremiah suits these times. He lived in the daily observation of evil and iniquity advancing in the scene around him, though it was called by God's name, and was indeed His place on the earth. The house of prayer had become a den of thieves. He knew, likewise, that the judgment of God was awaiting it all; but withal, he looked for sure and happy days in the distance which lay beyond the present corruption and the coming judgment.

He mourned over it; he also testified against it. And like his Master (John 7:7), he was hated for his testimony.

He was, however, full of faith and hope touching the future; and therefore he laid out his money in the purchase of Hanameel's field (chap. 32). All this was beautiful - the present sorrow, the

certainty of approaching judgment, and the hope of closing, crowning glory. This is a pattern for our spirit.

And I observe another feature of character or of power in the prophet. He was not to be seduced from the conclusions of faith by occasional circumstances or fair, promising appearances. This is seen in chapter 37.

The Chaldean army had broken up their camp at the walls of Jerusalem, because of the arrival of the Jews' Egyptian allies. But Jeremiah left the city, for he could not but hold the conclusion of faith that Jerusalem was doomed of God; he was not deceived by the flattering appearance of a moment like that (Jer. 37:5-15).

This is a fine exhibition of a soul walking by the light of God, not only through darkness, but through darkness that seemed to be light - and with all this, he was a suffering witness.

Things are advancing and prospering as far as the accommodations of social life go. But the moral of the scene in the eye of faith is more serious than ever. The apostate powers of man are ripening themselves into their most abundant exhibition. There is somewhat of rivalry between them just for the present. The secular and the religious powers are apart as yet. Each has its respective votaries and worshipers. But confederacy is to succeed for a time, I believe. The world must, even for its own ends, for a season, adopt religion; and then for that season the woman will ride the beast again, that man's system may grow solid as well as extended, and propose itself as the thing that has earned for itself a title to conform all and everything to itself.

Separation is the Christian's place and calling - separation because of heavenly citizenship, and oneness with an already risen and ascended Christ. Abraham's was a very complete separation. It was twofold. He was separated from the natural associations of Mesopotamia, "country... kindred... and father's house," and from the moral associations of Canaan, or its iniquities and idols.

May the Lord, in the thought of these solemn truths, be more real and near to us! May the prospect of His presence be more familiarly before us, and the hope of His glory be found lying more surely and certainly in the very midst of the affections and stirrings of our hearts!

## Brief Notes on John 13 and 14

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What a blessed thing to be one of the Lord's very own! How we are valued by Him! First, "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me." How can we measure the preciousness of such a gift? Second, redeemed with His precious blood-His own that way. And third, His own as sealed by the Spirit! How blessed to think of ourselves as His own in this threefold way! And it is very blessed too to think of His love which never gives up its object.

Not "supper being ended," but "supper being come," or "during supper" (v. 2). The thought of betraying the Lord had already been instilled into Judas's heart, but Satan had not yet taken possession of him. What a contrast between Peter's love at the beginning, and his love at the end of this chapter! Poor, impetuous Peter! What a breakdown must ensue when pressure is brought to bear, if we are trusting to our own love! But there was all the difference between Peter and Judas. The latter was an apostle and a disciple, but he was not born again. Peter, on the contrary, was truly born again, besides being an apostle.

What a wonderful display of grace we get in verses 3 and 1. This action of the Lord was typical; they did not understand it then, but He intimated they would know hereafter, not when they got to heaven, but when the Spirit of truth came who should guide them into all truth.

Verses 5-8. The Lord was here, and in His marvelous grace had part with the disciples; but now He was going to be the absent One, and He wanted them to have part with Him; and (as often with us also) Peter's mistakes are used to bring out truth. Verses 9 and 10. I understand three words are translated "washing"; one having reference to inanimate things, nets, robes, etc.; another, to bathing of the whole person; and the third, to washing a part of the body, such as the hands or feet. The first word here is "bathed." This is the action of the Word by the Spirit of God in cleansing us from sin's defilement. "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Chap. 15:3. This is not expiation, which is by blood, but purification; and, thank God, we are clean every whit through the operation of His precious word when we were born again.

But walking through this world, our feet are exposed to defilement. Our blessed Lord, on the contrary, was "the undefiled [One] in the way." Also, we are often defiled in our walk; and we need the service of that blessed One who "loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." Eph. 5:25-27. There we have His love, past, present, and future. Meanwhile, He desires that we have part with Him; and this is communion, to be enjoyed day by day. What interrupts communion is defilement contracted down here. The Lord's service as Priest is to succor us in our weakness, that we might not sin; but His advocacy is for us, should we have sinned. We need Him as both, and we need to have our feet cleansed constantly. Only One can do it, and He does it in His own wonderful love.

Verse 11. Then He refers to His own example, and shows us that we should wash one another's feet.

I was thinking of the continuity of the Lord's service, until we are in a scene where the place of the laver is taken by the sea of glass-consolidated purity.

Chapter 14:1 and 2. "I would have told you"; that is, He would have corrected any false hopes. Verse 3. We cannot measure the comfort of these words to the saints. But that is not all the comfort. We have been reminded of the presence of the Holy Ghost. Let us dwell on verses 15 and 16. While here, the Lord Himself was their Comforter or Paraclete. And He had kept them. Now He was about to leave them, and would send them another Comforter-the Holy Ghost. The world would not receive the Lord when here; they cannot receive the Spirit, for He was never presented as an object. He is here not to speak from Himself as a source, but to testify of the Lord Jesus. "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." That is, I take it, the contrast between both Comforters-the Lord was only here for a little while-the Spirit abides till we are conducted to the glory.

Verses 19 and 20. "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." We should not have had this if the Holy Ghost was not here.

## Lectures on the Books of Chronicles: 2 Chronicles 2:4-4

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### 2 Chron. 2:4-4

Now, Solomon represents a wholly different state of things; and persons may ask, Then is there no type here? To be sure there is, but it is not the type of Christianity. It is the type of the millennial kingdom; it is the type of what God is going to do. And if persons were to say to me, Do you mean to say that there will never be anything grand for this world? is all the world to be only for the devil - only for unbelief and flesh? I say, No, I maintain what God means; and there I differ entirely from my good friends the dissenters in this particular - that they do not look for this future dealing of God for the earth. They regard the present as being the closing term of God with the world. Now I believe the contrary. I believe that the present time is God's calling a people for heaven - calling a people on heavenly principles for Christ, founded on the cross, who are waiting for the glory. These are the two terms of Christian existence. Our starting point is the cross, and our terminus is the glory of the Lord Jesus. We are bound by, and we are now between, those two points. We are strangers and pilgrims. The cross has separated us from the world, and we are waiting for the Lord to bring us into His own heavenly abode - the mansions in the Father's house.

But when the Lord comes and takes the Church, has He done with everything? Is that all? Does not God mean to bless the world? Does not He mean to bless Israel? Does He not mean to bless the nations? I am sure of it. It is not to me a question at all. Persons may say, Well, we must not be too bold; we must not be too confident of what we do not know. But I think we ought to be confident of what we know, and I do not expect persons to be confident of what they do not know. On the contrary, I advise them not to be. Yet I suppose that every Christian is confident about something. Is he not confident of his own sins, to begin with? Is he not confident of the Savior? Very well, then he cannot speak too boldly of both, for I do not sympathize with those that are very sure of salvation and do not feel their sinfulness. I think it is a dangerous kind of confidence.

If I am true before God in the feeling of my sins, I am privileged to be equally sure of the blessedness of my salvation, because He is a Savior for the lost; and I cannot exaggerate either. But if you admit that principle as to so all-important a thing as the sins that expose you to hell, and the salvation that will bring you to heaven - if we are confident about that, we might well be confident about anything. There is nothing so hard as that - nothing. There is nothing that required such an immense conquering of difficulties as the delivering us from hell and the bringing us to heaven; and Jesus has undertaken both, and will as surely as He has accomplished the one, so the other.

But there must be an immense gap in the thoughts of any Christian - I care not who he is, or what - if he thinks that the Lord is merely going to bring people out of the world to heaven. Has He made the world for nothing? Was the world made merely to be the football of Satan? Is it merely the sport of the enemy of God? No, He means to wrest this world from the enemy's grasp, and He means to make this world a happy world; for the poor political quacks of the world have proved their total futility, and their inability to remedy the present state of disorder. He is the true physician

in every sense, and the great wonder-worker; and He will heal the world of all its plagues and evils that are now showing themselves, as we know, to be incurable distempers, but not so to Him. The mischief is not that man cannot heal them, but that man pretends to heal them; for I quite admit that it is no disrespect to any man to say that he cannot heal this poor sin-stricken world. No doubt about it, but the pretension to do it is bad, and that is just where man shows his folly - pretending to do what only God can, and what God does through the suffering of His own Messiah.

Here is the joy to me -that this glorious state of the world by-and-by is not to be apart from the cross any more than Solomon is from David. Solomon reigns in David's stead, and the reign of Solomon is the necessary complement of the sufferings of David. The two are bound up together in the most remarkable manner, and give us this complete type which I have been endeavoring to show. But then it is the type not of a people taken up to heaven after suffering upon earth, but the type of the power and glory of God that will shine from the heavens upon the earth. And therefore you see the true answer to people who reason. And it has always been a great question among theologians whether the future state of blessedness is to be on the earth which is to be metamorphosed or sublimated into a heavenly state, or whether the people of God in their risen condition are to be in heaven.

Now, I say both are true - not exactly that the earth will ever become heaven, but that all the saints that have suffered from the beginning of the world till the Lord returns, from Abel downward, will be a heavenly people. And therefore it is quite a mistake to suppose that because now the Church is heavenly in its calling, therefore the saints that are departed will not be heavenly too. It was true, the heavenly calling was not revealed to them; and they were not blest, as we are, with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. But they are the saints of the high places; they are the saints of the heavenlies too. They shall judge the world; they shall judge angels, just as truly as we. They will be caught up to meet the Lord, and we shall be with them, and they with us, in the presence of God. I do not mean to say that there will be no distinctions. That, again, is another mistake; but I maintain that this is the truth of Scripture most plainly.

But then God means to convert Israel, and this is the reason for which Israel is now kept - kept in spite of their unbelief, kept in spite of their hostility. They are the great fomenters of all infidelity. There is hardly a wicked thought of modern infidels, no matter who they may be, but what is but the evolution of the old infidelity of Spinoza and other infamous Jews of past days. The Jews have always been the keenest and the subtlest weavers of the web of infidelity. Well now, in spite of all that, God watches over them. They are in the house - the city of refuge. They are not permitted to be destroyed, although they deserve it. The avenger of blood must have destroyed them otherwise. They are kept there till "the death of the high priest which is anointed with... oil." When the Lord leaves His present place of priest in heaven - when He terminates that character of priesthood which He now occupies - then the blood-stained one will return to the land of his possession. That is the future that is for Israel by-and-by. There will no doubt be a sifting out of the guilty. There will be not only the manslayer that is innocent of murder by the grace of God, but there will be the murderer that will be put to death, because there will be a judgment. He will stand before the congregation for judgment. The Lord will destroy some of those murderers - kill them before His face, as it is said in the Gospel. They are to be slain before Him. But others grace will count, because they are converted, and because they confess their sin. Grace will justify them. This is the double type of the one guilty, and the other not, who might be in the city of refuge.

I refer to this here because it is so intimately connected with the subject of this book - the type of the kingdom, the grand kingdom that the Son of David will bring in in that day for the earth. And there is the grand mistake of Popery, for instance, in using all these scriptures for the Church now. These scriptures suppose power - suppose the exercise of earthly righteousness, as I shall show presently. That is not the character of the Church. The character of the Church is to be persecuted, not to exercise power. The character of the Church is to have heavenly and not earthly glory; so Popery has been guilty of the greatest possible departure from it. But not Popery only. It is a natural snare to the heart, because natural people like to be comfortable in this world; people like to be something. No wonder. It is exactly what the heart would covet, and this is what requires a great deal of faith to judge and to refuse.

Well then, Solomon is seen here not only at the head of Israel, but also controlling the Gentiles and making use of them as the servants of these great purposes; and so he demands timber in abundance. "Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build [shall be] wonderful great. And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that

cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil."

Then in the 3rd chapter. "Solomon began to build the house of Jehovah at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where [Jehovah] appeared unto David his father in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Oman the Jebusite." v. 1.

There again you observe the link. The glory is built upon the suffering. It was there that the sacrifice was offered; it was there that the destroying angel's hand was stayed. It was on mount Moriah. It was there, too, on the threshing-floor of the Gentile, because there must be that link. You see, it was by the hands of lawless men that the Jews crucified their own Messiah. And, accordingly, it was on the threshing-floor of Oman the Jebusite, the enemy that had been in possession of Jerusalem. We find the wonderful wisdom of God which marks this type. So the house, then, is prepared with all magnificence; but into all its details I do not pretend to go.

It is always a great thing, in looking at Scripture, never to go beyond what you know. That gives you firmness, because a person who pretends to know more than he does, must, after all, if he is an honest man, admit it to some extent. He can hardly pretend to honesty if he disguises it. But it is a great thing not to go beyond our measure, because then we can speak distinctly; whereas, otherwise, at the very best we must be somewhat ambiguous, or - what is a very great fault in dealing with the Word of God - rash. Oh, it is a serious thing to impute to God what God does not say, and to run the risk of making the God of truth appear a liar. And so it must be, where men guess instead of waiting to learn; but then we must always wait to learn, and I believe that where we have the faith to wait God will give us to learn.

I abstain, therefore, purposely in this case from saying some things that I have a judgment about, but that are not necessary. There is only one point of deep interest that I will speak of, and that is the distinction between the cherubim here and the cherubim of the ark in the tabernacle. When the ark was brought into the temple here, the wings of the cherubim looked out toward the house; that is, instead of looking "inward" - which is a mistake in our version - they really looked outward. In the tabernacle, on the contrary, the cherubs looked upon the blood that was upon the mercy seat.

All their attention was occupied with that. The cherubim were the emblems of God's judicial authority. Now this is just exactly the difference. Righteousness now is so perfectly satisfied that it has no other task than to proclaim the greatness of the victory that Christ has won for us - no other work, as far as we are concerned, but to clothe us with the best robe. How precious for us! The righteousness of God is that which preserves, for no sword is in the hand there. In the garden of Eden the cherubs had a flaming sword. It was to guard and keep off man. But in the tabernacle the cherubs are simply the witnesses of what grace has done. They have nothing to do. They are guarding, not guarding man from it, but maintaining guard, as it were, even over the perfection of what grace has done for sinful man. But in the temple it is another thing. There the cherubs, or witnesses of the judicial power of God, look outward. It is now a question of righteous governing.

That is not the case now in the gospel. Righteousness does not govern. In the Millennium, righteousness will reign through grace. That is a totally different state of things. I do not mean as to the work of Christ, because that is the same work no matter when or where. The work of Christ is always grace reigning through righteousness. But I am speaking now of the character of the millennial reign; and I say that the great distinctive feature then will be not grace reigning, but righteousness. "A king shall reign in righteousness," and "princes are to rule in judgment." That is the point of it; and hence, therefore, as we see in this very case of Solomon, so he acted. It was on that principle that he slew Joab - on that principle also that he dealt with Shimei who had been spared during the time of David, the man of grace, the witness of grace. But under Solomon it could not be. It was perfectly right that they should die. It was not a mistake; it was a right thing; it was according to the principle that was then established; just as when the Lord Jesus was here upon earth, He said, "I am not come to destroy men's lives, but to save." But when He comes in glory, He will destroy; and it will be as right then to destroy, as now it is His glory to save.

Hence, then, we must distinguish. If we do not do so, the Word of God will be a mass of confusion to us, or we shall make fearful confusion with it, which is exactly what people do. That is, they do not rightly divide the word of truth. Now, if we only understand the Scriptures, everything will be in its place - everything in its due season and order. That is what I am endeavoring to help Christians to by the suggestions that I am making upon these books; that is, to help them to apply rightly the precious Word of God, whether it be typical or anything else.

I say, then, that the cherubs look outward; they look to the house, and that is the great point. It is the old house, because it was the sign of the judicial power of God that was going everywhere throughout the earth with its center in Jerusalem. But God's power was now dealing from that center outside; and, although there was an inner circle of Israel, the circumference of blessing was the earth itself - I might say the universe, only we are here looking simply at the earth.

And further, let us note that there were two pillars, the sign of divine stability. This kingdom, when it shall be in the hands of the Lord Jesus, will not be a mere type, but a reality. It will never dissolve through the weakness of man. It shall not be left to others. Hence, therefore, as the witness of it, there were two pillars - Jachin and Boaz. These show as a figure, but only as a witness. "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

Aaronic-type priesthood on high, He will come forth in His Melchisedec character of priesthood; and Israel will return to the land of their inheritance in peace and prosperity. The writer of these articles on Chronicles gives further exposition on the cities of refuge in his Lectures on the

Pentateuch.

## Light Shining

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We are told in the Word to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16). Too often we reverse this precept, and let our works shine that our light may be seen to our own glory. Hence the danger of speaking or writing about our own activities. The intention may be good, but it is seldom done without leading - even if unconsciously - to the exaltation of self. If, on the other hand, we are careful to let our light shine before men, our works, like our blessed Lord, cannot be hid.

## Look: How to Be Saved

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"Look"

Here we have another of those expressive little words which embody so much in their brief compass, and open up a wide field of truth before the vision of the soul. We have a lovely instance of the use of this word in Isa. 45 "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." v. 22.

In the preceding verses we have a very fine statement of the character of the One to whom we are told to look. "Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray to a god that cannot save. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? who hath told it from that time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside Me; A JUST GOD AND A Savior; there is none beside Me."

Here then is the One to whom we are told to "look." He is "a just God." But if this were all, a guilty sinner dare not look to Him for anything but judgment and eternal condemnation. The only possible issue of a meeting between a just God and a guilty man, is the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. A just God must punish sin. He cannot pass over a single speck or stain. It would involve the denial of His nature and the overthrow of His government were He to pass over the smallest atom of sin. It cannot possibly be. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity." Sin, wherever it is found, can only be met by the just judgment of God.

But mark the beautiful and most marvelous combination! Blessed be His name, we are not called to "look" merely to "a just God." This would be terrible. Yes, it would be inevitable destruction. But when we listen to the other title which grace has linked on to "a just God," all is changed. He is not only "a just God," but "a Savior." Precious fact for us poor sinners!

But how can God be just and a Savior? The cross yields the glorious answer. There justice had all its very highest claims answered. There the majesty of heaven was vindicated. There sin was thoroughly condemned. There all the demands of the throne were perfectly met. There all the divine attributes were gloriously harmonized. There the most convincing evidence was afforded to all created intelligence, that God could never let sin into His presence.

In one word, then, the cross is the only platform on which we can behold "a just God and a Savior." There we see how God can be just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus. The atoning death of Christ forms the righteous ground on which God can receive back His "banished." Christ bore the just judgment of God against sin, in order that as a Savior He might receive to His bosom the very vilest sinner that simply looks to Him.

But who are they that are called to look? Is it some special class? No, thank God, it is not His way to limit His gracious invitation. Theology does this, but God never does. Hear the precious words once more: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Such is the wide aspect of

God's salvation. When God spoke as a law-giver, He addressed Himself to one people; but when He speaks as "a just God and a Savior," He addresses Himself to "all the ends of the earth."

And may anyone "look"? It is not only that he may, but he ought - not only is he permitted, but commanded. It is a command issued to all the ends of the earth. This includes every one who hears the message. It includes the reader of these lines. Whoever you are, you are this moment commanded to "look... and be saved." Before you can refuse the application of this word to yourself, you must prove that you do not come within the range of "all the ends of the earth."

Theology says, "Some"; God says, "All." All are commanded to "look." True, they will not; but that is their awful responsibility. Theology says, "Man cannot look, and hence it is only deceiving him to tell him to do so." Does a just God deceive people? Will theology dare to say so? Well, it is God who commands "all the ends of the earth" to "look" unto Him "and be... saved."

Yes, reader, one look at a Savior God is salvation. Never mind theology, or the puzzling, withering dogmas of theologians. Harken to God. Remember He commands you to "look unto Me, and be ye saved." You cannot get over this. You cannot shake off your solemn, personal responsibility to look this moment to a Savior God. Leave theology and theologians to settle their questions with God; but do you remember that you have a never-dying soul to be saved, and the only way of salvation is to hearken to the gracious commandment of "a just God and a Savior" who says to you, "LOOK UNTO ME."

## Gleanings From Luke 1

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How beautiful does Luke 1 rise upon the heart! It has just struck me very peculiarly. I read it like a new scene of light and joy breaking in after a gloomy and wasted interval, and exceeding all that had been in the earlier days or that had been promised by the prophets. There had been most surely a return from Babylon in the times of Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah, and they were good times; the zeal of the servants of God, the restoration of the house and the city, the revival feasts, and the order and services of the people, made them so. But such times had been clouded. The day was overcast; yea, while it was yet but morning, a change had come; and Malachi gives us an evil account of his time, in which condition, with a bright promise to the remnant, Israel goes on till the times of the New Testament, a dreary and evil interval indeed, without one single ray as from the light of the Lord or the spirit of revelation to animate or cheer it. But though it tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, and come with a bright witness.

Such is this exquisite chapter. The morning breaks. The heavens are opened, as it were, and the dreary wastes of Israel are revisited. And as in the twinkling of an eye all this takes place. No special harbingers, no marvelous notices, of the coming change; but the priest is at the accustomed altar, and the people in their places according to the manner, and in the ordinary current of everyday life; the women of the land were preparing for espousals (v. 27), when suddenly the heavens open, and visitations are made alike to the temple and the cottage, to the priest and the poor unknown virgin of Nazareth.

The suddenness and the brilliancy of all this is very blessed. And how it tells us that the distance of heaven from earth is nothing when the due season comes for bringing them into communion. The ladder is a short one that will reach from heaven to earth by and-by. And in this chapter we get a sight of it for a moment, or a sample of some of its happy services. Here the angels of God are ascending and descending. Gabriel enters, without wrong, into the place of the priests, and stands even at the right side of the altar. He does not take the high style of the Angel-Jehovah, and ascend in its flame; nor does he, like Jesus-Jehovah, speak of himself as greater than that temple; but being a heavenly one, he enters without trespass upon the place of the priest. But so does he enter without reluctance into the place of the poor unknown Nazarene.

The earth may not be so prepared to receive such visitations, as heaven is to make them; but Gabriel has for both Zacharias and Mary the same healing and gladdening word, "fear not." And joy, the most satisfying joy, diffuses itself everywhere - old men and maidens, young men and children, join in. Mary, and Elizabeth, and the child in the womb, and Zacharias, in their several ways attest their joy; and in principle all creation is lighted up in gladness. Here is more than earlier days had known or voices of prophets foretold.

Ezra and Nehemiah had never had such days of heaven upon earth as these, nor had Malachi told the remnant of such tastes of soul-satisfying joy as Elizabeth had when she saluted Mary, and as Mary had when she uttered her song of praise. He had indeed said that they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and thought on His name together; but now in the hearts and on the

lips of such a remnant the gladdening light of the Spirit is shed, and the triumphant strains of the Spirit are poured forth. And the suddenness as well as the brilliance of all this! Who was calculating on a bit of all this the day before? And then the ease with which heaven visits the earth when the due time comes! No reserve in coming side by side with the highest; no reluctance in coming side by side with the poorest and meanest. The ladder stretches its ample foot across the length and breadth of the land, and down to every point of it "abundant entrance" is administered to the angels in the heavens above. All these features of this communion attract me. Would that the soul could wait more in the joy and patience of faith for the great original of all this - for that millennial day when the ladder shall thus be raised and the heavens after this pattern shall open on the earth again, when the passage downward shall be thus in full ease and brilliance again; and if the receivers of the joy that is brought be made so happy by it, what shall be the happiness of them who bear it to them, and who in their measure shall experience the divine prerogative and know that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." May our hearts greatly rejoice! He will interpret the doings of His hand, and will outdo the sayings and promises of His prophets.

## Man: a Tripartite Being, Spirit, Soul and Body

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composed of Spirit, Soul, and Body In the light of the Old Testament

It may be asked, What do we know of their origin? It is right that we should seek to know the meaning of what God has seen fit to write in His Word. Neither intellect nor science can answer this question. These notes from Scripture on this subject have helped the writer; they may also help and interest the reader.

Man, as God's creature, is made up of these three distinct parts. Like men, the animals are said in Scripture to possess both soul and body, but not spirit. In the Word of God (Gen. 1), where alone we can read anything of the origin of this present creation, God has been pleased to instruct us as to this matter. "Let the waters bring forth... the moving creature that hath life" (or, in Hebrew, nephesh, soul); and again, in verse 21, "Every living creature that moveth" (or, every living soul - the same word). So also in verse 24, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature" (or, living soul) "after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so." God thus created them by His word living souls (ghahy nephesh) upon the earth; and verse 30 tells us that that class wherein there is soul (nephesh) includes every beast of the earth, every fowl of the air, and everything that creepeth upon the earth.

But when we come to man, we read something different. As to all the animals, God had but spoken and had called them into being. At the fiat of their Creator they had come forth; but He now consults as to the creature that is to have dominion. That is man. Neither the earth, nor the air, nor the sea is called upon to produce him. He is to be made, and made also in the very image and after the likeness of God. "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (n'shahmah ghahy); "and man became a living soul" (ghahy nephesh) - the same expression as we find used of the animals in Gen. 1:21. But what an important and twofold difference! First, man was, as to his body, God's own formation out of the dust of the ground - not, as they were, called into being by a word. Second, he was, as and when he was thus formed, the receiver (from God still) of this n'shahmah of life into his nostrils. Thus the formation of his body and his inspiration, by which it is said he became a living soul (ghahy nephesh), are by no secondary means. Both are immediately from God, two things which we do not read of any of the lower creatures.

But further, "There is a spirit" (rooagh) "in man: and the inspiration" (n'shahmah) "of the Almighty giveth them understanding"; so says Elihu. But that the beasts have "no understanding," David tells us in Psalm 32:9, using this same word for "understanding." Again, he also says, "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not" (same word), "is like the beasts that perish." Psalm 49:20. The prophet Isaiah also declares that they (the beasts) have not the spirit (rooagh). "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." Isa. 31:3. With men, therefore, the beasts partake both of soul and body, but not of spirit. As to the spirit (rooagh) in man, it too (as soul and body are) is God's work. The first place we read this word rooagh in Scripture, it is applied to God (Gen. 1:2). We read that "In the beginning Elohim created the

heavens and the earth." Later, when the creation as it at present exists was formed, we read, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Elihu also, who applies this word to the spirit in man (Job 32), applies the same word to God in Job 33:4. This spirit God forms in man. "The LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit" (rooagh) "of man within him." Zech. 12:1.

That both soul and spirit were not confounded, but were known and distinguished, we may learn from other passages of the Old Testament. Hezekiah said that he spoke in the bitterness of his "soul" (nephesh); but he adds, "In all these things is the life of my spirit" (rooagh). (Isa. 38:15, 16.) Job says, "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit" (rooagh); "I will complain in the bitterness of my soul" (nephesh). Job 7:11. Job also contrasts soul and spirit - the first being that of every living thing, and the second which is alone in man - when he asks the question, "In whose hand is the soul" (nephesh) "of every living thing, and the breath" (rooagh) "of all mankind?" Job 12:10.

As to the spirit being a separate formation of God in every man, and not a mere influence, we read of "the spirit" (rooagh) "of Zerubbabel," and "the spirit of Joshua," and the "spirit of all the remnant" in Hag. 1:14; of the "spirit" of Elijah (2 Kings 2:15); of the "spirit" of Pul, and of the "spirit" of Tilgathpilneser (1 Chron. 5:26), as well as of the "spirit" of Cyrus (Ezra 1:1).

In one place only, where man is questioning about things existing "under the sun," is rooagh ascribed to beasts; and then it is by one who confesses his own ignorance of what he is writing about. He, himself wise, asks the question about it, "Who knoweth?" without answering. (Eccles. 3:19-21.)

The beasts perish (Psalm 49:12), but as to man, both soul and spirit are immortal. This, found fully in the New Testament, to which I do not now refer, we find also in the Old. It is written, "God hath made man upright" (Eccles. 7:29). Of his threefold formation we have already spoken - "spirit and soul and body." We may now look at what is immortal in him Job, of whom we have already heard, who spoke of all three - spirit, soul, and body (see Job 10:1, 11, 12), and lived most probably long before the writing of the book of Genesis-knew himself as one who would exist after death. In speaking of that event, and of the time when the worm should have destroyed this outward visible frame, he says, "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26). That is, I, the man Job, the complete workmanship of God, spirit, soul, and body - "In my flesh shall I see God." For that which is destroyed by death (and even this, as to man, is only for a time) is merely this external shell, the tenement that contains both spirit and soul. =====

Daniel also may be referred to: "But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." Chap. 12:13. Daniel speaks of Nebuchadnezzar's "spirit" (rooagh; chap. 2:1, 3), and of his own "spirit" (rooagh; chap. 7:15). This spirit and the soul and the body formed the man Daniel; and this man will stand in his lot "at the end of the days"; the body may have long since turned to dust; Daniel still rests, and still awaits to stand in his lot in the end of the days - an end not yet come. The soul departs at death from its tenement. It is not affected by death. "As her soul" (nephesh) "was in departing, (for she died,)." Gen. 35:18. Here too Ecclesiastes is clear as to the future of the spirit, speaking now of man, and without doubt on the matter: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit" (rooagh) "shall return unto God who gave it." (Eccles. 12:1-7.)

It is by means of the body that the varied feelings and emotions of man manifest themselves. Some of these are ascribed to the spirit in Scripture, some to the soul, some to both soul and spirit. Thus the spirit (rooagh) is troubled (Gen. 41:8; Job 21:4; Dan. 2:1); revives, or is strengthened (Gen. 45:27); is anguished (Exod. 6:9; Job 7:11); is endowed with wisdom (Exod. 28:3; Deut. 34:9); is jealous (Numb. 5:14); is sorrowful (1 Sam. 1:15; 1 Kings 21:5); is contrite or humble (Psalm 34:18; Pro. 16:19; 29:23; Isa. 57:15; 66:2); is broken (Psalm 51:17; Pro. 15:13); is overwhelmed (Psalm 142:3; 143:4); is faithful (Pro. 11:13); is hasty (Pro. 14:29; Eccles. 7:9); is haughty (Pro. 16:18; Eccles. 7:8); is wounded (Pro. 18:14); is patient (Eccles. 7:8); is grieved (Dan. 7:15; Isa. 54:6); errs (Isa. 29:24; Eze. 13:3). It learns too the humbling lesson that there is nothing under the sun for the "spirit" of man, but only "vanity and vexation." (Eccles. 1:14, 17; 2:11, 17, 26; 4:4, 16; 6:9.)

Of the soul (nephesh) we read that it departs from the body at death (Gen. 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21, 22), as we have seen the spirit does in Eccles. 12:7; that it blesses (Gen. 27:4, 19, 25, 31; Psalm 103:1, 2); it loves (Gen. 34:3, 8; S. of Sol. 1:7; 3:1-4); knows anguish (Gen. 42:21); has appetites or tastes (Lev. 7:18, 20; Num. 21:5; Deut. 12:15, 20, 21; Job 6:7; 33:20; Psa. 78:18); has lusts or desires (Deut. 14:26; 1 Sam. 20:4; 1 Kings 11:37; Psa. 42:2; 84:2); hates (2 Sam. 5:8); abhors (Lev. 26:43; Zech. 11:8); thinks (Esther 4:13); sorrows (Lev. 26:16; is vexed (2 Kings 4:27; Job 19:2); is bowed down (Psa. 57:6); is troubled (Psa. 88:3); faints (Psa. 107:5, 26; Jonah 2:7); is relieved (Lam. 1:11, 16, 19); is in bitterness (Job 10:1; Isa. 38:5); is weary (Jer. 31:25); sins (Micah 6:7) and therefore needs atonement (Ex. 30:15, 16; Lev. 17:11; Num. 15:25); has to be afflicted while it is made (Lev. 16:29, 31); so also it needs redemption (2 Sam. 4:9; Psa. 34:22; 49:8, 15; 71:23); salvation (Psa. 35:3); and conversion (Psa. 19:7). These lists, which are not exhaustive, may serve to illustrate what, in chief, is attached to, or emanates from, both soul and spirit.

From the fact that Scripture nowhere asserts that the beasts have "spirit," also that we have quoted the passages insisting upon the contrary, as well as from a careful comparison of these two lists, I think it is clear that the "spirit" is the higher part in man. It (rooagh) is also spoken of the Spirit of God. Man becomes like the beasts, if he has no understanding, as David says; and it is "the inspiration" (n'shahmah) "of the Almighty" (Job 32) (not given to them as it was to man) that is the secret of this understanding in man. The understanding, therefore, is connected with the "spirit" in man, and not with the "soul."

I find the word "soul" (nephesh) used for the whole man, just as it is often used now, in Gen. 12:5; 14:21; Exod. 1:5; Numb. 15:27, 28, and in other places; but I have not found "spirit" (rooagh) so used for the man. How fitting, therefore, that we should find in Scripture, as we do, that sin, atonement, redemption, conversion, and salvation are all connected with it, not with rooagh, but with nephesh, the soul; for it is the man, spirit and soul and body, that has sinned, and that needs this power of God to be put forward in grace on his behalf.

Gathering up from what has been said of both soul and spirit in the Old Testament, it is not difficult to see that the eternal existence of man is taught in it, and was accepted long before the light of the New Testament, as to these things, shone out in all its fullness. If man is blind, he cannot see it; and then he may go so far as to deny (as some have done, and do still) that it is there. Even in his blindness he may teach that man does not exist forever; but there it shines, God's truth, nevertheless.

There is a solemn word in Mal. 2:16, where we read a final exhortation to the "spirit" (rooagh) which was led away through the "desires" (Gen. 3:6) and "affections" (1 Tim. 2:14) of the "soul." "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously." "Vanity and vexation of spirit" ought to turn the man to God, ought to lead him to take heed, and to look above the sun for what he fails to find beneath it. But to deny the immortality of the soul or spirit, and the resurrection of the body, or, in a word, the eternal existence of the man whom God has formed, is thus to deal treacherously with ourselves and with God, and leaves still all the "vanity and vexation" there. "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. Blessed words, my reader; words of life and light, coming from Him who "made man upright"; words sounding amid all the wearying vista of this life for every poor sinner who will "take heed."

Man: a Tripartite Being, Spirit, Soul and Body

It is unnecessary for those who believe in the divine inspiration of the whole Word of God to seek to prove from the New Testament that which we have already seen brought before us in the Old. We merely remark that examination will show to any who seek it, that Old Testament truths are all established in the New, and fully unfolded. But there are others which come before the reader of the New Testament respecting "spirit and soul and body"; for now He, on whom in Himself death had no claim, has gained the victory over death and all its power, and has brought "life and immortality [incorruptibility] to light through the gospel." And this for man. Let us then first observe the distinct words (as in the Old) employed to distinguish "soul" and "spirit" in the New Testament.

It is generally admitted, by those who have had ability to examine it, that our Lord and His apostles quoted the scripture from a Greek version of the Old Testament, then in common use, and not from the older Hebrew. This Greek translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew was called the Septuagint. But by thus using it, our Lord accredited this version, and set His seal upon it as the Word of God. This is an important fact; for in this version we have before us the words then used as the equivalents in Greek to the Hebrew rooagh and nephesh, words we may also expect to find distinctively employed therefore by the writers of the New Testament.

Now in this Greek translation of the Old Testament (MSS. of which still exist) we find in the passages we have already referred to; namely, Gen. 1:20, 21, 24, 30; 2:7, speaking of the soul's formation, the Greek word psukee as the equivalent to the Hebrew nephesh. For spirit (Hebrews rooagh) we find in Job 32:8, where its existence is declared, as also in Zech. 12:1 and Amos 4:13, where its origin and formation at first by God are spoken of - in all these places, the Greek word pneuma is given as the equivalent for rooagh. In this same translation also, where all three parts of which man is composed are spoken of in one chapter (Job 10), the same distinction as to the use of the words is maintained. "My soul" (psukee) "is weary of my life;... I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (psukee). v. 1. "Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit" (pneuma). v. 12. "Thou hast clothed me" (the man Job; that is, both soul and spirit) "with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." v. 11. In Eccles. 12:7; Hag. 1:14; Eccles. 1:14, 17; Mal. 2:16, passages already referred to, the Septuagint has also pneuma for rooagh.

In entire harmony, and using the same words for soul and spirit as the Septuagint version gives, we find all the scriptures of the New Testament. There is no confounding of them, there is no confusion. In coming to the New Testament, we are emerging from a night of shadows into the full light of day as to all that concerns man. "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1

John 2:8). But apparently small thing as it is, is it not fitting that we should see in this entire harmony of both Old and New Testaments God's care of His Word? "He is the Rock, His work is perfect" (Deut. 32:1). Thus sang Moses, and this perfection is manifested in the little (as men speak) as well as in the greatest of His works. May it give to us, as we ponder it, increased confidence in Him who, Jehovah to Israel, is to us our Father (John 20:17), while He permits us to trace both Him and His ways (1 Cor. 2:10) in His Word. He will speak to us and instruct us therein (John 6:45) as to all that it is necessary for us to know. May the knowledge of who He is humble us. While our Father, He is, nevertheless, the Alpha and the Omega, the unchangeable God. As He says, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." Rev. 1:8.

The three parts of which man is constituted, "spirit and soul and body," may for a time be separated. That hour is death. "Man dieth, and wasteth away," says Job (14:10), when regarding the body. Paul, in the New Testament, repeats it, but follows him beyond the grave. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Heb. 9:27. Death is the penalty attached to sin. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). It is that condition of the body when seen without a tenant. The body is the man's earthly house or tabernacle, the habitation of both spirit and soul, so that while in it he is said to be "at home in the body." While in the body, he is also said to be "clothed" (Job 10:11). But he leaves the body at death. Thus we read, "Willing [desiring] rather to be absent from the body"; again, "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. 1:23); and again, "The body without the spirit [pneuma] is dead" (Jas. 2:26). Here we learn that at death the spirit is not there. But we also read that the death of the body does not affect the soul. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (psukee). Matt. 10:28. At death the soul (psukee) is "required" (Luke 12:20), and then all that ministers merely to the body is left behind for others.

The body only is that part in man which is mortal. In Heb. 9:27 it is seen to be both capable of, and liable to, death, and after that also to corruption. (Compare Acts 13:36 Cor. 15:42; Rom. 6:12; etc.) "Flesh and blood [of which the body is formed] cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 15:50. So the remark of Martha, "Lord, by this time he stinketh" (John 11:39), though spoken of the man, could only refer to the body. She knew corruption had begun in it; but the cry, "Lazarus, come forth!" from Him who was both the Creator and the Life, was answered at once by the whole man, "spirit and soul and body." "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." We see therefore that that part of the man, the body in which he dwelt, and in which he is said to be clothed, "skin and flesh... bones and sinews" (Job 10:11), this only rested in that grave at Bethany, where corruption had already begun its work.

It was there in the condition of which James speaks - "without the spirit" (pneuma); for the Lord had before said plainly, "Lazarus is dead." That the sorrow attendant upon death is also because of the absence of the soul (psukee), we learn from other scriptures. Paul said, "His life [soul - psukee] is in him," as a reason why they should not be troubled about the young man whose body they took up (Acts 20:10); but this only shows that the usual trouble and mourning at death are because the soul and spirit have left the body. And it was certainly so that day at Bethany; for they well knew that Lazarus would "rise again" (v. 24), but at present, and from them, their brother was gone.

## Man: a Tripartite Being, Spirit, Soul and Body

Having thus seen that death is the dissolving of the tie that has kept together the man, "spirit and soul and body," and having noticed that he is variously spoken of as seen sometimes connected with the one part of his being, and sometimes with the other, we may now ask, What light has the Lord been pleased to give us as to the place of the spirit and soul (or the man) when they have left the body? To this we will now turn, first remarking that, in seeking an answer, we shall have brought before us of necessity the wondrous way whereby Christianity triumphs over all the misery that sin and its consequence (death) have introduced into this world.

First, then, what is death to the believer? The Lord says to the poor thief dying by His side, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). These words, addressed directly to the man, did not refer to his body; for that neither remained with the Lord, nor entered paradise with Him that day. The Lord's body was borne to Joseph's tomb, while the mangled remains (John 19:32) of the poor malefactor were "taken away" by other hands (v. 31) to find some other, and apparently in man's esteem, a more suited and fitting resting place for such as he than the rich man's sepulcher. The Lord's body, resting there three days, saw "no corruption," while the other returned to its kindred dust. But it mattered little. The veil had been lifted from that dark future that lay beyond the grave, by His own hand who came to bring "life and incorruptibility to light," and to remove the sting from death. And what the Lord said to the thief, He meant and fulfilled. The rejected and dying Savior thus leaving the world, and the first believer who, dying, left it when the way had been opened by Him through death - these two can never more be separated. The words, "To-day... thou... with Me," eternally linked together thus, declare the extent and the value of the blessed work He accomplished that day for every weary child of Adam's fallen race who will trust in Him.

This paradise was not a place that existed only for that moment; that is, for the Lord ere He ascended, as some have taught. It was the place called also by the Apostle Paul "the third heaven" (2 Cor. 12) - an existing place then, long after the death of the thief; for he says he was "caught up into paradise." When there he had lost all consciousness of the existence of the body; for he said, "Whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell." Yet he retained the consciousness of a man; he heard words which it was not possible for him to utter. Inexpressibly blessed was it to be in such a place, and freed from every hindrance, as one quietly reading the chapter must admit. And the blessedness of the place is also shown in the only other passage where this word paradise is used. The promise made to him that overcometh in the message to the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:7) is, that he shall "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." Paradise then, only named in these three places, is shown to us as a place of unspeakable, yet conscious pleasure and rest and delight. It is with the Lord, which in itself is enough; but it is also to be there to hear and to feed, which, though it may be figurative language, conveys to us clearly enough the conscious enjoyment of the place.

With this instant happiness of the believer after death, all the scriptures of the New Testament agree. Thus "to depart" is to be with Christ, which, he adds, is "far better" (Phil. 1:23); and he (Paul) who says that it is "far better," knew more of communion and fellowship with Him when on earth than many. He knew perhaps more of it than any saint has ever known. Yet it is "far better," for he says to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8). Peter also

speaks of the putting off of the body ("my tabernacle" - 2 Pet. 1:14), yet looks onward to the day when he, together with those who have fed the flock, shall receive at the appearing of the Chief Shepherd "a crown of glory that fadeth not away" (1 Pet. 5:4). But as to the meantime, Jesus had said to him, "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterward." John 13:36. And where He went, and whither Peter followed Him, we have already seen. Similar, if figurative, is the testimony of Luke 16:22.

Having spoken of Heb. 9:27, it remains to say a word as to the future (that which is after death) for the unbeliever. The veil is lifted here also, and we read, "After death the judgment." This is the awful and dark shadow that falls from the future upon the deathbed of the unbeliever, that renders it terrible. Into the world's judgment, the Christian can never come. "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 5:24. This is the record concerning such, though all shall appear (be made manifest) at the "judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:10).

The believer cannot come into judgment, but there is a resurrection of damnation [judgment] (John 5:29). How solemn is the declaration, "He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained." Acts 17:31. These judged are men - "spirit and soul and body" - for we read again: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Rev. 20:12. For as the death of the body was a severance for a time of the tie that bound "spirit and soul and body" together, so the destruction of death is the re-formation of that tie, now no more to be severed but to pass, one complete man, into all the horrors of the judgment and the second death - a death not marked by the separation of the parts - "spirit and soul and body" - but by their eternal union; for we are bidden to "fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). My reader, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Rev. 20:6. To this first resurrection, and to one special class in it, "those who are alive and remain," we will now turn ere we close this subject.

We have already seen that death is the fruit of sin, and that man in Heb. 9:27 is said to be both capable of and liable to death, because there he is speaking of the fruit of sin, and of those who, not having faith in Him who has once come, are not looking for Him to come the second time. But he immediately speaks of another class who are thus looking for His second coming. These may die or fall asleep; but, though capable, they are not necessarily liable to death. "We shall not all sleep," he says. There are some who "are alive and remain" when the Lord comes (1 Thess. 4), and who do not die, but are immediately changed. But what is changed? Spirit and soul? No; Phil. 3:21 says it is the body. "There is a natural body [which we have], and there is a spiritual body," for which spirit and soul are waiting, and which Paul calls "our house which is from heaven." This we shall have "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump" (1 Cor. 15:52). When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. "We look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body" (or body of humiliation), "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:21. Death then has no claim upon or power over the believers who are alive here upon the earth when this assembling shout is given. For them there is no separation of "Spirit and soul and body." He has broken the power of him who had the "power of death"; and He has

satisfied all the claims which God's holiness demanded an account of sin. God was glorified too in it by Him, and it is proved by His own place now, so that "in a moment" they are to be caught away in the power of life. "That where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). They do not die, but "mortality" is "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. 5:4). Such is our hope - to see and to be with Him who says, "Fear not.... I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1:17, 18.

As Christians, we have ever to remember that the soul is the seat of the affections and desires, which must be, if we desire to grow in divine things, kept under control, so that the Word of God may at all times be allowed to come in "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul [psukee] and spirit [pneuma], and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12. The word "sensual" in Jude 19 is psukeekoi, and may be translated "soulish"; that is, they were controlled by it. Similar was the desire of the man in Luke 12:19: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." This has been the language of very many since. The natural affections also, though formed of God, are strikingly referred to in many places as possible hinderers in the path of faithful discipleship, if allowed to govern us. How many have made shipwreck on this rock! Among others thus - "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:26.

Fitting in the midst of all the snares that surround us, the varied attractions for the mind and understanding, the varied desires and affections of the soul - the what-shall-we-eat and what-shall-we-drink, and (not least, the fashions of the day) wherewithal-shall-we-be-clothed, of the body - fitting, amidst all this, is the prayer of the Apostle. And may it be increasingly our prayer for each other - "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. 5:23.

## Many Antichrists

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In the days of the Apostle John there were already many antichrists - not legalists or errorists only, but antagonists of Christ. For these Satan prepared the way by inciting good men to sanction evil things. The prevalence of "many antichrists" shows that His name was, even in apostolic times, made the cloak for thoughts and ways the most opposed to Himself. The devil sought to destroy Christianity by attaching the Lord's name to his evil plans.

How marked the change, even before the apostles disappeared! Worldliness and the world, under the name of the Lord Christ! This laxity became a great snare for both Christians and the world. Christian professors were already too easily beguiled to countenance plausible lies of the enemy, for deadly heterodoxy may outwardly sound very like blessed truth. Thus, sincere believers are often misled for a while, and those who have only a mental acquaintance with the truth are drawn away to take license from such sanction as theirs.

Therefore we particularly desire for ourselves to cherish the truth of God and His Word increasingly, and with earnest love and zeal warn and entreat the children of God to be upon their guard in the small things as well as the great, looking well to it that they be vigilant as to their children in what is fated to perish so awfully; or for the sake of worldly advantage not to be seeking for them what they know would be wrong for themselves.

The Lord grant that we may feel deeply what a solemn importance attaches to Christ and the truth! What will the world think of you who profess to know better? What pleasure can Christ find in you, if you relax your protest and grudge your separation to Himself? If you grow careless and begin to allow evil you once felt in this or that? May grace make us lowly, yet earnest, not in a spirit of bondage or of petty fault-finding with others, but in being true to the Lord Jesus who has been true to us. We are told in 1 John 2:18 that antichrist is coming, but at the same time "even now there have come many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour." J. N. D. Trans. We must beware therefore of evils on every side, and of evil particularly done under the name of Christ - that is antichrist. It may be utterly to destroy the Christ of God, but an antichrist can do nothing but oppose the name of Him.

Finally we are told in what consists the great evil of the latter days. It is in this: a denial of all revealed truth of Christ. "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" But this is not the full character of antichrist. It was what the Old Testament prepared us for; it pointed to the promised One, Jesus, and showed that He was the true Messiah, the Anointed of God. But the New Testament shows that He was not only the Messiah, but the Son revealing the Father. That Jesus is the Christ, is the great answer to all Jewish expectations, such as the Old Testament would form. But that Jesus is not only the Christ, but the Son of the Father, is the grand truth of the New Testament. Whatever tends to supplant and overthrow the truth of the New Testament, will assuredly bring in antichrist. "He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."

And this is what things are rapidly hastening to. It comes now to be a sanctioned thing that men may teach doctrine that undermines both Old and New Testaments. Even those who are in the highest position ecclesiastically, lay it down that there is nothing in such speculations contrary to sound doctrine! What then since this epistle was written can be more calculated to fill one with concern than that which is now avowed by those accredited as Christian men to speak with authority?

Truly do we need to be "kept by the power of God through faith." Let us own that these are solemn words to ourselves, for this extreme evil is a thing floating in the air. Doubt of God and confidence in man prevail. It is not confined to a few individuals here and there; "even now are there many antichrists." It is by their frequency that we know it is the "last hour," however long its continuance from the Apostle's day.

The Lord keep us, not so much occupied with the evil, but cleaving to the good in Himself, entering more and more into the truth that God has revealed in Him. This is the surest preservative where it is coupled with a good conscience and a devoted heart. "As for you let that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you: if what ye have heard from the beginning abides in you, ye also shall abide in the Son and in the Father."

## Brief Notes on Matthew 16:13-18 and Ephesians 5:25-33: the Church

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Men may talk much about the Church, but there is no understanding of it till the Person of the Lord is known. Simon was only a poor unlearned fisherman, but he made a glorious, unwavering confession-"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." There was no pause, no hesitation; he knew it. But the knowledge came by revelation of the Father: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." There was no happier man than Simon at that moment on the face of the earth. Then indeed there ensues a further revelation: "And I also say unto thee that... upon this rock I will build My church (see J.N.D. Trans.)"builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit."

But in Eph. 5 we have another thing; this blessed Person "loved the church, and gave Himself for it." The Spirit here employs the nearest and dearest of all earthly ties-the love of equals. It is not here an angel that a husband is called to love, but a fellow creature brought into the happiest and closest relationship with himself- "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." But if that is so sweet, what is it to be the object of the love of the Son of God, to be loved by Him as we know Him revealed by the Father? When we learn His Person and then His love to us, we may learn about the Church. What can those who are discussing His Person understand about it, though they talk so loudly about the Church?

We are not only living stones on the Rock, but we are "builded" there. We are not loose stones to go anywhere, nor are we thrown down into the road in a heap, but we are "builded together" each having its own place to fill in the "spiritual house" ( 1 Pet. 2:5); and nothing can, in His grace, move us from this allocation, nor from Himself, the Builder and the Rock; and by and-by He will present to Himself His Church in all its glorious completeness, ourselves then perfected in glory (John 17:23).

## Moses in Egypt and Moses in Madian

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Acts 7:20-36

One great principle in all true service is the consciousness of being upheld therein by God. It was thus with the perfect Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. "Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth." Isa. 42:1. The great feature in His service was that He never acted of Himself: "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." John 5:30. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." John 8:28, 29. The moment a servant acts independently, he acts from himself and out of character.

There is a great danger of mistaking the busy activity around us at the present day for true service to God. I believe that God intends to mark very distinctly what man's natural understanding and power can effect, and what the power and wisdom of the Holy Ghost can effect. Our endowment, as Christians, is "the Spirit of the Lord," "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord," to make of "quick understanding in the fear of the LORD" (Isa. 11:2).

Whenever we are living before men instead of before God, there will be restlessness and disquiet. There may be the desire to do many things that are written in the Word, but they will not be done in quiet and peaceful joy. We are never really preserved from hypocrisy unless we are living before God. It is the very best possible cure for the overweening conceit we have, all of us, naturally of ourselves.

But let us seek to gather a little instruction from the history of Moses the servant of God.

It is worthy of remark that the life of Moses is divided into three distinct periods of forty years each. Most of his first forty years were spent in Egypt as the "son of Pharaoh's daughter."

The next forty years were spent in the wilderness tending the flock of his father-in-law. There, at the mount of God, he had a vision of glory such as never could have been revealed to him in Egypt.

In the last forty years we have the account of the sorrowful and trying course he had to run, as the servant of God and his people Israel, in bearing the burden of that people.

The first portion of his life was spent in Egypt. And Stephen speaks of him as being "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds" (Acts 7:22). But this wisdom of Egypt was not anything that God could own. Doubtless, Moses knew that God was about to use him as the "deliverer" of His people; but that which had been acquired in Egypt could not deliver the Lord's people from Egypt.

Moses' parents could not but recognize the remarkableness of their child. (See Heb. 11:23.)

And Moses himself, "By faith... when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. 11:24-26.

"When he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel." Acts 7:23. Whatever ease and comfort Moses might have enjoyed in Pharaoh's house - its luxury and its refinements, "the treasures in Egypt" were all his - his heart yearned over his brethren. He went out unto his brethren and looked on their burdens.

"And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian." v. 24. "Mighty in.. deeds," on behalf too of the people of God, but acting in the energy of the flesh, not as sent of God (hence what followed), Moses was thinking how Moses was to deliver the people. "He supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them." v. 25. But no, "they understood not."

Moses had another lesson to learn. God had to teach him that he would only be served by the power and strength that come from Himself, not by the strength or wisdom of Egypt. There cannot be two things more different than a person acting in the energy of the flesh, and one acting in the power of the Spirit. In the first case, there is disappointment and surprise at the failure of our efforts.

When Moses had spent forty years in the wilderness, doing as it were nothing, we find him (Exod. 3) answering God's message, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee," thus: "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" When he comes to be sent of God, there is the deep sense of the responsibility of it laid upon him, and he shrinks from it. Before, when going forth in the energy of the flesh, he was bitterly disappointed at the failure he met; now he has learned his own insignificance, and he says, "Who am I?" And it is ever thus. When a saint feels that he is sent of God on any mission, there is always the deepest prostration of spirit. This may be brought about by painful discipline of soul, but the end of God's training is to break down self-confidence, so that when at last the person goes forth in service, it is with the feeling, "Who am I?" One great characteristic of the flesh we have acquired by being so long in "Egypt" is the dislike to say, "Who am I?" But God must produce this frame of mind before He uses us. The most cultivated understanding, human wisdom, and research will not stand in any stead in the service of God.

"And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday?" Acts 7:26-28. He only gets misunderstood by those whom he seeks to serve. When he would be the man of peace, his reward is the taunt, "Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?" I am speaking of Moses as one knowing, in a sense, what communion with God was, but who had not learned as yet to throw off Egypt's strength and wisdom. We must fail when we go a warfare at our own charges.

Many a saint runs on for a while (just after his conversion, perhaps) in the eagerness and zeal of the flesh, doing right things, but not in the spirit of dependence on God; by-and-by his energy flags and he feels as though he were entirely useless, as though God could never again employ him in His service. Now this is a profitable lesson, though a deeply humbling one. The Lord often trains an individual thus, for much after usefulness in the Church. Just so was it with Moses. "Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian." v. 29.

These first forty years of Moses' life are passed over very slightly by God. No doubt, had man written the history of them, we should have had given to us a wonderful account of all that Moses did and said in this land of wisdom. The Spirit of God is silent. And why, beloved? Because the wisdom of "Egypt" is foolishness with God, and the strength of "Egypt" weakness with God.

During the next forty years Moses is lost to Egypt and to Israel. But then he is alone with God. In solitude (Exod. 3) the Lord meets with him at Horeb - "the mount of God." And I doubt not that Horeb is thus named because it was a place where Moses had enjoyed communion with God, and where he had learned a lesson which he never could have learned when in Egypt- dependence on God. In secret he is being prepared for all those mighty achievements he was soon to be called on to perform before Pharaoh and Egypt and Israel.

It is in solitude that God chiefly teaches His people. The blessed Lord sought for refreshment on this earth in being alone with God. And this is the place where the saint learns his own weakness and God's strength. He enters into the depths of his own evil, but also into the depths of God's grace. He learns to deny self, to subdue imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. He proves the necessity of the cross.

"And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them." Exod. 2:23-25. "The time of the promise" (Acts 7:17) had at length come, and now we find Moses about to be prepared and sent forth as the "ruler and... deliverer" of Israel.

One preparation had been forty years passed in solitude in secret training with God in the wilderness, but there was another thing needful - the manifestation of God's glory.

"And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush." Acts 7:30. There had never been a thing like this seen in Egypt. Egypt was not the place for God to show His "great sight." The wonders of nature were exhibited there in the periodical inundation of the river, and the like. The wonders of art were also there. But here was something that Moses' Egyptian wisdom failed in unraveling. "When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight." v. 31. "The bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Exod. 3:2.

But unless we have wisdom to understand why the bush was not consumed, we have not the real wisdom of God. It is impossible in Egypt to see the glory of the living God. It is above all human thought or conception. It is something which man has no power to explain. We may tell people of the sight, but they will not believe it; man's wisdom is at fault.

"And as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold." vv. 31, 32. This "great sight" cannot be spoken of by Egyptian lips; it cannot be understood by Egyptian ears, and we must have the anointing of the eye-salve to see it.

What a marvelous thing that there should be a little weak bush, as it were, on this earth, with everything against it, and yet nothing able to prevail.

"Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground." v. 33. We

are brought by grace into the place of holiness, and to rejoice in God's holiness. There the soul learns its deepest lessons of what sin is; it sees not only its own nothingness, but its oppositeness to God. There it learns that salvation must be of grace from first to last. These things are only fully learned in the sanctuary. The moment we are rescued from the world, we are brought to stand in the place of holiness; and God deals with us accordingly. The reason for His chastening and admonition is that we may be thereby partakers of "His holiness." He desires that we should be as near Him in spirit as we are in our head.

What must Moses' thoughts have been respecting all the glory of Egypt when he turned aside to see this "great sight"? And what would ours be, beloved, with regard to the world, were the eye always and steadily fixed on the glory? When Moses was engaged in solitarily feeding the flock in the wilderness, there might have been some longings after the glory of Egypt; but these must have ceased when he had this manifestation made to him of the glory of God, "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

So with ourselves. When we think of the true glory of the Church, we are able to look at the glory of "Egypt" and feel ourselves weaned from it, as well as weaned from the wisdom and power of "Egypt." But if our souls are only looking at their own weakness, we shall very likely be tempted to long after "Egypt" and the things of "Egypt."

Paul was qualified to serve the Church by his apprehension of its being one with Jesus in the glory.

In Moses' needing a spokesman (Exod. 4:10-16), we are taught that neither the wisdom nor the eloquence of "Egypt" will be of any avail in God's service.

Very often there may be busy activity in service, but not the quiet sitting at the feet of Jesus, drinking in from His lips our knowledge of truth and grace. We need much to realize that we have to do with God, even when we are serving others.

Mark what follows. "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush." Acts 7:34, 35.

But God must bring Moses out of Egypt first. He could not make such a communication to him there. It was the bane of Abram to get into Egypt. Abram had no altar there. And so it is with us.

When we get into the world, it is the same thing. We cannot have our altar. Communion is interrupted.

In the first place, God reveals His name: "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham," etc. v. 32. Second, His grace: "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people," etc. (v. 34). (How blessed to be assured that there is not one sorrow of His people, not one groan, but that He knows it altogether.) Then we get the formal commission: "And now come, I WILL SEND THEE INTO EGYPT."

"And Moses said unto God, Who am I?" etc. (Exod. 3) After he had worshiped God as an unshod worshiper, there was a shrinking from that which God had laid on him, though, forty years before, he had been most eager to enter upon the same sort of service. It is a most solemn thing to have to do with the people of God. The responsibility involved is that under which we must sink if left to ourselves.

Moses now knew that he that would serve Israel must have a great deal of shame and obloquy to encounter. Hence the need of the training through which he had been put. So with regard to service in the Church. If Paul is a "chosen vessel" "to bear" His "name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel," the Lord in making this known to Ananias says, "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." And what was Paul's after experience? "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches"; again, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." 1 Cor. 12:15.

Paul had the flesh crushed at the outset, crushed again after he had been taken up into the third heaven, crushed all the way through. He never went on, in service, in the energy of the flesh, but as one who knew that it must be endurance to the very end.

How often does a young Christian think, I will tell others of the Lord's love, and they must believe me; or, I will tell Christians of the security of the Church, of the coming of the Lord, of the heavenly calling of the saints, and the like; and they must receive it. But no! we need to learn that we cannot carry everything before us. Where there is the most ascertained mission from God, there is always the deepest humility. Paul, in speaking of his arduous service, says, "I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Cor. 15:10.

The preparation for active service is in secret with God, in learning ourselves in communion with Him. There the battle is really fought. Power for active service is acquired not in active service, but in intercourse with God in secret.

Whatever we do in service, we ought to do as worshipers. Our service would then be carried on in felt responsibility to God, and it would bring blessing to others and to our own souls.

I believe the saints often think that it is an easy thing to serve God. But no; it is a hard thing to serve Him in spirit and in truth. To serve God in the sense of our being nothing and His being everything, is a hard thing. The place of the servant of God is to hide himself, and let God appear. Thus it was with THE perfect Servant. The most splendid achievement, without this, is not service.

There would be much more profitable, happy, useful service if we only saw more of God's order. One delights to see activity in service; but then it should be connected with the being in secret with God, and the seeing His purpose with regard to the Church. Thus we should serve happily and

holily, not as though God needed our service, but as desiring to glorify Him in our bodies which are His.

## Mount Sion

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Russian atheistic leaders long ago tried to cast out the thought of God-to exile Him from their borders. This campaign has been considerably short of a 100 per cent success, although it has made a serious impact on the world at large. Lately these leaders have tried to ridicule the idea of God and of heaven by saying that they sent their astronaut out into space, and he returned without seeing anything of God and His dwelling place.

We might suppose that such a childish argument would affect no one, but there are persons who will grasp at any straw to support their wish that there be no God to whom they must give account. Suppose an astronaut were to go out from the earth many times the distance that the Russian did; how far would he have gone in God's universe? In space that is measured in "light years," or the distance that light can travel in a year-6,000,000,000,000 miles-what is a few hundred miles? The Russian statement is consummate foolishness. We might liken it to an ant emerging from a hole in an inland desert area and sallying forth on an excursion measured in feet, and then returning to the ant colony to inform them that after due examination it simply was not true that such a thing as an ocean existed on earth. An ant would not have the ability to go far enough to find an ocean, nor the capacity to understand what it was if it could be found. So also is puny man, with the single exception that he is wise in his own conceits. And we might add with Daniel the prophet, "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." Chap. 5:23.

Let us examine a little of what the Word of God says about not merely heaven, but the heavens. We read of "fowls of heaven," "the dew of heaven," "the clouds of heaven," "the winds of heaven." Thus, the atmosphere surrounding the earth is called heaven. Perhaps we may call this the first heaven. Then there is "the sun and the moon," and "the host of heaven." These are referred to in Psalm 8 as "the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained." This is also spoken of as "the firmament of His power" (Psalm 150:1). The sun, or the greater light, was to rule the day; and the moon, or lesser light, was to rule the night. Then "the precious things brought forth by the sun" are mentioned, and the "precious things brought forth by the moon" (or moons, or months). Jehovah asked Job, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?" Chap. 38:31. Is not this another sphere which God calls heaven? It is all the work of God, yes, of His fingers. The most daring of men have only barely entered on this territory, and astronomers with their largest telescopes cannot fathom its extent. It approaches an infinitude of expanse. But with all this, does the Bible speak of any of it as God's abode, or the "father's house"? Never.

The Word of God speaks of another heaven thus: "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee" (1 Kings 8:27; see also 2 Chron. 2:6; 6:1.8). Here is a third heaven; and the Apostle Paul speaks of having been caught up to the "third heaven," into "paradise." Now if man can only touch the outer reaches of the heaven of the stars and other celestial bodies, and cannot penetrate to the end of this sphere by great telescopes, how is any atheistic mortal man going to say where God is, or what the place is like? The fact is that atheists, infidels, and just plain

unbelievers are not going to get there at any time.

How can man find out the dwelling place of Him whose glory is "above the heavens" (Psalm 8:1; 113:4)? And in Heb. 4 we read: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into [literally, through] the heavens, Jesus the Son of God." v. 14. And in chapter 7, He has been made "higher than the heavens." v. 25. Such is the place of the Lord Jesus Christ who came down from heaven, was cast out by the world, and has gone back higher than the heavens. He passed right on through them all, back into the immediate presence of God, and is now seated at "the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Chap. 8:1.

After the Apostle Paul came back from seeing things there, he said it was not possible for him to utter what he saw. It was so far beyond anything with which the human mind is familiar, that it was not possible to convey to saints on earth a description of those celestial scenes, and the glory of that place.

Many people have speculated about what kind of a place heaven is; and mere speculation is worse than useless, for it is bound to convey erroneous ideas. A case in point is the folly of the Koran, with its foolish imagery, about bowls of milk, maidens, etc. But many of the mental pictures conjectured by Christians are not much better. God does not specially occupy us with heaven, but with Him who will be the delight and joy of heaven. When the Lord Jesus was about to leave the disciples, He did not say, "I am going to heaven," but He told them of the Father's house- the scene of bliss from which He came and to which He was returning, having accomplished the work of redemption for us. He was going away and He cheered their thoughts with the knowledge that He would not remain there forever without them; for He said: "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 14:3. What would heaven be without our Lord and Savior? What would the Father's house be without the Father? Many peoples' idea of heaven would not go beyond the beautiful, uninhabited place. Would this satisfy your heart, fellow Christians? The poet has expressed this well:

"Oh bright and blessed scenes,  
Where sin can never come,  
Whose sight our longing spirit weans  
From earth where yet we roam!  
"And can we call our home  
Our Father's house on high,  
The rest of God our rest to come,  
Our place of liberty?  
"Yes! in that light unstained,  
Our stainless souls shall live,  
Our heart's deep longings more than gained,

When God His rest shall give.  
"His presence there, my soul,  
Its rest, its joy untold.  
Shall find when endless ages roll,  
And time shall ne'er grow old.  
"Our God the center is,  
His presence fills that land,  
And countless myriads owned as His,  
Round Him adoring stand.  
"Our God whom we have known,  
Well known in Jesus' love,  
Rests in the blessing of His own,  
Before Himself above.  
"Glory supreme is there,  
Glory that shines through all,  
More precious still that love to share  
As those that love did call.  
"Like Jesus in that place  
Of light and love supreme;  
Once Man of Sorrows full of grace,  
Heaven's blest and endless theme.  
"Like Him! Oh grace supreme!  
Like Him before Thy face,  
Like Him to know that glory beam  
Unhindered face to face!  
"Oh love supreme and bright,  
Good to the feeblest heart,  
That gives us now, as heavenly light,  
What soon shall be our part."

Those scenes of glory to which we are going are even now for our joy and delight, the dwelling place of our affections and associations. "For our conversation [citizenship, or commonwealth] is in heaven." Phil. 3:20. We are as those from a foreign country who are living for a while in a strange land. The tastes, desires, and affections of the new nature belong to those bright scenes where all its denizens acclaim the worthiness of the Lamb and give glory to Him. This world and all its affairs are uncongenial, and its climate is debilitating to those who can sing:

"We are but strangers here;

Heaven is our home!

Earth is a desert drear;

Heaven is our home!

Dangers and sorrows stand

Round us on ev'ry hand;

Heaven is our father-land,

Heaven is our home!"

In Heb. 12:22-24, we find not a description of the place to which we belong, but some details about those who are there, and those who are to be there.

"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,... the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

The first mention is of mount Sion. This stands in sharp contrast to Sinai, the "mount that might be touched"; and at the giving of the law, even a beast that touched the fiery mountain had to be killed. We have been blessed by grace, the grace of God, and not cursed by a law which we could not keep. Grace is needed for sinners; nothing else would do. And after grace comes glory-"The LORD will give grace and glory." Psalm

Grace, that which we did not deserve, is the prerequisite of all blessing now and to eternity.

Next, it is added, "and unto the city of the living God [the God with whom Khrushchev and his comrades will have to do, but in judgment], the heavenly Jerusalem." It is not the earthly Jerusalem in all its millennial splendor to which we are come. It will be glorious in its limited earthly way, as it is said, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion... the city of the great King." Psalm 48:2. The same earthly glory is mentioned in Psalm 122: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together." vv. 2, 3. Our hope, and the home of our souls now, is "the city of the living God." It will not be a center of an earthly nation, nor merely a place of blessing for the earth, nor the gathering point for the earthly worshipers at the temple; for it is a "heavenly city" where there is no temple, but "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Rev. 21:22.

"The Lamb is there, my soul-  
There God Himself doth rest,  
In love divine diffused through all  
With Him supremely blest.  
"God and the Lamb!-'tis well,  
I know that source divine  
Of joy and love no tongue can tell,  
Yet know that all is mine."

This heavenly city is the city of the living God, the place of His sovereign throne over all the universe; and nothing that defiles-man's bombs, satellites, and astronauts, and all his sins -will ever enter it. It will be perfect bliss and joy forever, and all based on the grace of God and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ in atoning for sins.

Myriads of angels, the general assembly of them, will be there. Those heavenly, untainted beings will neither spoil nor detract from the glory of "the city of the living God." Also the assembly of the firstborn ones will be there, for their names have been written there. All the redeemed from Pentecost to the rapture, all those sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, will be there-not one missing. Christians, this is our sure hope, and should be the home of our affections even now. We want not an atheist to search out God or His dwelling place for us, for we have it by indefeasible title, and by the word of Him who cannot lie. If Khrushchev were to tell us he had found heaven, we would not listen; for only the blessed One who came down from heaven can reveal to our hearts what is there. We feel like the little girl who, when accosted by an infidel and questioned about where heaven is, simply replied, "It is where Jesus is."

"There in effulgence bright,  
Savior and Guide, with Thee  
I'll walk, and in Thy heavenly light  
Whiter my robe shall be."

Also, "ye are come... to God the Judge of all." But He will not be a stranger to us, for He is well known to us in Jesus' love. We have been brought to His God who is now "our God" and "exceeding joy" (John 20:17; Psalm 4; 3:4). "We... joy in God" (Rom. 5:11), not merely in His salvation, or His purposes of grace, but in Him Himself. O the blessedness of poor guilty sinners being brought to God! For the ungodly and profane, it will mean endless woe, and the torment of outer darkness forever. Woe to the scoffers who ridicule God and His grace. The sore judgments of God hang over this world which cast out and still rejects God's Son. God will be no party to the dishonor done to His Son by treating their sin of rejection as though it were a light matter.

Then in that scene of perpetual bliss will also be found "the spirits of just men made perfect"-not merely the spirits of just men, but spirits clothed with glorified bodies suited to the heavenly

Jerusalem. They are the spirits of just men "made perfect," or complete, in the "heavenly Jerusalem." They are the Old Testament saints whose faith cheered many others as they passed along the same toilsome road. The elders of Heb. 11 are some of them; they and all their company are going to be in the "city of the living God" where we shall be soon. These are those mentioned in the last verse of Heb. 11, as those who still await that scene of glory (their spirits blessed with Him now), "that they without us should not be made perfect." They wait for their ultimate blessing until we get ours.

Last, we read, "And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Ah, yes, Jesus Himself is there-the center and theme of heaven's song-the One who is seen in the midst of the throne in Rev. 5 We might mention one little difference between these verses in Heb. 12 and the scene in Rev. 5 In the former we go in and find Jesus the center; in the latter we find Jesus in the midst and then come out to the various assembled companies.

And in all eternity, it will never be forgotten-"the blood of sprinkling" which will be the foundation on which all rests. The mention of the new covenant here, which will be made with the house of Israel and Judah on earth, is on the basis of His precious, shed blood. Thus all blessing in heaven and on earth are brought together in His work. In contrast with this "blood of sprinkling," the "blood of Abel." cried unto God from the ground, cried for vengeance. But there is a sense in which the martyr sufferings of Christ and His blood which man shed is the world's condemnation. May the heavenly city of the living God, and all that is there, draw our poor hearts away from men's cities which are defiled by sin.

## A Neighbor Unto Me

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Some have hastily concluded in reading the parable of the certain Samaritan that the Lord answered the question, "Who is my neighbor?" by pointing out that wherever there is need we should do our duty toward our neighbor. But it should be observed that the man who fell among thieves is not mentioned as a neighbor toward whom the other acts, but the Samaritan was neighbor unto him. This is another principle altogether to what was in the lawyer's mind when he said, "Who is my neighbor?" and stands out in contrast with it, because the lawyer merely wished to justify himself; that is, to have clearly defined those who had any claim upon him, that he might have no outstanding debts. We know for ourselves the satisfaction in being able to say, I owe nothing. Thus what prompted that question was really love to himself, and not love to his neighbor. Where love is in exercise, it asks not, Who? but has its own delight in acting apart from the question of who deserves it. And this is the principle of grace which is here shown out in contrast to the principle of law, which was the fulfilling of duty toward one's neighbor. The one is meeting claim; the other is meeting need apart from the question of claim altogether.

And this is why the term "Samaritan" is employed, to present one on whom there was no claim; "for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans"; so that the Samaritan acts from himself, and not from any claim the other had on him. And this brings out what the gospel of the grace of God is. It is not the fulfilling of claim or promise, but the acting out of God's love to the lost. There were no promises to Adam, and a sinner has no claims upon God. Forgetfulness of this often keeps souls from having the blessing of the gospel; they will not have it for nothing. If they can establish some claim, whether by their prayers or religious observances, they would like it better. Why? Because this would be to give them some importance; but to be of no importance at all is humbling to the pride of man. It was this that kept the Syrophenician woman from the blessing at first. She pleaded the promises in saying, "Thou

Son of David," and was thus putting in a claim on Him, when she had none, as a woman of Canaan. She was taking the children's (Jew's) place when she was only a dog; and so the Lord says, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Then she says, "Truth, Lord." She relinquishes all claim upon Him, and takes the place of deserving nothing; but there she gets everything. "Yet," she says, "the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." The "yet" shows she had resources, though not now in the promises or in herself in anywise, but in Him and the love that brought Him down to meet the need of the lost. This was faith in Him, which He at once owns; for although He must deny her false claim, "He cannot deny Himself."

The Lord would willingly have been a neighbor unto the lawyer, and uses the law to produce a knowledge of his need; for the law is not a way of getting righteousness, as the lawyer was using it, but "by" it "is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20); and this is how God uses the law. The Lord still further says, "Go thou and do likewise," that the man might know his deceitful heart, that such a principle of acting (that is, in mercy) was foreign to his nature altogether, and that thus he might

learn his need. We find the Lord always deals with souls according to their state; to a soul with a felt need He would never say, "Go and do thou likewise"; or, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," as He says to another, who was merely inquisitive, and not needy.

The point of the teaching of this portion may be summed up in these words: It is the principle of grace in dealing as a neighbor, instead of the claim of God toward a neighbor.

## Original Sin — Infants

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An article which appeared in Time magazine in the November 10, 1961 issue, which was headed, "Suffer the Little Children," emphasizes the great ignorance of Christendom from the days of the so-called Church Fathers until today. The article begins by quoting part of a verse from John 3 as it is found in the Catholic Douay Version: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." v. 5. The article says:

"These words of Jesus in John 3:5, apparently slamming heaven's door on all who have never been cleansed of original sin by baptism, have made perplexing problems for theologians through the centuries."

The writer then discusses the subject of unbaptized adult heathen, and speaks of Catholic and Protestant thoughts on the subject, but he adds: "But the case of unbaptized infants is a more poignant matter."

All of this confusion stems from "not knowing the Scriptures." And the following part of the article, which quotes from Augustine and the great reformers, shows that none of them are trustworthy in many matters which require sound doctrine; and we quote:

"St. Augustine, for one, consigned them to the eternal flames of hell, though the thought distressed him. 'I am, believe me, beset by no small difficulties,' he wrote, 'and I am quite at a loss what to answer. Though I cannot define the nature of their damnation, yet I do not dare to say that it would have been better for them not to exist than to exist as they are now.' Martin Luther agreed with Augustine, John Calvin sidestepped the issue by stressing predestination; if an infant was elected for salvation, Calvin held, lack of baptism could not keep him from it, and if he was damned to hell, baptism could not save him."

Much of the above quotation is egregious folly. The last quoted statement is the error of Calvin's which carried him beyond anything in Scripture in his zealous devotion to an idea. But to return to the basic issue of the matter, What is meant by "original sin"? Another has written that, in general, "people do not know what they mean by 'original sin.'" Again this same writer (J. N. Darby) says, "Original sin is theology, and not Scripture, and the fruit of men's minds, which have not to be explained but refuted as not the expression of God's." (Collected Writings, vol. 23, pp. 559, 560.)

There is absolutely no basis for the expression found in this article, "cleansed of original sin." It is true that Adam sinned, and through his sin he pulled down the whole human race. When he begot a son, he was born after "his image," after the image of fallen man. Adam was created a perfect human being, but he rebelled against God and fell in every compartment of his being - "spirit, and soul, and body." In spirit he was estranged from God; in his soul, he fulfilled his own lusts; and in his body, death was at work. Every descendant of Adam - except of course that One who was the Seed of the woman and "God manifest in flesh" - has been born with a fallen nature. The beautiful and innocent babe has a nature that, if the child lives, will show the sad fruit of that nature. An infant that dies, dies because of Adam's sin; but to call that "original sin" and say that it can be

cleansed is very contrary to the words and tenor of Scripture. God does not cleanse a fallen nature. God does distinguish in His Word between sin (the nature) and sins (the fruit of that nature). Sins are forgiven on the basis of faith in Christ's finished work on the cross, and the sinner's trust in that work. God was glorified by His perfect work of atonement and was fully justified in forgiving every poor sinner who accepts the Savior as his own. But when it comes to the matter of the sinful, evil nature - sin - it is not cleansed or forgiven. God condemns that as hateful. The sinner who believes has his sins forgiven, but does not have any improvement in the old nature. It is still there as long as he lives in this body, and it never gets better. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; it never becomes Spirit, It is not the product of the Spirit of God. He gives a new life and nature to believers, so that such become "a new creation." (See 2 Cor. 5:17; J. N. D. Trans.)

Then to refer to water baptism as that which cleanses from "original sin," is consummate folly. Water baptism never has and never will cleanse anyone - some theologian's words to the contrary, notwithstanding. Nor does that old Adam nature get cleansed. In fact, "born of water" in John 3 simply does NOT refer to baptism. The scripture there says, "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"; but it does not say that "that which is born of water is water." If it does not mean water baptism, then some may ask, What does it mean?

Water is used as a figure of several different things. In John 7, it is used as a figure of the Spirit of God, and we are not left to our own devices to prove that it is so. Scripture plainly tells us, "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive." But here in John 3 it simply cannot be used to describe the Spirit, for the "water" and "the Spirit" are carefully distinguished. Hence we must look elsewhere for the answer.

First, let us look at the Old Testament, where water was used in connection with cleansing the priests from defilement when they went about the service of God. Before they entered the holy place of the tabernacle, they had to stop as they passed the laver which contained water. There they had to wash their hands and their feet before entering the tabernacle, "that they die not." Next, in the New Testament, the Lord Jesus put water into a basin on that night before He was betrayed and then washed the disciples' feet. His comment was that if He washed them not they would have no part with Him; that is, no communion. Moral soil on saints interrupts communion, so the Lord washed their feet - that which touched this defiled world as they walked down here. Then let us go to Eph. 5 for the spiritual significance of this. There we read that "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it"; that is now past. Then in the present, He is occupied with it that "He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Now this gives us a clue to one use of the water - it is used as a symbol of that which cleanses saints (not sinners) from defilement as they traverse the wilderness; and the Lord Himself is at present occupied therein. This enlightens us on the use of the symbol of water, which is used here as the application of the Word of God to lead us to judge evil and to cleanse us. But evidently that is not the meaning of "born of water" in John 3.

Now let us go to 1 Pet. 1:23: "Born again... by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Here we get the word of God (that of which water is a type) used to produce "new birth." From this let us go to Jas. 1:18: "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." Here it is the will of God and the word of truth linked together. Without doubt, the Spirit of God is the One who uses the

Word of God - not the Word as used for cleansing saints, as in Ephesians 5, but as that instrument used in. His power to produce a new life in a dead soul. Now dare anyone challenge this meaning as applied to John 3, where new birth is by water and the Spirit? The key that unlocks the seemingly difficult passages of Scripture is not always in the same chapter; but the Word of God does contain the answers, so that we need not go away uninformed.

Another key to being born of water and of the Spirit in John 3 is to be found in John 15:3: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." It is again new birth that is referred to, and this is produced by the word of the Lord Jesus - the word of Him who was God manifest in flesh. Previously, in John 13:10 and 11, He had said to the twelve apostles, "Ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean." Judas was not "born again"; he never was. After Judas had gone out, He said to the eleven, "Now ye are clean"; there was no exception. While blood is necessary for cleansing from sins before God, there is another sense in which the new birth gives a sense of moral cleansing. The Apostle John never mentions Christian baptism.

Therefore, we affirm, and do so without fear of contradiction, that being born of water and of the Spirit in John 3 has not the smallest connection with water baptism, but is symbolic of being given a new life by the power of the Spirit of God using the Word of God.

This will also be true of the restored remnant of Israel

in the future day, and it accounts for the Lord's words to Nicodemus, "Art thou a [literally, the] master [or, teacher] of Israel, and knowest not these things?" As a teacher of God's Word of the Old Testament, he should have been familiar with Eze. 36 We herewith quote verses 25 through 28:

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God."

Beyond all question this refers to Israel and the future, for it has not yet taken place. They have not dwelt in the land with God acting as their God since the days in which Ezekiel wrote. In the day that is coming, a remnant of Israel is to be born again of water and of the Spirit. Both water and the Spirit are here specified as being used together to give them "a new heart" when they will walk in His statutes and do them. Therefore, new birth is a positive requisite for a restored Israel in their land under their Messiah in the future. It is also true of people now who are brought to God. John 3, however, goes beyond merely new birth, for the Lord speaks of "heavenly things" after having spoken of that which will be true of the earthly people. He speaks in the 16th verse of eternal life and how it is received now.

But to return to the general question. God will never cast an infant into the lake of fire because of Adam's sin, nor will that be the portion of anyone who never developed mentally and did not have the power of decision - of one who could not understand that he needed a Savior. Such are not accountable. The lake of fire, the second death (which is the separation of the whole man, spirit,

soul, and body from God for all eternity) is a never-ending night of despair for those who reject or "neglect so great salvation."

When the Lord Jesus was here and took up little children, He said, "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Matt. 18:11. Whereas, when He was speaking of adults, He said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke 19:10. Infants and little children have not departed from God by wicked works, and if they die before they reach an age of accountability, the death of the Lord Jesus fully takes care of them who were born with a fallen nature and died because of the fall. No one will ever be punished for Adam's sins, but for his own, and not then if he accepts Christ as his personal Savior. We quote the words found on a tombstone of some infants. They express the truth.

"Bold infidelity, turn pale and die! Beneath this stone four infants' bodies lie.

Say, are they lost or saved?

If death's by sin, they sinned, for they lie here;

If heaven's by works, in heaven they can't appear.

Reason - ah! how depraved!

Revere the Bible's sacred page, the knot's untied;

They died for Adam sinned, they live for Jesus died."

But let us keep it unmistakably clear that water baptism is not meant in John 3, nor does water baptism ever save anyone. All the religious rites performed over an unbelieving adult who dies will avail nothing. And rites done over infants who die avail nothing. The former is lost forever; the latter is saved and saved for an eternity with Christ in glory.

## Over You in the Lord

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In 1 Thess. 5:12 and 13 the Apostle writes, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." The presence of elders is not requisite in order to have and to own those who are over us in the Lord. There is much of importance for us now in that scripture, for we have elders no more than they. I think we ought to lay its exhortations to heart. There are within and without not a few ill-instructed souls who hold the notion that, unless there be official appointment, they cannot have anybody over them in the Lord. This is all a mistake. No doubt, when a man was officially appointed, there was a definite guarantee in the face of the Church given by an apostle or an apostolic man; and there was thereby no little weight given to those who were thus appointed. Such a sanction had great and just value in the Church, and would be of consequence among the unruly. But none the less did God know how to provide instruction for assemblies where there was not yet official oversight. How merciful for times when for want of apostles there could be no elders!

But it will be noticed that the Corinthian assembly abounded in gift, though elders are seen nowhere among them. The Thessalonians do not appear to have possessed the same variety of outward power, while elders or bishops again are never hinted at. Yet at Corinth the household of Stephanas devoted themselves regularly to the service of the saints; and the Apostle beseeches the brethren to submit themselves to such, and to everyone that helped and labored. He prays the Thessalonians to know those who labored among them, and presided in the Lord, and admonished them. Evidently this did not depend upon their being apostolically appointed, which could hardly have been in their circumstances as lately gathered. It is founded upon that which after all is intrinsically better, if we must be content with one blessing out of two. Surely, if it comes to be a question between real spiritual power and outward office, no Christian ought to hesitate between them. To have the power and the office combined is no doubt the best of all when the Lord is pleased to give both; but in those early days we see that individuals were often and rightly engaged in the work of the Lord before there could be the seal of an apostle, as it were, affixed; and such the Apostle encourages and commends earnestly to the love and esteem of the saints before and independently of that seal. How precious that we can fall back on this principle now!

Even at Corinth and Thessalonica then those were raised up in the midst of the saints who showed spiritual ability in guiding and directing others. That was the work of those to whom one epistle exhorted subjection, and whom the other epistle commended as "over" them "in the Lord." Such men as these did not labor only, because some might be actively engaged in the Lord's work who might not be over others in the Lord. But these manifested power to meet difficulties in the Church, and to battle with that which was ensnaring souls, and so to guide and encourage the weak, and baffle the efforts of the enemy. They were not afraid to trust the Lord in times of trial and danger; and therefore the Lord used them, giving them power to discern and courage to act upon what they did discern.

## A Pattern for Preachers

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"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." Neh. 8:8.

## Paul's Farewell Message: Part 1

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Let us read together Acts 20:16-38. This is the Apostle's farewell message to the Ephesian elders. Paul had labored among the Ephesians for more than three years, so that they had become very dear to his heart. Is it not true that the longer these associations in Christ continue, the more precious they become?

Here we have to picture to ourselves the dear Apostle hastening to get to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. He feels he can not take the time to go inland to Ephesus, so he makes arrangements ahead of time that the elders should meet him at the port of Miletus. He called for "the elders of the church." Would it be out of place to stop a moment here and ask the meaning of that expression, "the elders of the church"? In those days it was Paul's custom to either personally, or through a deputy, ordain elders in every church where he had labored. See Acts 14:21-23. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church."

Ordained elders in every church. Such was the order in the days of the apostles. Some will ask, "If that was the case then, why not today?" I would answer that there are two reasons why we do not have them, and why we can not have them now. In the first place, we haven't any apostles; we have no properly constituted authority to place official elders in our meetings. On no occasion, as far as the Word of God tells us, did the Church itself hold an election and choose their elders. That was left to the apostles or to those with delegated authority from them. As remarked before, we have no apostles today. The New Testament apostles and prophets were regarded as connected with the foundation of the Church, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20).

Nor is it recorded that there was any provision made for "apostolic succession." You get that very distinctly brought out in Peter's epistle. He, of course, was one of the chiefest of the apostles. He reminds those to whom he wrote that after his decease they were to keep in mind, not what his successor should tell them, but what he had written to them.

In other words, the only succession they were to have after his demise would be the written Word itself. He made no provision to have someone take his place. No, brethren, there is no scriptural provision made for a continuation of the apostolate.

Now for the second reason why we have no officially appointed elders in the Church today. There would be no logical or consistent place in which to set them. Supposing we had the Apostle Paul here today, and we should say to him, "Brother Paul, we would like to have some ordained elders; since you are here we suggest that you appoint them for us." How would the Apostle react to such a situation? I rather think he might challenge us with another question; "If I ordain elders in the church of God in F, where shall I put them?" If he passed that question on to us, what would we say? Would we dare say, "Our group here in F is the Church of God?" We would not if we were taught of God. No, we would not be guilty of such a blunder. What is the church of God in F

The church of God in F is composed of every blood bought, Spirit-indwelt soul in

If the Apostle were to say, "I'm going to put all the ordained elders in F in your little group, what would be the result? Oh, how inflated we would become! But the Apostle could not consistently do such a thing. We are not the church of God in F No, we are just a poor little remnant, trying in these last days to maintain the truth as we find it in the Word of God. But let none of us ever become intoxicated with the idea that we are the church of God.

The Word of God has much to say about remnants; they have a lovely place in Scripture. It is a real privilege to be identified with a believing remnant; but the remnant must never imagine that they are the Church. In God's thoughts any member of the body of Christ here in F is just as dear to the heart of the Savior as any of us here in this room today. God shows no such favoritism. Every blood-bought soul is &many precious to the heart of Christ; and if you and I have the thoughts of God, we are going to have affections for the members of Christ wherever we meet them.

The Apostle called for the elders. How many were there? We are not told. There is nothing in Scripture to certify how many elders were placed in any one church, or that they all had the same number. But there is one thing of which we can be absolutely sure; that is that there was no church that had just one elder. There is no such official mentioned in the New Testament as the elder of the church. No, there was always a plurality of elders.

Now another question; we have ruled out ordained elders for the present day, because we have no valid authority to choose such. Then does this mean that today we have no elders in the Church of God? No, I do not think we need come to any such conclusion. While it is admitted that we are without official elders, yet in the goodness of God and His tender care over us, He sees to it that we have those among us in the assembly who do the work of an elder. I believe that faith will recognize such.

Now turn to 1 Thess. 5:12, 13. "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." This is an exhortation to faith to give recognition to those to whom the Lord has entrusted leadership among us locally. Now turn to Hebrews, the last chapter and the 17th verse: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." If we are taught of God, we will have that spirit of submission to those to whom the Lord may entrust godly leadership among us. In the ways of God we find such among us wherever we go. I presume some of us in our younger days had little idea of the exercise of soul on the part of some of our older brothers in their desire to see us kept in the path of dependence and obedience - how much time they spent in prayer for us as they sought the throne of grace for help in preserving us from the snares that were laid for our feet. I would say to you younger Christians who are here today, don't despise the leadership which God has been pleased to set in the meeting with which you are identified. When a brother in the assembly comes to you and seeks to speak with you in shepherd care for your soul, if you resist him, it isn't that you are just in rebellion against that particular brother, but you are rebelling against the Lord who placed such shepherds in the assembly. They seek out of an honest and good heart to care for the flock among whom they serve.

This word "elder" is closely related to another word in Scripture; that word is "bishop." Look at the first chapter of Titus, and you will see this identity. The fifth verse reads, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless." You see we have changed our terminology; we are still talking about the same man, but now he is spoken of as a bishop. So here we can readily see that a bishop and an elder are one and the same office. Why use the two terms? The answer is, elder is the name of the office, and I would conclude from the original Greek word that the term elder intimates an older person. Now that word "older," of course, is a relative term. In a country such as the United States where the ordinary life span is around sixty or seventy years, we expect the older brothers to be men of gray hairs. But our brother A has just told us that in that part of Mexico where he has been preaching they do not live so long. Brother S also told us that in South America, on the plateau of northern Bolivia, the life span is comparatively short. So we can not pin this down and say that one must have had sixty birthdays before he can be recognized as an elder. Maybe he might be such at fifty, or at forty. In a way, it is a relative matter. So we must not be legal in these things; but we do see that elders (bishops) must be those of ripened experience, both in their personal life and in the assembly.

I have met unmarried young men around twenty-one or twenty-two years of age who told me very blithely that they were elders in the church. How far this is from the scriptural pattern! Remember this, there is no substitute for experience in the things of God. This is the reason the Word says, "not a novice" - not one newly come to the faith. Sometimes we have those brought to the Lord who are energetic characters, born to leadership. They, being newly saved, wish to get things done; and they immediately strive to take over the gospel testimony. Such need to wait; they need to be taught of God; they need to ripen in the knowledge of the Word. God has not seen fit to put leadership in the assembly in the hands of such. I well remember an old brother giving an address at a conference, and he made this remark: "All my children have a better education than I have, but there is one thing none of my children have. They do not have my experience." Let us not discount the fact that some of our brethren have been in the path for years. They have weighed the problems that believers meet along the way. They have sought to get God's mind about the various questions in the assembly. What a privilege it is to have those to whom we can go who are qualified to give us help and advice.

Now I grant you that in its last analysis the Word of God takes precedence over anybody's advice. That goes without question. None of us are ever wiser than Scripture. None of us would desire to put forth any dogma. No, the Word must reign supreme. On the other hand, let us not resist the prayerful oversight of those brothers in the assembly who are seeking our good. Let us be sure that we are not resisting the voice of the Spirit to our conscience. If we do, it will be to our loss now and in that day to come.

In verse 18 of our chapter Paul calls attention to his demeanor as a servant of the Lord. "Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons." Sometimes brothers wonder why they do not seem to have more weight; why their brethren do not listen better to them. Do you think that this word of Paul's here may be the answer? The Apostle reminds these Ephesian elders after what manner he had been among them at all seasons. Did you notice as we read in Titus the qualifications of a bishop? He was not to be "self-willed, not

soon angry." Do your brethren look at you as self-willed? Do you lose your temper? If you do, if you are a "striker" (a loud, ill-tempered man), you can not wonder that your brethren do not pay you the respect you would like. No, this thing works both ways: I should heed my brethren when they come to me, but, on the other hand, the brother who assumes a place of leadership in the assembly should see to it that he has a manner of life that corresponds to the place he takes. A brother who is constantly losing his temper, who is ever trying to have his own way, thrusting himself through, can not hope for the respect and confidence of the saints.

Again Paul says, "serving the Lord with all humility of mind." There are few things more unbecoming in a servant of the Lord than to become pompous and overbearing. The Apostle was not so. He served the Lord with all humility and with many tears. Ministry for him never became a soft, easy pursuit. He was not leaning back in the lap of luxury in his service for Christ. It was a rugged reality for him wherever he went. I remember dear old brother P saying more than once, "If you wish for a happy service for Christ, go out and preach the gospel; if you wish sorrow of heart, serve the Church of God." And brethren, it is true! The one who would serve the saints is going to bear on his heart all the trials and troubles that occur among them. Nor let us ever think that the trials and difficulties that may be in our local assembly at the present moment are a new thing in the history of the Church. They have always been here. Satan hates the truth of Christ and the Church. He does not wish to see any going on with the Lord; he would ever throw us into confusion. Satan is ever stirring up strife among God's dear redeemed people.

But let us never be discouraged because things are not going as smoothly as they might. Let us rather retreat into our closets, and get on our knees and cry to God for wisdom and help through the trial. I have witnessed situations, deadlocked impasses that it seemed nothing could break, and yet God came in in answer to deep, earnest, longing prayer. I have seen such sad circumstances clear up, dissipate, and disappear; and the saints were again in happy harmony. Oh, let us remember that we have a living God in heaven who is interested in the welfare of His people. Don't give up. Seek grace from God to have such resolved. He can do it.

## Paul's Farewell Message: Part 2

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In the 20th verse of our chapter, the Apostle says: "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." The Apostle Paul was no man's hired servant; he was not in the field of God's husbandry on a monthly salary basis. He was there as sent of God; he was there to speak forth the mind of Christ, so he can say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you."

Brethren, do we desire teachers that will speak to us smooth things, things that tickle our ears? If we do, we are not in the mind of the Spirit of God. In second Timothy we read of a time "when they will not endure sound doctrine; but... heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth." What is the penalty for such an attitude? They "shall be turned unto fables." If we resist the truth of God - if we say, "I'll not have that" - then we shall have to have Satan's substitute. We shall be turned aside to something that is not the truth of God.

The dear, faithful Apostle Paul, wherever he went, held back nothing profitable for the saints. We are now living in a day of compromise; the desire is for big things; the sights are set high, with the end result being that the truth suffers. "Truth is fallen in the street," because men have set certain goals that they are determined to reach. Sad to say, the result is often spiritual bankruptcy. Which do we value more? the great, big, powerful assemblages of Christian profession, or the plain, precious remnant path as marked out in the Word. You know, it costs something to walk in the path of the truth of God. Indeed it does! "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Satan would always lead us into the path of compromise if he can not make total unbelievers of us. He would tell us, "Why do you have to be so different from everybody else? Why do you not conform to the accepted pattern of the day?" Now suppose we hearken to his suggestion; why not conform, and thus accomplish more for God? Wherein lies the fallacy of this attitude? Is it not in the all too patent fact that the "accepted pattern" is forever changing? It is like the sand dunes, forever shifting and changing shape. There is no solidity. If you try to keep up with the popular standards in the religious world you will discover that you are just drifting, drifting, drifting. Where will it all end? The Word tells us in no uncertain terms; it will all culminate in Laodicea.

What is Laodicea? It is the last of the seven churches as described in the second and third chapters of the Revelation. Laodicea is the professing church of God, having become such a nauseous thing that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, has to say, "I will spue thee out of My mouth." The great ecumenical buildup that is in progress today, whether in Protestantism or in Catholicism, is all headed for the same divine repudiation at the hands of Christ. Meanwhile, the Lord knoweth them that are His. They are all, every one, individualized before Him; and each is precious in His sight. One of these days the redeemed will hear the shout in the air, and we shall all be caught out of this world to meet the Lord in the air.

Is it not a sad thing to think that the apostate church will continue to function here on the earth after the true Church is removed? The preacher may be there the next Sunday to give his usual

sermon; the unsaved church members will be there to listen to it; the elders and the deacons may applaud the effort. How can this be? Because it is an unsaved preacher; unsaved deacons and elders; and unsaved church members. This may be an extreme illustration, but it carries the point. The Lord is going to take out all that are real, born again, those who have a vital link with a living Christ. When He removes them, the lifeless profession will be left behind.

No, beloved, we can not afford to take the road of compromise. Woe be to the man who reads his Bible to find in it that which pleases his particular prejudice. Every word of God is pure. You and I have no right to discount one verse within the pages of God's revelation.

What was the burden of Paul's ministry? As for the gospel, it was, testifying to the Jews and to the Greeks, "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." You can never improve on that. If you haven't started with "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," you haven't started at all. That is fundamental; that lies at the basis of all blessing for your soul and mine. Have you taken sides with God against yourself? Have you taken your place in the dust of repentance, and has Christ become your all in all for salvation? Have you said, "Yes" to the pleadings of the Spirit of God? The only Object for your faith is Christ Himself.

Today there are many false Christs. Such are peddled from door to door. Maybe on your answering the door bell you are offered a copy of the magazine, "Awake." The more appropriate name for that periodical would be, "Go to Sleep." It is a total denial of God's Christ. Yes, Satan is busy; he would rob you of Christ. Oh, he sure that the Christ in whom you are trusting is God's Christ. The religious world today is infiltrated with many antichrists. The number is ever increasing. One of these days (and it is not far off) the antichrist is going to appear in person on the scene, and the world that has turned its back on God's Christ will welcome Satan's antichrist. Oh, what a world it is! No wonder the heart of the Christian cries, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Now verses 26 and 27: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." What a far cry this is from the present day notion that the gospel is all that need concern us in our preaching. The popular idea seems to be, just get people saved and let it go at that. What a misrepresentation of the heart of our blessed Lord! The Apostle Paul in his ministry had it ever upon his heart to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." That is, Paul would have the believer to be full grown, to be mature. Let us never be satisfied with our present development in the Christian life. There will always be vast depths yet to be explored in God's Word, so let us ever seek to be "reaching forth unto those things which are before." Some day we shall be welcomed into the privilege of knowing even as we are known. But until that day dawn, let us be diligent in the daily searching of the Word, both for our own souls, and for those unto whom we would minister.

Paul says, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." What does he mean? I believe he had a clear conscience before God that he had never knowingly misrepresented the truth of God. The saints would never be able to say, "Why, Paul, you never taught us that; you never ministered that truth; you kept it from us." Can we imagine Paul replying something like this: "Well, I feared if I ministered such truth among you it might cause trouble; or, at least, some of you would not accept it." No! No! There was no such evasion with the Apostle. He can say, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you."

Brethren, do we desire less than the full truth? Do we prefer to fellowship with some company of believers who only desire 50% or 75% of the truth? Some today are content to go on with even less than this. Rather let us seek to be in the good of the whole counsel of God.

Now the dear Apostle comes near the end of his address to the elders. No doubt the tears ran down his cheeks as he told them the sad news as to what would happen after he was no longer among them. Satan was busy himself in dividing and scattering them. This dispersion was going to take place in two ways. First, evil teachers such as Judge Rutherford of Jehovah Witnesses, Joseph Smith of Mormonism, and their kind, would arise as grievous wolves and tear the flock to pieces if possible. But the second danger of which the Apostle warned them was more serious than the first. The second scattering would be those of their own number who would form parties and divide the flock. "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Ah, that was what made Paul weep. That was the reason he said, "Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Oh, how sad it is when a brother assumes the responsibility for dividing the saints of God. They speak perverse things; headstrong things; self-willed things. What for? "To draw disciples after them." The Church of God has suffered under that scourge all down through its history. The spirit of the thing was already abroad in Paul's day, so that some were saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." But it is just as heinous in God's sight today as it was then. God's estimate has not changed in the least.

One of the saddest tragedies that can possibly come into the life of a servant of the Lord is that of being guilty of leading a portion of the Church of God away from Christ the Center. How contrary to the heart of Christ for one to seek a following after himself! The Good Shepherd desires to see the flock kept together. He loves them every one. Dear old brother P used to say, "Remember, our Lord Jesus has shepherds who tend the flock, but He does not have any shepherd dogs." In what spirit do I yearn after those whom I may see straying? Is my concern a self-righteous, pharisaical one, or do I have the heart of Christ, the Chief Shepherd? Do I long to see these scattered sheep gathered back to Christ the Center, that they may again be happy in His presence?

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace." Notice, the Apostle did not say, "I commend you to the elders" or "to the deacons." He commended them to no earthly authority whatsoever. He commended them to two unchanging and unchangeable objects: God and the Word. Can God change? No. Can the Word change? No. "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven." He commended them "to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Such is the wish of God for all of us today, that we might be built up in the faith; that we might be readied for the grand inheritance that awaits us. God's people are a sanctified people; a separated people; a gathered out people. Paul knows that the will of God as expressed in His Word would be realized among a separated and holy people. When we see saints of God seeking to commingle the holy things of God with the trash of the world, what an insult it is to the blessed Lord! This spirit of admixture of the holy and the profane is all about us today. Let us avoid it as we would a plague. Oh, beloved, let us wake up! Let us remember how near we are to the end. Are our associations those which God can call sanctified? Are our relaxations from time to time sanctified relaxations? "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while." God has no objections to our coming apart to rest and relax, but are such periods in disharmony with His will for us?

Now the 36th verse: "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." Prayed with them, not at them. No, nor over them. They all knelt together, and he prayed with them all. "And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." How lovely are the affections of the people of God! Do not ever seek for anything like it in the world, for you will never find it. This wonderful fellowship into which you and I have been brought is the fruit of Calvary. It comes down from above, from the Head of the Church. "They fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." How they loved him! Was he an unfaithful shepherd? Had he always spoken smooth things to them? Was he always trying to conform them to his personal comfort? Absolutely no! But when it came to the farewell their hearts and consciences told them that that dear man of God had told them the truth. And the Spirit of God caused their tears and his to be mingled, as they parted for the last time on earth.

"They should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship." They watched him board the boat, and I can see them waving their farewells as the ship sails away. How well I remember parting from a dear old servant of the Lord some fifty years ago. As our boat left the wharf, this old veteran servant stood on the shore; and as long as we could see him he was waving his kerchief at us. That was our last sight of him in this world. Our next meeting will be the one "in the air" when the Lord comes for His Church. Oh, beloved, how real are the affections of Christ! Let us not betray them. Let us not seek a substitute. Let us come closer together. We need one another. I need your encouragement. I know I would love to be a little encouragement to you, while together we await His coming.

## Peace ... My Peace

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John 14:27

There are two characters of peace presented to us in this verse. "Peace I leave with you" is not the same thing as "My peace I give unto you." Peace we need in every form. Peace we need first of all for the conscience, and the Lord would set the consciences of His disciples happy and free before God. Now this was one, and indeed we may say the main, object of our Lord's coming here - specially of His death. As we are told elsewhere, He "made peace through the blood of His cross." And so in the fullness of this peace, when He rises from the dead, first He says, "Peace be unto you"-a peace that so suffices, so overflows, that our Lord repeats it a second time in connection with the mission on which He was sending them out. "Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Chap. 20:21.

The first blessed peace is between God and our souls, peace as regards the old war which we kept up against God when we were enemies. But this is not everything. When we have found it, know it, rest in it, it is absolutely necessary for the well-being of our souls that we should know Christ's peace. This at once shows the difference. Christ never needed the peace which we did as having been at enmity with God; and yet it was His to enjoy peace, after a sort, which had never been before. Therefore He adds not merely "Peace I leave with you," but "My peace I give unto you" - the peace which He ever enjoyed, which reigned within Him and lit up all around Him.

And it is remarkable as confirming this that in Col. 3, where we have the expression, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts," it really is "the peace of Christ." "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body." He, the Head of the body, was always in the perfect and unbroken enjoyment of this peace - not as if He had ever been out of it, or needed to have it made for Him, but as One whom nothing ever agitated. He might suffer, sorrow, groan, weep - all these He knew - but yet in all these His peace abode.

No doubt at the cross there was a wholly different experience. We cannot speak of peace there. But that which He tasted there, we are never called to know in the slightest degree. We could not even approach that furnace heated seventy times seven, where every question was settled between God and His beloved Son as to our sins. There was a suffering there which was altogether peculiar to itself, before which all others must be silent at God's word; the great and solemn judgment of sin was to take its course between God and Christ, and that hour abides isolated and alone forever. But, excepting such a scene and season which thus stood apart from all others, as respected Christ in His ordinary dealings with God (whatever might be the zeal of His heart which ate Him up), there was one thing which never changed. That zeal was not always in exercise, but was always surely there so as to meet whatever required it to be called out. But all was in its just place, because there was One that waited upon God and that drew on the infinite resources of God for each moment. "I live," as He said, because of "the Father." Thus, whatever the zeal, He might occasionally burn with indignation against those that defiled the house of His Father; whatever the tender compassion that yearned over sorrow, whatever the rebuke that

convicted the disciples of their unbelief, and whatever the righteous displeasure of His soul that tore off witheringly the pride and hypocrisy of men who put on a cloak of religion, there was one thing that never failed, for it never was absent, but was in full mighty flow in His soul; and this was His peace. What a thought that such is the peace which He gives to us!

Jesus leaves with us, as a last legacy that comes to us from His death, peace - the righteously won portion for the soul that believes in His name.

But "My peace" seems to be a deeper and more personal boon, not procured by His work only, but fresh from His own heart which was ever filled with it to overflowing. It supposes the peace that He has made for us by the blood of His cross, and left to us; but it follows on and puts us wondrously in communion with Himself, enjoying now the peace He Himself enjoyed, although it were of all things as marked and characteristic as any other perhaps which could be named. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. He gives to us His peace; He the Lord of peace, who walked in it as none else ever did, tried as only He was or could be. O may we treasure His peace!

There is another scripture to which I would briefly refer - 2 Thess. 3:16: "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means."

We hear repeatedly of God's giving Himself the title of the God of peace. "The Lord of peace" is a much more unusual expression. I do not think they mean exactly the same thing, however closely connected. "The God of peace" points to Him as the source of it. He alone could be. Peace is what a sinful creature least of all knows. How could he, who is at war with God? The wretched pleasure of a fallen being is change. To this he has recourse as his miserable diversion from facing the true condition of his soul, his past life, his present state, and all that lies before him. He is afraid to look at things as they are; he dreads to search too closely unto himself; and he shrinks back from the God that he knows he has despised, and for whose presence he is unfit. What a change when that God is known to that soul as the God of peace! And yet it is not that God is changed, but the soul. For God is the God of peace, but that soul only knows Him to have become so to himself by a new creation and by redemption. He is delivered from his former self and hence is placed in Christ - the One who has banished all his evil and brought him into His own good.

It is impossible that God could be other than the God of peace, for He has through Christ's redemption on the cross completely put away all with which otherwise He must be at war for the one to whom He displays Himself and has given the very life of Christ to be his life. God could not but love and value and delight in what is of Christ. What can be simpler? And it is God who effects this great change - not by His own changing, as if the Creator were a creature variable like ourselves-but Christ, and no longer self, makes all the difference. Let us hold this fast, rejoicing that we have nothing to put forward before our God - nothing to boast in for our soul - but that now we have Christ whom once we despised and abhorred.

But then "the Lord of peace" is another phase of the truth which has its own blessed importance. It is not God who has made peace through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who can therefore afford to be the God of peace to him who has Christ. But "the Lord of peace" directs us to Christ Himself. It is not that He is our peace only, which is very true, and the epistle to the Ephesians tells us that Christ Himself is our peace. An astonishing manifestation of what grace

has given us in Him! He is the Lord of peace also. By that I understand that He is not only the Lord of us and of all, but that He is the One who knows how to bring about peace - the One who is above all the circumstances that tend to disturb. Elsewhere we read of this peace.

In this chapter the Lord Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you"; that is, He has left peace as the fruit of His death. But then He gives us the same character of peace which He enjoyed Himself. The peace that He has "left" is the peace that we receive by faith in Him. The peace that Christ gives is peace in communion with Him after we have received peace through His death. And a wonderful thing it is that such hearts as ours should be capable of such communion with Him in that which is naturally so contrasted with our own condition. And the reason is this, that we know that God now has replaced the first man by the second; and the more simply we apply this to our own souls, the more calm we are amid things that tend to trouble. We can count upon Him. If they are things quite outside our control, in whose hands are they? We know that they are in the hands of God, and our God is the God of peace. What we have to guard against is our own will, our own nature being acted upon; for we ought not to be governed by circumstances. We are brought into the light of the presence of God; it is there that we walk, and the believing this and resting upon it as the truth of our God for which we have nothing to show but His word is precisely the point of faith for us day by day. What a deliverance from everything like deceit or from crooked or unlovely or ungenerous or unchristian-like ways, which we shall be sure to fall into if we lose sight of Him. We are never so if we are consciously walking in the light [although we are always in the light]; but when we are not, then self is sure to show itself in the various forms of fallen Adam.

We have the Lord of peace to look to, who is at the helm and not only preserves the ship but controls the elements. "The Lord of peace Himself," for we count not upon circumstances, not upon people; for those we count most upon we often have the deepest sorrow from. And it is well for us to learn this profitable lesson, that God will not allow us to make an idol of anything or any one. We have God above everything; and not only that, but we have a Man above everything - a Man who loves us perfectly - a Man at the head of the universe, glorified and set over all the works of God's hands. That Man is our Lord, and our Lord is the Lord of peace. "Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always by all means." What a blessing! Surely it is in His power, and "faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

## Paul's Epistle to Philemon

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In Paul's epistle to that beloved fellow disciple, we listen to the voice of an apostle, a suitor, and a brother in Christ. Paul had to sustain all these characters; and he does so, not sacrificing one of them to another of them; and this is beautiful - the workmanship of the Spirit in him, as it were, after the model of Jesus at Bethany.

(At Bethany, we see the Lord adopting a family scene. There He admitted such fellowship as would not have been consistent with a disallowance of the scene. He could not have been at Bethany, as we see He was, had He disallowed the affection that suits a family circle. He was a well-known friend there. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." These are words which bespeak this. He was not there merely as an invited guest - no, nor merely as a Savior, nor as one that had won for himself a welcome by his sweet and profitable words. Such was seen in the house of Simon the Pharisee, in the village of the Samaritans, and at the table of Emmaus; but here at Bethany Jesus was as one well known- a loved and honored visitor- whose title to all that was there was understood and felt. But, though it were thus, Jesus did not interfere with the arrangements of the house. As having the title of an intimate friend, He knew His welcome at all times; yet the order of the family was not at His discretion. Martha may still be the busy one - the housekeeper. Jesus leaves things as He finds them. It was not for Him to meddle. As He could not enter the house of another unbidden, so, having entered, He could not interfere with the order He finds there. All this is perfection in its place. But, if one of the family, instead of carrying herself in her family place, will step out and be a teacher in His presence, He will then resume His higher character and set things divinely right, though He would not touch them, as I may speak, domestically.)

In the first ten verses of this lovely epistle, we hear the voice of an apostle. Paul addresses Philemon in conscious authority, as having a higher relationship to him in the faith or in the order of the house of God. He salutes him, thanks God for him, and then prays for him - as he does, ordinarily, in all his epistles for the churches - expressing likewise his joy in the grace that was in him, as he would rejoice in the grace that was in them; as, for instance, in the dear Philippians.

Then, to the 19th verse, we hear the suitor; and in such a character Paul stands in the acknowledgment of Philemon's rights, as a master in his own house and owner of his own possessions, as simply and as fully as if he were not an apostle. His desire as a suitor is not allowed to take advantage of his apostleship, and this is beautiful. He who charges servants not to despise their masters because they are brethren, will not presume on the worldly rights of a brother because he himself is an apostle (see 1 Tim. 6). Paul makes his requests of Philemon touching Philemon's servant Onesimus, under the sense of his title as a master, as much as any stranger, any citizen of the world, could have done; and again I say, this is beautiful. As Jesus would not interfere with family order, His servant would not trespass on family rights and possessions. He knows when to be an apostle and when to be a suitor, and how to be both in season, in the spirit of his Lord who knew when to be the teacher, the divine authoritative Teacher,

and when to be the family friend. The spirit of the Master guided the servants in the steps of the Master, and we may follow Paul as he followed Christ. There is something lovely in this. The character of a suitor is not lost in that of the apostle. Apostleship is not allowed to trespass on civil rights. Paul skillfully uses his materials, and plies his reasons. That is so; but that is just what an interested suitor would do, and every suitor should be interested. This is only the perfection of the new character in which he was now speaking. He also lets Philemon know that his compliance would be obedience. This was but the integrity of a suitor to a Christian like Philemon. Paul's skill or art in plying his reasons would have been but cunning had it not been accompanied by such integrity as this. I may, therefore, say his way as a suitor is beautiful.

And then, to the end, we listen to the words of a brother-the breathings of one who knew the grace that was in a fellow disciple, and with confidence could count upon it and use it. "But withal," says he, "prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." Here it is Philemon's love in the Spirit that he reckons upon, as before it had been his rights in the world he was acknowledging.

Surely, there is something excellent in all this. And one other thought on the whole epistle 1 would suggest: that Paul, the prisoner, in no measure grudges Philemon, the master, his comforts and possessions and liberty. No. What he had in Christ was too paramount in his heart - to commanding and occupying there - to leave room for such a feeling. But it is blessed to see this. No, he knew the dignity of suffering for Christ. To him it was "given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Phil. 1:29).

## Practical Christianity

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The Christianity of the closet and the Christianity of busy life are not, as is often fancied, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with Jesus in His solitude knows how to carry the savor of the fellowship even into the most common affairs. There is need of prayer in this matter. For though we be convinced that there is but one thing needful, we are easily led away, like Martha, to busy and trouble ourselves about "many things." Many things we must needs do and care about while we are in the flesh; but the work to which Christ calls us is to do and care about these things in such a spirit as to make them part and parcel of our great work - the work of keeping close to Jesus, and of following Him whithersoever He goes. If only willing to leave all and follow Christ, He will make the cross not heavy to be borne, but a delight, more pleasant than to the miser is his load of gold, or to the earthly monarch are his insignia of power. "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

## A Practical Word

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"Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." 2 Cor. 4:10. With Paul the flesh was not allowed to interrupt the power of this divine life, so that it flowed on in an unhindered way....

It is an important fact that sacred Scripture never tells me to die to sin, for this I never could do. But the Scripture tells me that I am dead, having died with Christ, and this is Christian liberty. I begin with being dead with Christ. For I cannot die to sin, when sin is the character of my whole life apart from Christ.

## Promised and Made Good

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We shall all be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory. It was God's counsel before the foundation of the world, but never brought out till the cross. He "hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, [which is responsibility], but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ." It was before the world in God's purpose about His people, but it was never brought out till Christ had laid the foundation for it in the cross. In Titus 1 there is a similar statement: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested His word through preaching." All this glorious purpose, glorious for us and for God, never was brought out - never hinted at - until Christ laid a righteous ground for it in the cross. Then God brought it out and said, That is what I am going to do.

## Remarks on the Lord's Death

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The reader will remark how perfectly the account of the Lord's death suits the general character and special design of John's Gospel and of no other. Here Jesus is the conscious Son, the divine Person who made all things, but became flesh that He might not only give eternal life but die as a propitiation for our sins. And here therefore, here only, He said, It is finished, and bowing His head delivered up His spirit. There are witnesses, as we shall see, but they are of God, not of man or the creature; and they intimately flow from His own Person. No darkness is mentioned, no cry that His God had forsaken Him, no rending of the veil, no earthquake, no centurion's confession - all of which meet to proclaim the rejected Messiah (Matt. 27). So substantially, save the earthquake, the Servant of God obedient to death in Mark 15. Luke 23 adds the testimony to His grace in the crucified robber, His first fruits in paradise, and the centurion's witness to "Jesus Christ the righteous," after He had committed His spirit into His Father's hands. It was reserved for John to set forth His death who was God not less surely than man, and as such. The Creator but man lifted up from the earth could say, in dying for sin to God's glory, It is finished. The work, the infinite work, was done for the putting away of sin by His sacrifice. Thereon hangs not only the blessing of every soul that is to be justified by faith but of the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. "It is finished" [one word in the Greek]; one word! yet what word ever contained so much?..

In the law, the Psalms, and the Prophets the Spirit of God had Christ before Him, and in the sufferings to come on Him, as well as in the glories that should follow. But the fleshly mind, as it shrinks from sufferings, is disposed to overlook and get rid of testimony; especially so if the sufferings be the effect and the proof of man's evil estate, for this is of all things most unpalatable. Thus was the Jew dull to see what condemned himself and leveled him morally to the condition of any other sinner; and rejecting the fullest evidences and Christ's own presence in divine grace and truth and the gospel at last, he was given over to Judicial hardening when wrath came on them to the uttermost.

Christ alone gives the key to the paschal lamb; Christ is the main object in the Psalm No reasoning of skeptics, even if theologians, can efface the truth, though it exposes their own unbelief; and assuredly, if the heart were made right by grace, it would desire that to be true which is the truth, instead of stumbling at the word being disobedient, or neglecting it because of indifference. In vain then do the Rosenmullers and the like hesitate or avow their dislike of the type and the allusion. To faith it is food, and strength and joy; for if God's Word is instinct with His delight in Christ giving Himself to die, He also expresses it in every sort of form beforehand that the very facts of His atoning death, the great stumblingblock, might render the most irrefragable testimony to its truth and His glory, when thus manifested here below in shame, to man's shame and everlasting contempt.

How marvelously meet in Christ's cross the proud enmity of the Jew, the lawless hand of the Gentiles, the determine ate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and this in perfect grace to the

guiltiest of Jews and Gentiles! For out of Christ's pierced side came out forthwith blood and water. And John was not so preoccupied with the Savior's dying charge concerning Mary as not to mark the sight. In the strongest form he lets us know that what he saw and testified was no mere transient fact but before the mind as present, of permanent interest and importance. In his first epistle (5:6) he characterized the Lord accordingly. "This is He that came through water and blood, Jesus Christ; not in the power of water only, but in the power of water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Mora 1 purification however needed and precious, is not enough; there must be expiation of sins also; and both are found by faith in the death of Christ, not otherwise nor elsewhere. As a fact in the Gospel the order is blood and water; as applied to us in the Epistle it is the water and the blood, and the Spirit as One personally given follows. Nothing but death flows to man from Adam; Christ, the second Man who died for sin and sinners, is the source alike of purification and of atonement to the believer who needs both and is dead before God without both. For though the Son of God with life in Himself, He stands alone till He dies; dying He bears much fruit. He quickens, purifies and expiates; and the Holy Ghost consequently given brings us into the import of His death as well as blessing resulting from it. For it is judgment pronounced and executed by God in His cross on the flesh, but in our favor, because in Him who was a sin offering.

No wonder then that John was inspired to record the fact, not more wondrous in itself than in its consequences now made known to the believer. The salvation must be suited to and worthy of the Savior. If He was eternal, it was everlasting; if divine judgment fell on such a Victim, it was that they believing Him should not come into judgment, but have life, being forgiven all their offenses and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Such is the declared standing of every true Christian, but it is in virtue of Christ who is all and in all. Creeds and theological systems enfeeble and hinder its enjoyment; but all this, and more than one could here develop, is clearly and plainly revealed to faith in Scripture, as it is indeed due to Christ's glory in Person and work....

God forbid that •a word should be said to obscure that blood, or to turn a soul from its justifying value. But out of the Lord's side flowed water and blood, and we need both. The blood atones, the water purifies; and as the blood abides shed and efficacious once for all, in contrast with the ineffectual and many sacrifices of the Jews, the washing of water by the Word is not only applied at the first but is needed to purge all through Where this is not seen, confusion follows, and the enfeebling, if not destruction, of fundamental truth.

## Restoration to Communion: the Red Heifer

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In Numb. 19 we learn the excessive jealousy of the Lord about sin, not in the sense of guilt, but defilement. This He measures by His sanctuary. We have to do with it, and nothing unclean can be allowed. We are "clean every whit" (John 13:10), but the feet-washing is needed. We belong to the sanctuary and yet are in the world, though not of it (John 15:19; 17:14); we need to have a just estimate of both. If we but touch evil, a remedy is required. Still it is not the question of justification, but of communion. Sin hinders that - hinders my coming boldly into the holiest. How was this met? The blood of the unblemished heifer, representing Christ who knew no sin and could not be brought under its power, was sprinkled before the tabernacle seven times; that is, before the place of communion, not of atonement. The sin offering was burnt without the camp, but the blood of the red heifer was sprinkled seven times where we meet God in intercourse. This marks the full efficacy of Christ's blood when I meet God. The body was reduced to ashes, as Christ was judged and condemned for what I am apt to be careless about; but God is not careless, and would make me sensible of sin. Christ had to suffer for it, and it is gone; but the sight of His suffering shows me the dreadfulness of it.

God has an eye that discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart; He would have us discern them too, and without this there can be no communion. But we do not get back into communion as quickly as we get out of it. Seven days elapsed in the type before there was full restoration. The Spirit takes and applies the ashes (that is, the remembrance of Christ's agony, and what occasioned it), and makes us feel practical horror of sin.

When I look at my sin with horror, even in the sense of the grace which has met it, it is a right feeling, but not communion; it is a holy judgment of sin in the presence of grace. Hence, there was a second sprinkling - not on the third day, but the seventh - and then there is communion with God. We see that perfect grace alone maintains the sense of perfect holiness. The result, in the end, is that we increase in the knowledge of God, both as to holiness and love. We must have been out of communion before we sinned, or we should not have yielded. How came I to fall? Because of the carelessness which left me out of God's presence, and exposed me to the evil without and within.

## Revived Roman Empire

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Christians who have any knowledge of dispensational truth have heard of "the revived Roman Empire," but many of them could not give an explanation of what it means. It is our purpose here to look a little into what God has said about the Roman Empire of the past, and at His pronouncements concerning its future. Our aim is to see where we are today in relation to that future.

For a thing to be revived, it must have at one time existed, then for some reason ceased to exist. This is exactly what is said of the Roman Empire: "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit [or, abyss; that is, with diabolic power], and go into perdition... the beast that was, and is not, and yet is [or rather, shall be present]." Rev. 17:8. God often uses the word "beast" to describe earthly governmental powers. Here is one which existed, then would disappear, and later will reappear in an altered form before its complete and final overthrow at the hand of Him who will come to seize the reins of power in this world.

When God spoke to Nebuchadnezzar and to Daniel about the Roman Empire that was then to come, He first named the other world empires which would precede it from the day in which He turned His earthly people over to Gentile dominion. He removed His throne from Jerusalem and the earth when He permitted Nebuchadnezzar to subjugate the Jews, about 606 B. C. The course of history from that point on is described in Daniel, chapters 2 and 7. In the former chapter, Gentile supremacy is depicted in an image resembling a man, and in the latter, as four wild beasts; the image began with gold and ended with a mixture of iron and clay. In other words, dominion received from God in Nebuchadnezzar deteriorated. The image was of gold, silver, brass (or copper), iron, and the iron mixed with miry clay. We are not left to our own imagination to understand this, for Nebuchadnezzar was the "head of gold," and after him would arise a "kingdom inferior" to his. The city of Babylon in Nebuchadnezzar's day exceeded in glory any city that had as yet existed. Nebuchadnezzar could boast, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built...?" Chap. 4:30. He left God out of his considerations, but he had built a great city and a great empire.

After God's allotted time, the Babylonians were conquered (Jer. 27:6), and succeeded by the Medes and the Persians - the latter predominating. They in turn were decisively defeated, according to prophecy, by the Greeks under Alexander of Macedonia. He became king at the age of 20, and died at 33, after having conquered practically all of the known world of that day. God also foretold the breakup of his kingdom into four parts, and went into detail about the struggles between two of those parts, which occupied territories on opposite ends of Israel (Dan. 11:1-35).

But the tide of world progress was running westward, and the loose tribes in Italy were forged into a formidable power. This new power reached out farther and farther until at its zenith it occupied twice as much territory as Alexander's kingdom had. Furthermore, the Romans dominated the world scene for a longer period than any other nation ever has - about 600 years. They conquered northern Africa, the Middle East, the Balkan area, and extended their control of Europe into England.

Now how does God describe the Roman Empire of the past? "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise." Chap. 2:40. Also, "behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and break in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it." Chap. 7:7. Could anyone give a better description of the great Roman power as it existed?

But perhaps God overruled in the kingdoms of men so that the Greeks, who spread their culture and beautifully descriptive language in the world, were permitted to do so in order that He might use that language as a vehicle for spreading the written Word, and the Romans permitted to maintain a measure of peace by force so that the gospel could be spread in all the world during the early days of Christianity.

There is, however, this solemn side to it, that the Greeks spread mythology and many kindred errors which have more or less plagued the world ever since; and the Romans who boasted of laws of justice and equity, officially put the Son of God on the cross. Thousands upon thousands of God's dear children were martyred by the Roman Empire. God has not forgotten what it did to His Son and to His children. A terrible time of reckoning is coming for the Western world.

We noticed that God described a future state of the Roman Empire in a verse of Rev. 17 Now let us inquire, Did God give in the Old Testament a still future picture of the Roman Empire? Yes, He did. In the image of "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) in Dan. 2, we find its now past history depicted in the legs of iron; and in Dan. 7, as a ferocious wild beast which could not be likened to any beast of the earth. But in both chapters its future state is also given; in the image, there were feet and ten toes composed of iron and miry clay; in the beast of Dan. 7, its future is described as "and it had ten horns." Here we have ten toes and ten horns. In Rev. 17, the beast that "was, and is not, and shall be present" is seen in the future with "ten horns." Is not the story one, though given in many parts? We are not left to our imagination here, for we read: "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast." v. 12. And again, "And I... saw a beast rise up out of the sea [sea is sometimes used in Scripture to describe the restlessness and commotion of the nations], having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." Rev. 13:1. The seven heads represent seven forms of government of the Roman Empire. A study of its history will reveal the many forms of government it had. When John the Apostle wrote, he could write of these, "five are fallen [ceased to exist], and one is, and the other (or seventh) is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." Chap. 17:10. The beast, or future dominating power of the beast, will be an eighth form, but partake of previous forms (v. 11). In Dan. 7, an eleventh horn, a little one, comes up among the ten, and takes control of the ten, even to plucking up three of the ten by the roots. The little horn of Dan. 7 seems to merge in the beast himself in Rev. 17

Now is it not plainly evident that the Roman Empire, which was very great at one time, and then fell apart, will come back to life in a far greater way in the future? Men thought in the days of its past glory that it was an eternal, or never ending, empire; but God said otherwise. Then when it was all broken to pieces (the Western part of the Empire ended in 476 A. D., and the Eastern part continued for a time with the capital at Constantinople), man scoffed at its resuscitation, although

Charlemagne (748-814) attempted it. Napoleon and others, including Mussolini, have tried it. The Italian Fascist dictator went on to seize Ethiopia and Albania and revive the name Roman Empire. So far, all attempts to reunite the broken fragments of the Roman Empire, and so to remake it, have failed. Nor has any other nation ever achieved world sovereignty. We are living in a great gap between the empire that was and yet will be again. We are living in the time between the legs of iron and the ten toes of the feet; between the beast without the ten horns, and the beast with ten horns.

There never has been a stage of the Roman world when ten distinct kingdoms were united to form one new empire. Man cannot precipitate this, nor can he prevent it when God's time comes. Its future existence, and the character of its make-up its Satanic support, and its ultimate and final doom are as certain as if they had already taken place. When God has said, "I will," the thing will surely come.

### Revived Roman Empire

The Christian who holds fast to God's Word and has the proper focus of prophetic events, through the means of dispensational truth held in affection, has a better understanding of coming events than the most brilliant statesman on earth apart from that truth. But the great progress of Communist penetration in such a large portion of Europe, Asia, and other strategic places caused some to doubt the reliability of the believers' Biblical knowledge and heritage. Perhaps never since the dissolution of the Old Roman Empire did things look more hopeless for the revival of the Roman Empire than just after World War II. Much of Europe's young manhood was either gone or broken, its cities were destroyed, its countryside unkempt or worse, and communications broken down. That was only 17 years ago.

God who rules in the kingdoms of men allowed the very belligerence of Russia to spur the West to joint efforts at the restoration of Europe. So today Europe has had a veritable renaissance, and all west of the Iron Curtain has sustained a real rejuvenation. The very tactics of Russia helped to force men to work together in Western Europe as never before. Now we stand on the very threshold of the greatest world event of modern times - the revival of the Roman Empire. Only a few of the nations of that old sphere have failed to reach success never before known.

With just six nations of Europe in the European Economic Community (EEC), there is a surging and throbbing community of 170,000,000 people who have attained a higher standard of living than they ever before knew. And one striking point to notice is that in the very forefront of this thriving renaissance is the nation of Italy. This nation has been backward compared with other European nations, but today it is booming. Its businessmen have become giants of industry who are confident and self-assured. One great help to such success was the finding of a big source of methane fuel in the Po Valley.

For an example of the drive and initiative of the new Italian business executive, look at Adriano Olivetti who changed a family company making office machines into an international concern which then took over the Underwood Corporation in the United States. ENI, the huge state-run oil and gasoline combine is spreading out in Europe to the dismay of old-time oil companies. There are many other manufactured products of excellence that are helping to make Italy the fastest growing country on the European Continent - and all of this when the treaty of the EEC is called

the Rome Treaty. Everything today points not only to a revived Roman Empire in the offing, but to a certain place of importance for the city of Rome which for many years was the headquarters of the old Roman Empire.

All of this is taking place now when the Church of Rome is showing new resurgence and spawning an international urge of religions to draw closer to her; in other words, ecclesiastical Rome is also in step with the new tempo and will be ready to ride the beast of the revived Roman Empire (according to Rev. 13 and 17) as soon as the beast is ready to ride. Fellow Christians, the moment of our home call, "Come up hither" (Rev. 4:1), is almost here. We must be gone before the developing events mature, and surely it will not be long until they reach maturity.

As we mentioned last month, England sees that it is important that she join the "Common Market" and not remain an isolated island just out of reach of all the rapidly expanding continental growth. She has made application for admittance to this exclusive European club along with the other six nations. We also learn that she is working now toward adopting a new currency which will be based on the decimal system, the same as is in use on the Continent and in the United States and Canada. It will take some time and considerable expense to make the currency change-over, but it would seem an inevitable thing in the Common Market, or perhaps even more so in the subsequent political union. The new pound would be worth 100 cents, the half pound, 50 cents, and so on down to 25 cents, 20 cents, 10 cents, 5 cents, 2 1/2 cents, 1 cent, and 1/2 cent. These are all isolated events which add up to a general picture of the coming Roman Empire. Spain also wants admittance, as well as Ireland and other nations; but in the final arrangement there will be ten nations, as the ten toes of Dan. 2, or the ten horns of Dan. 7, and Rev. 13, and 17.

One other nation which is rather insistent on gaining admission to the Common Market is Israel. Now while Israel is at the other end of the Mediterranean, the territory was in the Roman Empire at the time of our Lord's coming and death. And at the time of the great revived Roman beast, Israel will be under the wing of that power. The Roman power will make a league with the false prophet in Jerusalem for a seven-year term. Therefore, it would not be at all amiss to suppose that Israel will be at least a minor power in the great league.

In all likelihood, the United States, Canada, and other American powers will be in some sort of league with the great ten. The United States has from the beginning endorsed the EEC, and even now is in the process of preparing legislation to make reciprocal trade and tariff agreements with the EEC. The United States has no thought of abandoning the Western European alliance, for it is but a part of a larger plan to restrain Russia and China from further encroachments. It is none too soon in power politics to build such a defense, for it is but a matter of time when China and even smaller nations will have nuclear weapons; and small nations might be more reckless in using them than Russia would be.

Mr. McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President of the United States said: "We cannot suppose that the Soviet Union has now suddenly abandoned its 15-year-old preoccupation with the dividing and weakening of the Atlantic community. But, in the end, our confidence in Europe rests on deeper and more solid political ground.

"These people are our cousins by history and culture, by language and religion. We are cousins, too, in our current sense of human and social purpose." Yes, the peoples of the American

Continents are connected with the old Roman Empire by a direct line.

Mr. Bundy went on to say: "It is in Western Europe and in North America that the true opportunities of the modern world are now being opened for the first time. These societies are moving together into the age of every man.... But there is required, also, something harder, deeper, and decisive - a conviction, throughout the civil society, that its end is man and his possibilities. It is because we have this inherited commitment, in common with Europe, that we can be confident of the wisdom of our purpose that Europe shall gain in strength." (Italics ours.) U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 15, 1962.

In all this worldly wisdom we discern not a spark of the wisdom that "cometh from above." There is no "Thus saith the Lord." Man is the aim and end. Well may Scripture say, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22.

The present age will end in "man's day," that day wherein man will divorce himself from God and all that is worshiped. Sin came into the world by man's sin, and will climax with "the man of sin." While church membership remains high in this nation, and the Church of Rome is making great strides, the time is not far distant when plain, bold, unvarnished atheism will throw off even the name of God. The peoples of this Western world have received a tremendous brain-washing by the atheistic jumble of evolution. All will be in readiness, after the true Church is gone to be with Christ, for the world to cast off the restraint that comes from even the name of God. Atheism and the deification and worship of man and of Satan will end this age at the coming of the Son of man with His saints and holy angels to execute judgment and reign gloriously.

There is still another important development indicating our close proximity to the end of the Church's sojourn on earth and of the day of grace. It may not seem so directly related as other points afore mentioned; it is coming world-wide television transmission. So far, such a feat has not been accomplished.

For many years prophetic students have wondered how the whole world was to see the beast of the revived Roman Empire; for Scripture says: "The beast which thou rawest was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go into destruction: and they who dwell on the earth, whose

names are not written from the founding of the world in the book of life, shall wonder, seeing the beast, that it was, and is not, and shall be present." Rev. 17:8; J.N.D. Trans. Now it seems that in another year or two, the people of the world will be able to see the fulmination of wickedness as the beast struts across the scene blaspheming God and making the world tremble.

Satan is the "prince of the power of the air," and he is actively engaged in preparing the world to accept the man whom he will back with all his powers. The world populace will worship his man, himself, and the apostate head of the Jewish state in Jerusalem. It will be a trinity of wickedness opposed to God's King whom He has destined to "rule all nations with a rod of iron" (Rev. 12:5). Man is being readied to cast out the very name of God; moral degradation is increasing; all the implements of destruction are being readied. Today, only the finishing touches to a few details remain to be accomplished. Truly, "the time is at hand."

The Treaty of Rome is no child's play; it is a document of 248 sections covering just about every conceivable phase. It will have teeth in it too, for it will have "some authority to compel adherence by the national governments." (From a letter by Chase Manhattan Bank, March April, 1961.) As we noted previously, the coming Roman beast will pull up three of the first ten horns by the roots (Dan. 7). He will have power to compel compliance and he will use it.

We are not following some imaginary story when we speak these things; they are according to the Word of God. They are the words of truth and soberness (Acts 26:25), and will be fulfilled to the least and smallest letter. Man speaks of the EEC as a milestone of human progress; it is a milestone all right, but a milestone along the road that will bring down the wrath of God on the world that cast out His Son after spitting in His face.

Christians, let us bestir ourselves. Let us look up with joyful expectation, for we will soon see our Savior face to face.

"That bright and blessed morn is near

When He, the Bridegroom, shall appear,

And call His bride away.

Her blessing then shall be complete,

When with her Lord she takes her seat

In everlasting day."

## Revived Roman Empire: Editor's Column

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Coming events do cast their shadows, and it seemed to many Christians who were living during World War I, that everything was shaping for the end of this age then. Germany was defeated, only to rise again for another world war within a quarter century. But Russia fell into the hands of able and ruthless communist dictators, and this changed the whole course of world history.

One thing that happened during the first World War was that the intensely individualistic nations of Western Europe found it expedient to sacrifice enough national sovereignty to put their armed forces under a single military head and council. With the coming of the armistice in November, 1918, however, the joint endeavor fell apart. The allied Western nations could not even agree on a peace treaty. Soon each was going its separate way, and the old rivalries and economic wars were resumed. Hitler was permitted to rearm Germany against her pledge not to do so. This was no doubt allowed by wise men who thought it well to have a strong force between the West and Russia; but they soon found themselves fighting Germany alongside of Russia, thus helping to build an intractable power bent on world supremacy.

World War II also presented the specter of European rivals fighting together under a joint command, but still it was no Roman Empire. It was only a temporary alignment of convenience for self-preservation. At the close of the great war, the Western nations started to disarm as they had done eighteen years before. But Russia's disregard of her contractual obligations revealed her real aims. Her leaders broke their pledges with impunity; agreements were worthless whenever she decided to abrogate them. During this time Russia gained control over a much larger portion of the world, and there was no comparable power ready and willing to halt her expansion.

This situation caused the Western powers to draw closer together in an attempt to offset Russia's great and growing might. Various expedients were tried to give some unity of purpose to Western opposition to the communist world expansion. This was a new experience to have nations seeking a basis of unity in a time of absence of war - we will not call it a time of peace. A new phrase was coined to express the present impasse, a "cold war," which means it is war but not yet actual combat. Russia has been the chief gainer in this kind of warfare.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) came into being in 1949 to consolidate military planning, stockpiling, and preparations for a hot war. All of these steps are forerunners of the coming Roman Empire; it takes much time to condition the thinking of the individual nations to be ready to submit their forces to a super-national force in time of peace, even in view of war. But it became evident that if the Western nations did not stand together they would fall singly before Russia's master-minded treachery. At times the NATO organization seemed about to fall apart through inner dissension, but then Russia would come forward with some bold new move or adventure, and thus arouse the Western nations to activity again. In one way or another, this emergency has not been allowed to die out, nor the general framework of NATO been allowed to dissolve. God who knows the end from the beginning, and who orders all things according to the counsel of His own will, has been making things grow surely into a pattern of those that are to

come. Christians of a century ago, who understood much of the prophetic word, would be astonished to see the strides that have been made by Russia and her satellites, Palestine, the Western world, the religious world, both in and out of the Catholic camp. One reason Christians are not living more in the realization of the imminence of the Lord's coming is that they have been snared by unparalleled prosperity. This obscures our vision of the things to come, and we fail to see how close the end is.

Now to have a really united Western Europe, composed of ten nations under the strong federation which probably will center in Rome, more than a military union is required. One of the reasons the NATO military union often has rough going is that something more is needed. The first thing that must be added, is an economic union. One of the big Russian offensives of the cold war is economic warfare, where she can play in the big markets of the world. Manipulation in this field can depress currencies, cut commodity prices, undercut a nation's credit, dry up the market for their essential marketable products, and many other fair and unfair means of competition. Now it is evident that no single nation on earth could stand against such tactics in a world where margins are narrow, and often given to wild fluctuations. Therefore, an economic union seems to be not only feasible, but of absolute necessity. If such were in operation, no common foe could pit one nation against another, and then break first one and then another until each falls into Russia's grasp. A nation without products to sell, without markets in which to sell them, without credits for purchases, would soon decay within and then fall like a ripe apple into the hands of the one who shakes the tree.

Without economic union, military union cannot be supported; and without them both, political union is impossible. But the revived Roman Empire will have all the prerequisites of the greatest power on earth. And all the earth shall wonder after the great Roman beast, when they behold that behemoth which had so recently ceased to exist as an entity.

And what is growing now? The economic union - the so-called "common market." It is known as the European Economic Community (EEC). This European Economic Community was born on March 25, 1957, when six nations, formerly of the Roman Empire domain, signed a treaty at ROME. The signatory powers were Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. They are sometimes referred to as the "inner six." Its primary purpose was a customs union that would eventually dispense with all tariff duties between these nations. It is envisaged as a means to the flow of free labor between the nations involved. It is also to change national laws to make them conform to the general over-all pattern, so that there may be a wide economic and commercial exchange with a free flow of capital, all of which will eventually lead to a political union.

Does this sound like a blueprint for the revived Roman Empire? Yes, but it is more than a blueprint; it is far advanced from the planning stage, and its initial success is astounding. England remained aloof from the plan in its early stages, but now is being forced by economic laws and the desire for self-preservation to seek admittance in the EEC. England had attached itself to an "outer seven" known as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Its members were Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. But realignments can be made, as the case of England has demonstrated.

The members of the EEC are bound more closely by the Rome treaty obligations than are members of the EFTA. True, there are some obstacles to be overcome in such matters as

member nations who have overseas countries and territories; but these are less formidable than they once were, for many foreign possessions have disappeared from the scene. Then also, there is a determination of the framers and backers of EEC to make it work, yes, even to enlarge its scope. Some are looking forward to a May meeting of the heads of state of the member nations for clues as to how its political evolution may work.

With reference to England's long reluctance to join the EEC, and now seeking to do so, it was freely stated last year by one of their own men that they would either join or go broke within five years. Things are moving at a rapid pace in the international arena. The President of The International Nickel Company said in the company magazine that he visited five of the six EEC member nations to get certain answers, and that what he "heard and learned was startling and sobering. In a word, we are now playing in a much faster international league than most of us realize." The pace is truly quickening, and the very leaders are being swept along by the swift currents which they are powerless to stay or reverse.

While considering the events that are surely leading up to the formation of the revived Roman Empire, we might quote from The Morning News of Alameda County, California: "The European Common Market, though it seems a new thing to most people, actually is only the revival of what once existed in Europe for three centuries or so about 1900 years ago.

"For when the Roman Empire was at its peak, the area of all the countries now in the Common Market plus that of several others, together with the millions of people who inhabited the land, formed one single immense market that had no boundaries internally and no internal tariffs. Its people enjoyed a period of unrivaled prosperity."

Comments of some leading world figures may indicate the seriousness with which this EEC and related union is considered. President Kennedy said: "The Atlantic Community is no longer concerned with purely military aims... We are, and increasingly will be, partners in aid, trade, defense, diplomacy and monetary affairs." And former Secretary of State under President Eisenhower, Christian A. Herter, said: "Must we wait for some great catastrophe to produce the necessary compression of our sovereignties, the critical mass from which great new political energies should emerge?... Now we together must seek between inertia and utopia a practical common course to harness our several national strengths." - Newsweek, Jan. 22, 1962. And Newsweek expressed the aims of EEC thus: "The founding fathers of the Common Market clearly intended that the Treaty of Rome should be the beginning of a United States of Europe." July 17, 1961.

Walter Hallstein, the president of the EEC's nine-man executive commission, which really runs the new union, said: "Make no mistake about it, we are not in business, we are in politics. We are building the United States of Europe." - Time, Oct. 6, 1961.

As to how EEC's initial success is coming, we quote from Inco Magazine: "EEC became, in four short years after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the free world's largest trading unit. In percentages of world trade, EEC was in the lead 17.5; the United States was next with 16.9; and the United Kingdom was third with 10.8 percent. EEC had likewise become the world's largest buyer-importer of raw materials." He further reported that the estimated 12 to 15 years for the transition stage, it now seemed would be completed in eight years from the 1957 date of the Rome

Treaty.

EEC's achievement in lowering trade barriers among the members, in increasing trade and prosperity, is great; there is also an underlying and implicit objective of political union, and has been from the start. It is just what we might expect in the revival of the Roman Empire. Christians, we are witnessing the preparations for the revived Roman Empire and the end of this age.

## A Rich Man and a Poor Man: Part 2

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Luke 18:15-43

When he heard this, "he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich." Is not that remarkable? He was very sorrowful because he was very rich. Well, we might say, "If I were rich, that would solve all my troubles." Would it? Did it solve this man's troubles? He was very sorrowful, because he was very rich.

In another gospel, where the same incident is recorded, we read that "he went away sorrowful." (Matt. 19:22.) I know of no sadder words than these: "he went away"-from whom? From Jesus-away from life and love and blessing. He turned his back upon that light from heaven. Toward what did he turn? Toward eternal ruin. Some day that beautiful life was going to break up-to go all to pieces. He would stagger on, out into darkness. It is a dreadful thing to think of. Many a soul has done it-come down to the last hour with nothing to hold on to-nothing! They feel slipping from their grip all that they had held dear. It is being torn from their unwilling fingers. They go out into hopeless night.

It is to be remarked that we never read of this young man's coming back to Christ. There is no record of his having profited by the Lord's advice. He went away very sorrowful. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, "With what difficulty shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." Oh, you can bless God that you were not born rich. Had we been born rich, the likelihood is that we would still be on the highway of sin. "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!" You can fill your pockets with gospel tracts and go out into the Mexican section of this city. You can leave your little Spanish messages from door to door. If you are able to speak a few words in Spanish, you will get many a courteous "Thank you." But suppose you fill your pockets with gospel leaflets and go out into that section of the city where live the millionaires in their palatial homes. The likelihood is that you will never get the opportunity to even contact the rich. You will be met at the door by the maid; and when you present your card and state your mission, you will be refused. With what difficulties shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God.

The answer of our Lord puzzles the disciples. They regarded riches as something desirable; perhaps they thought they would like to have a little more themselves. So they raise the question, "Who then can be saved? And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Here we retreat into the sovereignty of God. The older I get, dear brethren, the more I enjoy that side of the truth. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." God is going to invade some of those rich homes in that aristocratic section of the city and touch some hearts. He will have them with Him in heaven. He has ways and means of doing it. So we read down through the years, there were some rich who were saved. Joseph of Arimathea was one. He had a nice clean tomb waiting for the Lord's body. Yes, God knows how to save a rich person, and in His sovereignty He will do so to the good pleasure of His will, blessed be His name!

You and I are going to be saved because of the same sovereignty. It is not because we were poor, but because the grace of God sought us each in his hiding place, and drew us gently forth to meet Jesus. He gave us to see beauty in Him. We accepted God's offer of salvation.

At this point Peter interrupts with one of his sudden questions: "We have left all, and followed Thee." The young man had turned away. But Peter had just heard something about following Jesus, and so having treasure in heaven. He eagerly awaits the Lord's appraisal of the consequences of having left all to follow Him. Our Lord puts a "Verily" before His reply. It is important. There is no man-Peter, you, or any of the rest-who has "left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." You know that the Christian gets the better part of both lives. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8. We have seen this exemplified over and over again. I remember a well-known brother saying to me, "The children of the saints do get on." What he meant was, that as our children seek employment, their Christian faithfulness soon manifests itself in their work; and this is soon recognized by promotions, responsibilities, etc., with corresponding increased remuneration. They do not come to work Monday morning with the odor of liquor still on their breath. Their energies are not consumed in the gratification of the lusts of the flesh. They have more to offer their employer. Yes, godliness is profitable, even in this life. So in this way it pays to be a Christian. Who shall "receive manifold more in this present time," and then, what next? "In the world to come life everlasting."

Recently I was present at the funeral of a prosperous young man. He died in the bloom of life. The corpse was handsome as it lay there in the cold sleep of death. The wife was a believer, and she had a large floral piece standing in front of the casket with one word plainly wrought in the design-"REDEEMED." I thought, How lovely! Though the young man lay there in the defeat of death, yet the soul was redeemed; he was with the Lord. In the world to come, his will be the portion of life everlasting. Yes, dear saint of God, our best assets are on the other side. We are journeying on until we can enter into the good of them. Thus the Lord comforts Peter with the thought, Peter, if you have left house or wife or children for My sake, you will not be the loser. God will never be debtor to any man. Yes, it pays to be a Christian. "Them that honor Me I will honor, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. 2:30.

In the verses immediately following, we have the Lord's announcing what lay before Him as necessary to the accomplishing of this great salvation. He announces His crucifixion, His death, and His resurrection. These great transcendent facts lay at the threshold of all blessings that are to be ours through time and eternity. But they understood none of these things yet; they were hid from them. How dependent we are on the Spirit of God!

I have a cousin who some years ago said, "I read the Bible, but I cannot understand it; it is too deep for me." But that was years ago; she does not talk that way now. She enjoys her Bible. What has brought about the change? She has been converted saved. Now I never hear any complaints about her not being able to understand her Bible. God has sent His Holy Spirit to dwell in her heart, and to take the things of Christ and make them good to her soul.

We must have the indwelling Spirit of God if we are to understand the Word of God. Though the disciples did not understand the Lord at that time, yet, not long afterward, on that memorable day

of Pentecost, they received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now their souls were flooded with the light from heaven, and they were able to understand all things.

If you and I are to understand the Scriptures, it will be by the submission of our hearts to the gracious leading of the Spirit of God. That is why, beloved, we should not grieve the Spirit. A grieved Spirit is occupying us with our wretched selves, rather than with Christ. So we become conscious of a lack of progress in divine things.

We started our talk with the story of a very rich man. We shall close now with a brief reference to a very poor man. This will take us back to the 17th verse. "Verily I say unto you, Who-soever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." In the 35th verse we have a blind man by the wayside, a beggar. I could not conjure up a picture that would more excite the pity of the human heart than that. Blindness is a sore, sore trial. But when blindness is coupled with beggary, we have what calls forth from our hearts the deepest pity. Think for a moment of those poor unfortunates we see brushing the sidewalk with a white cane, with their little tin cup in hand, and a sign on the breast, "I am blind!" We hear the tinkle of an occasional coin in the cup. The human heart moves in pity toward a fellow mortal in his sorry plight.

So here in our chapter. This beggar had nothing to recommend him other than his need. He claims no other ground of recognition than his own exceeding need. "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." Why did he not say, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, what shall I do?" Such was the approach of the rich man. But no, we read nothing here of doing. It is "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." What a difference in the approach! The other man in his self-complacency says, "Good Master." Not so here. "Jesus, Thou Son of David." He gives Him His official title and calls for mercy. His companions rebuked him and told him to keep still. But he cried the more, "Have mercy on me." He wanted nothing but mercy. And, beloved, that is the cry God likes to hear. It is the simplicity of the child, just bringing to the Lord his need. He is at the end of his resources, and casts himself upon the riches of that blessed Son of David. "Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him." He asks, "What wilt thou?" "And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight." He made no promises; he only presented his need. "Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight." Ah, when a soul owns that he is blind, and gets down at the feet of Jesus to own his need, then he gets the blessing. The last thing the natural heart is willing to do is to own its total poverty toward God.

I remember Dr. Dashwood's giving an address at St. Louis. He told about a young lady to whom he had spoken as to her soul's salvation. Her reply was, "I'm not interested." He replied, "It is not a question of your being interested, but of whether or not you are willing to be saved." She admitted that this was the real reason of her indifference. So the Doctor replied, "Are you willing to be made willing?" She said, "No, I do not think I am." "Well, possibly you would be willing to be made willing to be willing." Again she responded in the negative. Finally, he asked, "Would you go as far as to ask God to make you willing to be made willing to be made willing to be willing?" She thought a bit, and said, "Yes, I think I would be ready to go that far." So the Doctor said, "Let us kneel and tell the Lord what you have just said." So they knelt, and the Doctor prayed, "Lord, look upon us. Make this dear soul willing to be made willing to be made willing to be saved. So, Lord, we count on Thee to do this for Jesus' sake. Amen." As they arose from their knees, the tears were flowing; she was willing. And, of course, the result was, she was brightly saved right there. Yes, that was the

crux of the whole matter.

Do we really desire salvation? are we willing? There is a bountiful supply awaiting us, but it must be on the ground of mercy; not by DOING. We have to come as a little child.

As this dear blind man received his sight, how happy he was to follow Jesus in the way, and glorify God. The rich man went away; the poor man followed Jesus. Which would you rather be? -the rich young ruler who went away from Jesus, still rich, but still blind, or the poor man who followed Jesus in the way, still poor in this world, but with the vision of his soul opened to the treasures of heaven? Will you come to Him now and be made eternally rich?

## Righteous Judgment

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Luke 7:36-50

There is one thing to be observed in this passage which turns to us for searching and warning. Jesus judged righteous judgment. He was not to be flattered. He did not try either persons or circumstances in reference to Himself. That is where we so commonly fail in all our judgments. We see objects, whether persons or things, much in our own light. How have these things affected ourselves? How have these people treated us? These are the inquiries of the heart; and, in the answer they get, the judgment is too commonly formed. We are flattered into good thoughts of people, and slighted into hard ones. Jesus was not such a one. The Pharisee's compliment and good fare did not affect His judgment on the whole scene in his house. The friendliness of a social hour could not relax the righteousness of His sense of things, as Peter's recent confession, on another occasion, did not hinder the rebuke that Peter's worldliness deserved. Jesus was not to be flattered. Like the God of Israel in old times, His ark may be boasted in and brought into the battle with a shout, but He is not to be flattered by this. Israel shall fall for their unrighteousness (1 Sam. 4).

What a lesson for us! What reason have we to guard against the judgments of self-love! against the trying and weighing of things or persons, in relation to ourselves! This firm, unswerving mind of Jesus may be our encouragement, as well as our pattern, in this; and we may pray that neither this world's flattery nor spite move us from having our thoughts as before the Lord all the day!

## Righteousness of God

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God cannot do anything to make justification more perfect than it is. Any attempt of man to add to it, would be trying to add light to the sun. Love brought Christ down, and righteousness raised Him up. The term, "the righteousness of God," means that God is just in justifying by the faith of Christ, and has no reference to what He was under law here below. Christ suffered once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. One part, consequently, of divine righteousness, is that Christ is raised up from the dead; another, that we who believe become the righteousness of God in Him. The "righteousness of God" is the obligation, as it were, to bless me in Christ if I look to Him for salvation. Doubtless Christ did fulfill all righteousness; it was indeed what He owed to God as an obedient, faithful man on the earth; but the "righteousness of God" is what He owed to Christ.

When the idolatrous Gentiles were ready to acquit the Messiah, the Jews cried out so much the more, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." And both joined therein to do the fatal deed. There was an end of the trial of man. Then, all being proved ungodly and unrighteous, a new kind of righteousness - even the righteousness of God who justifies freely of His grace without law - comes into manifestation. He raises Christ up from the grave, after redemption. He does not set Him on the throne of David; that would be far too low an estimate of His work. But He sets Him as the glorified Man on His own right hand in the heavenly places, and communicates to the joint heirs the knowledge not only of free and full pardon through His atoning work, but of acceptance in the Beloved, according to the power of His resurrection.

## Thoughts on Romans 12

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If the Gentile Christians at Rome were justified and saved, it was through the mercy of God (see chap. 11:30). It was so likewise with any Jews there. It was all the mercy of God. The nation would finally be received back again on the ground of mercy, after Gentile apostasy. It is on account of the tender mercies of God that our bodies are to be given up a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. What a different morality from that under law! Under it, man in the flesh had to obey given commands, and so give righteousness to God; here the flesh is given up: I am laid on the altar of God, and my body is presented a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (compare 2 Cor. 4:10). It is as we bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus will be manifest in our mortal bodies. The ministry of righteousness has written Christ on our hearts, and it is as the death has power over the old nature that the life will flow out. Christ has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor (Eph. 5:1, 2). We are called to be imitators of God as dear children. We are identified with Christ, dead and risen; let our walk be worthy of this position, and flowing from it. This is Christian morality. But if I am dead and risen, what have I to do with the world? Conformity to the world is a shame for a Christian. It is linked with the flesh, on which the ministry of the Spirit writes, Death. If I let the Spirit work, I am transformed by the renewing of my mind; I am learning practically now what good and evil is. I prove daily what is the will of God. Thus the body presented a living sacrifice to God, non-conformity to the world, and transformation by the renewing of the mind, fill up the Christian morality in this passage. When

we are thus devoted to the Lord, we find ourselves among a new set of people, unknown before, but now known to us. They are members of the body of Christ. Are we to seek high things for ourselves here, as we did when in the world? No; just the contrary. We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The truth of the body of Christ is here practically brought in to show the relative bearing of Christians to one another. All members have not the same office. We are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. The members of our bodies, though many, do not interfere with one another; so it is in the Church of God. There are different gifts; let each one use his gift according to his faith, in responsibility to the Lord. Here perfect liberty of ministry is brought out. There is no such thing mentioned here as setting apart by man. Every one, if he has a gift, is responsible to the Lord to use it. This is not the license of the flesh, but the liberty of the Spirit. Notice also, these gifts flow throughout the one body, and not many bodies: "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Exhortations follow, which enter into the minutest concerns of daily life. Do I really love a person? Let not shyness, conventional usages, or selfishness, hinder me from showing it. Do I love my brother? Let me in honor prefer him. Have I an honest earthly calling? I am not to be slothful in it, serving the Lord in it all, for He is my Master. Is a saint in need? Help him. Is a saint passing by the road? Open your house to him. Are you persecuted? Bless them that curse you. Do any rejoice? Rejoice with them. Do any weep?

Weep with them. Do you love the company of the rich? Walk with men of low estate. Everything is summed up in the little verse, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." If I am insulted, trampled upon, spit upon, like the Lord, what matters it? He gives His power. "When He was reviled, reviled not again;... but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Pet. 2:23. He overcame evil with good, in life; He overcame it in death, and rose conqueror out of it all. Let us be followers of Him.

## Thoughts on the Book of Ruth

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As in Judges we have the dark side of man's misuse of the favor of God to His people under Joshua, so this brief book lets us see a bright picture, yet most true, of His work in view of Messiah. Ruth, a lowly Moabitish stranger, led by gracious and godly affections in faith, seeks shelter under the wings of Jehovah, finds grace in His sight, and is herself exalted to be a direct link in the line of the Lord's progenitors after the flesh. It is the type of the remnant (after Lo-ammi was sentenced and executed on Israel) received back in grace in the last days, preparatorily to the kingdom, when the kinsman-redeemer espouses their cause. The names are of evident significance. Elimelech (my God the King) being dead, Naomi (my delight) typifying the Jewish nation, is a widow and loses her children, and calls herself Mara (bitterness). But a remnant, without title to promise, is received in pure mercy, identifying itself with the desolation of Israel, and is finally blessed with the richest grace and honor on the earth. The nearest of kin refuses to redeem the inheritance; the law could not restore Israel to it, nor raise up the name of the dead. Boaz (in him is strength), typifying Christ risen, does it in grace.

## The Spirit's Teaching

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What explains prophecy? That which explains all Scripture - the Spirit of God alone. His power can unfold any part of the Word of God. Do you ask if I mean to say that it is of no importance to know languages, understand history, and so on? I am not raising a question about learning. It has its use; but I deny that history is the interpreter of prophecy, or of any scripture. And if there are Christians who know the history of the world, or the original tongues of Scripture, it is Christ who has to do with the spiritual intelligence, and not their knowledge or learning. Besides, even if men are Christians, it does not necessarily follow that they understand Scripture. They know Christ, else they would not be Christians. But real entrance into God's mind, in Scripture, supposes that a person watches against self, desires the glory of God, has full confidence in His Word, and dependence on the Holy Ghost. The understanding of Scripture is not a mere intellectual thing. If a man has no mind at all, he could not understand anything; but the mind is only the vessel - not the power. The power is the Holy Ghost acting upon and through the vessel, but it must be the Holy Ghost Himself that fills the soul. As it is said, "And they shall be all taught of God." John 6:45.

## The Sufferings of Christ

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There is no subject in Scripture which demands more an exercised heart and a worshiping and adoring spirit, than that of which you have written. It is not a subject for a cold, doctrinal analysis, but one for a heart which has had grace given to see something of the deep need of the soul for that which Christ passed through on His cross; who, with a chastened and reverential spirit, would seek to learn the meaning in some measure, if it could not learn it in its depths, of that unparalleled moment, which, once passed through, could not be repeated.

With such a state of soul, much can be learned through grace, and I believe the more the soul understands what passed on the cross, the more solid will be the peace which flows from it. With the mere knowledge of the death and blood-shedding of Christ, forgiveness, shelter from judgment, may be and are known; but there will not be the solid abiding peace with God, till the soul understands in some measure (Who could fathom its full depths!) the meaning of the cry which issued from the soul of Christ on the cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" That (to us) fathomless cry expressed the position, according to its truth, in which His holy soul stood at the time when He was enduring the judgment of God about sin! It was a moment when the whole moral nature of God - truth - majesty - righteousness - holiness - against and concerning sin, burst forth in its fullest power and expression, and discharged itself upon the head of Jesus! It was a time when the moral nature of God about sin was so brought out, and exhibited, and vindicated, that He can turn toward a fallen world with the fullest display of love in righteousness, and declare Himself a just God, in justifying those who believe - whosoever they be, and whatsoever be the ruin in which their sins have placed them - and do this without the least compromise of His nature in doing so! It was a time when Christ was drinking to the dregs the cup of divine and unmingled wrath - the cup which expressed the divine judgment of God against sin, when Christ was forsaken of God - His soul bearing directly the inflicted judgment of God.

O for a worshiping spirit to gaze upon Him at that moment - to behold Him drying up, as it were, the river of death, and judgment of God upon sin, that His people might pass over dry-shod. Not one sigh of Christ, not one sorrow of His holy life, but is of infinite value to us; but it was at this unequalled scene that atonement was made; it ended in His death. Death consummated the work, but the act of death alone must not be dissociated from the previous scene. If so, it would separate it from the bearing of the judgment of God about sin. The death and blood shedding were the witnesses to this, but the cup of wrath was drained and finished, when the death of Christ completed the work.

Simple souls do not distinguish this, while they rest in peace on the cross, the death, the blood shedding, the being made sin, the being made a curse - and in all these rightly, without entering into the meaning of that which God alone can fully know. They know that by means of death they are redeemed - that they are justified by blood - by His death they have life - by the shedding of His blood they have remission. His blood it is which makes atonement for the soul. They are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. But to confine atonement merely to the act of death

would indeed be to err. It would be to omit the fact of the divine judgment of God about sin, which was borne to the full by Him when forsaken of God - when He cried and was not heard (Psalm 22:2). This psalm gives us the feelings of His holy soul on the cross at the time when the circumstances narrated in the gospel took place, in which verse 1 of the psalm is quoted. If we take verses 7 and 8, and compare them with Mark 15:29-31, nothing can be plainer. It was when He made His soul an offering for sin, when He bore sin judicially before God. Simple souls look on the work as a whole, and rightly so; and with adoring hearts, they rest upon it as undergone for them, without entering fully into its meaning. With such, one would pray that the feeling may indeed be deepened, and a more worshiping spirit flow daily from what they have gained. But when the question is before the soul, it is well to guard against confining atonement to the bare act of death which was the climax and accomplishment of the work, and thus forget that to which Scripture attaches such deep and pre-eminent importance.

I would add in conclusion, that God does not call upon a sinner to believe in anything that Christ did, but to believe in Christ. He knows what He did, and accepts the sinner who believes in Him according to His own knowledge of the value of Christ's work, and not according to the knowledge the sinner possesses of it; still it deepens and strengthens the believer in the knowledge of God and His grace, as the soul comprehends how the judgment of God for sin has been borne by the Son of God - how He ended in Himself that to which the judgment attached - and, rising out of the dead, is the One in whom every one believing in Him lives.

## Telstar - Mariner 2 - Age End - Herbert Hoover

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We are living in the most exciting and stirring days of man's history on earth. Developments and achievements of men crowd the scene in such rapid succession that people have come to expect the unusual. They see no reason to doubt that man can do almost anything he sets his mind to do.

One of the most recent startling events was the lofting of a 34 1/4-inch elaborate and intricate sphere from the earth into a predetermined orbit above it. It was conceived and developed by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and is a triumph of communications for the whole world. It was named Telstar. This small satellite is indeed a masterpiece of human ingenuity. It can receive sounds and pictures from a sending station on earth and then magnify them 10 billion times and send them to a receiving station at another location. It can also handle 600 telephone conversations simultaneously.

Telstar is really an orbiting space relay station which enables the users to surmount the impossibility of bending the waves and impulses around the earth's circumference. The waves are beamed to Telstar out in space which then relays them back to another part of the earth beyond the horizon. It contains 15,000 components, and the power required to operate its instruments is derived from the sun by means of solar batteries. The giant sending and receiving station antenna at Andover, Maine, weighs 380 tons.

It is indeed a marvel that man who is born into the world to live a comparatively short span of life here, and then depart, should be able to plan and execute these feats of technology. It would seem that the God who created him and gave him the capacity to invent such intricate devices should have some recognition for His giving man these capabilities. In 1844 when the telegraph was developed, its inventor, Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, commented by the first clacking of the telegraph, "What hath God wrought." Regarding Telstar, one current magazine paraphrased that: "What hath the American Telephone Company wrought."

It is now estimated that with from 30 to 50 such satellites in orbit, or perhaps with many fewer larger ones in a wider orbit, the whole world can be linked together for live television. It would also enormously increase the telephone, telegraph, data, and facsimile transmission of intercontinental communications. It is estimated that 100 million persons on each side of the Atlantic saw the initial performances.

In the same week with the launching of Telstar, the United States exploded a 1-megaton nuclear bomb about 260 miles above the earth. It was the first bomb to be exploded in the fringes of outer space. Time magazine called it "the most dazzling - and awesome - display of man's power yet seen." July 20, 1962. Pictures taken on Waikiki Beach, Hawaii, at 11 p.m., as the bomb exploded, showed up the whole area as at noonday. The light was seen for about 6000 miles from the small Johnston Island where it was blasted aloft.

Then the Russians sent two cosmonauts whirling about the earth and back again safely. But this feat is becoming more commonplace as both the United States and Russia vie for preeminence in

the spectacular.

On Monday, August 27, the United States blasted off the firing pad at Cape Canaveral, Florida, the Mariner 2 space ship (weight, 447 pounds) on a 180,000,000-mile trip which is supposed to take it by the planet Venus on December 14 of this year. As of the date of this writing (August 30) the space ship is calculated at 250,000 miles off its course which was planned to take it within 10,000 miles of Venus.

The scientists who built Mariner 2 allowed for a certain amount of deviation from its planned course and built equipment into it to make a correction in flight. It receives orders from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California and has carried them out. By these means its speed was increased, solar panels extended to gather the power to operate its equipment, and has altered its course so that it is now calculated to pass approximately 9000 miles from the sunny side of Venus. During its thirty minute pass of the planet, its sensitive radiometer and infrared sensor are supposed to gather information regarding the

planet's surface temperature, how much heat escapes through the cloud cover, whether or not there is water there, measure its magnetic fields, and gather other scientific information, and radio the data back to earth.

Earth and Venus were about 60,000,000 miles apart in August and are due to be approximately only 35,000,000 miles apart in December. But the long voyage of Mariner 2 was necessary because of the long circular trajectory required to make the Mariner pass at the right time. Surely the ingenuity of man to calculate the distance of Venus and its predetermined course is marvelous, but what about the One who put Venus there? What about the wisdom of Him for whom and by whom all things were created? Mariner 2 is supposed to go into orbit about the sun after its mission to Venus is accomplished.

Some of our readers may ask why we should enumerate these late accomplishments of men. Our reason is that we may all keep a clear perspective of what is going on, where the present age is tending, and what the Christian's attitude should be toward man and his great progress.

Let us consider our first-named development - a worldwide satellite communication system that will make current events in one part of the world household attractions in all other parts of it instantly. Some will consider this a shrinking of the world, but the prime thought that comes before us is that this presages the coming day of trouble for the whole world (Rev. 3:10; Matt. 24:21). God speaks of a day that is coming as one wherein a time of trouble will try them that dwell on the earth. But before such a time arrives, a man will come who will head up the Western civilization as a potent force of might and terror. He will have at his command the awful lethal weapons of destruction wherewith to make the earth a shambles. He will also lift up his voice to blaspheme God and them that dwell in heaven. He will be in league with a false Messiah in Jerusalem, who will perform lying miracles wherewith to deceive the populace. He will strut across the fleeting earth scene demonstrating his powers, and so great will be the sight that it will then be true that "all the world wondered after the beast" (Rev. 13:3-8).

A prerequisite of this world-wide demonstration that will astound the world is world-wide television. People will have to see the beast and hear him to be so impressed that all the world will admire him. He will be extolled as the man they had been looking for for a long time - a man with looks

"more stout than his fellows," and a mouth speaking "very great things." We have been expecting the advent of world-wide television as a part of the great deception that is coming. Satan is called the prince and the power of the air; and is not Telstar a precursor of the great apostasy? Not that we say that man may not find other uses for it, and yet make it a profitable economic venture. But will it not fill an important part of the prophetic picture?

Fellow-Christians, the great development of men's ideas and inventions does not in the least alter our opinion of the subtle and hideous dangers of television for Christian homes. It will not occupy the adults with Christ and His things, nor help to bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It will rob Christians of the little time left in today's hustle and bustle that could be used in reading the Word of God and meditation thereon. Furthermore, it will defile the minds and souls of saints with the corruptions of the world that is hurrying on to certain doom. Television is fast helping to lower the moral standards which have already fallen very low. It is teaching crime, violence, and immorality. It is indeed a moral and spiritual danger to any Christian to have television in his home. But this does not hinder our having a proper perspective of man's accomplishments and whither they tend.

The eerie flash above Johnston Island is but another reminder that man has at his disposal the weapons of his own destruction. In all probability mankind has in his arsenals more power of destruction than all he has ever used - from the invention of gunpowder, the World War I manufacture of TNT, and the block busters of World War II combined. It is a forlorn hope that man will destroy the weapons and not use them to wreak vengeance on his enemies. He has never yet developed the power to destroy life, and not eventually used it. A few excerpts from a speech by former President of the United States, Herbert Hoover, on his 88th birthday, may be in order:

"Uppermost in the minds and prayers of the plain people everywhere was that war should cease and that peace would come to the world.... During my long years, I have participated in many world negotiations, which we hoped would promote peace. Today we have no peace.

"From all this experience and now as the shadows gather around me, I may be permitted to make an observation....

"Leaders of mankind have for centuries sought some form of organization which would assure lasting peace. The last of many efforts is the United Nations....

"I supported the League of Nations.... I urged the Senate to join the World Court. I urged the ratification of the United Nations by the Senate....

"Now we must realize that the United Nations has failed to give us even a remote hope of lasting peace. Instead, it adds to the dangers of wars which now surround us....

"Today, the menace of Communism has become worldwide.

"The time is here when, if the free nations are to survive, they must have a new and stronger worldwide organization....

"Some organized Council of Free Nations is the remaining hope for peace in the world." U. S. News and World Report, Aug. 20, 1962.

These are the sober words of a sober man of ripened experience - "Today we have no peace." No world-wide organization and no balance-of-power pact has yet succeeded in securing peace. Truly the words of Rom. 3, "The way of peace have they not known," are true. Mr. Hoover's hope is in some future Council of Free Nations, but it is nowhere in the offing. The "Prince of Peace" once came to reconcile the world unto the God they hated, but they cast Him out; and it is only the long-suffering and forbearance of God that has not visited this guilty world for what they did to His Son. But judgment has been decreed, and the Judge has been appointed. The moment of its dreadful execution approaches. It has always been God's way to withhold judgment until man's daring and presumption have reached their peak.

Our third aforementioned development is one that only increases man's pride and aids and abets his increasing atheism and moral decay. If he were able to bring back a piece of the planet Venus, or a sample of its atmosphere, it would not bring him any closer to God; it would only increase his boastfulness which is already very evident. Every venture man makes beyond the earth where God placed him, only increases his ego and independence.

May we keep a clear perspective of the great works of men, and where they ultimately lead! None of these advancements charm us, but we look for the Lord Jesus Christ to take us home to Himself in His Father's house, according to His faithful promise. But woe to this poor world when the Lord calls His heavenly people home!

## The Chemistry of the Blood

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Since our publication of the first issue of Christian Truth, we have received questions intermittently about a book entitled, "The Chemistry of the Blood," by M. R. De Haan, M.D. We have heretofore declined to make any public comments on the subject, but now feel that we should make a few guarded ones.

Dr. De Haan's main thesis is that the blood of the Lord Jesus was holy and was not contaminated by His birth into this world as begotten of the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary. To this we all agree. But Dr. De Haan labors to prove that His blood was holy and was in no way contaminated by blood from Adam's fallen race. We have always felt a revulsion at the doctor's attempt to analyze the "precious blood of Christ." We do not need blood chemistry to understand Scripture.

As for the fact that the blessed Lord Jesus was holy, Scripture is unmistakably clear. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Luke 1:35. "Who knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21); "Who did no sin" (1 Pet. 2:22); "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). Sin was no part of His nature; He was never tempted by it. He was always absolutely holy. No laboratory or science of man can establish this fact, but we are told it by the infallible Word of God.

The Lord came and took human form and "was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:7). He came to give His life for the sheep; man could not take His life from Him. He said, "No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself." John 10:18. It is true that His precious blood was shed, but man was not permitted to do this in order to take His life; for He first delivered up His Spirit to His Father. We rejoice that "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

But to venture beyond Scripture and to delve into secrets of His Person deserves censure. It savors too much of looking into the ark, as the men of Beth-shemesh did (1 Sam. 6:19). They died for their sin. We need to tread softly when we are on that holy ground; the unshod foot of reverence becomes us. Adoration instead of dissection is what is fitting.

Another point of Dr. De Haan's which we regret is the following:

" 'Upon the Cross His blood was spilled,

A ransom for our sins and guilt.'

This is not true. Jesus' blood was not 'spilled.' Spilling is the result of an accident. The death of Christ was no accident. He laid down His life and voluntarily shed His precious blood that we might live." p. 44.

This we challenge. Truly He laid down His own life, but a Roman soldier pierced His side, and blood and water came forth (John 19:34). He did not shed His own blood. It was a deliberate act of wicked men to pierce His blessed side after He had given up His life.

In a certain sense Abel was a type of Him in being slain by his brother. He, blessed be His name, came so near to men that they could in all evil intent pierce His side in the last wicked act against

Him.

When God spoke to Cain about his murdered brother, He said, "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Gen. 4:10. Then in Hebrews we read that the blood of Christ "speaketh better things than that of Abel." Abel's blood cried for vengeance, but the Lord Jesus' precious blood spoke of pardon for sinners who received Him. To find fault with the expression in the hymn, of His blood's being spilled, is in our judgment pedantic, and mere quibbling. Of Abel's blood, God said, "the earth... hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood." Was not this true also in the case of the Lord Jesus? Dr. De Haan says that it was not an accident; no, on their part it was premeditated murder. They were as guilty of the act as though they actually took His life, for the full intent was there. There is no basis for denying that His blood that flowed from His side fell to the ground. God will yet judge the world for what it did to His Son.

One meaning of the word "spill," according to the authoritative Merriam-Webster unabridged dictionary, is "5-To cause or allow intentionally to flow out and to be lost or wasted: to shed as blood."

And for Dr. De Haan to say that "Perhaps there is a golden chalice in heaven where every drop of the precious blood is still in existence, just as pure, just as potent, just as fresh as 2000 years ago" (p. 28),

savors of the superstition and idolatry of the Roman system. It is unholy speculation, and unworthy of one who trembles at God's Word. There is not one thing in Scripture that would countenance such a thought.

Many years ago a man by the name of C. E. Stuart was exposed to the folly of such speculation by overextending the types of the Old Testament. We must never carry types to the point where they contradict the plain statements of Scripture, nor add thereto. Mr. Stuart said that the work of atonement was not completed until the blood was presented before God in His immediate presence in heaven. He got this by overdrawing the type of the great day of atonement when the high priest presented the blood of the victim in the holy of holies of the tabernacle. In Mr. Stuart's strange overstatement, his doctrine made it necessary for the Lord Jesus to make a trip while in (or from) the tomb to present His blood on high before God. This would be to put the Christian back on Old Testament ground. Was not His blood shed before God and before man when His side was pierced? The Lord made no such trip into heaven between His burial and His resurrection.

Let us beware of overdrawing Scripture and of introducing our own reasonings and speculations into it. Let us keep the unshod foot of reverence when speaking of either the Person or the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

"Who to our charge shall lay

Iniquity or guilt?

Our sin is done away

Since Jesus' blood was spilled.

Captivity is captive led,

Since Jesus live ill that was dead."

■ This is perhaps the suitable issue and place to make a few comments on a clipping that was sent to us recently. It was taken from a pamphlet entitled "Water Baptism," by Dr. De Haan. We have no wish to challenge the writer, but we do desire to keep a clear perspective regarding the truths of Scripture. Everything is to be tested by Scripture, and the early believers at Berea tested the words of the Apostle Paul by the Old Testament. For this they were commended by the Spirit of God, who says that they were "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they... searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The clipping as it was relayed to us is: "When God saw Christ on Calvary He saw more than Christ's physical body. He saw also the MYSTICAL body of Christ which He had chosen from eternity, to which every believer of every age has belonged from eternity. So when Christ hung on the cross, the Father saw there the whole body of Christ, the entire Church and body of believers and He reckons that what happened to Christ happened to every member of the body of Christ." (Emphasis by copyist.)

It is difficult to quote a single verse that would say this is not true when Scripture never raises such a thought, even in the negative. It is never even supposed in the sacred pages. One comment on the body of Christ is found in 1 Cor. 10 "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." It is the loaf of bread placed on the table in remembrance of the Lord which when unbroken reminds us that all believers of this dispensation the Church from Pentecost to the rapture - are members of His body. But when it is broken it is no longer a symbol of the body of Christ as composed of believers, but of that body which was prepared for Him when He came into the world. "A body hast Thou prepared Me." It was His own body in which He suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust. But nowhere is it even hinted that God saw in Christ's body on the cross the "mystical body of Christ." Such a statement is the product of imagination.

In 1 Cor. 12 we read, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." v. 27. "Ye" - the saints at Corinth, not "every believer of every age." The saints of the Old Testament times were not part of the Church. Only those of this age, between the descent of the Holy Spirit and the calling home of the Church at the coming of Christ for His own - those who are indwelt by the Spirit of God - are a part of "the Church." No doubt Old Testament saints were "born again," but they were not indwelt by the Spirit. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it... that He might present it to Himself a glorious church.... For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." (Eph. 5:25-30.)

We were not members of His body when He hung on the cross, but we are when indwelt by the Spirit as the seal of whose we are. The Church of God is separate and distinct from the Old Testament believers, and also from those saints who will be on earth after the Church has been taken home to be with Christ. The Church is distinguished from Old Testament saints in Heb. 12:23 (the "spirits of just men made perfect"). The Church is His body now, as united to a living Head in heaven. There never was such a thing, before the day of Pentecost, as a body on earth united to a living head in heaven; and there never will be after the Church is taken home, when He

presents her to Himself "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." She will then, after the marriage takes place in heaven, be His bride, and be that forever. Rev. 21:2 speaks of her as a bride 1000 years after the marriage.

The Old Testament saints will occupy that place which John the Baptist claimed, "the friend of the bridegroom." When the marriage takes place in heaven, there will not only be the bride and the bridegroom, but invited guests. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Rev. 19:9.

Another remark that needs to be searched out in the light of the Holy Scriptures is that God in viewing Christ on the cross "reckons that what happened to Christ happened to every member of the body of Christ."

This is farfetched and untrue. Christ died for our sins, but God never reckons that what happened to Christ happened to every believer. He was alone there. On that cross He suffered

the rejection of men, and this is never reckoned to us. On that cross, in those dreadful three hours of darkness, He was alone - shut out from the light of God's countenance when He, the Holy One, was made sin for us. It brought forth from those blessed lips that cry of abandonment, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" That was never reckoned to us.

We quarrel not with the man who wrote these remarks, but all Christians have a duty to check everything by the Word of God. This we seek to do in all fairness. We are not cast upon men for the preservation of the truth, but on the Scriptures. When the Apostle Paul was leaving the leaders of the Ephesian assembly, he told them of failure to come, and said, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace." Acts 20:32.

May we all be more diligent in searching the Scriptures, while seeking grace and wisdom from Him for proper discernment. "Hold fast the form of sound words." 2 Tim. 1:13.

## Christ, the End of the Law

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Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The two righteousnesses are then contrasted. Moses describes the one, saying, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them." Rom. 10:5. The keeping of the law was man's righteousness; it was God's perfect rule for a creature. It required man to give a righteousness to God; if he did, he lived by it.

The righteousness of faith, on the other hand, brings a righteousness to man. A man has not to ascend up to heaven to bring Christ down even to death. A man has not to go down into the deep from above; He has come down to bring Christ up from the dead; He has risen; God has raised Him. A dead and risen Christ is set forth as the display of God's righteousness, in direct contrast to human righteousness which would be keeping the law. We have seen what the righteousness of faith does not say; now let us see what it does say: "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord

Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:8, 9. With the heart man believes unto righteousness; with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, as Scripture says.

Man confounds human and divine righteousness together; God distinctly divides them. We have seen man's righteousness is, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them." Christ, as man, fulfilled it; but that is not the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God, or the justice of God (for it is the same word), is His own character, as such, displayed in His own acts; namely, the death and resurrection of Christ (see also Psalm 71:19, 20), and handed over in Christ to the sinner who lays hold of it by faith, and is justified by it.

Truly, O God, Thy righteousness is very high-as high as heaven. No one can reach it! But God Himself has come down to settle His own claim; Christ has been delivered for our offenses, and God has Himself judged sin Himself in the Person of His Son on the cross. He has shown Him great and

sore troubles on account of man's sin. I look at sin; I look at the dread darkness; I hear the bitter cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" I see the blood gush forth; I ask, Why is this? The only answer is, Sin is the cause. God there judged sin in the flesh on the sinless One. I say, That is righteousness! It is the Judge passing judgment. God's righteousness against sin is displayed. I look again; I hear a great earthquake; the stone is rolled away from the sepulcher; the guards become as dead men; I see a holy, spotless One - holy and spotless as ever He was - rising from the dead. I ask, Why is this? I hear the answer, Righteousness requires that Man who has glorified God in every way, whether in life or death, should be given the first place in the glory. Who is that Man? It is Christ, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven. He of God is made unto us righteousness. God and man are linked together in one Person, even in the Person of the Christ. They were ever together from the incarnation, but in one Man. There is no such place for us

except in resurrection. (John 12:23.) On the cross I see the sinner's substitute - marvel of marvels - forsaken of God. The veil is rent, and access is given to every sinner who believes in Jesus, into the very holiest. The believer's position is now Christ before God. Thus God is for us, as revealed in His own acts in Christ. Faith appropriates it all, and gets Christ's position before God. Is Christ dead? the believer is dead. Is Christ risen? the believer is risen. Is Christ the righteousness of God? the believer is made the righteousness of God in Him. With his heart he believes unto righteousness; with his mouth confession is made unto salvation. He believes; he is not ashamed; he calls on the name of the Lord; he is saved.

## Thyself Our Treasure

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The first chapter of The Acts presents us with the scene of the Lord's departure. "He was taken up" into heaven. Undesirable as this was to His disciples, as they thought, they were made quite equal to the occasion when the time came; for it is even said, they "returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke 24:52).

Since redemption's work is accomplished and Jesus glorified, the personal presence of the Holy Ghost on earth is the consequence; and He is the strength and joy of our hearts during the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The disciples seem to have had a foretaste of this joy on the occasion referred to above.

Nevertheless the Lord's absence still leaves a blank in the hearts of His own, which can never be filled till they see Him. Therefore the disciples hail with joy the words which fell from the lips of the two heavenly witnesses, who assured these "men of Galilee," who stood looking up into heaven, that this same Jesus, who had been taken up from them into heaven, should so come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11).

" 'Tis the treasure we've found in His love

That has made us now pilgrims below."

And when the Treasure was taken to heaven, the hearts of them that were set upon it were taken there too; "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21).

Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, was greatly attached to king David. His heart had been won by acts of kindness, and when the king became an exile, Mephibosheth became a mourner. He refused to make himself at home where the king was not only without a throne, but without honor and without a resting place. True it is, that Mephibosheth must have been more an object of pity than of envy, if we judge by appearance, after the description given of him on the king's return in 2 Sam. 19:24. But God looks on the heart. And here was one whose joys were so wrapped up in the person of David that he found no rest apart from him, and knew nothing but joy when the king had returned to Jerusalem in peace.

"Called from above, and heavenly men by birth,

(Who once were but the citizens of earth)

As pilgrims here, we seek a heavenly home,

Our portion, in the ages yet to come.

"Where all the saints of ev'ry clime shall meet,

And each with all shall all the ransomed greet,

But oh! the height of bliss, my Lord, shall be

To owe it all, and share it all, with Thee.

"We are but strangers here, we do not crave

A home on earth, which gave Thee but a grave;

Thy cross has severed ties which bound us here,

Thyself our treasure in a brighter sphere."

## The Tillage of the Poor

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A little knowledge, with personal exercise of spirit over it, is better than much knowledge without it. As the proverb says, "There is much food in the tillage of the poor." For the poor make the most of their little. They use the spade, the hoe, and the mattock; they weed, and they dress, and turn up their little garden of herbs. And their diligence gets much food out of it. And we are to be these "poor" ones, ever to use divine Scripture as they carry on their tillage, and make the most of our little. It may be but milk we feed on; but if we use our diligence to lay aside malice, and hypocrisies, and envies, and the like, we shall be really feeding and growing (1 Pet. 2). And because of this, we often find much more savor of Christ in those who have less knowledge, for theirs is this "tillage of the poor" (Pro. 13:23).

## Tomorrow

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A Christian is one who has God as his Father in heaven. The anxiety that dreads an evil thing on the morrow is nothing but unbelief.

When the morrow comes, the evil may not be there; if it comes, God will be there too. He may allow us to taste what it is to indulge our own wills; but, if our souls are subject to Him, how often the dreaded evil never appears. When the heart bows to the will of God about some sorrow that we dread, how often the sorrow is taken away; and the Lord meets us with unexpected kindness and goodness.

He is able to make even the sorrow to be all blessing. Whatever be His will, it is good. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matt. 6:34.

## U.S. Supreme Court Decisions

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In recent issues we have been calling repeated attention to the mounting evidences that we are now living at the time of the end - the end of the day of grace. We shall soon hear the shout of Him who said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Then this poor, deluded, Christ-rejecting world will be left to reap the due reward of its deeds.

This month we feel constrained to write a few words regarding the United States Supreme Court decision banning the use of the specified prayer in the New York State public schools. When we read the twenty-two words of this innocuous, anemic prayer, we marvel that there should be any objection to the use of it, unless it be by true Christians who wished the prayer to be pertinent to present conditions, and that the Lord Jesus be mentioned in it. Back in 1951, the New York State Board of Regents recommended that the schools, at their option, adopt the use of this so-called prayer as an act of reverence. It read: "Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessing upon us, our parents, our teachers, our country." It was designed to be thoroughly non-denominational, and offensive to no one. There is nothing in it in which any believer in a so-called Supreme Being could not take part. But the law specifically stated that anyone who objected to it could be excused from participation in it or from the room while it was said. Therefore it seems clear that it was not the mere seeking of the rights of some religious minority, but rather the right of infidelity and atheism to object to any mention of God.

The suit was brought by the New York Civil Liberties Union on behalf of two Jewish families, one Unitarian family, one from a member of the Society for Ethical Culture, and one described as an agnostic. It was carried all the way to the Supreme Court by the Civil Liberties Union, and \$6,000 was expended before this 6 to 1 decision was rendered against the prayer.

We are not interested in the Supreme Court's decision because we think a prayer should be uttered in every public school; but we cannot fail to see the trend of the day, which is opening the way for avowed and belligerent atheism. The echoes of assent to the Supreme Court's decision indicate the forces which desire and approve such a ruling. Correspondent David Horowitz, from the United Nations in New York, commented in his column in the B'nai B'rith newspaper of July 6: "Judging by the reactions here at the United Nations, the Socialist states took the lead in joining most of the 104 member countries in an expression of satisfaction at the U. S. Supreme Court decision against State-established religion." Evidently any state-established religion means any recognition of God, or the "God-concept." Another remark from the same issue of B'nai B'rith: "Jewish opinion has been overwhelmingly in favor of the decision, but at the same time there were several pockets of disagreement." Some of the old orthodox Jews feared the decision.

It is not strange to find the liberal elements among both Jews and so-called Christians expressing satisfaction over the Supreme Court ruling. Just ten years ago the same court ruled, "that we are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." What has happened in the interim? Godlessness has increased. The Word of God plainly tells us that there is a man coming who will oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped. Man's

wickedness is daily rising to new heights; and as soon as the Spirit of God, with the true Church of God, leaves this world, all restraint will be removed. This will bring about the open deification of man. It is prefigured in Dan. 6, where king Darius made a decree that no one could ask a petition of any god or man for thirty days, save of himself. These days are approaching, and it is only the presence of the Church on earth that hinders their full development.

Some years ago, it seemed incredible that the United States would join the United Nations, or any group of nations, which, in deference to atheist Russia, forbade any prayer at the opening of any meeting; but in lieu of the same, they would authorize a minute of silence. The United States, however, joined this unholy alliance. The United Nations installed a meditation room where members can go to meditate; but this room remains largely unused. Well may we say today, "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

One remark that has struck us forcibly concerning all this agitation, is that people should "put God where He belongs." Their thought was to put Him out of the school and into the church or synagogue, but is not God omnipresent? Is not God to be reckoned with about all the affairs of our lives? Russia has sought to drive God out of her country; and the famous atheist, Nietzsche (1844-1900), boasted that he had killed God, much as the man of sin who is coming will do; and he will do it with public acquiescence and approval. But let us remember, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the LORD shall have them in derision." Psalm 2:4.

Justice Hugo L. Black wrote the majority opinion for the Supreme Court, but it was the concurring opinion of Justice William O. Douglas which became the real storm center, and which probably, more than anything else, marks the character of these days. Justice Douglas referred to the fact that at the opening of every session of the Supreme Court a crier proclaims the opening of the Court with these words, "God save the United States and this honorable court." Both the Senate and the House of Representatives have chaplains, and each session is opened with prayer. In making mention of these functions, Justice Douglas said that he considered them unconstitutional. He commented, "Yet for me the principle is the same, no matter how briefly the prayer is said, for in each of the instances given the person praying is a public official on the public payroll, performing a religious exercise in a governmental institution." - B'nai B'rith. Very little does the Western world realize where the steps they are now taking will lead them. God is being excluded from one area after another of public and private life; while secularism, materialism, agnosticism, and open and avowed atheism are taking over. It will not be long before God arises "to shake terribly the earth." There is a time of trouble coming for this world which God declares will be worse than anything that ever preceded it. It will be "the great tribulation." And it will culminate in direct judgments at the hand of Christ, who comes as King of kings and Lord of lords to make His enemies His footstool, and to rule the nations with a rod of iron. Then He will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

At the same time that the Supreme Court handed down their decision against the use of a prayer addressed to Almighty God, they handed down another momentous decision with very far reaching effects, which thus became the law of the land. This one hinders the United States Post Office from interfering with delivery of certain "unpleasant, uncouth and tawdry" magazines. Such magazines that cater to corruption and lust have been banned by the Post Office, but the new ruling makes it very difficult for the Post Office henceforth to ban any literature that is obscene. It is

striking that in the same day that the highest court of the land chose to oppose the mention of Almighty God in a prayer of twenty-two words on the one hand, it opened the flood-gates to filth and corruption on the other. Justice Tom C. Clark, who dissented from the six judges' ruling which approved lifting the Post Office ban, remarked that the decision of the judges "required the United States Post Office be the world's largest disseminator" of such indecent and foul material (New York Times, June 26, 1962). Not only does this Supreme Court ruling lift the ban on the previously mentioned magazines, but there are others of similar nature ready to go into print, with the assurance that they cannot be banned from the mails.

One special note in this decision should be mentioned. Justice Harlan, in his decision permitting postal distribution of periodicals branded as obscene, said, "It must be so offensive on their face as to affront CURRENT community standards of decency." Here we have the kernel of the whole thing, and the kernel of increasing lawlessness and lustful pursuits. "It must be so offensive as to affront current community standards"; in other words, there is no standard of morality to go by. Moral standards are always changing and, consequently, being lowered; and so the lower the community standard sinks, the lower the interpretation of the law must be. We are reminded of the servant of Christ who recently said that man is governed by his lusts and popular opinion; and that when popular opinion drops, his lusts take over. How good it is that the holy, immutable Word of God never changes, and that God never lowers His standard of holiness.

May we at this point insert a few words to young Christians. Beware of what you read. The world is wallowing in what they "know naturally as brute beasts." They are like the prodigal in the far country who would have satisfied his hunger with the husks that the swine did eat. Avoid all literature and pictures that tend to stimulate man's lusts. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Pro. 4:15. Our young people in school and college are very apt to hear and see a great deal of this, but they need to seek the Lord's help to avoid any contamination by it. The world is not getting better, but getting rapidly worse; and when the Lord Jesus comes to execute judgment, parallel times with those of the days of Sodom and Gomorrah will be prevalent.

We cannot remake the world, any more than righteous Lot could improve wicked Sodom. Our hope and our expectation is the coming of the Lord, so let us not be alarmed by the rapid increase in godlessness and corruption, although we can note that it is but a part of a bent of the world on its road to destruction. The Christians in the days of the early Roman Empire had no encouragement from the government; in fact, they often suffered under its decrees. Many were put to death for Christ's sake. It was possible then, and it is possible now, for a Christian to live in "all holy conversation and godliness." The same things that caused the dissolution of the old Roman Empire are at work now; the only difference being that there is a form of godliness today, although the form itself is soon to be given up.

Under specious pleas and arguments, people with aversion to the mention of God and those with perverted minds must have their rights safeguarded in those very matters. We have not as yet, however, heard of any who refused to accept money on which is engraved, "In God we trust" - probably because of the value of money. But whether the inscription, "In God we trust," remains or goes, or whether or not prayers may be said in schools, there is a path for Christians which can be for God's glory. How thankful we should be to God who has given us a faithful description of the last days, and has told us how to live therein!

"Keep thyself pure." 1 Tim. 5:22.

"Keep us, Lord, O keep us cleaving

To Thyself and still believing,

Till the hour of our receiving

Promised joys with Thee."

NOTE: The B'nai B'rith mentioned above is the one published in Los Angeles.

## The Way We Now Know Christ

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In 2 Cor. 5:16 we have a very clear statement of the way in which we now know Christ. We read, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." That is, Christ had been known as a man in flesh down here; but now that was ended. He had gone into heaven, and henceforth He was to be known as a living Messiah on earth no more. Yet not unknown, but living in a more wonderful way than before. His death was the closing of man's history in responsibility; but as risen from the dead, He is Head of the new creation, as well as Head of His body the Church.

In that relationship we know Him now. Christ the Head is in glory, unseen and unknown by man in the flesh; we, the members of His body, are on earth. The Spirit of God has been sent down, and He unites us to the Head in glory, giving us the consciousness of our relationship. What a wondrous place is ours! but how feebly it is apprehended by us.

To know Christ after the flesh is a Jewish position. We have an illustration of it in Thomas (John 20); Jesus (v. 29) says, "Because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." This points to a much more blessed way of knowing Christ: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Pet. 1:8. It is interesting to mark how the Lord prepared His disciples for this change. In John 14 He tells them that He is going away. All their hopes were centered in Him as Messiah on earth. His death would crush all these; and, lest these might think that all had been a mistake and a delusion, He says, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Then He tells of the Comforter who would be given consequent on His going away. That His disciples understood little of this is apparent; still, Jesus places them morally in the position which they were to occupy afterward. In the world their hopes were to be connected with an absent Christ, and the Comforter sent down to dwell in them and with them forever. In keeping with this, when He rises from the dead, He says to Mary, "Touch Me not." Mysterious change, one would say, in the One who never discouraged the advances of a single true heart. But He was gently teaching Mary the truth that she was to know Him no more after the flesh; she had known Him thus.

It is very touching to see how that, even after He had risen from the dead, the disciples still clung to Him as an earthly deliverer, their thoughts never rising beyond earthly position. The two disciples going to Emmaus, speaking of their disappointed hopes, say, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21); but at the very last, the disciples say, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6.

But there was to be something far higher and more wonderful than this—they were to be witnesses for an absent Christ whom the world had cast out. He was going up into heaven, and they were to know Him no more after the flesh. The Holy Ghost was to be sent down to dwell in them, the power for the testimony committed to them, and, as we find elsewhere, to connect them with Him in glory and give them the knowledge of Himself there. This could never be while He was on earth.

In His life, and in His death, He was emphatically and absolutely done, but as risen from the dead and gone on high, we are associated with Him by the power of the Holy Ghost sent down. Hence Jesus says, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Expedient, because they would know Him in a far closer way, and as brought into union with Himself.

Let us look for a moment at the practical effect of this. We get an illustration of it in Peter. With his eye on Christ he could walk over the stormy billows. Stephen, looking "steadfastly into heaven," sees Jesus there and, forgetting his own troubles, he thinks of his enemies: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." What a beautiful manifestation of the Spirit of Christ. The manner of this conformity is doctrinally stated in 2 Cor. 3:18: "We all with open face beholding... the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord." We thus see that there is transforming power in the knowledge of Christ in glory; and we do not get this by looking at His lowly path on earth, but at what He is now.

It is our place to know Him where He is. We can know Him nowhere else, just as a friend is known in the place where he is for the time being. What a wondrous thing is this intimacy with the Lord Jesus. How little we know of it, yet it is the secret of power. See the effect it had on Paul: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"; and as if he were just commencing to sound the depths that are in Himself, he goes on, "That I may know Him."

Ah, if we only knew a little more of Him, how the world would lose its attractions-how self and the flesh would be denied-how we would surmount trials and difficulties! In short, the deeper our knowledge of Christ, the more power there will be for worship, for service, and for walk. Have we not to mourn over weakness and failure and poverty of soul? The cause of it is here: we are not sufficiently occupied with Christ on high. Do we often mourn the low tone of our worship? It is because Christ is not fully engaging our hearts; for just in proportion as we know Him there, shall we delight to think of Him as He was down here. As we gather around the symbols of His broken body and shed blood, the deeper our practical knowledge of Himself in glory, the more true and real will be our remembrance of Him in His suffering and death.

Another practical effect is that we prove this world to be "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," because the only One that satisfies our affections is absent, and is disowned and cast out. Thus the blessed hope of His return is kept clear and bright. We long to see Him. The two things are connected. We remember Him till He come, but the measure in which we do so depends on our knowledge of Himself where He is now.

Let us judge ourselves as to these things. I believe there never was a time when a growing personal knowledge of Christ was more needed. The tide of indifferentism has set in, and mere intelligence will not give us power to stand against it. Christ, as the known and loved object of our hearts, will alone preserve us. What an instance of intelligence without faith we find in Matt. 2:3-6. The chief priests and scribes had a perfectly correct knowledge of the prophecy concerning the birth of Jesus; yet so far as we know, it never took them out of the court of Herod. The wise men from the East were left to seek out the Child.

May the Lord have the supreme place in our hearts, so that we may be kept true to Him.

## How We Who Live Should Live

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"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." 2 Cor. 5:14-15.

The thought uppermost in my mind in reading these verses is just as simple as it is of all importance; and that is, beloved brethren, what are we living for? A weighty question, I need not say; and it is of moment to our souls that we should not shrink from answering it, and that we should answer it in the fear of God. Verse 15 was particularly before me--"He died for all, that they which live"; that is, the believers, etc. All were dead, believers and unbelievers alike, all were ruined men before God. And the death of Christ is the proof of the condition of every soul naturally; that is, all are lost, all lifeless toward God; that even the Son of God, who is everlasting life, should need to suffer, should find no portion but death in this world, is the proof that there is no life in it. Everything lay so irretrievably in death, that for Him to die is the only door of deliverance out of it. And, "He died for all."

It is not said that all should live, though undoubtedly there was life in Him adequate for every soul - life everlasting in Christ. But then, in fact, no soul did, none would, receive Him - not one. Grace therefore has wrought and given some to receive Him. And therefore it is added, "He died for all, that they which live"; that is, they who do believe in Him, and therefore have life - "that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." Now there is never a question day by day that arises, but what brings out one of these two things - whether we are living to ourselves, or to Him who died for us and rose again. And have we not to own the sad truth of how constantly we have to rebuke our souls? How often, not to say in general, the first impulse of the heart is to take that view of everything which would minister to our pleasure, or gratification, or importance? What is this but living to ourselves? When any question comes before us, when anything, either in the way of an evil to be avoided, a loss to be shunned, or something to be gained, some object that comes before us, is it not our tendency to look upon how it will bear upon us, and to give it that turn which will be for our profit or advantage in some way or another? I do not say this is always personal; it may be for our family, for our children, looking onward to the future or at the present. Now, we are always wrong when we do it. God would not have us to neglect the real good of those dear to us and dependent on us; but the question is, whether we trust ourselves or Christ. Are we adequate judges of what is best for our children? Are we the least biased and the wisest to decide on that which would be for, not the passing profit, but the good which endures forever?

It comes to a very simple issue. We have two natures - one which is always grasping for something that will please and exalt itself, and another which, by the grace of God, is willing to suffer for Christ, and clings to what is of Christ. But as the Apostle says (1 Cor. 15:46), not that which is spiritual was first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.

This is precisely so in our practical experience. The thought that is apt to arise promptly when there is trial and difficulty is the simple, natural one, how to get out of it - not how am I to glorify God in it, and turn it to the praise of Christ.

Then again, if there is any prospect of improving circumstances, this is the first thought -that which is natural. Ought we not to be upon our watchtower with respect to this? Should we not have it as a settled thing for our hearts, This is my danger? We may not all be tried in the same way, for that which would be a gratification to one might not be so to another. But there is one sad thing in which we all agree; we have a nature that likes self and seeks to gratify it, and we have hence a tendency to indulge that nature as the first thought of the heart. But let Christ only come before our souls; let us think of Him when either trouble or pleasure comes before us. And what then? That which is natural fades away - we judge it. We say, That is a thing which brings no glory to Christ, and what are we here for?

Let us remember that God has done everything to fit us for His presence. He "hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1:12). There is no doubt of that; it remains untouched. But the practical question for our souls is whether our hearts, knowing the perfect goodness of our God and Father toward us, enter into this great thought - that He now sets Christ, dead and risen, before us, in order that, in the presence of the angels as well as of men, yea, in His own presence, there may be the wonderful spectacle of beings who once lived for nothing but self, here, by the very image of Christ before their souls, lifted above self altogether.

May we bring this to bear upon whatever may be the circumstances through which we pass day by day! It is the main thing for the walk of every saint. There are other great things for the Church; but they are so much the greater as they are built upon Christ, the object of each individual that composes the assembly. Let us not deceive ourselves as to that. No position can ever make amends for failure in the habitual thought of the heart. May we search and see whether we are living to ourselves or to Him who died for us and rose again!

## What Is a Christian's Rule of Life?

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It is commonly taught among Christians, that the believer's rule of walk is the moral law, or the ten commandments. It is admitted, of course, by all, that the believer is not justified by the deeds of the law, and that if the law be thus used, it will only add to man's condemnation. His justification must clearly be by grace, and on the principle of faith; but, when justified, what is the standard by which his life is to be governed? This, it is generally held, is the moral law, which was undoubtedly the rule given to Israel and, for its own purpose, is therefore as perfect as all the other works of God's hands. It is true that believers are said to be under God's grace, and not under law; but this, it is maintained, applies to justification, not to walk. They are urged also not to return to law, but this is explained to mean ceremonial law, not the moral. These distinctions are intelligible, but are they scriptural? Where does the Word of God speak of a believer as being under the law for one purpose, and not for another? Where does it declare that while the ceremonial is abrogated, the moral law is still in force as the rule for Christian walk? No doubt there is a distinction between the moral and ceremonial law, and also between the law as a ground of justification, and the law as a rule of life; but when this distinction is used to make Scripture harmonize with theology, it behooves us to inquire whether Scripture is thus fairly interpreted.

It is said, "that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth" (Rom. 7:1); but it is added that the believer does not live, having "become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God" (Rom. 7:4). Then follows, "Now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in oldness of letter." v. 6; J. N. D. Trans.

Here, as usual in this epistle, man is looked at as first alive in the flesh. Such is his standing before God, and in this standing the law "hath dominion over" him. But believers are "dead with Christ" (chap. 6:8), and are therefore "become dead to the law" - "delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." No language can be clearer. The believer, as dead with Christ, is free from the law.

Is this the ceremonial law? Evidently not; for the passage goes on, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (v. 7); so that it is of the decalogue itself that the Holy Ghost is here speaking, and to the decalogue itself that the believer is declared to be dead. Is he dead to it then only as concerns justification, and still alive to it as a rule of conduct? In the above passage the question of justification is not even alluded to; and the reason why we are said to have "become dead to the law" is, that we "should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." When "in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death" (v. 5). The contrast, then, is not between justification and condemnation, but between the fruits produced under the law, and those produced by our being "married to another." We cannot be "married to another" until we are dead to the law. If alive to the law, we are not dead with Christ; and the result

is "fruit unto death." If married to Christ, we are dead to the law; and the result is "fruit unto God." The believer is, therefore, dead to the law not only as a ground of justification, but as a rule of walk. The law can no more produce fruit to God after his conversion, than save him from his sins before his conversion. So in the previous chapter it is said: "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." Chap. 6:13, 14. Here, again, the subject is not justification, but walk. Our justification is assumed; and the question is whether, being justified, we shall serve sin or God. What delivers us from the power of sin? "When.. in the flesh, the motions of sins,

which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Now, however, being not "in the flesh," but "dead with Christ," are we put under the law again to be kept from sin, and to bear fruit for God? Just the contrary. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." In a word, the power for walk is not in our being under the law, but depends upon our being dead to the law.

The Apostle then asks, "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." v. 15. But what is the ground for this decided negative? Does he say, You must not sin because, though not under the law for justification, you are under it for walk? Surely, if this had been true, it would have been the obvious reply; and that the Apostle does not so reply, proves that the doctrine is not true. Instead of drawing this theological distinction, he shows that the new basis of Christian morality is not the law partially revived as a rule of conduct, but the new position into which the believer is brought as dead and risen with Christ. The law, so far from being the rule of life for a believer, works nothing but misery when the believer thus uses it; for even of a quickened soul it is said, that "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (Chap. 7:8), while elsewhere it is written that "the strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15:56).

So the Apostle reproaches the Galatians for bringing in the law after grace was known. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?" Gal. 3:2, 3. This is very striking, for the Holy Ghost here speaks of the introduction of the law, after they had believed, as a reverting to the flesh. He then shows that the law, however introduced, is fatal; "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." v. 10. It may be said that this refers to justification, not to conduct. It is, however, addressed to persons already justified. Moreover, the principle is a general one, applying

to any use of the law whatever, and showing that there is no such thing as being half dead to the law, and half alive to it; but, if we are under the law at all, we are under the curse. So it is taught elsewhere: "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Chap. 5:3. How could Scripture and theology more flatly contradict each other? Theology says that we are under the law in one way, and free from it in another. Scripture says that we must be under the law altogether, or free from it altogether.

Sinking theology, then, and following Scripture, we find that the believer is dead to the law, not only for justification, but as a rule of life; and that its introduction in any form is a departure from the principle of grace. But does this give rein to lawlessness? The Apostle deals with this very question in the Romans. If the law were retained as a rule of life, it could never have arisen; and the fact that it did arise proves that the law was not so retained. But if not, what barrier is there against lawlessness? A twofold barrier: first, that being "dead to sin," we cannot "live any longer therein" (Rom. 6:2); second, that being "married to another," we can "bring forth fruit unto God." As dead with Christ, we are dead to sin; and the practical teaching founded on it is, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Chap. 6:12. As having life in Christ, we are "alive unto God," and the practical result ought to be, "that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." v. 4.

The law was, of course, perfect for its own purpose; but, working through the flesh, it not only could give no power against lust, but positively created lust. Being "weak through the flesh," it could not condemn "sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:3). But now we, being "married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead," are able to "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," and thus "the righteousness of the law" is "fulfilled in us" (v. 4). While under law, we are, through the flesh, unable to fulfill its righteous requirements. Freed from the law, walking as those who are dead and risen with Christ, its righteous requirements are fulfilled in us. Thus the attempt to put the believer under the law as a rule of life defeats its own purpose. It is only when we are completely emancipated from it that its righteous demands are brought out in our lives. For the law, while it gives directions, gives no power. Power comes from the new life in which we are quickened together with Christ. Having the life of the risen Christ, we are able to show forth that life in our walk and conversation.

But it may be asked, Did not Christ fulfill the law? was He not "made under the law?" and if we are to show forth His life in our own, must we not be under law too? Undoubtedly Christ, as a man born into the world, was "made under the law." But we are not "married" to Christ as a man born into this world, but as the Man "who is raised from the dead." It is as united with Christ risen that we have, and are enabled to "walk in newness of life." Christ as man met every righteous requirement of the law, even to death, which He endured on our behalf. Is Christ risen and glorified under the law? If not, neither are we; for we are dead with Him, and thus delivered from all out of which He has passed, while our life, as quickened with Him, is the same as His own.

But is not the law appealed to by Paul himself? Does he not say that "all the law is fulfilled, in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"? G a 1. 5:14. Does he not quote the 5th commandment in speaking to children, "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth"? Eph. 6:2, 3. And do not these and kindred passages show that the believer is still under the law? Such passages doubtless show that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." To the Galatians his reference to the law was most apt; for they wished to put themselves under the law, and what more telling than to show them that the law itself condemned them?

But surely we can quote the law as indicating God's mind without putting ourselves under it. Some of our judges have cited the Roman law, because of its admitted excellence, in delivering their judgments; but who dreams that these judges held the Roman law to be binding in our country? If God lays down principles in the law, they must be perfect; and as such Paul quotes them. But this no more proves that we are under the law of the ten commandments, than a judge's reference to Roman law proves that Roman law is the law of this realm. On the other hand, if believers are under law as a rule of life, why is this rule not named? Why is the Apostle constantly urging other motives, and hardly ever even alluding to that code which, according to theology, is the Christian's real guide? This alone suffices to show how widely the theological dogma of the believer's being still under the law as his rule of walk departs from the true teaching of God's Word.

The rule for the believer's walk, then, is Christ, and not the law. He may follow the law ever so diligently, but the result will be that "the commandment, which was ordained to life" will be "found to be unto death" (Rom. 7:10). Just so far as his walk answers to the truth that he is "married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead," will he "bring forth fruit unto God." In all cases our rule of life depends on the position we occupy. A child and a servant both owe obedience to the head of the house, but the child's obedience should flow from his position as a child, the servant's from his position as a servant. An Israelite's relation with Jehovah was determined by the covenant made at Sinai; and his rule of life was, therefore, the law. Our relationship with God is determined by our having received the spirit of adoption; and our rule of life is, therefore, Christ, "the firstborn among many brethren," to whom we belong - the Son, whose Spirit God hath sent forth into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father." As dead with Christ, we are dead to the law; as quickened with Christ, we can walk in newness of life; as beholding the glory of Christ, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Cor. 3:18

## Why Am I Thus?

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This cry of perplexity is wrung from many a sad heart in this sin-burdened world. We are surrounded by mysteries. "Why am I thus?" goes forth from crippled ones, bedridden ones, bereaved ones, from many suffering from the consequences of the sins and follies of others where death would be welcomed as relief.

Now the poor sufferer may do one of three things.

First, he may leave God out altogether, curse his day, and bear his heavy burden all alone till death ushers him into a darker eternal gloom.

Or second, he may turn to God, charging Him with his condition, and saying, "Why hast Thou made me thus?"

Or third, he may turn to God in a broken, childlike spirit. Rebekah, in Gen. 25:22, sets us a good example. In her perplexity she "went to inquire of the LORD." This is the right and best thing to do. A full answer may not yet be given, but at least there will be peace and rest and support in the perplexity. "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7. For we are but children, not capable of comprehending the full answer if it were now given. "Why am I thus?" Oh, tried one, trust, wait, hope on! "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psalm 30:5) - cometh never to depart. Our light affliction is but for a moment; the weight of glory is eternal.

Many a child of God afflicted and cut off by infirmity from some of the sweetest joys of life, and often looking with envious eyes on others, may sorrowfully ask, "Why am I thus?" We can only answer, / cannot tell you; you will know some day. But let me ask you, Why are you what you are? Why are you, who were a vessel of wrath, a guilty sinner, afar off, without hope, why are you now a vessel of mercy, a child of God, pardoned, brought nigh, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ? Why has your poor body with its infirmities yet been made a temple of the Holy Ghost? Why did the Father give you to the Son to be one of "His own," whom He loves to the end?

These questions may well be pondered. In thinking of them we may forget our sorrows, and our souls be filled with the joy of the Lord.

"Why art thou then cast down, my soul?

What should discourage thee?

And why with vexing thoughts art thou

Disquieted in me?

"Still trust in God; for Him to praise

Good cause I yet shall have;

He of my count'nance is the health,  
My God, that dolt me save."

## Risen With Christ, Dead With Christ

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The Christian's life is exhibited in two things - death unto that which is here, and heavenly mindedness. "Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ," writes the Apostle, "from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" The expression, "rudiments of the world," goes a vast way. I am to be dead not only to sin, but to all the religiousness of human nature. A Jew has this religiousness, and it was cultivated of God; but it brought not forth good fruit; it produced nothing but "wild grapes."

Now if we do not see that we are risen, we shall be cultivating human nature for God. He Himself has tried this already; and He says, that not anything could have been done more than He has done. (Isa. 5.) But man would still be striving to cultivate the religiousness of human nature, and introduce sinners into heaven, otherwise than by death. We are dead and risen again, and it is simply heavenly.

In this is the real power of our living above sin. It assumes death; it goes upon the principle that we are "dead to sin" (Rom. 6). We get a blessed liberty in seeing and accounting ourselves dead. We have a new life. Christ has taken His place where death and resurrection have put Him. And there I am, where Christ is. It is altogether another life. And this life has its own world, and its own sphere of affections. "They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Rom. 8:5.

Resurrection life is manifested in walking through this world as abstracted, withdrawn from, unactuated by, the motives of the world. A Christian has new motives. If I see a man walking through the world without things here affecting him, I say, "He is either mad, or risen with Christ." Alas! we are not as consistent as madmen. All the motives in the world never touch the new nature. Do you think it could be thinking about friendship with the world? could it be seeking riches, or honor, or power? The motives which actuate men have no influence upon it. Perplexity comes in by our having a motive which is not drawn from heaven; whenever I see myself or another in perplexity, I may be quite sure some other motive is at work. There is always a tendency to decline from this singleness of eye.

When we first receive the knowledge of life in Christ, we are absorbed; we readily admit all else to be "dung" and "dross" (Phil. 3). But when decline comes in, we get old motives into action again. Little by little, we are not absorbed, and then a hundred things begin to be motives - things of which I took no notice, which did not act before. People say, "What harm is there in it?" When I begin to inquire, "What harm is there in this or in that?" there is the tendency to decline. There may be no harm in the thing, but the thought about it shows that I am not absorbed with that which is heavenly. "Thou hast left thy first love." It is not in great sins, but here, that decline in the saints is manifested.

When the sense of grace is diminished, we decline in practice. Our motives must be in God. Sometimes effort is made to press conduct, works, and practice, because (it is said) full grace was

preached before; now that there is decline in practice, you must preach practice.

That which is the rather to be pressed, is grace - the first grace. It is grace, not legalism, which will restore the soul. Where the sense of grace is diminished, the conscience may be at the same time uncommonly active; and then it condemns the pressing of grace, and legalism is the result. When conscience has been put in action through the claims of grace, that is not legalism; and there will be holy practice in detail.

We may fall into either of two faults - that of (because fruits have not been produced) preaching fruits, or that of getting at ease when certain things come to have influence over us again, through thinking that what we approved of before was legalism.

We shall not get back by dwelling on detail. Christ is the great motive for everything; and we must get up into the knowledge of resurrection in Christ, to remedy detail. Here there is a wonderful truth, and wonderful liberty.

Another very important point is the tone and spirit of our walk. Confidence in God, and gentleness of spirit is that which becomes the saint. For this we must be at home with God. The effect of thus walking in Christ, setting the Lord ever before us, is always to make us walk with reverence, lowliness, adoration, quietness, ease, and happiness. If I go where I am unaccustomed to be - if I get, for instance, into a great house - I may have much kindness shown me there, but when I get out again, I feel at ease; I am glad to be out. Had I been brought up in that house, I should feel otherwise. The soul is not only happy in God for itself, but it will bring the tone of that house out with it; because of its joy in God, anxieties disappear, and it will move through the ten thousand things that would trouble and prove anxieties to another, without being a bit troubled. No matter what it may be, we bring quietness of spirit into all circumstances, while abiding in God.

If a man be risen with Christ, if he be dwelling there, it will show itself thus. We shall not be afraid of the changes around. We shall live not in stupid apathy and listlessness, but in the exercise of lively affections and energies toward the Lord. One great evidence of my dwelling in Christ, is quietness. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on. Another sign is confidence in obeying.

This connects itself with fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus. Christ - fellowship not only in joy, but in the thoughts of the Father and the Son. The Holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, is our power of entering with the affections into the things of God. "The Father loveth the Son"-what a place this puts me in, to be thus cognizant of the Father's feelings toward His beloved Son.

In our proper place, we get our mind filled and associated with things that leave this world as a little thing - an atom - in the vastness of the glory which was before the world was.

## The Word of God - Dangers

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Do we Christians really value the written Word of God- the Holy Bible? Doubtless, not as we should. It is a veritable treasure-trove-"more to be desired... than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Psalm 19:10. But what comes easy is often not valued as it should be. To have within our reach the very Word of God is an inestimable privilege, for it reveals to us the whole mind of God about our relationships with Him with whom we have to do. It tells us of our fall in Adam, and of redemption in Jesus Christ, the last Adam - the Lord from heaven. It tells us of life and of death, of heaven and of hell, of things terrestrial and of things celestial. It meets all our needs and gives us direction for each step of our pathway.

Many dear saints of God have endured hardships and even death to possess a copy of the Bible, and others have given up their lives rather than part with it and its sacred precepts. Its very preservation to us, against all the malice and hostility of men and of demons, is a great miracle; it is a work of God who has in His all-wise superintendence guarded it for us. It has been maligned and ridiculed, scoffed at and beset by foes among the rich and the poor, the uninformed and the ill-informed, the religious and the irreligious. There is scarcely a portion of the Holy Scriptures that has escaped being handled by unholy hands, or discounted by words proceeding from unholy lips and brains.

In early times, God conversed with the patriarchs and gave them instruction for themselves and their families. Until the time of Moses, there was no written word for the people. The first five books of the Old Testament comprise what is known to the Jews as the Torah. It contains a divine and absolutely accurate account of creation, and shows man his responsibility to his Creator. In it God also gave His law to the Israelites; this could be broken, but not bent, even as the tables of stone upon which "the writing of God" was. The stones were broken before they came into the camp, even as the commandments were broken at that time.

But along came the critics who said that Moses could not have written those books, because writing was unknown then. This pleased the fool who says in his heart, "There is no God." But God allowed men to find writings that had been done long before Moses wrote; however, the opponent of God and His Word is never long at a loss for objections. Next, the critic said that Moses did not write the account of creation, or give the law from God to the people, but that he had merely compiled fragmentary legends and various codes of conduct. There are always those who eagerly adopt any notion that seems to favor atheism. But God said by Stephen that Moses received the living oracles for the people; he did not compile or edit them. Furthermore, the Pentateuch, or Torah, abounds with "The LORD spake unto Moses." And if we go back to the codes of human conduct that Moses is supposed to have copied, they are without exception concerned only with man-to-man relations; but the law of the living God had first to say to man's responsibility to his Creator. Or if we compare God's unadorned but sublime account of creation with the nonsense found in the fragmentary legends of the heathen regarding it, we see that the latter is but crude corruption of the facts.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, except a very few isolated portions which concerned Gentiles, which were written in Chaldee, or Aramaic. This is as we might have supposed. The Old Testament was translated into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt, about 270 B. C. Here again the critic is routed when he rejects the book of Daniel as having been written as history and not prophecy. To get around the exactness with which Daniel's prophecy was fulfilled, he simply says, It was written after the events, and hence was merely history. But that early Greek translation, called the Septuagint, contained the book of Daniel. And that prophecy carries us on to the death of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem. God's prophetic word by him also takes us into the long interval in which we live, between the Roman Empire of the past and that of the future. The Lord Jesus Himself referred to Daniel as "Daniel the prophet," not as Daniel the historian.

The New Testament was written in Greek (not classical, but in the language of the people, called Koine). In about the second century, Latin superseded Greek as the language of government and diplomacy. This gave rise for the need of a Latin translation of the Holy Scriptures, which in the fourth century was made, largely by Jerome. It became known as the Latin Vulgate. Vulgate signifies to make common or public. This well suited the Roman Church for centuries, as all its services were in Latin; but, as Europe was overrun by other peoples, and languages multiplied, the Latin Vulgate was no longer the language of the common people. Thus for centuries the people could not have or read the Word of God, and the Roman Church became the most determined foe of placing the Bible before the common people. The populace was kept in ignorance and darkness.

This was one of the contributing factors which brought about the Reformation. The reformers did not start out to break with Rome, but to make her clean out corruption, graft, and evil. When Rome was adamant, a final break ensued.

In the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe was the first to translate the whole Bible into English. It took him 22 years to complete it, and each copy was written by hand, which required ten months' labor. Only the rich could afford a copy, and others would pay for the privilege of reading it for an hour a day. "The Word of God was precious in those days." It is strange that Wycliffe was permitted to die a natural death, but forty years later his bones were dug up and burned and his ashes scattered on a river. Wycliffe's translation was made from the Latin Vulgate.

Early in the sixteenth century, a very great scholar by the name of Erasmus made a good Greek translation. He was a man evidently raised up of God for the work, for it was a valuable help to later translators. It was from the original Greek, and errors that had been made in the Vulgate were lacking.

About this time, William Tyndale, a contemporary reformer of Luther's, made a translation from the Erasmus Greek Version, and this was the first printed New Testament in English. He had to flee England because of persecution, and his work was done in Cologne and Worms on the Continent. These New Testaments had to be smuggled into England, and every copy the Church of Rome could get its hands on was burned forthwith. This man of God was first strangled and then burned at the stake. It is not our purpose to recall these early struggles in order that the common people might have the Word of God in the vernacular, but we do wish to point out that others have suffered the loss of all things, and even of life itself, because they valued so highly what we take for granted.

"That old serpent... the Devil" has always been the enemy of the truth of God. Many times in Old Testament days, the enemy sought to eradicate the Old Testament. Whatever has been of God has been the object of his hatred and abuse, and he has always found willing hands to do his work. We will not go into further details of the struggles to have the Bible in the language of the people, but pass on to the well-known work, the King James Translation. In 1611 that work of inestimable value was printed. It was a work of fifty-four translators. They worked under the favor of the strange king, King Jas. 1 The English translation was made from Greek and Hebrew texts. Probably nothing in English history did so much to stabilize the English language, or to enrich the English people, as that translation - not that it was wholly free from mistakes, but it shows the marks of God's guiding and providential hand in its preparation. It also shows the piety of the men who labored hard and long on its preparation.

The Catholic Church too felt the pressure and need to give a vernacular translation to the people. This was done in the Douay Version which was made from the Latin Vulgate. They have since produced a more satisfactory translation in this country in the Confraternity Revision. But the effects of all of them are somewhat nullified by their priestly warnings to their communicants that they may err in reading it for themselves, and so should receive it only in the light which the Church throws upon it.

In 1885 the whole Bible was revised from the King James Translation. This was also a long and tedious operation, but the Revised Version never gained the acceptance that the King James Version did. Early in this century (1901, to be precise), another revised version came out; this one was produced by American scholars. It is generally referred to by the initials of A. R. V., meaning American Revised Version. This did not gain acceptance either, but we consider it is in many places better than the 1885 English revision.

But let us come on down to the middle of the 20th century. Satan, the god and prince of this world, can no longer deprive much of the world populace of the Word of the living God. It is now readily available in most languages and at reasonable prices. His attacks now are to call its divine authorship in question, to seek to disprove its statements by pseudo-scientific argument. Instead of fighting the production of the Bible, he is patronizing the Bible. He has joined forces with so-called Christianity to produce a great multiplicity of versions, texts, and translations, so that the wayfaring man might become so confused and bewildered that he casts all aside as spurious, or at least, as doubtful.

To make our point clear, we will quote from a current publication:

"Anyone invoking the Bible these days is always well advised to double-check his quotation; in the current flurry of Biblical revision and retranslation, it might have suddenly become archaic or incorrect. Last week two more additions to the changing Bible were announced." - Time, October 19, 1962. This article is headed: "The Changing Word."

What better way to sow distrust of the unchanging and unchangeable Word than to dub it the Changing Word. "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89. If the Word of God is subject to changing moods and fancies of men, then there is nothing solid in this whole world, for it is a changing scene. Things that were considered as unchanging as the Rock of Gibraltar are gone or going from the scene. How many nations remain as they were 62 years ago?

Which moneys of the world have the same value as they did fifty years ago? None! as far as we know. Who can guarantee the so-called blue-chip stock certificates for a decade ahead? Who can promise that there will not be a war of giants whose struggles will decimate the population? We say with solid conviction, There

is nothing stable here. All is fleeting and vain, perishable and transient. And now great men of letters would remove the only bulwark - the Word of Him who does not change, and who never changes His Word. Of old He said to Israel, "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal. 3:6.

When the last remaining bit of stability is cast aside, is there any wonder that moral decay is prevalent in government, in business, and in the social structure? Where is individual morality appreciated? Truly this great nation is following closely in the steps of decadent Rome in the days of her fast decline.

Are these days not reminiscent of what we read in Jer. 36? There God gave Jeremiah a message to write to King Jehoiakim the son of Josiah. The princes went in and told the king what Jeremiah wrote; then "the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll; and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which, stood beside the king. Now the king sat in the winter house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he [the king -A. R. V.] cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed." Jer. 36:21-23. There have long been men of great daring who would use a penknife to cut up the Word of God, and burn it; but many men today use the pen instead of the knife to mutilate the Word of Him "who cannot lie." Surely all the judgments pronounced by the God of heaven will come upon this world, and solemn indeed they are.

Besides the news headline quoted above - "The Changing Word" - we have before us other headlines as follows:

"Time-Honored Words Vanish from Old Testament." "Drastic Changes in Translation for New Bible."

"A New Translation Alters Bible."

"British Scholars Use Scissors - New Bible Version Deleting 'Nonsense.' "

"A New Bible For Our Age."

"Scientific Churchman Cuts Out Adam, Eve."

"Jewish Bible 'Reroutes' Exodus."

"New Bible Changes Story of Moses, 3rd Commandment."

Are not these headlines sufficiently bold to sway many unbelievers toward distrust.. of the Holy Bible? Are they not calculated by the enemy. of souls to do their disastrous work? Why burn Bibles today when more effective means are at hand to discredit them? Christian readers, are we really awake about the character of these times? If Jude found it necessary to write to the believers to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," is it not all the more

necessary now? Are we to succumb to laziness which worldly prosperity produces? Are we to be inebriated with the spirit of the world? Or, are we going to EARNESTLY CONTEND for the faith? We may easily lose our heritage by simple default. The spirit of Laodicean apathy has swept over Christendom where professed (and sometimes real) Christians are neither cold nor hot. Are we partaking of the spirit of lukewarmness which permeates all profession?

For many years it was possible to obtain from Bible Houses and Societies faithful translations in foreign languages of the King James Version. Now, we admit that it would probably be better to have faithful men of God translate the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures into the foreign languages in which missionaries and indigenous Christians labor in the Word and doctrine; but as a shortcut to getting the Word of God into many languages, it was easier to translate from the English. This proved quite satisfactory. Now we are informed that it is impossible to buy such translations for work in several lands. The publishers have simply discontinued printing the Bible from the more trustworthy King James Version and have substituted the modern translations which cast doubt upon many portions of Scripture. We received this complaint two weeks ago from a native Japanese laborer who is in the United States for a visit. Will there be an attempt made now to discontinue printing the King James Version in English? Who can tell? The trend is certainly that way, and some of the great Bible Societies are going along with it.

## The Word of God

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The child of God needs no human testimony to convince him that the Scriptures are the Word of God. They so fit into his daily experience, and take up the thoughts and feelings of his mind, that he is conscious that the Author must be the living God. For He only could thus speak of the secrets of his heart and the inmost recesses of his soul. He finds his joy and peace flow only in the channel where they are said to flow. His sorrows come as the appointed way is departed from. Man, the world, and the things that are seen, are found to be exactly that which the Word describes them to be. So perfectly true is the statement, that their emptiness and uncertainty are every day painfully experienced. Precious Book! God's inspiration! Oh that my feet were ever directed to keep Thy precepts, and my heart to trust Thy promises!

## Words on Service

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True service begins with Christ, who is the Head; and when Christ is forgotten, then the service is defective. It has lost connection with the spring and fountain of all service, because it is from the Head that all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increases. The body is of Christ, and He loves it as He loves Himself; and every one who would serve it will best learn to do so by knowing His heart and purposes toward it. In a word, it is Christ who serves, though it may be through us. We are but "joints and bands." If we are not derivative and communicative from Christ, we are useless. To be useful, my eye and heart must be on Christ, and not on the issue of my service; though, if true to Him, the end will vindicate me too, however disheartening the interval. He who judges of his service by present appearances, will judge by the blossom and not by the fruit; and, after all, the service is not for the sake of the Church, but for the sake of Christ; and if He be served in the Church, though the Church own it not, yet, Christ being served, He will own it. Now the constant effort of Satan is to disconnect in our minds Christ from our service, and this much more than any of us perhaps have fully discovered. Whether in reading, or praying, or speaking, how seldom, if we judge ourselves, do we find that we act simply as toward Christ, and Him alone! How often may sentimentality and natural feelings affect us in our service, instead of simple love to Him!

"The work of faith." Our Lord's was this. He did not see the effects directly. If our motive for working is the effects we shall produce, this is not a work of faith. The Lord may encourage by the way, but the work is to flow from the power of communion with Himself, the love of Christ constraining. We should labor and not faint; therefore, we have need of patience. The more we understand the character of Christ's disappointments, the more holy will our labors be. We often look for that which will satisfy us here, when we ought to be looking for it there. Not only ourselves, but our work, is in the sight of God. The work must be carried on as if God were there, there being no allowance of anything He would not approve. It is not enough that the end we have in view be right; our way of working must be right also.

It is a miserable thing for a Christian to be acting for a testimony. God may make that which I do turn for a testimony. While all the frankincense (Lev. 2:2) was burned on the altar to the Lord, those around smelled the sweet savor. But a testimony is not my object. Those who set up for a testimony will soon make a show of themselves.

Ananias and Sapphira wanted to get the character of devotedness (such as the Church had) without the cost of it. Love of money really governed, modified by love of Church reputation.

Are we to say, I will not act on what I do know, till Thou tellest me all my course on to glory? The Lord continually exercises His children, giving light enough to make a thing a matter of plain Christian obedience, and not showing all the happy, and blessed, and full consequences till faith acts on that; it is just a holy and excellent trial of faith. He says in principle, I am the door.

The mind may say, Where to? The Lord answers, / am the door; and wherever the soul finds Christ, or the will of Christ, if walking in faith, it trusts that, and the blessing follows. It soon goes in and out, and finds pasture. Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. It is better to trust God in doing His will than the consequences which doing His will may produce, however blessed. Nor shall he that follows Him walk in darkness, though he may only know that in the very next footsteps Christ has gone before him.

The Lord keep us from resting upon a religious reputation. Of all the terrible things that can befall a saint of God, one of the worst is trusting in a religious reputation, especially for one engaged in ministry. How often have we seen a person laboring devotedly, diligently, blessed in his labors, gathering souls in truth to Christ, but gathering a circle round himself. Becoming satisfied with the circle he has made, resting in the fruits produced, and not in Him who is alone the power of life, his usefulness is gone, and he himself stops short of the end.

If raging billows rise in countries around us, and the preaching of the gospel is forbidden, still all is in His hand who "hath the key of David,... [who] openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth." I might desire that the gospel might be preached in a certain land, and the hindrances might seem too many and too great; but it is my comfort to know that Christ has the key, and all the divine power of God is at His disposal. None could shut out His testimony; all the powers of earth—the Pharisees, the lawyers, the chief priests, the governors, the Pilates, and the Herods could not hinder one poor sheep from hearing the voice of the Good Shepherd. So now. This is our confidence. With all the liberty with which we are blessed, I could not count upon a single year more, but for the simple promise: "I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it"; and I could go fearlessly into any country, whatever the outward circumstances, if I saw that the Lord had set before me an open door.

Of course we must wait His time to have the door opened. Paul was forbidden to speak in Asia at one time; and then we find him there for three years afterward, the Lord owning his labors, so that all of Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital, heard the Word of God. We must be content to lean in faith on the arm of Him who holds the key, and in our patience possess our souls; for there will always be circumstances to exercise our faith, and God will allow them to arise to prove to us that we cannot do without Him; for then it is that we find that we have no strength, and that God answers our weakness according to His own strength. If Christ has opened a door, no man, devil, or wicked spirit can shut it.

Whenever God works, the first point with Him is to secure manifestly His own glory in what He does. When unrenewed man works, or when renewed man works like an unrenewed man, God's glory is left out of the question.

## Wrong Ideas: Sudden Catastrophies

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There exists in the popular mind an impression that sudden catastrophes are God's righteous judgment on those who are the victims of them; or, in other words, that it would not have happened had there not been a very good reason for it, unknown perhaps to us, but well known to God. This is, as far as my observation goes, a popular mistake, and a mistake of very ancient origin, and, as I hope to show, a most mischievous one, taking its spring from the devil. I find its existence in what men say is almost the earliest book of the Bible - the book of Job 1 find it re-appearing in the day the Lord Jesus walked this earth; and you, I doubt not, have encountered it in the present age. You have read the sorrows of Job, that saint of patriarchal days. His oxen, his asses, his sheep, his camels, his servants, and his children alike, almost in a moment, were removed from him; and his body likewise became the subject of a sore disease (Job 1:2). You have heard from your childhood of Job's comforters, and perhaps have understood the drift of their arguments. They are an illustration of what I have said as to the popular idea that calamities are the consequence of the concealed or open wickedness of those upon whom they fall. One after another they accuse Job of wickedness. See what Eliphaz says (chap. 4:7, 8; 15: 4, 6; 22:5-23); Bildad (chap. 8:6-20; 18:21); Zophar (11:6-14; 20:5-19).

Job was in reality more righteous than they, for God had said of him what He never said of them, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth [He does not say, in heaven], a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" Chap. 1:8.

But Job's friends, taking advantage of his misfortunes, assumed that his trials were the result of hypocrisy and wickedness, and in calumny sat in judgment on him. Their Pharisaic "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou" (Isa. 65:6) did not, however, escape the righteous judgment of God. His wrath was kindled against them, and a sacrifice only availed them to escape being dealt with for their folly (chap. 42:7, 9). They had mistaken the ways of God. He was not at that time openly governing the earth, or avenging Himself on the wicked, or they, even more severely than Job, would have suffered. He was then, as now, allowing wickedness to pass on (save, of course, in His children), gradually ripening for the day of judgment, when each and all shall receive the fruit of their doings.

A similar mistake would seem to have been made by those who, in Luke 13:1, told Jesus "of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices." His answer detects and exposes the current of their thoughts, and applies, as ever was His custom, the moral teaching to their consciences. "I tell you,... except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Occupation with the fate of others had led them to take the eye off themselves, in the mistaken notion that the Galileans' sins had provoked their judgment; but the Lord's words recall to them the necessity of taking the beam out of their own eye before they presumed to cast the mote out of their brother's eye (Matt. 7:1

Jesus said, "Repent," or, in other words, judge yourself in the presence of God. You have perhaps measured yourself with your fellows and found yourself better than they. This may be possible and

probable; but have you measured yourself with God? Have you ever thought how these little sins that are as nothing in the eye of man are glaring and flagrant in the eye of the One who is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity (Hab. 1:13)? Comeliness before man is but corruption in the presence of God (Dan. 10:8); and even the one that was perfect and upright, so that there was none like him in all the earth, abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes, confessing himself vile when he came to measure himself with God (Job 42:5,

Can you hold fast your uprightness in the presence of the light of the glory of God? Job could not, Isaiah could not, Daniel could not, Peter could not, Paul could not (Job 40:4; 42:5, 6; Isa. 6:5; Dan. 10:8; Luke 5:8; Acts 9:4). Surely you too must take a sinner's place in the presence of the "Holy, holy, holy" God.

The reception of the glad tidings gives peace with God, present access into the favor of God, and the hope of future glory (Rom. 5:1, 2). If you simply as a convicted sinner receive the message sent you by God, the testimony of the Holy Ghost that Jesus was delivered for your offenses, and raised again for your justification, you have the witness of the word of the living God for it that all your sins are forgiven, you are accepted with God, and are an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ (Acts 13:38, 39; Rom. 8:17). Now do not turn aside and say, It is too easy; there is more than this required. God requires nothing from you but simply to believe on His Son as your own Savior - not merely to believe about Him, but on Him as the One who died for you. Will you not, then, even now believe with your heart unto righteousness, and make confession with your mouth unto salvation (Rom. 10:10)? Do not suffer Satan to persuade you that you must feel it. "He that believeth [not he that feeleth] on the Son hath everlasting life." John 3:36.

## A Wrong Prescription

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A young friend of mine told a very interesting account of the circumstances of his conversion. He had been trained from his earliest days in strict morality, but without one spark of light as to Jesus and His salvation. His religion was cold and dreary. He had nothing to meet the need of the soul. The atmosphere in which he lived was intensely worldly. To make money was the grand object of his parents and friends.

It pleased the Lord, however, to visit this precious soul with the convicting grace of His Holy Spirit. He became really anxious about his eternal interests; and, in his anxiety, he thought he would seek for some spiritual advice from a Christian friend. Accordingly, he went to this friend and opened his heart to him. He told him of his exercises, and asked him what he ought to do. "Well," said this friend, "you can do nothing. All your efforts are useless. You must just wait until God's time comes; and then, but not until then, you will get what you are seeking." My young friend inquired how long he might have to wait; but this, of course, his adviser could not tell - who could? This spiritual adviser was wholly unfit to deal with an exercised soul. He prescribed theology in place of ministering Christ. It is a mistake to ever tell a soul he must wait, for now is the accepted time and day of salvation.

Well, my poor young friend was as unhappy as ever, and he thought he would betake himself to another physician belonging to a totally different school of religion. He did so, and opened his heart to him, and asked him what he should do to be saved. "Oh!" said he, "you must knock. 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you.'" "How long am I to knock?" inquired my friend. Of course, no one can tell that. He must just continue knocking, and, in due time, it should be opened.

Here we see misplaced truth. No doubt, it is all quite right for those who want to get in to knock at the door; but is this the advice to give to an anxious inquirer after salvation? Is such a one to be told either to wait in dark uncertainty on the one hand, or to knock in hopeless effort on the other? Are there no glad tidings to declare to anxious souls? Has the Son of God died on the cross, and finished there the work of redemption, merely to leave a soul waiting or knocking? For what have I to wait or to knock? Has not Jesus finished the work? Yes; blessed be His name, all is done; and hence both these spiritual counselors were defective in their advice, and they left their friend as miserable as they found him. He assured me he continued for three years knocking, and got nothing.

At length he went to a third adviser, and he at once told him, "You are all wrong together. You have neither to wait nor to knock, but simply to believe and be saved - saved on the spot - saved forever." Blessed news! Precious tidings! How welcome to a poor, harassed soul, just emerging out of a cold, dreary, misty formalism, and perplexed by the conflicting counsel of theological advisers, to be told, on God's authority, that all is done, that sin has been put away, that salvation is as free as the air he breathes, free as the sunbeams that fall upon his path, free as the dewdrops that refresh the earth, or the perfume that emanates from the flowers. My dear young friend drank in the gladsome message. He found peace. He was set free. The waiting and the

knocking gave place to a joyous believing. He found Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He grasped by faith the precious truth, and found therein all he wanted for time and for eternity.

"Salvation in that name is found,

Cure for my grief and care;

A healing balm for every wound;

All, all I want is there."

O that all who have to do with anxious souls may learn how to deal with them! May they point them to Jesus, and not perplex them with theology.

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