

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 16

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 16, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

80 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 16

Absolute Dependence

Nothing can be more truly blessed than the position of hanging in child-like dependence upon God and being entirely content to wait for His time. True, it will involve trial; but the renewed mind learns some of its deepest lessons, and enjoys some of its sweetest experiences, while waiting on the Lord; and the more pressing the temptation to take ourselves out of His hands, the richer will be the blessing of leaving ourselves there. It is so exceedingly sweet to find ourselves wholly dependent upon one w h o finds infinite joy in blessing us. It is only those who have tasted, in any little measure, the reality of this wondrous position that can at all appreciate it. The only one who ever occupied it perfectly and uninterruptedly was the Lord Jesus Himself. He was ever dependent upon God, and utterly rejected every proposal of the enemy to be anything else. His language was, "In Thee do I put My trust"; and again, "I was cast upon Thee from the womb." Hence, when tempted by the devil to make an effort to satisfy His hunger, His reply was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." When tempted to cast Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, His reply was, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." When tempted to take the kingdoms of the world from the hand of another than God, and by doing homage to another than Him, His reply was, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

In a word, nothing could allure the perfect Man from the place of absolute dependence upon God. True, it was God's purpose to sustain His Son; it was His purpose that He should suddenly come to His temple; it was His purpose to give Him the kingdoms of this world; but this was the very reason why the Lord Jesus would simply and uninterruptedly wait on God for the accomplishment of His purpose, in His own time and in His own way. He did not set about accomplishing His own ends; He left Himself thoroughly at God's disposal. He would only eat when God gave Him bread; He would only enter the temple when sent of God; He will ascend the throne when God appoints the time-"Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." (Psalm 110)

This profound subjection of the Son to the Father is admirable beyond expression. Though entirely equal with God, He took, as man, the place of dependence, rejoicing always in the will of the Father; giving thanks even when things seemed to be against Him; doing always the things which pleased the Father; making it His grand and unvarying object to glorify the Father; and finally, when all was accomplished, when He had perfectly finished the work which the Father had given, He breathed His spirit into the Father's hand, and His flesh rested in hope of the promised glory and exaltation.

Well, therefore, may the inspired Apostle say, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in

heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2:5-11.

After All This: Passover

"So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah. And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him." 2 Chron. 35:16-20.

There was an interval of thirteen years between the passover which Josiah kept and this closing incident of his life, passed over in absolute silence in the divine record of his life and service for God; yet the two events are brought together and set in moral contrast by the words, "After all this." We may well inquire the reason. The great reforming work which he was born to accomplish (see 1 Kings 13:2), and which reached its highest point of success in the eighteenth year of his reign, seems to have been overshadowed, if not counteracted, by the disaster which closed his life, and, still worse, led to Gentile interference with the kingdom of Judah. God had nothing but unqualified approbation for the one who, while he was yet a child, began to seek after the Lord God of his father David, and who yielded himself to do all that was required of him in his position as leader of God's people. But it is evident that his attack upon the king of Egypt was far from meeting with the divine approval. His previous history had been marked by simple unhesitating obedience to the written Word of God - not only to the law of Moses, but also to ordinances of David and Solomon which were to him of equal authority as being sanctioned by God in connection with the building and consecration of the temple now in place of the tabernacle in the wilderness - with the result that the observance of the passover associated with Josiah's name was a more complete recovery for the nation than any previously recorded.

The passover which, ninety years before, Hezekiah king of Judah had been able to keep (2 Chron. 30) as the result of the gracious invitations sent out to all that remained of the larger kingdom of Israel after the Assyrian captivity, did indeed recall for such as responded, the blessing and joy of the days of "Solomon the son of David." But here the recovery was more complete still, and those who were gathered together at Jerusalem on the fourteenth day of the first month (not, as in the former case, in the second month, as graciously, in need, allowed of God for His people when they were pilgrims liable to failure and defilement - see Numbers 9:11), were made to realize for the moment the blessing of the times of Samuel the prophet when, the priestly government having broken down and been judged - the kingdom not yet introduced-they found

Jehovah when sought to be still, as ever, a Savior God (1 Sam. 12).

The work of reformation under Josiah had been steady and progressive (2 Chron. 34:3, 8), in contrast to Hezekiah's good work which was done suddenly (chap. 29:36). The king of Judah must

have been greatly strengthened in heart, and encouraged, by the discovery that God had spoken of him by name 350 years before, and had ordained him to carry out that particular work with which he was occupied (2 Kings 23:17). His soul was thereby established in the confidence that he was God's servant with his work planned out for him; and he may well have taken it as a message from God saying to him, "Let thine eyes look right on." When the book of the law was found in the temple, Josiah was more deeply affected than any man in the kingdom; for he rightly judged himself to be responsible before God for the moral condition of the nation at the time. He wept and chastened his soul, and sought the Lord afresh as at the beginning. God had respect unto the man who trembled at His word (2 Chron. 34:23; Isa. 46:2, 5). But no amount of personal piety and devotedness, even in the king, could turn away the fierce wrath of God from the guilty nation fast hastening to its doom.

The great value of the feast of the passover was that it brought the people to the city of solemnities, in the acknowledgment of the truth of their relationship to God on the basis of redemption when God was passing through the land of Egypt as judge. The blood of the lamb provided a shelter from judgment, and this should have been sufficient. The recovery of such a truth brought with it no guarantee or encouragement as to recovery of territory lost to Israel through the people's sin. The ark had been restored to its proper dwelling place from whence it had been so unaccountably removed (probably by Manasseh); the mercy seat had been re-established in Israel, but God was not going to lead them in triumph through the land as in the time of Joshua. Yet was there everything to encourage the king of Judah to go on quietly in faith and dependence upon God. No doubt Pharaoh Necho was invading territory which should have been in Israel's occupation, according to the original gift of

Jehovah (Josh. 1:4); but from the very beginning they had failed in energy of appropriation, and that which had been in unbelief and cowardice surrendered to the enemy could never be regained by pride and presumption.

Genuine faith is based upon the knowledge of God Himself and His Word, and acts on its authority; it may not travel beyond. Josiah might have thought that he was but following the example of David and Solomon; but times had changed, though God had not. Surely he had forgotten the solemn warning of Huldah the prophetess; he had departed from the path of faith and was inspired by the pride and haughtiness of spirit which precedes a fall. Even though his motives were pure and unselfish, that was not enough. True obedience is set in motion by the commandment; in the absence of that, faith must wait upon God. Had Josiah done this, he would have been preserved from destruction, and for the blessing of the people. No doubt it was a specious snare of the enemy, and he fell into it (Lam. 4:20).

It is worthy of notice that the man of God who came from Judah to Bethel (1 Kings 13)

exposed himself to the judgment of God even unto death, by an exactly similar departure from simple obedience; and, we may remark in closing, as "whatsoever things were written aforetime," are also "for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come" (1 Cor. 10:11; J.N.D. Trans.), so we should do well to consider how far we have really profited by the great recovery of truth made by the Holy Ghost to the saints, and in what spirit we are using it and maintaining a testimony for the Lord in these days of ruin and declension. The Lord Jesus looks to us to keep His Word and not deny His name, although it be in weakness. "Thou hast a little strength." But "Him

that overcometh will I make a pillar." (Rev. 3:8, 12.)

Answers to the Questions

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As soon as sin came in, God told the serpent that the woman's Seed would bruise his head, although he would bruise the heel of the coming One. See Gen. 3:15.

"Soon as the reign of sin began,

The light of mercy dawned on man,

When God announced the blessed news,

'The woman's seed thy head shall bruise.' "

The enemy is called "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan." Rev. 20:2.

When the prophet Isaiah told King Ahaz to ask for a sign from God, and he refused to do so, under the pretext of piety, Isaiah, speaking by the Spirit said: "Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Isa. 7:14. Then when Ahaz refused to ask a sign regarding an event to come in the very near future, God used the occasion to give the sign of the coming Seed of the woman. And this Son to be born was to be God Himself - "Immanuel," meaning, "God [dwelling] with us." He was the One to overcome Satan and bruise his head. He is the "stronger" One who bound the strong man, and overcame him by going down into death and rising again. Now He has taken from him his armor wherein he trusted. He came forth the victor over death and now has the keys of death. See Matt. 12:29; Luke 11:21, 22; Rev. 1:18.

Behold the Bridegroom

Matt. 25:1-13

It is a striking and solemn thought that when the cry at midnight was once made, it never was repeated. The effect of the cry was all confusion among the virgins. The wise had gone in somewhere, and they had slept as well as the foolish. They had gone in, and thus had falsified their true and primary attitude which we read of in verse 1, where we are told, they "went forth" to meet the bridegroom. But once midnight came, a cry was made; this was full of grace. They did not deserve that they should have been awakened and recalled to their first state of expectance; still, it was given. But it never was repeated; and what followed was the confusion, but midnight was past! Still, amid all the confusion, there was a consciousness in the wise virgins that they had oil in their lamps. With them all was well. And when the bridegroom came, they went in with him to the marriage. The others were not ready, and when they came the door was shut.

All this is truly solemn, and the more so when we see how the parable connects itself with the previous one: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven," etc. (v. 1) ; that is, in the state of things which we find in the parable of the wicked servant, who said in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming. Mark this; he did not deny that he would come at some time or other, but it did not suit his plans and his association with the drunken, or his assumption of power tyrannizing over his fellow servants. His heart dictated his conduct in all this. What has Christendom done but this? Centuries of worldliness and assumption of authority have characterized her; and instead of meat in due season, her effort has been to extinguish the hope of the Lord's return as an ever present thing, as but ill suited to her. She has brought in all sorts of events to be fulfilled before that. She does not say, He will not come, but puts it off as far as possible from a present, living hope.

In such a state of things, the Lord has given the warning cry. Of late years it has resounded far and wide. Opinions have varied, and speculations have been put forth as to the true character of that return. Still, the cry has gone forth - the midnight cry -for it was at midnight the cry was made; and it was after midnight the confusion which was the result of it took place.

Let us look around in Christendom at present, and see if we cannot discover this very state of things - confusion of every kind. Many of those who profess His name have waked up from the slumber which has crept over the Church for centuries - wakened by the midnight cry.

Reader, are you one of those who have heard the cry? And are you conscious of the possession of that which will admit you to the marriage? I appeal to your conscience before God. Is it so, or not? Remember this, the cry was never repeated.

EVIL SERVANT - "My lord delayeth his coming." Matt. 24:48.

SCOFFER - "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Pet. 3:4.

CHRISTIAN - "Come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

Bethel — Peniel — Beer-Sheba

There are four stages in the journey of the life of Jacob (see Gen. 25-49): his residence at home in Canaan; his sojourn in Padan-aram; his second residence in Canaan; his sojourn and death in Egypt.

Between these four stages there are three links or times of transition, which we may call Bethel, Peniel, and Beersheba.

Bethel, or the scene there, happens as he journeys from Canaan to Padan-aram.

Peniel, or the scene there, happens as he journeys back from Padan-aram to Canaan.

Beer-sheba, or the scene there, happens as he journeys from Canaan down to Egypt.

These are the eras in the life of Jacob, and the transitions from one to the other. I would now meditate on these transition scenes, or on Bethel, Peniel, and Beer-sheba.

Jacob had offended the Lord, having taken the way of nature in listening to the counsels of unbelief touching the blessing. He is therefore put under discipline, that he may learn the bitterness of his own way. His place of stones, the very night on which he left his father's house, witnessed this. It was the fruit of his transgression, but it told that God was his God still. It is the place of discipline, however, and not of sin. God can therefore own it and visit it. Had it been the tent where he and his mother had dressed the kids for Isaac's feast, God could not have owned it, for iniquity was practiced there; but Luz, or the place of discipline, the Lord can visit with His presence.

He does accordingly come, and He comes to make glory a great reality to His servant. He does not come to soften his pillow, or to change his condition, sending him back to enjoy the home of his father and the care of his mother. He leaves Jacob still to taste the bitterness of departure from God, but comes to make glory and heaven great realities to him. Onward, therefore, this chastened child of God goes, and for twenty years knows the bonds of an injurious taskmaster in Padan-aram.

In due season he is on his way back. But it is a different

Jacob we now see, as well as a different journey. He was an empty Jacob at Bethel; he is now a full Jacob at Peniel. He has become two bands. Flocks and herds, servants and wives and children, tell of his prosperity. He has become a rich man. He has a stake in the world. He has something to lose, something which may make him an object and a prey.

He hears of Esau's coming with four hundred men. He trembles. He manages as well as he can, religiously committing all to God. But still, unbelief has mastered his heart, and he is in fear of his revengeful brother.

The Lord comes to him, but He comes in a new character altogether. He had been a child under discipline at Bethel; he is an unbelieving child now, and the Lord comes not to comfort him as then, but to rebuke and restore him. "There wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. '2 This was the Lord in controversy with Jacob's unbelief touching Esau. But what is the issue of this controversy? Grace is made a great reality to Jacob now, as glory had been before. The wrestling Stranger in abounding grace allows Himself to be prevailed over by the weak and timid Jacob, and the spirit of faith revives in the soul of Jacob. Very blessed this is. He comes "boldly to the throne of grace." He says, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." And Jacob becomes Israel. The unbelieving Jacob is restored now, as the chastened Jacob had been comforted before. Grace is made a great reality to him, as glory had been to him then. At Bethel he walked at the gate of heaven; here he walks in the presence of God. Christ was giving him promises at Bethel; He is giving him embraces at Peniel. He was opening His house to him there; He is opening His heart to him here.

Such was Bethel, and such was Peniel to Jacob; such was God to him in his various needs. Heaven was shown to him in the day of his sorrow; restoring grace in its exhaustless treasures, in the day of his failure.

But Beer-sheba is still to be visited, and it has its peculiar character also. Nature has spoken very quickly in Jacob when, on hearing that Joseph was alive and governor of Egypt, and seeing the wagons

which he had sent to take to that country, he said, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." This was just nature; and though nature may speak rightly in a saint, yet its voice ought always to be challenged, for it may be wrong as well as right. In a calmer moment of his soul, this decision, this unchallenged decision of nature, becomes the occasion of uneasiness to Jacob; and it is this uneasiness, as I surely judge, that gives us Beer-sheba. For, I may ask, Why the sacrifices there? "And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac."

This is remarkable. And why all this? I ask. There had been no altar at Mamre before he had set out. Why this delay at Beer-sheba on the road? The spiritual sense has now been awakened, and the saint feels reserve where before he had felt none. This is very common with the people of God. Nature had acted at Mamre, but now that the mind of Christ awakes to take the lead, the judgment of nature is reviewed.

Many years before this, the Lord had said to Isaac, "Go not down into Egypt," and had said this to him in a day of famine in Canaan, as was the present (see chap. 26:1, 2). Faith reviving in the soul of Jacob at Beer-sheba (lying on the southernmost border as you go to Egypt), this is remembered, and Jacob pauses. Uneasiness is felt when faith thus challenges the verdict of nature. And God is sought, the God of Isaac - most fitly so, for it was the word of the God of Isaac which had awakened this conflict and uneasiness. The word of the Lord, as we have now seen, had raised a wall or dug a gulf between Isaac and Egypt. So this delay at Beer-sheba, and these sacrifices, tell the secret of Jacob's soul, that faith, and not nature, was now taking the lead of the motives that were stirring there.

Very lovely this is, and very precious with God, as the sequel of this perfect little story of other days at Beer-sheba tells us. God comes to Jacob, and comes at once upon the raising up of the altar at Beersheba. He had been with him before, as we saw, on his way from Canaan to Padan-aram, and again on his way back from Padan-aram to Canaan; and now He is with him on his way from Canaan to Egypt. At Bethel, as we also saw, He had made glory or heaven a great reality to the chastened sorrowing Jacob. At Peniel He had made grace, in its restoring virtue, a great reality to the timid and fainting Jacob; and now at Beer-sheba He makes divine sympathy a great reality to the tender, self-judging Jacob.

The communion between the Lord and His elect one here is full of the witness of this. The Lord lets him know that He was acquainted with all the workings both of nature and of the spiritual mind in him, that He had marked the path of his soul from Mature to Beer-sheba. "I am God," said the Lord in a vision of the night to him, "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt.... I will go down with thee... and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes."

What a communication was this! How thoroughly did it disclose this most comforting truth, that the Lord had read all his heart, his present fears, his earlier affections, the mind of the father and the mind of the saint in him, the desire of nature and the sensibility and suggestion of grace. "Fear not to go down into Egypt" calmed his present saintly apprehensions; "Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" gratified the earlier motions of a father's heart. How full and perfect all this was! What a reality it proved communion or the sympathy of Christ to be!

"When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path." Psalm 142:3. The groan that cannot be uttered has entered, with exactest meaning, the ear of Him who searches the heart. All this is now made a great reality to Jacob, and in the joy of this he goes onward. How could he any longer fear Egypt? How could he question any longer the desire of indulging his fatherly affections? All was answered and satisfied, and Jacob resumed his journey and accomplished it. "And Jacob rose up from Beer-Sheba.... And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him."

Rich and wondrous instructions! Glory is made a reality to Jacob at Bethel; grace is made a reality to him at Peniel; and divine sympathy is made a reality to him at Beersheba.

I might add "Shechem" to these cases. Correction is made a great reality to Jacob's conscience there. The Lord told him to go from it to Bethel, for his way there was evil; and he sets himself on the journey, not only at once, but under a purifying of his whole house, showing how his spirit had received correction (see chap. 35:1, 2).

The Broken Sabbath

John 5

Some solemn thoughts arise in reading this chapter, though the questions and answers it awakes bring out blessed subjects for the soul's meditation; for since sin entered into the world, its sorrowful effects have ever been the occasion for the manifestation of divine grace, and the discovery that the blessed God is above all the power of evil and the evil one.

Without at all intending to dwell on the detail of the chapter before us, I would notice two things which stand out with prominence; namely, the miracle wrought, and the sabbath apparently broken - two things that a pious Jew would find it difficult to reconcile. The smallest reflection would assure him, that the power and goodness displayed in the miracle was none other than that of God, the Jehovah-Rophi of Israel, who had come down into the midst of the sorrows of His people in the Person of the despised Jesus of Nazareth. But that this work of power should be wrought on the sabbath day, and the ordinance of the Lord be seemingly broken, would be his perplexity. He knew that of nothing was the Lord more jealous than that His sabbath should be kept inviolate. It was one of the most intimate links between the Lord and His people Israel; but now this same Lord is in their midst, giving the most convincing testimony of who He was, yet according to their thoughts disregarding the sacred sabbath, and when charged with it, justifying Himself with the well-known words, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

This was quite inexplicable to a conscientious Jew, but still more intolerable to a religious fanatic, in whose eyes the keeping of the sabbath was of far greater moment than the relief of human suffering and woe. But this difficulty only brings out, as do all other difficulties which sin has occasioned, the manifold wisdom and goodness of that God whom we know as our Father.

The very meaning of sabbath is rest; and rest implies satisfaction, as we see in its first mention, in Gen. 2 God had created the heavens and the earth, had perfected all in order and beauty according to His own mind; at the close of each successive day's toil He had pronounced it very good; and when all was finished, and He could look out on all with pleasure and approval, He rested from His labor, and sanctified the day that thus expressed this satisfaction in the works of His hand. But let us for a moment reflect on the scene of our chapter. Alas! how changed, a change baffling description! Everything is in disorder; the beauty of all is tarnished and spoiled; man, the lord and head of the first creation, himself a total wreck, lying a helpless cripple at the poolside. What a sight to meet the eye of the Son of God! Could He rest in such a scene, and amidst such surroundings? Could the sorrow and misery which met His eye yield any satisfaction to Him? How far from it! Too keenly did He feel human woe, too deeply in His bosom were the interests and well-being of poor man to allow Him to pass through all with unfeeling indifference; nay, the suffering of man and the tender sensibilities of His nature made it utterly impossible for Him to keep any sabbath here. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," tell us this.

Ever since sin entered the world the God of all grace has labored, and will continue His labor until sin and all its bitter fruits are forever banished out of His realm; then will He keep His long and unbroken sabbath of eternity-"He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing"-but this could not be in the day of our chapter. Love cannot but be active so long as there is a need or sorrow to call it forth; and so it was as Jesus passed through those dismal porches of Bethesda. No Jewish ritual or Jewish hatred could check the activity of His love; He moved with a dignity above it all. He had come to do His Father's will, to reveal the Father's love; and He finds in the misery before Him a suited occasion for its display. Nothing can exceed its beauty. He singles out the most pitiable case - one who was "without strength" and had "no man" to help him. How like a Savior to select this case out of all others to display His power and goodness. "Wilt thou be made whole?" says Jesus. What a strange question to ask! We should have thought the question of willingness lay all on the other side; but so it is, however it may surpass our thoughts. Jesus is more willing to save than sinners are to be saved. He came to save; His very mission from the glory was to bring down the grace and power of God to relieve poor man from the misery under which he lay, and so here He seeks one who is willing for Him to exercise His mission upon.

Amazed that such a question should be asked him, the man replies, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool." Although this divine visitation was brought so near him, he had not enough strength to avail himself of it, nor one who was sufficiently above his state to assist him; but, blessed be God, there now stood by his side One who could not be numbered among the fallen race - Son of man, it is true, but also Son of God. In grace He had come down to annul "the works of the devil," and deliver poor man from his grasp. No sooner is there the confession of his helplessness and an implied willingness than the word is spoken, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

This is a lovely picture of what grace would do eternally after the mighty work of redemption was accomplished, a work in which not only the guilt of sin, but the whole state of man as a sinner, should be dealt with. Jesus "died for our sins according to the Scriptures"; but more, "He was made sin for us." He takes upon Himself the whole condemnation under which we lay as children of fallen Adam, and now "Grace reign [s] through righteousness unto eternal life." Not only are we thus justified from all things, but quickened out of our death in trespasses and sins, raised up in that life in which Jesus was raised, and placed in Him now in the heavenlies according to Eph. 2 Unspeakable blessing! Unspeakable grace, that has bestowed it on such as we!

So if we are left on earth for a time, as we are, it is that we should be to the praise of Him who has blessed us, just as the once impotent man was as a testimony to the power and grace of the One who had healed him. It is this testimony that evoked the hatred of the Jews, because it seemed to set aside what gave importance to themselves; and it is still true that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." May the Lord Himself give each of us grace in our varied circumstances and callings to be witnesses of His grace and power, not only by our words, but by our walk homeward, taking a lesson from the example before us of being able to justify all we do by the beautiful word, "He that made me

whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk."

Cleaving to the Lord: a Word to the Young

Acts 11

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

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

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

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

God has foreseen and provided for the whole case of the sinner. The younger son was as really a sinner when he left his father's house as when he was eating husks with the swine. He had abandoned God to do his own will. But the Lord pursues the case to the full degradation of sin - for sin degrades man. The young man comes to himself, turns back toward God, is converted; but he

has not yet met God, nor has he the best robe on him. He did not know, in his conscience, divine righteousness. When he really meets his father, not only is he in tender love - only the more shown because he had been lost - received when in his rags into his father's arms - but he is made righteously fit for the house, clothed with Christ. His father was on his neck when he was in his rags, but he was not received into the house in that state; he could not have been.

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

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

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

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

lean on it for strength. There is danger of joy, however genuine, making you forget how dependent you are every moment. Depend upon Him; cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Do not be content with being happy (may you continue so); but, with Paul, forgetting the things that are behind, press on, etc. (Phil. 3).

I have seen many Christians so full of joy that they thought there was no such thing as sin left. It is true that sin no longer remains on you, but the flesh is in you to the end. The old stock is there; and you will find that if you are not watchful, if divine life is not cherished and cultivated in your hearts by looking at Christ and feeding on Him, it will be sprouting forth into buds; if it does, they must be nipped off as they appear. No good fruit comes off the old stock.

It is the new that bears fruit to God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but think of Christ - cleave to Him. And may your soul be maintained in this truth, that Christ is your life - aye, that Christ is so your life that Christ must die (the thought of which is blasphemy) before you can perish! And as He is your life, so is He the object of that life. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2:20.

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

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

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

would an affectionate husband or wife, by throwing a doubt on their love if you had been for a moment ungracious. Hate yourself, but remember how He has loved you and will love you to the end. Mistrust not His work; mistrust not His love. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." v.18. All is of God.

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

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

Communion and Prayer

Communion with God flows from complete harmony and agreement of heart and mind with Him. Prayer, strictly speaking, is not communion, though often included in it. Prayer is the telling out of our wants to God, as those who from moment to moment depend on His sustaining bounty and grace. We should "continue instant in prayer." But communion is something more. It implies mutual communication between the Father and the child, brought near one to the other through that perfect work of Christ which has put away all our sins. Upon the realization of this privilege, all else will hang. It is the mainspring of living Christianity. Weak in this respect, the whole man is weak; and failure is the natural consequence. Strong here, we cannot fail in external behavior.

Confidence

The confidence of faith is to be manifested in the Christian life as a whole. Christians are often brought to a stand, through measuring their own strength with temptation, instead of exclusive reference to God. They go on well up to a certain point. One talks of his family, another of the future; in the various concerns of life our reasonings mean but this: "I have not the faith that counts on God." Faith has reference entirely and exclusively to God. Duty often leads into difficulty; but I have the consolation of saying, "God is there, and victory certain." Otherwise, in my apprehension, there is something stronger than God. This demands a perfect practical submission of the will.

Confusion and Disorder: Light and Order Amid ...

The Lord found a state of sad and humbling and various confusion in the land that He walked through day by day. But it only gave occasion to His path to shine the brighter, for it was light and only light undimmed by the darkness, and unbroken by the confusion that was all around.

The state of politics and of religion in that day exhibited this confusion. The authority of the Roman was there where Jehovah should have been supreme; Caesar's image was circulating in Immanuel's land. And He had to do with Herodians, Sadducees, and Pharisees; with His own kinsfolk according to the flesh in their ignorance; with doctors and scribes in their pride and pretensions; with the multitudes in their self-seeking and fickleness; and with the low condition of His own disciples.

He had to walk through such regions as Galilee, Judea, and Samaria-diverse, I mean, not in place of situation, but in character. For Samaria was the defiled, Galilee the rational, Judea the religious. This we see in John 4 and 5.

Galilee would receive Him because they had seen the miracles which He had wrought, but without signs and wonders they would not believe. Like Christendom and her walk every day, Galilee gave Him historical faith and acceptance. They believed on competent testimony; but there was no exercise of soul, nor awakening of conscience.

Judea or Jerusalem was occupied with its temple and its sabbath. Religion, or the observance of ordinances, the maintenance of what honored themselves in their own place as the house or center of the nation's worship, was chief with them, and prevailed to blind them to the doings of the Son of God. (A great multitude of impotent folk were lingering over Bethesda, though the Son of God was going about healing all manner of diseases, doing the work of Bethesda in a far better way than Bethesda.)

Samaria was unclean. It had no character to maintain, no religious honor to vindicate and uphold. But there the conscience was stirred. No miracle had been witnessed there, but no miracle was sought for. Jesus was received there because His words had reached their souls.

This was Galilee, and this was Judea, and this was Samaria: Galilee, the rational; Judea, the religious; and Samaria, the defiled. But all such various confusion only glorified the path of Him who knew how to answer every man. Herodians and Sadducees and Pharisees, His kinsfolk and His disciples, the doctors, the scribes, and the multitudes, Galilee, Judea, and Samaria, all in their way and season, got their answer from Him. He would not resist, but yet He would escape the snare. His voice should not be heard in the streets, and yet He would leave them unable to answer Him a word. He did not cure the confusion, but He passed through it, glorifying God the more by reason of it.

And it is our comfort to see this. It tells us that the scenes in which we find ourselves involved day by day are nothing new, and need not be a surprise to us. They may exercise us, and we may fail

under them, and to our humbling; but they need neither amaze nor dishearten us. We need not hope to cure it; but, like the Lord, we have to pass through it. Judgment will do its work in its season, and confusion shall cease. But the time of judgment is not yet fully come. Jesus was ever judging the sinner's enemy, but never His own. He contended for us against Satan, but never for His own rights against either the Roman or the Jew. Such was the combination of weakness and strength in Him - ever passing by wrongs done to Him, but judging all the power of the sinner's enemy.

And order shall succeed judgment, as judgment succeeds long suffering. In its time, this shall surely be, now confusion surely is. His hand will form and mold a scene of order in the days of the coming kingdom. And of this order He has already, by His Spirit, again and again, in the progress of His grace and wisdom, given pledges and samples. And as we look at this for a little, we shall have to say, How beautifully things take their proper place when the Spirit of God comes to regulate them! And this is done, as I may say, noiselessly - as creation of old assumed all its order under the same Spirit.

We see a sample of this in Gen. 18 The Lord had taken counsel with Himself, that He would reveal a matter to Abraham. Upon that, the two angels who had attended Him to Mature, pass on, while Abraham, on the other hand, draws near. How simple, and yet how beautiful that was! The scene, as without noise or effort, takes its due form. The objects which fill it fall into their right places the angels leaving the place in the possession of those who had a secret between them, while they themselves, left alone, draw nearer to each other.

So Abraham again in Gen. 21 He had just been distinguished by divine favor. He had got Isaac, and his house was established by the Lord. The Gentile comes to seek his friendship. Abraham accords it to him heartily; but on the occasion he assumes the place of the better, while Abimelech, though a king, and Phicol, his chief captain, who accompanied his master, without grudging, took the place of the less.

This was another witness of souls finding their right relationship to each other under the hand or Spirit of God, all between them being in the order and harmony of a noiseless sphere.

When the Spirit of God works, what an end of strife, and emulation, and self-seeking there is! And what relief to the heart such anticipation brings with it.

The interview of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba shows the same.

John and Peter, in the presence of the Lord, take their relations to each other in the same spirit in John 13. Peter in the distance beckons to John; and John, at that beckoning, being near, presses the bosom of his Lord afresh; and thus together they get out the secret of that bosom. There is no jealousy, no provoking here. One scarcely knows in which to delight the more-the beckoning of Peter to John, or the pressure of John upon the bosom of Jesus. Peter using his brother, or John using his Lord. It is an exquisite sight - lovely to behold, happy to anticipate - to think of communion after such a pattern, when no envyings or provokings will soil the interchanges of heart with heart, when "which of them shall be the greatest" will be heard no more, the confusion which passions and tempers bring forth gone forever.

And to these few instances of the beautiful, regulating power of the Spirit I must add that of our Lord and the two disciples going to Emmaus, in Luke 24. Jesus, a stranger, had joined Himself to them on the road, and helped their thoughts, and in that way relieved their hearts. The road was common property. But when they reach their home, the stranger will not intrude. He may join them on the king's highway, b u t their house is their castle. They, however, cannot allow this. They are too much His debtors to let Him pass on so soon, and they constrain Him to enter. But upon this, when faith has its desires toward Him, if not as yet its knowledge of Him, He at once takes His proper place. He becomes the host rather than the guest; the Lord of the feast dispensing its best provisions, while they, in the fullness of their hearts, awakened to know Him, thankful and happy, own His title. All is in its due order. From the beginning to the end this was so. The scene on the common highway, the scene at the gate of the dwelling, and then the scene inside the house -all is order.

And surely I may say all these are passing s ha do w s, whether in patriarchal or evangelical days, of happy days to come, when, again, in a noiseless sphere, harmonies, not unisons, shall strike and move the joys of thousands of hearts together. For at the end, as at the beginning, in the scene of redemption at last, as in that of creation at first, all shall be in order, both in heaven and on earth, under the power of the Word and Spirit of God. On earth, "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." The wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, the leopard and the kid lie down together. The nations shall delight to own the glories of Zion and minister to her, as best they may, Geba and Sheba, Nebaioth and Kedar. And in the heavens all shall be compacted and joined together, as in the mystery of one body; principalities and powers, and dominions and thrones, may be diverse, but still consistent and harmonious dignities.

Thus, in the places of the coming kingdom, whether earthly or heavenly, things will be in beauty and order - moral as well as natural order. The two sticks shall be one. Judah and Israel shall dwell together under the same vine and the same fig tree; and the nations will take the second place, the place of "the less," and take it joyfully.

"There all the millions of His saints

Shall in one song unite;

And each the bliss of all shall view

With infinite delight!"

The Queen of Sheba was too happy at the sight of Solomon's glory to envy him the possession of it. And Peter on the holy mount was so satisfied in the power of that place, that he would count it his happy business to serve those who were above him.

What a relief such a prospect gives! It is high time to be wearied and ashamed of all the vanity, the envying, and the strife which we are sensible of within and around. The Syrophenician breathed the happier spirit of the coming kingdom, when she was so heartily willing to be second to Israel, thankful to receive the portion of dogs under the table where the children feasted.

"Happy is that people, that is in such a case"! Blessed to anticipate a state of order - moral, holy, gracious order, kept in the power of the presence of God-such order the Scriptures both pledge and foreshadow. And well it is for us, beloved, if we can, until this age of order come, pass on

through the confusion which is now around us, in something of the light and purity of the mind of Christ.

Constant Dependence

We are to be kept moment by moment in a state of dependence, yet reckoning on the constant grace and help of God. There is not blessing, and joy, and comfort, where there is not dependence on the Lord exercised. It is not enough for victory, that in the battle we have ranged ourselves on the Lord's side. You will find the tendency of the flesh, whether in praying or preaching or anything else, is to get out of dependence on God. We may be saying true things in prayer or in testimony; but if we are not realizing our dependence on the Lord, we shall not have His strength in the battle; and the Lord must make us learn our dependence on Him, through weakness and failure and defeat, because we have refused to learn it in the joy and confidence of communion with Himself.

Disasters - Italy - Haiti - Cuba - Job 33:14: the Editor's Column

"God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." Job 33:14. The solemn warnings of impending doom go unheeded as men press on down the broad road. In one week during the month of October two major disasters occurred - one in Italy and the other in the West Indies. Each was of such an unusual character that neither can be passed off as of the ordinary casual happening of the day. One thoughtful man said: "A whole generation has become so accustomed to thinking of devastation and death in the terms of man-made war that it requires a conscious effort to grasp the fact that humanity still inhabits this globe by the sufferance of other powers than its own." This from an editorial in the New York Tribune as reported by Newsweek, October 21, 1963, p. 67.

We know that Satan is called the destroyer (see Rev. 9:11 - marginal reading for "Apollyon"). We read of some of his activities in the book of Job, where he brings forth the powers of the elements and of evil men against Job. God restrains providentially at the present, or the earth would be filled with destructive calamities. And when God does allow these displays of power, it is to warn men to flee from the wrath to come. But, alas! few consider these things; and they are treated as just items for a newspaper today, to be forgotten tomorrow.

Just four years ago men displayed their ingenuity by erecting the huge Vaiont Dam in Italy, which is today the second largest completed structure of its kind in the world. It stored water which backed up four miles and had a maximum depth of 873 feet. The dam was so well constructed that it did not give way even under the severe stress suddenly placed upon it when Mount Toc tumbled into the lake - 130,000,000 cubic yards of rock and dirt - and splashed the water out over the dam to a height of 300 feet. This cascading water fell on the peaceful valley below with the force of a tidal wave, sweeping away villages and hamlets as though they had never existed. Much debris was carried out to sea. It is estimated that in approximately six or seven minutes all in its path was destroyed. The swiftness and totality of destruction calls to mind the verse which says: "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them... and they shall not escape." 1 Thess. 5:3. Certain judgment is decreed by God against this world that cast His beloved Son out of it after heaping insults upon His blessed head. The wonder is that God has lingered this long in patience and forbearance. He is not willing or desirous that any should perish; His will is that all should come to repentance while there is still mercy to be had for the taking. But God would not be righteous if He did not punish men for this awful act, as well as for their other sins. He has appointed the day for judgment, and also named the judge (Acts 17:31); and when that time comes it will be too late to flee for refuge.

Many living in the Piave River Valley were sound asleep when disaster overtook them. It mattered not that they were asleep, insensible to the danger. It is thus that men live today under the shadow of impending doom - "Careless of their souls immortal, Heeding not the call of God."

The other disaster may be related thus: At the end of September, the United States weather bureau received a photograph from an orbiting Tiros satellite which showed a hurricane in the

making off the northeast coast of South America - the usual spawning ground of many hurricanes of the Western Hemisphere. From the first picture it was marked as a "bad one." The usual precautions were taken, and aircraft were sent to spot the storm and gather data concerning its center velocity and its direction and speed of movement. Man is helpless before such vicious moods of weather, except as he may be able to chart its probable path and warn those living in the danger area to take precautions. These hurricanes are named each year by the weather bureau according to the alphabet, using girl's names. This one in order of sequence was named "Flora," or the sixth of the season. Wind velocity mounted from 75 to 110 miles per hour, and in four deadly hours wreaked havoc on the tiny island of Tobago. Many were injured, 18 killed, and 17,000 left homeless; the property damage done was extensive.

Warnings were broadcast ahead of the storm to all in its path. It came on toward the impoverished nation of Haiti with its velocity increased to 140 miles per hour in its eye.

It cut a swath 75 miles wide across the Tiburon Peninsula of Haiti, demolishing whole villages, or perhaps leaving only a lone building standing. Here (as in the dam disaster in Italy) the number of those killed can never be accurately known, for many were buried under debris or carried out to sea in the floods. The estimate of the dead stood at 3,000.

Next, the Island of Cuba received the brunt of the storm, and there a most unusual thing happened; the hurricane remained on Cuba for five horror-filled days. A hurricane is expected to deal out its fury and pass on, but this one got caught between north and south wind currents and remained fairly stationary. Rainfall measured up to sixty inches in some parts of Cuba. To use the words of one report: "copper and manganese mines [were] flooded, fishing fleets smashed, sugar mills destroyed, cattle herds drowned, sugar, corn, rice, cotton, banana, and tobacco crops demolished."-Time, October 18, 1963, p. 33. It seems that the officials tried to underestimate the loss of life and listed it at 700, but thousands were missing. What terrible devastation!

Certainly, man does not possess any monopoly on instruments of death and destruction, nor can he dictate where the elements will strike when once their power is unleashed. There is a time coming when, according to the sure Word of God, it will be "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth." Rev. 8:13. And the expression, "inhabitants of the earth," indicates more than where they are; it carries the force of "earth dwellers," or those who have their hopes and aspirations here. They are like the man who scoffed at a tract, saying to the Christian who offered it, "You can have all the heaven you want, just give me EARTH." The poor man who thus spoke died suddenly shortly thereafter, so he lost the earth which he loved, and lost heaven which he despised.

Men are accustomed to using superlatives to describe the works of their hands, but a time is coming when superlatives will be needed to describe God's sore judgments on those who have rejected His Son as their only Savior. They preferred pleasure, and loved their sins. This recent flood in Italy was the worst, based on the casualty count, of any previously known dam disaster. The one in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, when a dam gave way above the town, in 1889, nearly rivaled this one; but the impossibility of locating and counting all the dead washed to sea in this disaster would make the recent flood the worst. And the recent killer hurricane sets a new record for casualties in such a storm. Well did God say to Israel:

"As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Eze. 33:11. At this present time God commands all men everywhere to repent. Well did the poet say:

"O, turn ye! O, turn ye! for why will ye die, When God, in great mercy, is coming so nigh? Now Jesus invites you: the Spirit says 'Come.' "

The particular circumstances of these great disasters point up how serious it is to ignore warnings. In the case of the Vaiont Dam, some engineers and geologists warned of just such a possibility two years ago; but people get used to living with danger of death. The mayor of the one valley hamlet had posted signs of "continued danger." In the little village of Pineda, 35 residents who lived just below the dam moved out and left their homes. They believed the danger signs and took refuge elsewhere. Like the eight survivors of the flood in the days of Noah, they took the means of escape and perished not with them that believed not. But 34 others decided to stay and risk it, and they died in the flood. To paraphrase a sentence from Scripture, "They knew not until the flood came and took them all away."

It is not that the danger was not apparent, or that nothing was done about it. Those in charge of the dam knew that a major landslide was imminent, but they miscalculated the danger. They took the precaution of lowering the water level 21 feet to make room for an avalanche to drop into the lake, but alas! it was too little. They would have had to almost empty the lake. How like peoples' efforts to avert the judgment of God against their sins by self-improvement, by a few good deeds, or by reformation of one kind or another; but all such attempts will prove valueless. Only by repentance toward God and acceptance of the Lord Jesus as a personal Savior will they escape "the damnation of hell."

In the case of "Flora," the warnings were issued in all good faith, but in Haiti and Cuba they were despised and unheeded. The Haitian Red Cross broadcast a flat denial that any danger existed. But the storm came almost immediately with terrifying force. Perhaps some people may reply, But the officials were to blame for not telling the populace. Surely they were, but are the preachers of today who sing soothing lullabies to their congregations any less culpable? No, they are more to blame, for they claim to be ministers of God while they lie and do not tell the truth.

The Cuban authorities made light of the warnings of danger, even though by that time it was well on its way. Tobago and Haiti were already evidence of the damage it could do. These recent tragedies are warnings from God, but how many have heeded them?

Only shortly before these horrors, there were floods in Pakistan, a landslide in Nepal, and a disastrous earthquake in Yugoslavia; but men go on day after day with the same careless indifference that marks this age.

When we consider the upheavals internationally, let us note that a severe pain, a doctor's visit, and then an operation, brought the prompt and unexpected removal of Prime Minister Harold Macmillan from the British government. The same week, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer (the man who helped rebuild war-stricken Germany into a powerful and prosperous nation) resigned. How suddenly great changes take place! When President Kennedy arrived in Italy late in June the government of Premier Amintore Fanfani had fallen, and the Pope was dead. Dare anyone predict

who will head the major world governments a year from today? With elections due in the United States, Germany, and Britain in another year, and only a heartbeat separating any man from removal from office at any time, who can predict? In fact, every major power could have a new ruler within a short time. We "know not what shall be on the morrow," but we know Him who does, and who keeps His own counsel. He will do according to His own will, and work out all His purposes, the major part of which is that His Son will be honored here where He was cast out and is still despised. He is going to rule with a rod of iron and subject all under His feet. At the present He sits at God's right hand until that moment when God will "make His enemies His footstool" (Psalm 110).

The Christian's hope is bright beyond description; for in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he and all the redeemed from the earth and from the tomb will instantly be changed into His glorious image and be caught away from this scene to be with Him forever. May He come soon! But may we warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

Divine Associations

Gen. 11 records two great facts; namely, the building of Babel, and the call of Abraham - or, in other words, man's effort to provide for himself, and God's provision made known to faith - man's attempt to establish himself in the earth, and God's calling a man out of it to find his portion and his home in heaven.

"And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another,... Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth." The human heart ever seeks a name, a portion, and a center in the earth. It knows nothing of aspirations after heaven, heaven's God, or heaven's glory. Left to itself, it will ever find its objects in this lower world; it will ever "build beneath the skies." It needs God's call, God's revelation, and God's power, to lift the heart of man above this present world, for man is a groveling creature - alienated from heaven, and allied to earth. In the scene now before us, there is no acknowledgment of God, no looking up to or waiting on Him; nor was it the thought of the human heart to set up a place in which God might dwell - to gather materials for the purpose of building a habitation for Him - alas! no; His name is never once mentioned. To make a name for himself was man's object on the plain of Shinar; and such has been his object ever since. Whether we contemplate man on the plain of Shinar, or on the banks of the Tiber, we find him to be the same self-seeking, self-exalting, God-excluding creature throughout. There is a melancholy consistency in all his purposes, his principles, and his ways; he ever seeks to shut out God and exalt himself.

Now, in what light soever we view this Babel confederacy, it is most instructive to see in it the early display of man's genius and energies, regardless of God. In looking down along the stream of human history, we may easily perceive a marked tendency to confederacy, or association. Man seeks, for the most part, to compass his great ends in this way. Whether it be in the way of philanthropy, religion, or politics, nothing can be done without an association of men regularly organized. It is well to see this principle - well to mark its incipient working - to see the earliest model which the page of inspiration affords of a human association, as exhibited on the plain of Shinar, in its design, its object, its attempt, its overthrow. If we look around us at the present moment, we see the whole scene filled with associations. To name them were useless, for they are as numerous as are the purposes of the human heart. But it is important to mark that the first of all these was the Shinar association, for the establishment of the human interests, and the exaltation of the human name - objects which may well be set in competition with any that engage the attention of this enlightened and civilized age.

But in the judgment of faith there is one grand defect; namely, God is shut out. And to attempt to exalt man without God, is to exalt him to a dizzy height, only that he may be dashed down into hopeless confusion and irretrievable ruin. The Christian should only know one association, and

that is, the Church of the living God, incorporated by the Holy Ghost who came down from heaven as the witness of Christ's glorification, to baptize believers into one body, and constitute them God's dwelling place. Babylon is the very opposite of this in every particular; and she becomes at the close, as we know, "the habitation of devils" (see Rev. 18).

"And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let Us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city." Such was the end of man's first association. Thus it will be to the end. "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces;... gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces; gird your-

selves, and ye shall be broken in pieces." Isa. 8:9. How different it is when God associates men! In the second chapter of Acts, we see the blessed One coming down in infinite grace to meet man in the very circumstances in which his sin had set him. The Holy Ghost enables the messengers of grace to deliver their message in the very tongue wherein each was born. Precious proof this, that God desired to reach man's heart with the sweet story of grace! The law from the mount was not thus promulgated.

When God was telling what man ought to be, He spoke in one tongue; but when He was telling him what He Himself was, He spoke in many. Grace broke through the barrier which man's pride and folly had caused to be erected, in order that every man might hear and understand the glad tidings of salvation - "the wonderful works of God." And to what end was this? Just to associate men on God's ground, round God's center, and on God's principles. It was to give them in reality one language, one center, one object, one hope, one life. It was to gather them in such a way as that they never should be scattered or confounded again; to give them a name and a place which should endure forever; to build for them a tower and a city which should not only have their top reaching to heaven, but their imperishable foundation laid in heaven by the omnipotent hand of God Himself. It was to gather them around the glorious Person of a risen and highly exalted Christ, and unite them all in one grand design of magnifying and adoring Him.

If my reader will turn to the 7th chapter of Revelation, he will find, "All nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," standing round the Lamb, and with one voice ascribing all praise to Him. Thus the three scriptures may be read in most interesting and profitable connection. In Gen. 11, God gives various tongues as an expression of His judgment; in Acts 2, He gives various tongues as an expression of grace; and in Rev. 7, we see all those tongues gathered round the Lamb in glory. How much better it is, therefore, to find our place in God's association than in man's! The former ends in glory, the latter in confusion; the former is carried forward by the energy of the Holy Ghost, the latter by the unhallowed energy of fallen man; the former has for its object the exaltation of Christ, the latter has for its object the exaltation of man, in some way or other.

Finally, I would say, that all who sincerely desire to know the true character, object, and issue of human associations should read the opening verses of Gen. 11; and, on the other hand, all who desire to know the excellency, the beauty, the power, the enduring character of divine association, should look at that holy, living, heavenly corporation which is called in the New Testament the Church of the living God - the body of Christ-the bride of the Lamb.

May the Lord enable us to look at and apprehend all these things in the power of faith, for only in this way can they profit our souls. Points of truth however interesting, scriptural knowledge however profound and extensive, biblical criticism however accurate and valuable, may all leave the heart barren and the affections cold. We want to find Christ in the Word; and having found Him, to feed on Him by faith. This would impart freshness, unction, power, vitality, energy, and intensity, all of which we deeply stand in need of in this day of freezing formalism. What is the value of a chilling orthodoxy without a living Christ, known in all His powerful, personal attractions? No doubt, sound doctrine is immensely important - every faithful servant of Christ will feel himself imperatively called upon to "hold fast the form of sound words" -but, after all, a living Christ is the very soul and life - the joints and marrow - the sinews and arteries - the essence and substance of sound doctrine. May we, by the power of the Holy Ghost, see more beauty and preciousness in Christ, and thus be weaned from the spirit and principles of Babylon.

Divine Teaching

He "teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." Psalm 144:1. 1 Sam. 17.

There is one feature common to all those who have been trained of God for His own service - they have had to do with Him in secret before they have become prominent in the eyes of men. The contrast to this is that restlessness of the flesh which seeks to attract attention before the soul has had this needed discipline. They run without being sent, and have to learn themselves by their own painful failures. If Paul is a chosen vessel of the Lord to bear His name, his training is in the school of trial: "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." Thus God has His secret ways of training for His service. It was so even with His perfect Servant, His beloved Son: "He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

Just so it was with David. In 1 Sam. 16 we find David in perfect obscurity; nothing thought of among his brethren, or by his father, away from the family, keeping sheep; not thought worthy to be called to the sacrifice. Yet he was chosen of the Lord. And he had not been alone in the wilderness. He had been under God's teaching. He had been preparing for public service in the secret school of Him who looks not on the outward appearance, and who sees not as man sees. It must be so with us. There must be a living before the Lord. Unless our souls are exercised before Him, He will not use us as instruments in His service. We may think He will, but it will not be so. God will always have to do in secret with that soul which He intends to serve Him in public. The excellent wisdom of our God in this may be seen in the history of many of His most eminent servants. They are found calm, wise, and enduring, when all around are perplexed and in fear. All they say and do tells us that they have been prepared for the work. Men who have been living in secret before the living God can move onward unhindered through the confusion and strife of men. They have learned how to stand in the breach before terrified Israel, or to meet face to face Goliath of Gath. And their preparation for this has been their living in secret before Him who is so infinitely greater than all, even before the living God!

Thus it is here with David. In the desert he has learned the resources which faith has in God, and now he is to be the champion of God against the champion of the uncircumcised. The lion and the bear he has slain already, unseen by men; now he comes forth to triumph over Goliath, in the sight of the armies of Israel and of the Philistines.

How fearful a foe had Israel before them in Goliath! Morning and evening he defied their armies, and his defiance was unanswered; for they were dismayed and sore afraid. Saul might set the army in array; the hosts might go forth to the place of fighting and shout for the battle (vv. 19-21); but "Behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the &tithes of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words:... and all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid." vv. 23, 24. This occurred just as David reached the camp. David heard the proud defiance of Goliath (v. 23), and he saw the dismay and dishonor of Israel. Their loud shout for the battle was soon over, and all the people were in utter consternation. But David was calm and undismayed amid all. The stripling David is

the only one who feared not - he whom his brothers despised and spoke lightly of in the naughtiness of their hearts - he whom the Philistine disdained and cursed. Now there was nothing that any could see in David as a reason why he should put himself forward to meet the Philistine when none else dared to do so; nothing that men, who judged by "the outward appearance," could discern as power; but quite the contrary. The flesh would see power in "the host," in numbers, and in armor, or in the mighty Goliath; but never in the stripling just come from his "few sheep in the wilderness."

Beloved, mark this: David had had to do with the living God, and now he saw that the name of the living God was implicated. Israel looked to Israel's resources; and what were the resources of Israel compared with those of the Philistines? But here was one who had the mind of God - one who looked to the resources of the living God. It was not that there was natural courage in David more than in Saul, but there was faith in David. It is true that David had been in obscurity in the wilderness, but there he had learned communion with God. And now he came forth as one fresh from the living God, and viewed all around him according to God; and what he had learned of God in secret he brought out into the circumstances before him. And this was the secret of his strength and his victory. The circumstances were well considered, their difficulties and dangers weighed; but his faith brought God into them, and acted amid them in His wisdom and in His power. Thus it is that David here looks on all around him. He views the army of Israel as the army of the Lord of hosts. He looks at it in the light of Him from whose presence he had just come (v. 26).

And I ask whether our failures are not invariably here, that we have not been in secret with the living God? This is the essential and primary matter. Do we esteem communion with God our highest privilege? Do we value living with God even more than living before the saints and with the saints? I believe we prefer living before the saints, to living before God and with God. We may be comforted when surrounded by the saints; but our strength is in walking with the living God, knowing that we are to endure as seeing Him who is invisible. The flesh itself may seek its own, and find a response too, among the saints; but the flesh withers - it is truly grass - in the presence of God. Hence it is our security, as well as our joy, to dwell by faith in "the secret place of the Most High," and to come forth into service in strength gathered there. Then shall we be able to look at every foe as David here looks at Goliath: "For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"

But the language of faith instantly excites the flesh. So it was with Joseph when telling his brethren his dreams. So it is here with David and his brethren. This we see in Eliab's words: "I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart." The moment the flesh sees a power greater than its own (as Eliab here sees in David), all it can do is to talk of its pride. Now Eliab was the eldest brother, and he stands forth here in that prominence which the flesh always loves and seeks. He was a man distinguished for natural attractions; but however goodly his countenance or his stature, God had "refused him" (chap. 16:6, 7). The Lord's anointed was not he whom man esteemed. And how constantly we are taught this lesson in the Word, by God's rejection of the first-born and His choice of the younger; Eliab stands like Ishmael or Esau, as representative of the natural title of the flesh. In the exercise of this title, he thus scornfully rebukes David. But David was speaking according to a wisdom, moved by a power, of which Eliab knew nothing. David was speaking the language of faith. The living God, the Lord God of the armies of Israel, filled his eye; and by Him he measured the Philistines and their champion. Eliab had no such standard before

him as this; he spoke and felt as a man, and therefore the language of faith was to him "pride" and "naughtiness of heart."

And the flesh always thus mistakes faith. The flesh angrily replies to us, "It is pride," as often as we speak of confidence in the living God. That very confidence which is the deepest humility is always condemned by the flesh as pride. For there is no depth of humility so great as self-abandonment, in order to bring in the living God. David, in the whole of this action, loses sight of himself, seeing only God and the armies of God. It is the power and the privilege of faith to have self cast entirely out of sight, and God alone filling its vision. No flesh shall "glory in His presence." "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." This is what David had learned; this David is now displaying; and this it is which Eliab calls pride. Now the truth is, that the flesh is the proud thing. I trust that we know this, and that we know also, that faith is a self-emptying thing, because faith receives everything from God; yea, beloved, more even than that-faith receives God Himself, as beyond every blessing which God can give.

"David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" Had David gloried in himself? No, indeed. And was there not a cause for speaking as he did? If ever the name of the living God is brought in question, there is always a cause. The very purpose for which we are left here in the world is, that we may confess the name of Jesus before men, and set aside our own name. Oh, that the hearts of all God's saints were united in this one thing, the confession of the name of the Lord Jesus!

But let us follow David as he passes from Eliab to the presence of Saul. What conscious dignity, what entire self-possession, are now seen in David! "And David said to Saul, Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." v. 32. While the whole army of Israel trembles, one stripling stands before the king and says, "Let no man's heart fail because of him." Yes; there is in faith that self-possession which enables us, not only to feel, but also to minister comfort and confidence amid the most trying circumstances; and therefore, instead of being overcome of trial, is able, as the Apostle says, "to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." 2 Cor. 1:4. David had already gone through trial, and had already, therefore, proved the God in whom he trusted. He knew whom he had believed (2 Tim. 1:12). He had been in danger before, and had been victorious; therefore he is confident now. There had been dealings between his soul and God in the wilderness - dealings, it would seem, never brought out to public light until this moment (vv. 34-37). O beloved! where is it that the saints learn really to get the victory? I believe, where no eye sees us save God's. The heartily denying self; the taking up the cross in secret; the knowing the way, in the retirements of our closets, to cast down imaginations, and everything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God; these are our mightiest achievements. The closet is the great battlefield of faith. Let the foe be met and conquered there, and then shall we be able to stand firm ourselves, and to comfort and build up others also, in the hour of conflict. He who had slain the lion and the bear in the desert is the only one unterrified by Goliath.

How this discloses to us the real secret of David's strength - the true strength of faith! Now we can tell what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "I am become a fool." He was obliged to speak of himself - that was his folly. His great strength in service, the reason why he was able to bear so much from the petulance of the saints, was because there had been exercise between Paul's soul

and the Lord, which no one was party to save himself and God. For the like reason David can now say to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him "

"And Saul said to David, Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him." Saul looks at David and then at Goliath; and, speaking as a man, Saul was right. But Saul knew not the secret of God which David had learned. Saul never knew what David was now going to tell. If Eliab had done such exploits, he would not have kept it secret for a day; but David had learned in another school - a school in which he had been taught not to make much of David, but of the living God. David, therefore, so far as the Scriptures inform us, had never boasted of or even mentioned his victory; but when the occasion demands it he can come forward and tell of the Lord's goodness to him. So with the Apostle: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven." For fourteen years no one, it seems, knew he had been up to the third heaven; but when an occasion comes to bring it out for His Master's glory - not for his own glory - then he declares it. A great deal more was going on between the Lord and Paul than any one else knew. So it was with David. Who knew what this stripling had done? Who knew that he had triumphed already so wondrously? Who knew that he had delivered the lamb of his flock out of the mouth of the lion, and that both lion and bear had fallen by his hand? Eliab knew not this. Saul knew not this. It might possibly have been known to keen discernment of individual faith (1 Sam. 16:18), but it had gone no further. Beloved, be assured that if you would really be strong, it must be by secret living before God. We are ready and eager to run into some service to be seen of men, but do we esteem unseen communion and discipline before God beyond all? Depend on it, if there is not the slaying of the lion and the bear in secret, there will be no killing of Goliath in public, no power or wisdom in our public service.

This should lead us to understand that little word, taking up the "cross daily." People can take up the cross, they think, on some great occasion; but doing this on great occasions is nothing like taking up the cross daily, daily denying self, daily hating and losing one's life in this world. God's eye is always on us; it is our privilege to walk always before God, and thus we have hourly opportunity of taking up the cross before Him, confessing Jesus before Him, and denying self.

Divine Teaching

"David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." v. 37. David knew that one was as easy to God as the other. When we are in communion with God, we do not put difficulty by the side of difficulty; for what is difficulty to Him? Faith measures every difficulty by the power of God, and then the mountain becomes as the plain. Too often, beloved, we think that in little things less than Omnipotence will do; and then it is that we fail. Have we not seen zealous and devoted saints fail in some trifling thing? The cause is that they have not thought of bringing God by faith into all their ways. Abraham could leave his family and his father's house and go out at the commandment of God, not knowing whither he went; but the moment he meets a difficulty in his own wisdom, and gets down into Egypt, what does he do? He constantly fails in comparatively small things. Once in a wrong position, one which we have chosen, and how weak we are! Faith knows no little things. Faith discerns our own weakness so clearly that it sees that nothing less than the power of God can enable us to overcome in anything. So faith never makes light of danger, for it knows what we

are; just as, on the other hand, faith never faints at danger, because it knows what God is. This true estimate of our weakness and peril always gives a chastened tone to the confidence of faith. Measuring ourselves by our foes, what do we appear? "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." Eph. 6:12. And what are we compared with such? what our strength compared with theirs? "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight!" Numb. 13:33. Therefore, "Put on the whole armor of God." Thus does faith discover the reality of our own weakness, while it rests secure in the might of the Lord. Thus faith knows what the flesh is, though the flesh knows not itself; and, consequently, he who is strongest in faith will least glory in self. "When I am weak, then am I strong."

Thus it is here with David. He well knew that he was no match for Goliath. None need tell David that. David was not acting in pride of heart. Far from him was any thought of his own strength when he saw the terrible giant of Gath. He felt himself to be less than either Eliab, or Saul, or Goliath thought him to be. Nevertheless he could go forth in most perfect confidence. He knew that he should be delivered. Out of weakness, he was made strong.

"And Saul said unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee." Having said this, Saul clothes David in his own armor. "He put a helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail." Saul could say, "The LORD be with thee"; but Saul knew not how to trust in the Lord as David knew. He sought to arm David as Goliath was armed; he brought forth his own carnal weapons. But they will not suit the soldier of faith. The moment David had got Saul's armor on, he could not move at all. All was constraint, all was effort. Now, beloved, there is no effort in faith. Whenever you and I are acting beyond our faith, we are conscious of effort, we are awkward. Whenever there is simple faith in the living God, we see saints go on quietly, easily, unobtrusively, and (it seems to me) victoriously. There is a happy liberty in the service which faith renders to God, which no skill or effort of the flesh can assume; and we must watch against mistaking effort for faith. There are many modes in which such effort is made to imitate the faith of others. For example, to make sacrifices because another has made them is one mode. I believe that all this is very sad. Whenever there is real strength from the Lord, persons move on easily and quietly, laying aside and relinquishing all other resources because of what they have learned in the cross.

"And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved them." David feared not to go, the Lord being with him, as Saul had said; but he could not go with these also. Faith never trusts in part to the Lord and in part to man. David had no helmet of brass, no coat of mail, when he slew the lion and the bear; then he went, the Lord alone being his strength. And, as he says, "the Lord delivered him." Just as Paul said, "No man stood with me.... Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me,... and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." In like manner had David proved the faithful arm of the Lord, but Saul's armor he had never proved.

But how often have we clothed ourselves, or allowed ourselves to be clothed, in such encumbrances, without detecting at once, as David did, their unfitness, and casting them from us! Have we not often worn them complacently; yea, gone forth to fight in them! Have we not often acted as though God's work needed help by this or that form of human power, as though what was begun in the Spirit could be made perfect by the flesh? and therefore we have had to learn our folly and unbelief in our discomfiture and loss. But it is not so with David here. He instantly detects

that the wrought and polished armor of Saul befits not the soldier of faith. The word of Saul was good but that word was belied by such arming as this. And I believe that those with whom God deals much in secret will be like David here. They will quickly, intuitively, as it were, discern and reject the advances of the flesh. They will thus distinguish between the precious and the vile. There will be an acuteness of spiritual sense (Phil. 1:9) in such, which is acquired nowhere but in direct communion with God. And hence, when out among the snares and wiles of the foe, if a film pass for a moment over the eye of their faith, and so a false object attract them, its falseness is felt even when not seen. Thus it is here with David. He stands a moment, indeed, to put on the whole armor of Saul; but just when Saul must have thought him armed for the battle, David felt himself fettered and burdened! The world's most skillful aids are faith's surest hindrances.

"And David put them off him." Thus does faith strip itself of all carnal weapons, for faith stands entirely in the power of God. Now our learning this is often the hardest part of our lesson - that which we most slowly learn, and soonest forget. But if we knew more of secret dealing with God, we should much more speedily rid ourselves of all carnal weapons. The soul which, like David, has been much exercised in secret before God knows the utter worthlessness of everything but God's own strength. And having thus learned this blessed lesson, it readily casts off those things which the flesh so esteems as aids, and feels itself set free by their loss. How far more blessed this way of learning the flesh, and denying it, than any other! But, for want of such direct living before God, we have to learn this in painful discipline, and after many failures; and it is the hardest part of our discipline to be stripped of those things which by habit and education we have all thought necessary - to stand aloof from modes of action in which, after the manner of Saul, the name of the Lord and human authority, or human wisdom, are combined; such combinations, often called judicious and useful, are most elusive and dangerous. How we see the Apostle rejoicing to count all those things esteemed by men loss for the sake of Christ! Why was not this a hard thing to him? How could he thus thoroughly renounce and put from him these things? He had learned to "rejoice in Christ Jesus"; to be "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."

Remember therefore, beloved, that he who has much to do with God in secret cannot use these carnal weapons. And surely this should show us the importance of coming forth from the presence of the living God into all our service, that we may be thus prepared to detect and to mortify all the pretensions and advances of the flesh. For it is sad indeed, through want of this, to see a saint trying to fight in the Lord's name, but clothed in the world's armor. Thus the world obtains a place in the Church. Its principles and its powers are recognized in the very place where God has written, "Love not the world"; "All that is in the world,... is not of the Father"; "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

This is often done in controversy. Argument is met by argument, instead of the simple use of the word of the Lord; Saul's helmet of brass and coat of mail, instead of the sling and the stone, and the arm of faith, are opposed to Goliath's brass and mail. How often does the Lord vindicate His own word when used in faith, carrying it with divine power to the heart! And how does He humble us by showing us how little our strong arguments avail, save it be to stir up heats and strife! The Lord make us more simple in all this!

But David goes not forth unarmed to the fight, though he casts from him the armor of Saul. He took his staff, the five smooth stones in his shepherd's scrip, and his sling; thus aimed, he drew nigh to

the Philistine (v. 40). Thus he strips himself of one sort of armor, only to array himself in another. But what

simple armor is this? If David overcomes Goliath with this, surely the victory must be the Lord's. This armor was never wrought by art and man's device; the running brook had given these stones their smoothness. But faith is always thus armed. The armor of faith, therefore, is always weak and foolish in the eyes of men. God's mightiest victories have been won by instrumentalities which man has most despised. The foolishness of preaching (a foolish thing in itself, and a foolish subject, Christ crucified) man treats with disdain; yet it is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Preaching has ever been as foolish as David's sling. But what we want is much more of such simplicity, remembering that we have the truth of God to address to men's consciences. We have weapons "mighty through God," if we had only simple faith to trust to them alone, rejecting the armor of human energy, wisdom, and authority.

"And the Philistine came on and drew near unto David." v. 41. And disdainful David and his armor, Goliath says, "Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves?" Remember this, beloved, that the flesh always thinks itself insulted because our weapons are not such as itself uses.

The flesh likes to see sword opposed to sword, helmet to helmet; the flesh loves its own. But David said, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied." Thus David put the question on its true basis. It is now simply a question between the Lord of hosts and the Philistine. David puts David quite out of the question, and brings God Himself in as the antagonist of Goliath.

Thus should it always be with us. What are we? What is the foe? It matters not what we are, or what is the power of the foe; it signifies not, however mighty the one, or weak the other; will not God vindicate His own name? David came in the name of the Lord of hosts; and will not God be jealous of His own name? Will He allow the Philistine to triumph over that? Never! Here then is the might of faith. Faith always brings in omnipotence. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" is ever the word of faith.

Now David would never have stood thus at this hour, if he had not learned God as his God in secret. Therefore he could say, "Let no man's heart fail because of him"; and therefore he could thus meet Goliath. The name of the Lord must be our strength against evil, whether within or without. Suppose the worst kind of evil, sin by a saint (and I trust that we all know that sin in a saint is far worse than sin in another), and what is our refuge? "For Thy name's sake, O LORD, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great." You have only to put God in remembrance of His own name, and He will be jealous for that name. Thus faith can always use the name of the Lord as its strength against every foe. So instead of there being pride in David's heart here, he was shrinking himself into nothing and making God everything. His most confident words are his most humble ones. And is it not the name of Jesus that we have to set against everything - against every trial, every anxiety, every enemy?

And living before God in secret will ever make us act, if I may so speak, on the aggressive. This is remarkable in David. He says (vv. 46, 48), "This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee;.. that all the earth may know that there is a

God in Israel! And David hastened, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine." David tarried not, faltered not, but instantly used his simple arms, and smote his foe to the earth (v. 49). "So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David."

It was not then that David merely waited to be attacked, but he hastened and ran to meet the Philistine. The confession of the name of the Lord proceeds most powerfully from us when we have learned in secret the value of that name. Then grace and wisdom are often given, even to act aggressively against evil. But surely we have learned how much grace, how much of Christ, it really requires to stand in testimony against evil! How we fail in this for lack of more cultivated communion with God! Mark how calmly and deliberately, though instantly, David took the stone. There was no show of effort. It was done just as though he had been in the wilderness with no eye upon him but God's. And the Lord directed that stone, just as He had enabled him to overcome both the lion and the bear.

Thus David prevailed; and thus does faith ever prevail. I believe that at this present moment there is much opportunity for such service of faith, but power for it must be sought by secret living before God.

Editor's Column

Owing to certain circumstances, we had to forego the Editor's Column this month, but hope, the Lord willing, to resume same next month.

"Behold, the Bridegroom"

Matt. 25:1-13

It is a striking and solemn thought that when the cry at midnight was once made, it never was repeated. The effect of the cry was all confusion among the virgins. The wise had gone in somewhere, and they had slept as well as the foolish. They had gone in, and thus had falsified their true and primary attitude which we read of in verse 1, where we are told, they "went forth" to meet the bridegroom. But once midnight came, a cry was made; this was full of grace. They did not deserve that they should have been awakened and recalled to their first state of expectance; still, it was given. But it never was repeated; and what followed was the confusion, but midnight was past! Still, amid all the confusion, there was a consciousness in the wise virgins that they had oil in their lamps. With them all was well. And when the bridegroom came, they went in with him to the marriage. The others were not ready, and when they came the door was shut.

All this is truly solemn, and the more so when we see how the parable connects itself with the previous one: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven," etc. (v. 1); that is, in the state of things which we find in the parable of the wicked servant, who said in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming. Mark this; he did not deny that he would come at some time or other, but it did not suit his plans and his association with the drunken, or his assumption of power tyrannizing over his fellow servants. His heart dictated his conduct in all this. What has Christendom done but this? Centuries of worldliness and assumption of authority have characterized her; and instead of meat in due season, her effort has been to extinguish the hope of the Lord's return as an ever present thing, as but ill suited to her. She has brought in all sorts of events to be fulfilled before that. She does not say, He will not come, but puts it off as far as possible from a present, living hope.

In such a state of things, the Lord has given the warning cry. Of late years it has resounded far and wide. Opinions have varied, and speculations have been put forth as to the true character of that return. Still, the cry has gone forth - the midnight cry - for it was at midnight the cry was made; and it was after midnight the confusion which was the result of it took place.

Let us look around in Christendom at present, and see if we cannot discover this very state of things - confusion of every kind. Many of those who profess His name have waked up from the slumber which has crept over the Church for centuries - wakened by the midnight cry.

Reader, are you one of those who have heard the cry? And are you conscious of the possession of that which will admit you to the marriage? I appeal to your conscience before God. Is it so, or not? Remember this, the cry was never repeated.

EVIL SERVANT - "My lord delayeth his coming." Matt. 24:48.

SCOFFER - "Where is the promise of His coming?" 2 Pet. 3:4.

CHRISTIAN - "Come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

End of This Age — Mrs Murray: the Editor's Column

Striking indications that we are now approaching the end of this age - the end of the day of God's grace in the gospel - are the recent decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States of America. Just before noon on June 17, Supreme Court Justice Tom C. Clark read the court's decision to outlaw a 10 year-old practice of reading from the Bible and/or saying the Lord's prayer in public school classrooms.

Suits had been filed with the court on these two points - the former by a Unitarian family of Abington, Pennsylvania, and the latter by an atheist woman of Baltimore, Maryland. One may wonder why the simple reading of a few verses, without comment, from the Bible, or the recitation of the so-called Lord's prayer, should be so offensive to anyone as to either cause the commotion and cost of such a suit, or the unprecedented decision of the Supreme Court. Last year the court ruled against students reciting a simple, inoffensive (almost anemic) prayer composed by school authorities. But this year's decision is much more far-reaching. Behind these things, we see the enemy of God and man - the god and prince of this world - readying the world step by step for Christendom's final plunge into the great apostasy - the giving up of God and of all that is called God, and rushing madly downhill into the worship of man and of Satan.

There will be a man, "the son of perdition," who will exalt himself "above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God [in Jerusalem], showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:3, 4. Men will also worship "the dragon" [Satan] (Rev. 13:4). And the then head of the nation of Israel (according to the prophecy of Daniel) will "honor the God of forces: and a god whom his fathers knew not shall he honor with gold," etc. Chap. 11:38. This new god will doubtless be the head of the revived Roman Empire, who will be in league with Israel as their protector against Arab incursions. But man is getting ready to cast the "living and true God" behind his back, to cast (as far as is in his power) the God who made him, out of the world He made.

The Baltimore woman who brought the one suit, Mrs. Madalyn Murray, boastfully said that she was a trouble-maker, and cared not what people thought. Another statement attributed to her is, "I would turn every church into a hospital, a sanitarium, or a school." She writes for atheist and humanist publications. Does not this speak for itself as to the tenor of her attitude in regard to God? She would like to rid herself of being reminded of God. But for all that, she cannot get rid of the fact that she will have to meet that God at the "great white throne," and hear her awful doom pronounced.

Mrs. Murray is not alone in this emboldened attitude of resistance to the very thought of God. We will quote a few sentences from the infamous and great biologist, Oscar Riddle, who defined an atheist as a

"person without a God or gods. He may or he may not deny the existence of a force that is beyond or outside natural law, but he is beset with no doubts about giving it reverence." - The Unleashing

of Evolutionary Thought, p. 158.

Again this writer says,

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

And so the fight against God, against Christ, against salvation, against life after death, against the inevitable meeting of God in judgment, goes on; and the Supreme Court bows to the strong currents which are pushing this country down the road trodden by Russia. Under specious pleas of guarding the rights of the non-religious, the old established deferences to God must fall one after another.

Just one more reference to the blatant book, *The Unleashing of Revolutionary Thought*:

"The informed atheist of our day gladly looks at the passing of God as part of the dawn of the day of Man. Otherwise he views it as dispassionately as others view the passing of the fairies and the devil. And no void is left by the relinquished God." p. 340.

If they are so assured of the passing of God from the life and thoughts of the nation, then why should they have to wage war to bring it about? They are self-convicted of the wish being parent to the thought. They want to hurry mankind on to destruction - not that they realize this to be the end result of their combined efforts. They speak of the "passing of... the devil," but we who can see through the smoke and dust realize that he is a very real person who is leading blinded and deluded people to their doom. And this is the end result of the unproved and unprovable hypothesis of evolution which is now taught in our schools as a science, which it is not.

We might well ask some questions, since men and women of atheistic design and intent must have their rights protected. On what basis can it be reasoned that Bible-believing, God-honoring people should not have the same rights? Why must our children be forced by law to go to school where they are compelled to listen to the fallacious reasoning of atheistically inclined teachers, or read such textbooks?

We who are Christians should be aware of the terrible character of the days in which we are living - "the last days" - wherein moral conditions make them exceedingly difficult for us to pass this way. The last days are upon us! The marks depicted in 2 Tim. 3 are everywhere apparent. And you and I, child of God, cannot reverse the trend in the world; we cannot set the world right. Only the judgment of God will change it. And all about us are the evidences that the moment of judgment is approaching. Let us look up and rejoice that before the dreadful moment arrives, the Lord Jesus will call all of His own to meet Him, and usher them into the Father's house.

But what shall we say of those who have children who must go to the schools where they will be taught that which is calculated to undermine their faith? We need to be much in prayer before God, requesting Him to preserve our dear children from the baneful influence of infidelity. We need as never before to see that they are well grounded in the truth of the Word of God, including the assurance that these evil designs are but the fulfillment of God's sure Word. May God keep them fresh and true to the faith once delivered to the saints. We need to earnestly contend for it, for that word in Jude indicates that efforts will be made to take it from us - "earnestly contend" - not merely "contend." And yet it is not our part to file counter suits for our rights. We are but "strangers and

pilgrims" here, and our home is above.

Another sad commentary on the present situation is that with the overthrowing of the Bible as the Word of God (openly in some places, more surreptitiously in others) has been a moral breakdown. This favored land is going down the road once trodden by the old Roman Empire in the days of its decline. It fell from within. As this nation has had privileges above almost any other land, thus great will be the fall of it when the Lord judges in righteous judgment, according to privilege and blessing.

Rom. 1 describes the conditions of the Roman Empire as God gave the heathen over to uncleanness after they turned their backs on the traditional knowledge that they had of Him. They became worse than the brute beasts in God's retributive judgment. They did not wish to retain God in their knowledge, so "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." And this once enlightened land is going the road to the dreadful pollutions of Sodom and Gomorrah and the old Roman Empire, as they rush to cast off restraint. Men think of themselves today as iconoclasts who break to bits old established inhibitions and customs; and consequently they give free reign to their vile natures and the evil suggestions of Satan. Nor is this road being trodden alone by atheists and infidels, but in the front ranks are many so-called ministers of the gospel. Modernists, ecumenicalists, and conformists must get on with the present trends. In a meeting of the National Council of Christians and Jews to discuss the Supreme Court verdict, which was called "wholesome neutrality," was the editor of a prominent so-called Evangelical magazine. Did he never read, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord?" 2 Chron. 19:2.

But here again, we cannot turn the clock back. Moral depravity is increasing rapidly; and when God is excluded, men's lusts take over. But we need to instill in our beloved children that God is holy, and He expects holiness from His own. His holy standards have not changed because men's have. The words of Heb. 13:4 are still true: "God will judge" those who indulge in moral sin. "Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away" (Pro. 4:15), like Joseph in Gen. 39, who "FLED" from the scene of temptation. He was living in the fear of God, and consequently did not view sin lightly, but as "great wickedness" and "sin against God." So, "Be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long." Pro. 23:17.

The only bulwark against complete moral breakdown and lawlessness in the land would be a wholesome return to and respect for the Word of God. But we need not expect that. Our lot is cast in evil days, but our God is sufficient for us. Enoch of old walked with God and pleased God in the days just before

He sent the flood upon the world of the ungodly. And in those days of abounding corruption and violence Enoch reared a family. We have the same God with us; and besides, we have the revelation of God in Christ, and His Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. All is not lost because our path gets harder; but lack of awareness of the situation, and lack of being cast upon Him for help, may cost us dearly in ourselves and our children. "Christian walk prayerfully

Faith

It is the character of faith to count on God, not simply in spite of difficulty, but in spite of impossibility.

Faith is not concerned about means; it counts upon the promise of God. To the natural man, the believer may seem to lack prudence; nevertheless, from the moment it becomes a question of means which render the thing easy to man, it is no longer God acting; it is no longer His work where means are looked to.

When, with man, there is impossibility, God must come in; and it is so much the more evidenced to be the right way, since God only does that which He wills.

Faith has reference to His will and to that only; thus it consults not either about means or circumstances; in other words, it consults not with flesh and blood.

When faith is weak, external means are beforehand reckoned on in the work of God.

Let us remember that when things are feasible to man, there is no longer need of the energy of the Spirit.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Heb. 11:6.

The Flesh and the Spirit

The flesh degrades a man. Think of the Roman centurion seeing the heads of the Jewish nation turning out to mock a poor criminal dying, as it seemed to be. There was the religion and the learning of the nation thus employed. The two high priests, the elders, the scribes, even to human sight, were degrading themselves. This was the flesh fully blown - enmity really expressed against God - but to what a depth its manifestation had degraded poor man!

Contrast this with the moral elevation to which the Holy Spirit can raise the same fallen man, as seen, for example, in Stephen. There we see him calmly kneeling down, death in view, the storm of malice, injustice, and violence round him, everything to rouse the flesh, but the flesh held dead. There is no sign of revenge or any feeling that morally could lower a man; but in perfect moral greatness he rises above himself and prays for his murderers. This is the effect of the action of an ungrieved Spirit in a fallen man. Practically no trace is seen of anything but Christ, which of course is perfect moral greatness and beauty.

Now it is the same with us. These are exceptional and extreme cases; but it is true in smaller ones too. If a father, for example, loses his temper in correcting his child, he has degraded himself. His conscience knows it, and also the child, who may dread him the more, but respects him less. Could the centurion respect the chief priest after he had seen him mock his victim at the cross? Satan's power no doubt was there, and the effect of his work is always to degrade. What could be worse than to betray your friend with a kiss? But Satan was there too; he had entered into Judas. Now the blessed effect of Christ's work is to elevate the object of His love. He died in grace for our sins, and now grace gives the believer a place in Christ - the best robe of the prodigal. May the Lord give us to know more of what mercy has done, and to prove the power of an ungrieved Spirit in our daily lives.

Forgiveness on a Righteous Foundation

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

The simplest truths of the gospel become of growing value to our souls as we advance onward along the Christian pathway. Truths which are at first received authoritatively, on the evidence of Scripture, become commended to us by their own beauty. What we receive at first, as it were, by force of our own necessity, becomes in our progress that which manifests the glory of Christ. Then we are able in measure to contemplate it apart from selfishness, and to see it in the light in which God Himself sees it. I think I discern this feature in apostolic teachings; while they unfold mysteries, or develop practical truth, they also (designedly) connect all with the primary truths of the gospel, thus bringing them into constant prominence. And this marks the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

It is human to handle a particular truth as a subject, but the object of the Holy Ghost is to hold up prominently to view the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The soul becomes unsettled from its steadfastness, when the mind takes the lead in learning even the truth of God. The Spirit, who leads into all truth, connects everything in His teaching with those great primary truths, the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mind may get hold of something new, and be interested in it, as if it were more wonderful than the truth already received. I do not wonder at the Apostle saying, "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." In the gospel of the grace of God the Apostle saw a deep and most blessed truth. Later he says to Timothy, "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." It is an unhealthy symptom when the simple gospel is not relished. It shows that the mind is at work, rather than the conscience exercised before God, or the affections engaged with Christ.

There are indeed wonderful discoveries made to us in the Scriptures of the grace and purpose of God to the Church; yet when all the counsels of God are manifested, and glory enjoyed without hindrance, then the primary truths of the gospel will be seen in all their brilliance. All will center in the Person and work of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the object of adoration, admiration, and praise throughout eternity. It is with these thoughts I now turn to the great fundamental truth of the gospel - "righteousness without works" - a doctrine which has not only been controverted by Christians, and contemned by the wisdom of this world, but on which even many of the children of God have only become settled after much bitter experience of themselves.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity." On this statement the Holy Ghost Himself, by the Apostle Paul, has thus commented: "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." "The blessedness" - we almost need to have this English word translated to us, so slow of heart are we to believe His goodness when God

Himself proclaims it to us. Happiness, our being's end and aim, is proclaimed by this oracle; and yet men are deaf to it. "Blessed [happy] is he whose transgression is forgiven"! This is happiness - the alone happiness of which man as a sinner is capable - because nothing but this can bring a sinner to God, in whose presence there is fullness of joy.

There is indeed a happiness proclaimed in the first Psalm: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." But where is such a man to be found? This blessedness only attached to the Holy One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous One - a righteousness because He is what He is. But as for us, it is not anything that we can do which can make us happy, but that which God does for us. It is man's impossibility to make himself happy; it is God's possibility to make a sinner happy. And this oracle is the declaration of a sinner's happiness, by means of the work of God Himself.

It is very doubtful if the bare idea of forgiveness of transgression, apart from the solid groundwork on which it rests - the infinite atonement of Christ, "forgiveness in His name" - would ever satisfy the conscience. The groveling thought of escape is indeed the careless thought of the unbelieving mass, without one just thought either of the character of God or of the evil of sin. But if such a manner of forgiveness were possible, it would leave the recipient of it in that state of uneasiness which a man feels who finds himself in the presence of one whom he had injured, yet who had forgiven him. He would be under the conscious sense of degradation.

Such a condition would be the very opposite of being "blessed." It is the mode of the forgiveness, bringing the person forgiven to stand at ease in the presence of God, who is declared to be just, while He is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, which constitutes the blessedness.

The atonement of Christ is indeed the remedy, the only remedy, the divine remedy, for the forgiveness of transgression; but it is more - it is the great medium of the display of the moral glory of God. Angels "desire to look into" these things, and learn the glory of their God by means of His dealing with sinners. And it is a wondrous thought, that man's necessity as a sinner, and the manifestation of the divine glory, find their one and only meeting point in the cross of Christ. Yes, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, and so forgiven as that God is glorified. Oh, what riddance of anxiety to the soul, when its salvation is thus taken from off its own responsibility, and it is no longer the question, Shall I be saved? but, Shall God be glorified? Blessed peace indeed, surpassing all understanding, when God and the conscience are alike satisfied.

"Blessed is he... whose sin is covered." It is not the manner of the Holy Ghost to use redundant expressions. We often use many words where few would suffice. But "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." And man lives "by every word

that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD."

Contemplate these words: "Whose sin is covered." Who would not faint under the struggle, if it were not so? God Himself has covered sin up out of His own sight, and this is what we need. How man tries to veil his heart from his fellow man! Yet even human sagacity can often pierce through the hollow covering, and man himself is ill satisfied with it. Witness his round of religious duties to try to cover it, and his natural proneness to superstition. But it is the atonement of Christ which covers sin before God. It is God Himself who has set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in

His blood. Here, when we discover sin, we can yet meet God, not in anger, but in mercy; for the sin which we have discovered is covered up before Him.

"Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity." How needed is this clause for the peace of an awakened soul! There is the consciousness of iniquity; and the announcement is that, although the Lord knows iniquity to be there, He does not impute it. And wherefore? Surely, because "He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." God has seen sin there, and He has judged it there. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." The cross of Christ is to us the marked expression of the love of God toward sinners. "God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The cross, further, is the declaration to us of the righteousness of God. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness."

Again, it shows the infinite hatefulnes of sin in the judgment of God. The cup could not pass away from Jesus. He bowed His head, and drank it. And God hid His face from Him, and made Him to know on the cross, in bitterest experience, what sin was-"God made Him to be sin for us."

The cross is both the way for God to come nigh to man as a sinner without destroying him by His presence - "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" - and also the way for man as a sinner to come near to God - "Ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

All these several aspects of the cross, deeply important and interesting as they are, would fail of giving settled peace to the soul, if the truth of the actual substitution of Christ for the sinner were kept out of sight. "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Here we find solid ground on which to rest our souls. The wonder of the Holy One of God being made sin on the cross is far greater than the wonder that any measure of guilt should by it be "forgiven," yes, also "covered." But there is more than this.

The idea of simple pardon is at the best negative; blessed indeed, even in that view, that iniquity, although committed, is not imputed. Speaking humanly, we have the idea of a free pardon emanating from the grace of the sovereign; we have the idea also of an amnesty; but we cannot get the idea of justification. It is the idea which God alone can present, because He alone can justify the ungodly; and this is the new and blessed idea here presented. "David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Rom. 4:6-8.

Four Offerings

In the sacrifices in the beginning of Leviticus, we have in type: Christ in His devotedness unto death, burnt offering; Christ in the perfection of His life of consecration to God, meat offering; Christ the basis of the communion of the people with God who feeds, as it were, at the same table with them, peace offering; and finally, Christ made sin for those who stood in need of it, and bearing their sins in His own body on the tree, sin offering.

The Friendship of the World

"The friendship of the world is enmity with God... whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Jas. 4:4.

Powerful testimony! which judges the walk and searches the heart. The world's true character has now been manifested, because it has rejected and crucified the Son of God.

Man has already been tried, without law and under law; but after he had shown himself to be wholly evil without law, and had broken the law when he had received it, then God Himself came in grace. Christ became man in order to bring the love of God home to the heart of man, having taken his nature. It was the final test of man's heart. He came not to impute sin to man, but to reconcile the world to Himself. But the world would not receive Him, and it has shown that it is under the power of Satan and of darkness. It has seen and hated both Him and His Father.

The world is ever the same world. Satan is its prince, and all that is in it - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life - is not of the Father, but of the world.

The heart of man, the flesh, has since the fall been always enmity against God. It is often thought and said, that since the death of Christ, Satan is no longer the prince of this world; but it was at the cross that he manifested himself as its prince, leading on all men, whether Jews or Gentiles, to crucify the Savior; and although men now bear the name of Christ, the opposition of the world to His authority remains the same under that prince.

Only observe and see if the name of Christ is not dishonored. Man may indeed be taught to honor it; but it is none the less true that where he finds his enjoyment, where his will is free, he shuts out Christ, lest He should come in and spoil his pleasures. If left alone he does not think of Him; he does not like to be spoken to of the Savior; he sees no beauty in Him that he should desire Him. Man likes to do his own will, and he does not want the Lord to come and oppose it; he prefers vanity and pleasures.

We have the true history of the world and its practical principles in Cain. He had slain his brother, and was cast out of the presence of God, despairing of grace, and refusing to humble himself. By the judgment of God he was made a vagabond on the earth, but such a condition did not suit him. He settled down where God had made him a vagabond, and he called the city after the name of his son, to perpetuate the greatness of his family. That his city should be deprived of all the delights of life would be unbearable; therefore he multiplied riches for his son. Then another member of the family invented instruments of music; another was the instructor of artificers in brass and iron.

The world being rejected by God, sought to make its position pleasant without God- to content itself at a distance from God. By the coming of Christ, the state of man's heart was manifested, not only as seeking the pleasures of the flesh but as being enmity against God.

Now, it is evident that the friendship of this world is enmity with God. As far as in them lay, they cast God out of the world, and drove Him away. Man desires to be great in this world; we know that the world has crucified the Son of God, that it saw no beauty in the One in whom God finds all His delight.

Genesis

The first book of the Bible is the remarkable preface, as the Apocalypse is the equally striking conclusion, of the revelations of God. Its office is to present the germ, in one form or another, of nearly all the ways of God and man, which we find separately developed in the succeeding books of Scripture; just as the Apocalypse is the natural close, presenting the ripened fruits even for eternity of all that had been sown from the first, the ultimate results of every intervening interference of God and of His enemy.

Thus, Genesis sets forth the creation, of which man is chief (chap. 1); and adding (as we ought) the first three verses of chapter 2, the work and the rest of God, the principles of moral relationship with God and His creatures (2); the temptation of Satan, with the fall, and his judgment by the Seed of the woman; and as in this chapter (3); sin against God, so in the next, against man - his brother (especially this against Christ in type), sacrifice and worship, the world and the household of faith (4); the heavenly and the earthly testimonies to the coming of Christ (5); the apostasy of man (6); God's warning by His Spirit, and judgment in the deluge, with the salvation of a spared remnant in the ark, and mercy to the creature (7); reconciliation in view of the earth and not of man only (8); God's covenant with creation, and institution of government (9).

The history of the present world is then given in its early rise and progress (10, 11); the call and promises of God, and the history of the called (12); the heavenly and the earthly callings (13); the defeat of the confederate kings of the Gentiles, and the Melchizedec priesthood (14); the Jewish portion unfolded and confirmed, with the disclosure of long oppression previously from those specially judged, as others also (15); the typical introduction of the law or Hagar covenant (16); the intervention of God's grace, sealed by circumcision, and to be displayed in the heir of promise (17); whose further announcement is linked with the divine judgment about to fall once more on the yet more guilty world, but with intercession not in vain for the earthly people mixed up with the objects of vengeance, as the due place of those who, outside the evil, enjoy communion on high with God (18); salvation so as by fire out of the tribulation and judgment which swallow up the ungodly (19); failure of the faithful in maintaining their real relationship before the world (20); the son of promise is born, and the child of the flesh according to the law, is cast out, followed by the world's submission instead of reproof (21).

Then follows the well known shadow of Christ's death, as the provision of the Father's love, and the oath of God after His resurrection (22); the covenant form of the blessing disappears (23); and the calling of the bride for the risen bridegroom, the new thing, ensues (24). Finally is seen the sovereign call of him, afterward named Israel, who is identified with the sorrows, exile, wandering, but ultimate blessing of that people (25-50), with the wonderful episode of his son Joseph, who is first rejected by his brethren after the flesh, suffers more still at the hands of the Gentiles, is next exalted (as yet unknown to his natural kindred) to the right hand of the throne; and last is owned in glory by the very brethren who had rejected him, but who now owe all to his wisdom and majesty and love.

God's Holy Word: God's Perfection Throughout

Passages of the Old Testament cited, as they are in all parts of the New, with many and many a glance or tacit unexpressed reference, link all the parts of the volume together, and give it a character of unity and completeness. The contents themselves of the volume do the same. They also give unity and completeness to it; for they are a series of events which stretch from the beginning to the end, from the creation to the kingdom. And prophecies in the Old Testament of events in the New are as quotations in the New of passages in the Old. And thus, in the mouth of several witnesses of the highest dignity, we have the oneness and the consistency of the divine volume from first to last fully set forth and established.

This would tell us that it is all the breathing of one and the same Spirit. Scripture itself announces the same. And again, the contents themselves speak also in this case. Their self-evidencing light and power, the moral glories in which they so brightly, so abundantly that God is their source. And thus the divine original of the Book, as well as its unity and consistency, is established. And we hold to these truths in the face of all the insult which is put upon them by unreasonable and wicked men; oppositions of criticism, falsely so called, only spend themselves in vain like angry waves upon the seashore. God Himself has set the bounds; and these things only return upon themselves, foaming out their shame.

In the progress of the New Testament scriptures, the Lord and the Holy Ghost, in their several ways and seasons, use the scriptures of the Old. This is a sealing of them, if they needed that. But it is so. It is God putting His seal on them after they come forth, as it was He who breathed them before they came forth.

As to the Lord, we shall find that He uses Old Testament scriptures in several different ways.

1. He observes them obediently, ordering His life, forming His character, as I may

He uses them as His weapons of war, or shield of defense, when assailed by the tempter or by the world.

He treats them as authority when teaching or reasoning.

He avows and avers their divine original, and their indestructible character, and that too in every jot and tittle of them.

He fulfills them, not withdrawing Himself from His place of service and of suffering, till He could survey the whole of them (as far as that service and suffering had respect to them) as realized, verified, and accomplished.

In such ways as these, and it may be in others, the Lord honors the Scriptures. What a sight! What a precious fact! How blessed to see Him in such relationships to the Word of God, that Word which is the ground and witness of all the confidence and liberty and peace we know before God! We read Psalm 119, there tracing a worshiper's relation to Scripture, and we find it edifying to mark the

breathings of a saint under the teachings, and drawings, and inspirings of the Holy Ghost. But it is still a more effecting thing to mark and trace the relations into which the Lord Jesus puts Himself to the same scripture.

Then, when the ministry of the Lord is over, when the Son has returned to heaven, and the Spirit comes down, He appears (as in the apostles whom He fills to write the epistles) doing the like service for us. For in all the epistles we get quotations from the writings of the Old Testament.

And there is no limit to this. These quotations are found in every part of the New Testament, and are taken from every part of the Old, from Genesis to Malachi-and that very largely. So we have in the structure of the divine volume nothing less than the closest, fullest, and most intricate interweaving of all parts of it together - the end too returning to the beginning, and the beginning anticipating the end. In a certain sense, we are in all parts of the volume when we are in any part of it, though the variety of communications in disclosing the dispensations of God, is infinite.

And surely we say, these qualities of the holy Book are in the highest sense divine, as its contents or material have in them a comprehension and display of moral glories in all unsullied excellency, which in the clearest manner speak of God, unmistakably, to heart and conscience.

But further-Scripture links itself with eternity.

If we have foretellings in the Old Testament of events in the New, so have we in both Old and New, foretellings of the eternity that is to come.

If we have quotations in the New Testament of passages in the Old, so have we in both the Old and New, references to the eternity that is past. Scripture passes beyond its borders, as I may say, and is in the scenes and glories of the coming eternity; Scripture also retires behind its borders, and is in the secrets and counsels of the eternity that is past, unsealing "the volume of the book" and disclosing the predestinations which were formed and settled in Christ ere worlds were.

Surely it is marvelous! But the Spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning, accounts to us for it - but nothing less can. And the Book, as has been said, is a greater miracle than any which it records.

And it is blessed for us to know and to prove that it prepares us for everything, for all that which surrounds us at this moment. Confusion and corruption may be infinite, but we have it all anticipated in and by the Book, to which we listen as the witness of everything to us in the name and truth of God. We need not be afraid with any amazement, since we have it. We may (if that be a holy action of the soul) "deride," and not "dread," the insolent infidelity of the day; and if we have grace, pray for those wicked men, that God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

And I would add this: that these citations out of His own writings by God Himself, first in the Person of the Son, and then in the Person of the Holy Ghost, are beautiful in this character to which I before alluded-that as He sent forth these writings as from Himself, at the beginning, being the Source of them, so after they have come forth and been embodied in human forms and accepted of men, as in all languages of the nations, and seated in the midst of the human family, He Himself comes to accredit them there. He has inspired them and sealed them - and we receive them thus introduced to us by Himself- and we ask no more.

And we may say of the Scriptures from beginning to end, one part of them cannot be touched without all being affected. To use inspired language, "whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," God has so tempered all of it together. And I may go further in the same analogy, and say, the uncomely parts have been given more abundant honor; as, for instance, in the book of Proverbs we get as rich and blessed a witness of the Christ of God in His mysterious glories, as we find anywhere.

Yes, and I will take on me

to add, if all other parts, like the members of the one body, resent trespass and wrong done

to any part, so the Spirit will say of God and Scripture, as He does of God and His saints, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." I am sure of it. God will make the quarrel of Scripture His own quarrel. "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words," says the Lord Jesus, "hath one

that judgeth him." John 12:48.

God's Ways With Israel and With Us

When the children of Israel got beyond the fear and the sword of the destroying angel, and under the conduct of the cloud had reached the neighborhood of the Red Sea, they were commanded to stand still and see the salvation of God (Exod. 14). They did so, and that salvation displayed itself in vast and wondrous forms of grace and power which till then had been hidden. They had already known redemption by blood. The first-born had been already delivered, and the judgment of God was now left behind. It had spent itself, and they were safe. But the glory in the cloud, the rod of Moses, the angel that waited in the camp, all had now to disclose some rare and wondrous virtues which as yet, up to that moment, had not been told. The angel changed his place and came between the camp of Israel and the host of Egypt, to keep the one apart from the other all the night. The rod of Moses commanded the waters of the sea to stand up as a heap. The glory looked out from the cloud and troubled the Egyptian army. Strange, mysterious powers, new and surpassing revelations of grace! Israel is safe and quiet and triumphant, and has only to go forward and sing the song of victory and deliverance, of present service in the sanctuary, and of coming glories in the kingdom.

So in the epistle to the Ephesians, the sinner has already been rescued by the blood of Jesus. Sins are forgiven; and the saints, thus beyond judgment, are summoned to listen till the high calling of the Church in Christ Jesus under the exceeding riches of the grace of God, like the salvation of God at the Red Sea, discloses itself in their hearing. They have but to listen. If they talk of responsibility, this is it - to listen, to accept, to be happy and thankful, because all this is what it is, and the God of all grace is to them what He is. And the Apostle, who teaches them these rich and marvelous secrets, only prays for them, that as they listen, they may have hearts to understand.

Guidance in Service

The question presents itself: In what manner and to what extent can we expect the direction of God in our work? We cannot expect visible and sensible interventions; but we can expect with certainty the care and direction of God by His Spirit in the heart, if we walk with Him.

"That ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" - to be led by the Spirit, if we walk in humility. (Rom. 8:14; Col. 1; Psalm 32:8, 9.)

I do not doubt that if we walk with God and look to Him, the Spirit will put into our hearts the special things that He wishes us to do. Only it is important that we keep in memory the Word of God, in order that it may be a guard against all our own imaginations; otherwise the Christian who lacks humility will do his own will, often taking it for the Holy Spirit. This is the deceitful folly of his heart.

But I repeat, he who looks with humility to the Lord, will be conducted by the Lord in the way; and the Holy Spirit who dwells in him will suggest to him the things which He wishes him to do.

Hebrews 9

Three things were done on the day of atonement (Lev. 16). Blood was put on the mercy seat, representing Christ gone into heaven, the ground on which we can preach to all the world. That was connected with Jehovah's lot. His death glorified God, whether one or a thousand are saved.

All was in utter confusion by sin. What kind of world is this? Where is righteousness? Where is love? What folly there is in infidelity! How can men solve the riddle of all the misery we see around without God? Where is the goodness of God to be seen? How can it be attempted to be explained without Christ? Indifference to sin is not love. Men try to persuade themselves God will be indifferent to sin. When I see God's judgment for sin on Christ, I get at the center of God's heart - righteousness is satisfied, and, what is more, God can rest in His love. And if you come as a sinner to God, and rest in Christ, it is a matter of the glory of God to see you there because of the blood.

"The heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices."

Satan and his angels are there, and cleansing is needed. This purging is not remission. God must have His house cleansed as well as His people made righteous (compare Col. 1).

On the people's lot, the scapegoat, the particular sins of the people were confessed. This was substitution (v. 26). And there is perpetual value in the sacrifice. He once suffered. This suffering was not the mere fact of death. The agony of His soul when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" was far deeper than the suffering of the separation of soul and body. Death was looked at as the wages of sin; God's wrath was poured out on Him against the sin. (Death to Christ was not merely going out of the body into paradise.) This never can be done again. He has gone in once into the holy place. If He went in often, He must have suffered often. "But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down." This does not mean forever and ever, but unremittably He is sitting at the right hand of God. I can never stand in the presence of God but in the sacrifice of Christ, and that is never remitted. He has put sin away; why should He suffer again? He has put it away according to the glory of God. "Once in the end of the world hath He appeared." This may appear strange, seeing nearly as much of the world's history has gone on since as before Christ's coming; but it does not mean chronologically, but the closing in of the ages.

Up to that time God had been trying men as living men in the world. That is ended - man is not alive now (I speak of man morally, as judged by God) - therefore it is said to the Colossians, "Why, as though living in the world?" Man has been tried as to life, and now the fig tree is cut down. Did it bear fruit? No! and it was cut down. The fig tree represented the Jewish nation, in whom God made trial of men under the best circumstances. "What could have been done more to My vineyard?" (Isa. 5:4). Christ came looking for fruit from the fig tree, and, finding none, He said, Cut it down; let no fruit grow on thee forever.

The "time for figs" was not yet - the fruit bearing time was not come. God, as it were, said, "They will reverence My Son." No! then there is no fruit from man forever. Man, looked at as in flesh, is

under the sentence of death. "When we were yet without strength... Christ died for the ungodly." Man is not only ungodly, but without power to get out of that state. Christ must close the history of the old man, by bearing the sin, and must bring in a new thing. Then God makes a feast and invites to the supper, when they not only refuse the Son, but they refuse the supper.

Man has been fully tried; and now, if there is to be blessing, it must not be on the ground of responsibility, but wholly of grace, by the last Adam. (Rom. 5.) If I believe this, I find out the truth about the old man little by little. Perhaps at first we only see ()Toss sins. "But what is to be done when I find I can do nothing?" you ask. Own you are undone. "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing."

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Death is like the policeman to bring us up to the judgment. Then (v. 28), we have the counterpart of this in grace. "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him," all believers, "shall He appear.. without sin." What does that mean? As to His own Person, He was without sin the first time; but now the same One comes back - what for? To deal about the sins? No! That He has done the first time; and now, apart from that entirely, He comes to receive them to Himself. For those who trust in His first coming, and look for His second, there is nothing but blessing. There is a work done in us to make us sharers in that which has been done outside us; but this is the question of the work done for us, outside of ourselves altogether. What had I to do with the cross of Christ? The hatred that killed Him, and the sins that He bore, are all that sinners had to do with it. Therefore there can never come a shade upon the love of God in the cross of Christ. It is perfect.

If We Sin Willfully

Heb. 10:26, 27

In seeking to understand the words of Holy Scripture, it is always helpful to bear in mind the general scope of the teaching of the particular book in which the words are found. And this is perhaps especially useful, and indeed necessary, in considering the epistles in the New Testament. Some special circumstances or considerations led to the penning by the inspired apostles of each of them; and if a little simple and prayerful study is given to them, it is generally not difficult to gather from the epistles themselves the particular objects the Holy Spirit of God had in view in inditing them.

No two of them treat of exactly the same subjects, or from exactly the same point of view; and a careful comparison of the epistles to the Romans and the Hebrews will at once convince us that not the latter, but the former, was intended to embody the precious instruction which is the more urgent need of one seeking "peace with God," whose conscience, awakened to a sense of guilt before God, craves to know what the provision is, which His grace has made for sinners as such; how He can be just, and the Justifier of the ungodly; and how the one who has learned himself to be hopelessly lost - "without strength," a sinner by practice, as also an enemy by nature - can find salvation, justification, from God and before God, and peace.

To one who has thus learned to see himself or herself as God sees and speaks of us, the truth of Rom. 3; 4; 5, and 8 will prove of unspeakable preciousness, showing first how the death of Christ avails for "redemption," the perfect canceling and blotting out of sins; how God can, upon the ground of that precious blood shedding, be "just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Next, that the resurrection of Christ was "for our justification"; for we see in it not only God putting His own seal upon the value, in His sight, of the work of the cross, but now He has taken our substitute out of the place where our sins had brought Him, and given Him a new place in resurrection, to be the Head of a new race, every one of whom (and it is true of every one who, taking the place of "guilty before God," trusts in the mighty work of redemption accomplished solely by Christ-every one such believer) is reckoned by God to belong to the Head of the new race; that is, the Lord Jesus, in righteousness and life. It is just the same as by our natural birth we are connected with "t h e first Adam" who fell himself, and involved every one of his posterity in condemnation and death.

The "first man Adam" was turned out for his disobedience, and became the head of a fallen and guilty race; "the last Adam" was taken in, after accomplishing an obedience "even unto death," and became the Head of a new race, every one of whom has "justification of life." He is looked at as "in Christ Jesus"; for him "there is now no condemnation." Not only is he not condemned, but there is no condemnation for him; he is "in Christ," shares with Him His new position before God as the "accepted man"; and to condemn him, would be the same as condemning Christ!

Now my dear reader, you are at this moment represented before God by one of these two heads. "In Adam" or "in Christ." There is nothing between. You are either reckoned to be in the position of one or the other - outside, through your own sin, or inside, through Christ's work which puts away sin. It is really very simple, for it is God's way of presenting it. It is no matter of feeling, which will never be two days alike, but of God's free and unchangeable grace, in which He meets every and any poor sinner who finds out his true condition as lost and undone, and simply looks away from hateful, sinful self to "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" - that great work, which is a finished work, declared so by the One who accomplished it (John 19:30). And the witness of God is given to it, in that He raised Him from the dead - that work which is as complete and perfect as it will be in eternity - back to which all the redeemed will look as that through which they were saved, and which is presented to you too today, that you may even now rest your whole soul's confidence upon it, and find "peace with God" as you simply rest in its perfect efficacy. Is it not that precious blood that cleanses from all sin? and

has it not been shed long ago? If not of perfect value, it must remain imperfect forever! You cannot finish the work. But if it is finished, and enough for God against whom the sin was, is it not enough for you? and is it not enough today?

"Well," you say, "it seems simple. If I could lay hold of that, I should be happy; and while I thus forget myself, except to judge and loathe myself as a guilty sinner before God, and think of the work of Christ on the cross, I think - I hope - I am saved; but what about tomorrow? Shall I not perhaps be just as miserable again then?"

Well, if your peace today is based upon anything whatever in yourself, your faith, or anything else, it may be gone and lost tomorrow; but if your eyes are turned to Christ today, to find Him all you need to fill your heart and purge your conscience, the question is, Will He be any different tomorrow? Will His blood have lost its precious efficacy, or He have changed because you have? If I have been wrecked and been tossing about in the water till I despaired of life, and find myself now on a solid rock, I do not torture myself to find out whether I am standing firmly; but is the rock firm on which I stand? I tremble, for I very nearly drowned; but the rock I have my feet on does not tremble, and so I fear not. And it is so as to salvation; my faith is weak and poor indeed, and my feelings even worse; but He my Savior never changes; and "He is our peace" (Eph. 2). "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee" (Isa. 26). The true way of peace is not to be examining and dwelling upon our faith, but the grace of Him who is the object of that faith.

And now for a word or two about the verses in Heb. 10 This epistle is addressed to those who had been Jews, but who had believed in Jesus as their Messiah, and had come into persecution and trouble in consequence. They were thus in danger of drawing back from their confession of Christ, instead of holding fast the beginning of their confidence "steadfast unto the end." The Apostle warns them against this in a most solemn manner, and not only exhorts them to be faithful in the position they had taken up, to hold fast the confession of their hope without wavering, but also to take up a more decided place outside that Jewish system which had been set up and owned of God, but which was now disowned, and about to be abolished (until Israel's future restoration) by the destruction of their temple and sanctuary and city. Before that time would come, and they be compelled to give up the Judaism they clung to, he exhorts them by the Holy Ghost (or rather, He by the writer) to "go forth" unto Christ "without the camp, bearing His reproach." This comes at the

end, but at the beginning he aims to impart more true and exalted thoughts of their Messiah whom they were in danger of despising and slipping away from.

In the first chapter He proves from their own ancient testimonies the deity of Messiah, His personal glory as above angels - a wonderful and difficult thing for the Jew to seize. In the second, His glorious humanity is the subject, and the various reasons of His humiliation. Then in what follows, His excellent superiority to all the types that pointed to Him is unfolded; and toward the end of chapter 9, His one sacrifice and once entering the true sanctuary is contrasted with the high priest's yearly action on the "day of atonement." Man has dying and judgment before him, but Christ was once offered, and now we look not for death and judgment, or for the next atonement day, with a renewed sacrifice, but for the reappearing of the One whose one offering has purged our conscience.

In chapter 10:18, after the witness of the Holy Ghost that sins are put away, the Apostle says, this being the case, the sacrifice neither need be nor can be repeated.

But what if, after a soul has come to "the knowledge of the truth" about this one all-availing sacrifice, he "willfully" turns his back upon it, and deliberately goes on in the "sin" the sacrifice was to put away?

We do not look for judgment, for it was borne by our substitute; and we look for Him to come again. But what does he look for who prefers the sin to the sacrifice which puts it away? There is but one sacrifice, and he turns his back on it - treads "under foot the Son of God" - certainly there remains no more sacrifice for sins - Christ will not suffer again, because he (the sinner) will not have His first coming.

Then, of course, his sin remains; and judgment must come. He is reckoned an "adversary," and must look for not another sacrifice, but "a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and heat of fire about to devour the adversaries" (J.N.D. Trans.). Such seems to be the simple but solemn import of this passage.

An Instrument of Ten Strings

Psalm 92:3

It has been well said that "We learn in suffering what we teach in song," and though only a very few can teach in song, yet it is true of all that our songs are the fruit of our sufferings. The children of Israel would never have sung with such triumph on the shores of the Red Sea but for their previous experience. The furnace of affliction, the recollection of the taskmasters' lash, tuned their voices as nothing else could. Indeed, ever since the entrance of sin into the world, nothing has been produced apart from toil and travail. The word to the woman was, "In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children"; and to the man, "In sorrow shalt thou eat... all the days of thy life." Gen. 3:16, 17. And the mystery wrapped up in that one word "sorrow" runs through all the ages and through all human experience.

It is sometimes said that the angels never sing. It may be difficult to explain why this is, but as a matter of fact we are never told that they do. We read that at creation "all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7); at the birth of Jesus they said, "Glory to God in the highest" (Luke 2:14); and in Rev. 5 it is recorded that the number of angels was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" (v. 12), etc. But only of the redeemed is it said, "They sung a new song" (v. 9). To account for this difference, two reasons may be suggested. One is, the angels are not the subjects of redemption, and the first and last songs in Scripture are both connected with redemption. The other, they have never had the varied experience that belongs to a redeemed sinner.

It is this varied experience which an instrument of ten strings suggests. To produce the finest music, more than one string is necessary; and if God is to have the best music from us, we must have more than one string to our instrument. Music is what God is seeking to get from us; and all His dealings, however painful, are only to make it more rich and full. Just as in an ordinary instrument there must be the bass and treble or there will not be perfect harmony, so God brings the darker shades into our life, as well as the sunshine, in order that the deeper tones may not be lacking - in other words, that there may be more strings to the instrument.

There is one string every Christian does possess - that is salvation. The first music God ever had from the children of Israel was when He had delivered them from their enemies (see Exod. 15). If you say, "Well, I am a Christian, but I have never sung like that," it is because you have imperfectly understood the gospel. If you are looking at your doings and what you are and how often you fail as a Christian, it is not to be wondered at if such a song has never come from your lips. The song is all about what the Lord has done. And when you see that He has delivered you from your sins and enemies, and brought you to Himself by the work of Christ, then you will for the first time really sing to God. You will have one string to your instrument.

"One string there is of sweetest tone,

Reserved for sinners saved by grace;

'Tis sacred to one class alone,
And touched by one peculiar race."

But God wants us to have others. He wants us to praise Him with an instrument of ten strings. At the end of Rom. 4 and beginning of chapter 5, we see how we are brought to God. The past is all settled; we have peace. As to the present, we stand in the highest favor with God. As to the future, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Then the Apostle says, "Not only so, but we glory in tribulations also" (Rom. 5:3). Here is a wonderful thing, to be able to glory in tribulations! To glory, or boast, in the very thing we most dislike! Well, these very tribulations produce some of the finest music from the saints of God. If you have learned to glory in tribulation, you have got another string or two to your instrument - perhaps several, because tribulations are so varied. Look at Paul and Silas in prison, their backs laid open with stripes, their feet fast in the stocks, their dungeon dark and unwholesome; but at midnight they prayed and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them. What sounds to fill such a place, and at such a time!

Do we know anything of this? Are you, my reader, passing through tribulation in some form or other? It seems a rough pathway, perhaps, but it is that you may sing, that God may (to speak figuratively) add another string, and thus get music from you such as He has never had before. Perhaps you ask, "How can I glory in tribulations? It seems impossible." One way is by seeing that they can benefit you as nothing else can. The Apostle does not say, "We glory in tribulations also," without indicating the method by which it is reached. "Knowing," he says, "that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." He knew what tribulation could do for him, and so he gloried in it; and more than that, he knew that the One who passed him through the tribulation loved him perfectly. These two things, the conviction that tribulations are only a blessing in disguise, and that it must be so because the One who permits it all loves us, will enable the weakest saint to glory in them.

Yes, it is the "knowing" what tribulation can work, and the "knowing" the love which is behind it all, that enables us to praise God. The psalmist says: "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O Most High: to show forth Thy loving-kindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night, upon an instrument of ten strings." And if God is allowing sorrow after sorrow to enter into your life, and calamities one after another to come upon you "just as if they watched and waited, scanning one another's motions, when the first descends the other follows," He is only adding the strings which are really your own experience of how He has delivered you and brought you to Himself, of how He loves you, of how He makes all things work together for your good; and thus the music may become more varied and possess greater harmony.

The history of Hezekiah presents a fine instance of this very thing. The message comes to him, "Thou shalt die, and not live"; and he turned his face to the wall and wept sore. He afterward describes his experience at this time. It seemed as though God would make an end of him. "Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter," he says. "I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward." But at last he comes to this,

"O LORD, I am oppressed; undertake for me." It is a blessed thing when we turn to the Lord in perfect helplessness and ask Him to come in. And to what did it all lead? At the end, after all the

bitter experience he describes, he is able to say, "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption." And again, "The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day:... therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the LORD." (See Isa. 38.) He can speak of stringed instruments, for the simple reason that he knows God as he never knew Him before. Was it worth the pain?

Habakkuk is another example of the same thing. He learns that though everything goes, God remains. "Although the fig tree shall not blossom,... and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength." And he closes thus: "To the chief singer on my stringed instruments." Very few of us, it may be, have this string - to have nothing, and no one but God, and find Him all-sufficient, so that we can rejoice in the darkest day. This is a very fine string to have on the instrument: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." Phil. 4:4.

When they brought the algum trees to King Solomon, we read that he used them for two very different purposes - to make "terraces [stairs]... and harps and psalteries for singers" (2 Chron. 9:10, 11). In one case the wood was trodden under foot; in the other, it formed part of a musical instrument. There is a moral order in this, as well as a lesson. The more we allow self to be trodden under foot, the more we shall be in a state to produce music for God. Nine-tenths of our difficulties and troubles arise from the fact that in some form or other we have self before us instead of God. May we be content to lie low in order that others may ascend. And if we are satisfied to be stairs, He will make us stringed instruments.

Have you ever watched a musician and seen how he tightens the strings before commencing to play? Sometimes he screws and screws until the strings seem as though they would snap. It is to get the right tone. The musician knows what he is about. And does not God, though He may be dealing with you in much the same way, and putting a great strain upon you? Yes, even though like the Apostle you may seem pressed out of measure, He knows how much we can bear. And He knows the effect the pressure will produce. The music will be all the sweeter.

The other day we watched a man making sweets. In the pot was a thermometer, and we wondered what that had to do with it. On inquiry we learned that a certain heat was necessary, and unless that was registered the man knew his work would be marred. God wants sweetness in His saints, and so He heats the furnace. Trouble and affliction always have one of two effects: they either sour or sweeten. In one case, they are gone through away from God; in the other, with God.

We have come to the close of the Church's sojourn on earth. How shall we spend the closing days of this period? Shall it be in praise? As we survey the past, with all its joys and sorrows, can we not see that God has been stringing the instruments that shall praise Him eternally? May we not begin now, and say

"Praise shall employ these tongues of ours,

Till we with all the saints above

Extol His name with nobler powers,

And see the ocean of His love;

Then while we look, and wondering gaze,
We'll fill the heavens with endless praise."

Israel's Offerings

Exod. 35-39

Look at Israel in Exod. 35 to 39, bringing their gifts to the sanctuary, and making the materials for it. Did they know what was to come forth out of it all? No. All that Moses told them was, what they were to bring, and then what they were to make, and that the result would be a sanctuary. But how each thing was to be disposed of, what place each was to fill in relation to the rest, and what the general effect of the whole was to be, they knew not. But this did not hinder their offering and working. The great result lay in Moses' hand. And accordingly, when they had made all, Moses arranged all (chap. 40). The confusion ceased - the heaps of things made by them, strewn under their eyes, were reduced to most perfect order, and not only to order, but made to disclose the most precious mysteries and secrets of divine counsel and grace. They gave in faith, and labored in faith. They knew but little. But they trusted. And the end so vindicated all their confidence, that they fell down and shouted in holy triumph. (See Lev. 9:24.)

Jeroboam and Rehoboam: God in Government

1 Kings 12; 13:2 Chron. 12

God's glory must be maintained. "Before all the people I will be glorified" was God's announcement by Moses to Aaron in the day of his brother's greatest honor and deepest distress (Lev. 10:3). His sons, Nadab and Abihu, had "offered strange fire before the LORD, which He commanded them not. And there went out a fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." A terrible end to a glorious morning was this judicial action of God on Aaron's sons. "And Aaron held his peace." He was silent. What could he say to this but acquiesce in it? It was right, it was fitting, that the God of the whole earth should resent an affront offered Him by those whom He had brought into such close official relationship to Himself. If all Israel had failed, they ought, as the tribe of Levi did on another memorable occasion, to have cared for the glory of Jehovah, and to have sedulously guarded against the introduction of unhallowed fire into the tabernacle of God. They did not; for they introduced it, and died.

If a man fails to care for God's glory, He may for a time forbear; but in the end He must act. He cannot deny Himself. He cannot acquiesce in the failure of His creature in this or any other matter. The Gentiles, when they knew God, glorified Him not as God; so He gave them up to uncleanness (Rom. 1:21-24). Belshazzar, though he knew the facts of Nebuchadnezzar's sickness, glorified not God; so the handwriting appeared to announce his approaching doom (Dan. 5:23). Jeroboam displaced Him in Israel when he set up the golden calves, so God had to show that He was God. Rehoboam with Judah forsook His law, so He made them feel the consequences of their sin.

Because of the grievous abominations and idolatry sanctioned by Solomon, Jeroboam was appointed by God to be the future king of the ten tribes. The kingdom became his, because God could not suffer sin in Israel without taking notice of it; and the kingdom would be his and his children's without change of dynasty if he walked in God's ways as David had done. The reason of his having it and the condition of his keeping it were both plainly declared on that day, outside the walls of Jerusalem, when Ahijah the Shilonite rent the new garment, and gave him ten pieces out of the twelve. And God proved Himself faithful to His word. Solomon was to be king all the days of his life, because of David's sake; but the kingdom should be taken out of the hands of his son, and the ten tribes should be given to Jeroboam.

An exile in Egypt till Solomon's death, Jeroboam was recalled after Rehoboam had ascended the throne, and quickly found himself the accepted ruler of these ten tribes. The sure result of disobedience was clearly manifested when he was made king. He knew the reason of his elevation. The beneficial effect, on the children, of the father's obedience, he had witnessed in the continuance of the kingdom unbroken in the hands of Solomon. He knew the cause of the delay between the promise of the kingdom by the mouth of Ahijah at Jerusalem, and his possession of it at Shechem. If ever there was a man who had been initiated into the cause of God's governmental dealings with His creatures, that man was Jeroboam. The relation of cause and effect in the severance of the kingdom in twain he knew perfectly; and the terms on which he could retain for

himself and family the kingdom he knew also. To retain the kingdom he must be obedient to God; to lose it, he had only to be regardless of God's glory, and take his own way. He chose the latter alternative; he set up the golden calves in open hostility to the altar at Jerusalem; so God had to intervene, and to glorify Himself.

Once seated on the throne of Israel, to keep possession of it was his object. Ahijah had years before told him how to do this, but he followed his own heart, and drew Israel into grievous and abiding sin. The calves were set up at Dan and Bethel. He also instituted a priesthood; and he built a house of high places, in imitation, doubtless, of the temple on mount Moriah. He invented a feast, too, in the eighth month instead of keeping the one God appointed for the seventh. All being ready, following the example of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, he stood to burn incense on the altar. At the dedication of the temple God manifested His presence, and showed to all that He took knowledge of what went on; the fire descended and consumed the sacrifice, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. At the institution of the feast Jeroboam devised, God likewise manifested that He witnessed what Israel was engaged in; a prophet appeared and cried against the altar but just erected for a new worship. He announced its destruction, and foretold that the object Jeroboam had at heart, to keep Israel permanently separated from Judah, his sin had effectually prevented.

A child born to the house of David, Josiah by name, should exercise authority where Jeroboam then stood, the religion and the rites that day inaugurated should pass away; and the altar devoted, as people might suppose, to the worship of Jehovah under the figure of the calves, should be defiled by the burning on it of men's bones. The priesthood Jeroboam had appointed, God disowned; and where they had offered up sacrifices, priests of the high places should be sacrificed; and a sign was given as an earnest of the fulfillment of this prediction - the altar was rent and the ashes poured out. The Lord Jehovah had been that day grievously dishonored, and He would show it; He rejected the sacrifice. No fire from above descended to consume it, but the altar on which it was laid was rent underneath it. Jeroboam had imitated Solomon, and grievously sinned against God. God rejected the imitation, and more markedly signified His displeasure. He accepted Solomon, and answered his prayer. He regarded not Jeroboam, for the prophet He sent addressed himself to the altar.

Attempting to seize God's prophet, Jeroboam had to own the power of the Lord; his arm dried up so that he could not withdraw it - outstretched in the very act of rebellion against God, it remained a spectacle to all the people. At the altar he had reared, before the calf he had made, the power of Jehovah was displayed. His arm remained stretched out, showing what he would do; but he had lost control over it - a striking illustration of man's impotence when arrayed against God. Jehovah on that occasion made all to see that He was above and distinct from the idols; and Jeroboam had to confess before all the company of Israel there assembled, that Jehovah alone could help him. "Entreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again." The prayer was immediately answered, and God was the more glorified; His power was exhibited in fixing that outstretched arm, and His power was seen in re-invigorating it.

But while Jeroboam was healed, not one particle of the judgment then pronounced was averted, nor was it delayed a single day beyond the stipulated time. It was the prophet He accepted, not

Jeroboam. The prayer of the man of God received an immediate answer, but not because God would show mercy to Jeroboam; for the king did not turn to God, nor humble himself before Him - neither did the people. God vindicated His name where it had been so flagrantly outraged; but He did no more, because they were not in a condition to have mercy shown them; yet He was ready to be merciful. That was, that is, His character. "He delighteth in mercy" is the revelation of Himself given us in Mic. 7:18. "The LORD God, merciful and gracious," etc.; such was the statement, as He would be displayed in government, made to Moses when in the cleft of the rock at mount Sinai. It needs only the opportunity to display this; and the opportunity is furnished when men are ready to receive it. The history of Rehoboam shows this.

For three years after Rehoboam's accession, Judah walked in the ways of David and Solomon. Then they failed, and forsook the law of the Lord; and Shishak king of Egypt was raised up to be their enemy. This was the first time since the exodus that the power of Egypt was felt by the children of Israel. In the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak invaded Judah. While Judah glorified God by serving Him, He prospered them; when they forsook His laws, He dealt with them; and speedily did the punishment overtake them. Strong for three years, within the two following ones Rehoboam found himself weak and defenseless, a foreign power ravaging the country, and Jerusalem itself threatened.

The defended cities proved no barrier, for the invaders were a great host. What were the people to do? The princes assembled at Jerusalem were powerless to avert the threatened calamity. The king and his counselors with all their wisdom could not divert the conqueror from his purpose. God then sent a messenger by Shemaiah, telling them of their sin, and that He would deal justly with them. "Ye have forsaken Me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak," was the message Shemaiah had to deliver. What a message was this! Who could say a word against it? It was perfectly just. God dealt with them as they had dealt with Him. He could not pass over their sin. They reaped the fruits of their own actions.

Perfectly just, yet how terrible this was! not a hint of mercy, not a glimmer of hope. Who could support such a manner of dealing with them on the part of God? Let any poor child of Adam who trusts to his own righteousness ask himself if he could stand to be dealt with by God strictly - as he has done to God, to receive from God according to what he has done, and no more. What man is there who, in his inmost soul, would not shrink if such a proposal were made to him? But how did the king, the princes, act when Shemaiah delivered his crushing message? They glorified God, and that moment mercy was vouchsafed them. "The LORD is righteous" was their reply. They humbled themselves and said no more. They deserved such treatment. They took their right place before Him. They justified God without excusing themselves. Jeroboam asked to have his arm healed. He felt the inconvenience and desired its removal, but not one word in justification of God escaped his lips. Rehoboam and his people asked for nothing. We read not of any prayer for the removal of Shishak. They justified God, and He was manifest to them. "They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and My wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak." How ready is God to respond to people when they own Him as the righteous Ruler! Ahab humbled himself, and God deferred the threatened judgment till his son's day. Jezebel did not follow her husband, so the

dogs ate her flesh in Jezreel.

What a character is that of our God! Righteous He is, yet merciful. Because "they have humbled themselves." They took their right place before Him; therefore He could say, "I will grant them some deliverance." It is God in government that we have set forth in these two histories - a warning and an encouragement to all who will take heed. Shishak plundered Jerusalem, the golden shields were taken away, the treasures of the Lord's house and of the king's house, he got possession of - he took all. A sorrowful time it must have been for Judah, but the secret of the Lord they knew. His wrath should not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Israel was already given up, having acquiesced in the sin of Jeroboam (2 Kings 14: 16). Judah deserved the same treatment; but, when they humbled themselves, God granted them some deliverance. It was not till the reign of Manasseh that the fiat went forth for their captivity in Babylon (2 Kings 21:12-16; 24:4, 5).

God's ways in grace we may well trace, and His ways in government also. God must be glorified. If His people fail in this, He must act against them; but if they humble themselves, He can show mercy, and He surely will. Rehoboam was strong for three years; then weakness supervened. The cause was shown; he humbled himself, and Judah with him, and the impending chastisement was mitigated; and he again became strong in Jerusalem. Jeroboam was a mighty man of valor-no despicable enemy in the field, as Abijam found - but of him, after the establishment of the calves, and the mission of the prophet to Bethel, we read not that he prospered. "Who hath hardened himself against Him [God], and hath prospered?" asked Job (chap. 9:4). Shall a sinner humble himself before God without experiencing mercy at His hand? Let Rehoboam, Ahab, and Manasseh reply.

Jesus Is Jehovah

"To me it is as clear as the sun at noonday that Christ was the Jehovah of the Old Testament."

John Nelson Darby

The article which begins on the opposite page is to be continued in the three succeeding monthly issues. It is also being prepared in separate pamphlet form (32 pages) and is to be available shortly, the Lord willing.

The editor and publishers of Christian Truth strongly urge Christians to meditate on the precious truths contained therein. It is a scriptural answer to the basic error on which the heresy of the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses is built. The same Arian heterodoxy is inherent in all modernistic teaching which affects the truth of the deity of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus Is Jehovah

1. Jehovah-Jesus, THE CREATOR

Early in the history of the professing Church of God, a grave and significant controversy arose as to the Person of Christ. This came to a head early in the fourth century. Emperor Constantine called a council at Nice in Bithynia in the year 325. A powerful defender of the faith came forward in the person of the great Athanasius, later bishop of Alexandria, who was used of God to turn the tide of the conference in favor of an uncompromising defense of the absolute deity of Christ. His opponent was a certain Arius, presbyter in the church at Alexandria. As the result of the latter's insistent denial of the deity of Christ, the term "Arianism" became a synonym for the blasphemy of reducing the Christ of God to the stature of a creature - "the greatest of creatures, but not equal to the Father."²

In contrast to Arius, eminent church fathers down through the ages taught that Christ was Jehovah. Among such might be named Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine.³

Down through the church's history many sects, parties, and denominations have arisen who were of Arian persuasion, as opposed to what is commonly called "orthodoxy," which word means simply, "right doctrine." Today the most militant and aggressive of all such Arian groups is the one which takes the name of "Jehovah's Witnesses." The present day organization is the offshoot of a movement started some ninety years ago by a C. T. Russell, later superseded by J. T. Rutherford, and now headed by N. H. Knorr.

The whole Jehovah's Witness credo may be said to be bifocal. The Witnesses have selected one passage of scripture in the Old Testament, and one passage in the New, to which they make frequent reference in their discussions, preachments, and propaganda. We would refer to Isa. 43:10-12 in the Old Testament, and John 1:1-13 in the New.

Before discussing the above references, we would call attention to a helpful device used in the familiar King James Bible. When translating the Hebrew word "Yahwe" or "Jehovah," they use all large and small capital letters, and render it "Lord." Thus wherever we read "LORD" we know the word in the Hebrew was "Jehovah," which means "essential existence - self-existing." The Hebrew word "Elohim" is consistently rendered "God," and means, "supreme power, as in creation." Bearing these distinctions in mind, let us read now Isa. 43:10-12.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah], and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD [Jehovah], and beside me there is no savior. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah], that I am God."

A parallel passage follows in chapter 44:

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah] the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."

Now verse 8:

"Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no God; I know not any."

Remember as we read these portions of the prophet Isaiah, there were no chapter divisions in the original document. Isaiah is here occupied with calling the attention of Israel to the folly of idolatry. If we read right on into the 45th chapter, verses 11, 12 we find:

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah], the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded."

Now to this add Isa. 37:16.

"O LORD [Jehovah] of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth."

Now it is as clear as language can make it that the One who calls Himself, "the LORD [Jehovah]," beside whom is no God, is the One who "made the earth, and created man upon it." Likewise He "stretched out the heavens," and commanded all their host.

Let us then turn to the New Testament for enlightenment as to who this "LORD [Jehovah]" is who "made the earth, and created man upon it,... and stretched out the heavens."

In John's Gospel, first chapter, verses 1-3, we find ourselves at the second focal point of Jehovah's Witnesses' effort to demote the Christ of God to the status of a creature. We quote:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything

made that was made."

Putting then these statements from Isaiah along all those from John we have the following startling parallel:

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah]... I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I... have stretched out

"All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." John 1:3. the heavens, and all their host have I commanded." Isa. 45:11, 12. Surely any unprejudiced reader of the above citations must feel compelled to the conclusion that Jesus is Jehovah.

Thus we can see that the two major Scripture citations of the Jehovah's Witnesses' propaganda are mutually destructive of the Witnesses' Arian attack on the Person of Christ. That the Creator of the earth and man upon it was the work of the "Logos," the "Word," the Christ of God, is so unequivocal that nothing less than blind infatuation with an Arian inspired rationalization can escape seeing and owning it.

As a further attestation of Jesus' creatorship, let us note the following parallels. We shall compare Jer. 10:10-16 with Col. 1:12-17:

"But the LORD [Jehovah] is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King [margin reads, "King of eternity"]:... He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.... The LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is his name."

"Giving thanks unto the Father... who... hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son [margin, "Son of his love"]: who is the image of the invisible God,... for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible... all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."⁴

The Apostle Peter speaks of those who "wrest... the... Scriptures, unto their own destruction." 2 Pet. 3:16.

No better example of this truth could be given than by citing the manner in which the Jehovah's Witnesses wrest the Scriptures in their fallacious rendering of John 1:1. We quote:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."

The unwarranted and gratuitous insertion of the indefinite article before the word "God" in the third clause of this sentence, shows an utter disregard of the context, and is, moreover, at variance with the best scholarship of the ages, both Catholic and Protestant. Not one of the reputable translations that have appeared during the past one hundred years has had the effrontery to insert the indefinite article and thus render it "a god." It would seem the Witnesses got their cue for this vulgarism from Benjamin Wilson's "Emphatic Diaglott," published in 1864, a work filled with gross errors and misrepresentations. In 1926 Wilson's translation found a rival in another of similar irresponsible character, "The Concordant Version of the Sacred Scriptures" by Adolph E. Knock of Los Angeles. Both became very popular with the Witnesses because they were both in agreement in denying the deity of our Lord.⁵

Now, having vitiated this statement as to Christ's being God, and having reduced Him to the level of "a god," the Witnesses are willing to accept him as the creator of all things. But we shall see as we follow on in our study, that such a view is in stubborn contradiction to many other statements as to the Person of our Lord.

No, reader, the Word of God is crystal clear-

Jesus-Jehovah is the Creator God.

2. Jehovah-Jesus OF Isa. 6 AND John 12

One of the most striking parallels is that between Isa. 6:1-3 and John 12:37-41. We quote:

"I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up.... Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did

"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.... Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart;

fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.... Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts.... And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." Isa. 6:1-10.

that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." John 12:37-41.

With what precision John lets us know that the One of whom he was writing, Jesus, was none other personage than the LORD (Jehovah) whom Isaiah had seen. Yes, Jesus is Jehovah.

3. Jehovah-Jesus INTRODUCED BY JOHN THE BAPTIST

Anyone with even an elementary knowledge of the Scriptures is aware of the fact that the Old Testament abounds with prophetic announcements of the eventual coming into the world of the promised Messiah. Of all these promises one of the most glorious is that found in Isa. 40:1-5. Now in order that we may see that it was of Christ that Isaiah was prophesying we shall put in parallel the promise and its fulfillment as recorded in Matthew's Gospel:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem,

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying,

and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S [Jehovah's] hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD [Jehovah], make straight in the desert a highway for

our God.... And the glory of the Lord [Jehovah] shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD [Jehovah] hath spoken it."

Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Matt. 3:1-3.

If the reader will note carefully the above comparison he will see that here the Spirit of God has definitely identified the Jehovah of Isaiah with the Jesus of Matthew. Then add to this Luke's word in chapter 1, verse 76:

"And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways."

Thus is John the Baptist called the prophet of the Highest. Who can this be but the Lord Himself, Jehovah. Yes, Jesus is Jehovah.

4. Jehovah-Jesus, THE STUMBLING STONE

Of all the Old Testament prophets, perhaps Isaiah is the most noted for his many and detailed announcements regarding the coming of Messiah. Repeatedly he identifies this Messiah with Jehovah. Witness the following from Isa. 8:13-15 and note the identity of this One with Jesus as recorded by Peter in his first epistle, chapter 2, verses 7, 8:

"Sanctify the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him

"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient,

be your dread. And he shall be for... a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel.... And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken."

the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient."

How patent is the conclusion from the above comparison that Jesus is Jehovah.

5. Jehovah-Jesus, THE ROCK

Another of the majestic titles of Jehovah in the Old Testament is "the Rock." The same is applied unreservedly to Christ in the New Testament.

"I will publish the name of the LORD [Jehovah]: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment." Deut. 32:3, 4.

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. 10:4.

Thus we see again that Jesus is Jehovah.

(To be continued)

1. Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, vol. 9, pp. 475-478. London, G. Morrish, 20 Paternoster Square, E.G. 4.

2. "Christian Testimony Through the Ages," T. W. Canon, G. Morrish, 114 Camberwell Rd., London. p. 50.

3. Evangelical Quarterly, James Clark & Co. Ltd., 9 Essex St., Strand, W. C. 2, London, England. Article by Prof. Dr. W. Childs Robinson, Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, G. vol. 5, pp. 275-282.

4. "In Col. 1:15-17 the Jehovah Witnesses' translation falsifies what Paul originally wrote, rendering it, 'He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth.... All other things were made to exist.' Here the word 'other' has been unwarrantably inserted four times. It is not present in the original Greek, and was obviously used by the translators in order to make the passage refer to Jesus as being on a par with other created things." "Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ," by Bruce M. Metzger in Theology Today, Princeton, N. J., p. 76. April, 1953.

5. For a fuller discussion of the fallacious rendering of John 1:1, see "Jehovah of the Watchtower," by Martin and Klann, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1956, pp. 50-54.

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6. Jehovah-Jesus, THE SHEPHERD

Our next parallelism between Jehovah in the Old Testament and Christ in the New Testament is the well-known Shepherd character of our Lord. Let us cite some of the passages:

"The LORD [Jehovah] is my shepherd; I shall not want.... Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD [Jehovah] forever." Psalm 23:1-6.

"Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." Psalm 80:1.

"Hear the word of the LORD [Jehovah], O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." Jer. 31:10.

"Thus shall they know that I the LORD [Jehovah] their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord God. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord Gob." Eze. 34:30, 31.

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep....I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine... And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, and one shepherd.... My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." John 10:27, 28, 11-16. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." Heb. 13:20.

After reading the above comparisons we can well understand why "Christian piety in every age has identified the Good Shepherd of John 10 with the Shepherd of whom David sang; and the

Shepherd of Psalm 23 is Jehovah."6

7. Jehovah-Jesus, THE LAW GIVER

Let us now notice another striking identification of Jehovah with Jesus. We refer to His being the One who spoke at Sinai. Note how carefully the Word of God identifies the Speaker on Sinai with the Lord Jesus in the New Testament.

"And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord [Jehovah] descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And the LORD [Jehovah] came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount:... and the LORD [Jehovah] said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord [Jehovah] to gaze, and many of them perish." Exod. 19:18-21.

"Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet.... But ye are come... to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.... See that ye refuse not him that speaketh: for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now hath he promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." Heb. 12:18-26.

The above quotation from Heb. 12 positively identifies Jesus as the One, "whose voice then shook the earth," referring to Exod. 19:18, "the whole mount quaked greatly." There it was the Lord (Jehovah), but the epistle to the Hebrews tells us it was Jesus. Yes, Jesus is Jehovah.

8. Jehovah-Jesus AND THE SABBATH

Closely related to our last identification of Jesus as the giver of the ten commandments at Mount Sinai, is His own claim to being Lord of the Sabbath. Note the parallel:

"And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD [Jehovah] hath said, To-morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD [Jehovah]... See, for that the LORD [Jehovah] hath given you the sabbath." Exod. 16:23, 29.

"Keep my sabbaths; I am the LORD [Jehovah] your God." Lev. 19:3.

"It is the sabbath of the LORD [Jehovah] in all your dwellings." Lev. 23:3.

"But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day. But he said unto them,... I say unto you... the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day." Matt. 12:2-8.

Is it not true that the only legitimate way in which Jesus could claim supremacy to God's sabbath, was in consideration of the fact that He was the One who gave the sabbath?

Yes, how plain it is: Jesus is Jehovah.

9. Jehovah-Jesus FEEDS HIS PEOPLE

Psalm 132 describes the blessing that will ensue under the reign of Messiah in the coming day. Jehovah is mentioned six times in this Psalm. One of His many kindnesses is His tender consideration for the poor of His people. Let us compare this with the heart of our Lord when He was here upon earth.

"For the LORD [Jehovah] hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provision: I will satisfy her poor with bread." Psalm 132:13-15.

"He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled." Matt. 14:19, 20.

Yes, Jehovah-Jesus was there present to meet the need, and it was so abundantly met that there were twelve baskets of fragments remaining after all were satisfied.

10. Jehovah-Jesus, THE HEALER

In no area of His life is Jesus more frequently recognized as the Jehovah of the Old Testament than in His long continued healing ministry. Note a few selected parallels:

"I am the LORD [Jehovah] that healeth thee." Exod. 15:26. "Bless the LORD [Jehovah], O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." Psalm 103:2, 3. "They shall see the glory of the LORD [Jehovah], and the excellency of our God.... Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." Isa. 35:2, 5.

"They bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech;... and he took him aside... and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;... and straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain." Mark 7:32-35.

"And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple.... Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.... And immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked." Acts 3:2, 6-8.

Thus we see that, not only did Jesus personally do what was accredited to Jehovah in the Old Testament, but also through the power of His name, similar miracles were wrought. The above parallels could be multiplied many times over, but space forbids. We recommend to our readers that they themselves trace the parallels.

11. Jehovah-Jesus KNOWS THE HEART

Omniscience is one of the exclusive prerogatives of deity. Only God can read the hearts of His creatures. Let us note some of the Old Testament statements as to Jehovah's knowledge of the heart, and compare the same with those of a similar nature applied to our Lord in the New.

"Then Job answered the LORD [Jehovah], and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Job 42:1, 2.

"For the LORD [Jehovah] searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee." 1 Chron. 28:9.

"The LORD [Jehovah] knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity." Psalm 94:11.

"For by fire and by his sword will the LORD [Jehovah] plead with all flesh.... For I know their works and their thoughts." Isa. 66:16, 18.

"O LORD [Jehovah], thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off." Psalm 139:1, 2.

"But the LORD [Jehovah] said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height

"But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?" Luke 5:22. "But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man,... Rise up." Luke 6:8.

"Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him." Luke 9:46, 47.

"And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them." Luke 11:16, 17.

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and

of his stature;... for the LORD [Jehovah] seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD [Jehovah] looketh on the heart." 1 Sam. 16:7.

"Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD [Jehovah] my God.... For thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." 1 Kings 8:28, 39.

saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God: thou art the King of Israel." John 1:47-49.

"And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he saith unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" Mark 2:8.

"But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." John 2:24, 25.

"And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord [Christ], which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen." Acts 1:24.

Can any reader of the above parallelism fail to see that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New? Yes, Jesus is Jehovah.

12. Jehovah-Jesus COMMANDS THE ELEMENTS

Not only was our Lord superior to sickness, disease, and deformity of all kinds, but He showed Himself repeatedly as in command of the very elements themselves. In this He showed Himself

the Jehovah of the Old Testament. We here present a parallel on this point:

"O LORD [Jehovah] God of hosts, who is a strong LORD [Jehovah] like unto thee?... Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them." Psalm 89:8, 9. "And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship.... And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Mark 4:37, 39.

"The LORD [Jehovah] on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea." Psalm 93:4.

"But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea." Matt. 14:24, 25.

Can it be otherwise than that Jesus is Jehovah?

6. "Jesus Christ is Jehovah," by Dr. W. Childs Robinson, in Evangelical Quarterly. opus cit. vol. 5, p. 153.

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13. Jehovah-Jesus COMMANDS THE CREATURES

Not only did Jehovah-Jesus have complete control over the elements, but He also was the LORD (Jehovah) of Psalm 104. Let us note the parallel.

"O LORD [Jehovah], how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts." Psa. 104: 24, 25.

See also the case of Jonah.

"Now the LORD [Jehovah] had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD [Jehovah] his God out of the fish's belly. . . . And the LORD [Jehovah] spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." Jonah 1:17; 2: 1, 10.

"He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." Luke 5:4-6.

"Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes." John 21: 5, 6.

Here we append a note from the pen of another:

"In other days, the God of Israel had commanded the creatures of the great deep, and a 'great fish' was prepared to swallow up Jonah, and give him a burying place for the appointed time. And so in His day, Jesus approved Himself the Lord of the

fulness of 'this great and wide sea,' summoning a host of 'small beasts,' thereof into the net of Peter (Psa. 104; Luke 5). 'Both small and great beasts,' that find their pastime therein, thus earlier and later days owned the word of Jehovah-Jesus."7

How precious this testimony that Jesus is Jehovah.

14. Jehovah-Jesus FORGIVES SINS

One of the prerogatives of Jehovah is to forgive sins; our Lord assumed this prerogative on numerous occasions. We herewith list a few of such instances.

"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD [Jehovah]; and thou for-gayest the iniquity of my sin." Psa. 32:5.

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah], . . . I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Isa. 43:16, 25.

"The LORD [Jehovah] is long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression." Num. 14:18.

"If t h o u, LORD [Jehovah] shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." Psa. 130:3, 4.

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Mark 2:5.

"But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Luke 5:24.

"And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Luke 7:48, 49.

What a solemn matter it would be for any creature to assume the prerogative of a holy, holy, holy God to forgive sin.

Truly Jesus is Jehovah.

15. Jehovah-Jesus, THE HUSBAND OF HIS PEOPLE

In the Old Testament Jehovah repeatedly takes the place of being the husband of His people, Israel. A similar relationship is denoted with reference to Christ and His people in the New Testament. Note the following:

"For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel." Isa. 54:5.

"Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD [Jehovah]; for I am married unto you." Jer. 3:14.

"My covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the LORD [Jehovah]." Jer. 31:32.

"And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD [Jehovah], that thou shalt call me Ishi [margin, "my husband"] And I will betroth thee unto me for ever." Hos. 2:16, 19.

"I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2.

"And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut." Matt. 25:10. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom . . . rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. . . . He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:29, 30.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, . . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. . . . Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Rev. 19:7, 9.

If Israel is the bride of Jehovah in the Old Testament, how blessed is our portion to be part of the heavenly bride of our Jehovah-Jesus!

16. Jehovah-Jesus, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Another blessed identity of Jesus with Jehovah is found in the title, "Our Righteousness."

Note the following:

"Behold the days come, saith "But of him are ye in Christ

the LORD [Jehovah], that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD [Jehovah] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." Jer. 23: 5, 6.

Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness."

1 Cor. 1:30.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10:4. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

2 Cor. 5:21.

Yes, none other than Jesus is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

17. Jehovah-Jesus, SALVATION THROUGH HIS NAME

Closely related to the above is the fact that salvation as the result of calling upon the name of the LORD (Jehovah) is equally predicated of Jehovah in the Old Testament as of Christ in the New. Note the parallel:

"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD [Jehovah] your God. . . . I am the LORD [Jehovah] your God, and none else. . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lon) [Jehovah] shall be delivered [saved] ."8 Joel 2:23-32.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. . . . For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Rom. 10:4, 13.

Note carefully that the passage cited from Romans 10:4, 13 is a direct quotation from the prophecy of Joel in the Old Testament. Another has well said:

"It is as Jehovah that God became the Saviour of Israel, and as Jehovah He saves the world; and this is the truth embodied in the name Jesus which is literally Jehovah-Saviour."⁹

How simple to faith is the identity of Jehovah in the Old Testament with Jesus in the New.

18. Jehovah-Jesus, THE JUDGE

Another patent parallel between Jehovah in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New, is in the solemn matter of judgment. We append just a few of the many parallels.

"The mighty God, even the LORD [Jehovah], hath spoken. . . . Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people. . . . For God is judge himself." Psa. 50:1-6. "Behold the LORD [Jehovah] hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. . . . Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. . . . I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart." Isa. 62:11; 63:1, 3, 4.

"Behold, the day of the LORD [Jehovah] cometh, cruel both

"For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. . . . And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." John 5:22, 27.

"Him God raised up the third day. . . . And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Acts 10:40, 42.

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. . . . And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. . . . And he hath on his vesture . . . a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Rev. 19:11, 13, 16.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thess. 1:7, 8.

with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity." Isa. 13:9-11.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Matt. 24:29, 30.

Yes, dear reader, if language means anything the above awe inspiring words show beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus is Jehovah.

7. "The Son of God," by J. G. Bellett, p. 25, The Bible Truth Press, 1 & 3 East 13th St., New York.
8. See the Greek Septuagint Version in loco. London, S. Bagster & Sons, Ltd., N. Y. James Pott & Co.
9. Old Testament Synonyms, by Robt. B. Girdlestone, p. 64. (To be continued)

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19. Jehovah-Jesus, THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

As a further and impeccable proof that Jesus is Jehovah we place side by side the two scriptural portions below:

"Thus saith the LORD [Jehovah] the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD [Jehovah] of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." Isa. 44:6. "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Isa. 48:12.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. . . . I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Rev. 22:12-16.

Herewith we append a comment from another:

"Who it is that announces that He is coming quickly is now declared, and declared as its solemn affirmation and certainty. He is the One who was before anything had its existence, who will be after all created things in this scene shall have passed away, and who exists through all time and eternity, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end of all existence, the eternally self-existent One who comprehends all being in Himself, for it is in Him that all live and move and have their being. The last two titles are found in Isaiah: 'Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last: and besides me there is no God.' Isa. 44:6. No terms therefore could more distinctly convey the truth of the Person of our blessed Lord, or more clearly assert His true and proper deity. And the significance of this, coming immediately after the promise of His coming, will, when their eyes have been opened, be at once understood by the tried and persecuted remnant of the last days. They will learn from it that the Messiah, for whose advent they long, is Jehovah Elohim, their Lord and their God." 10

Let us then bow to this precious truth,

Jesus is Jehovah.

20. Jehovah-Jesus is THE I AM

Now we come to the grand climactic claim of our Lord Jesus to His being the LORD (Jehovah) of the Old Testament. When God commissioned Moses to go unto Pharaoh to negotiate with him regarding his permission to the children of Israel to leave Egypt, Moses asked God a direct question and received a direct answer. Let us note the portion:

"And the LORD [Jehovah] said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry. . . . And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians. . . . And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?" Ex. 3:7, 8, 13.

Let us put God's reply to Moses' question alongside a leading challenge that was put to our Lord Jesus by the Pharisees in John's Gospel, chapter 8. We list the two passages in parallel.

"And God [the LORD (Jehovah), see verse 7] said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I Arvi hath sent me unto you." Ex. 3:14.

"Then said the Jews unto him, . . . whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM. Then they took up stones to cast at him." John 8:52-59.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Heb. 13:8.

Yes, Jesus is Jehovah, and He did not hesitate to declare himself the "I AM" of Exodus 3:14. Note a similar declaration also in John 18:4-6. We quote:

"Jesus . . . said unto them, . . . Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I AM. . . . As soon then as he had said unto them, I AM, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

21. Jehovah-Jesus ACCEPTS WORSHIP

One of the most outstanding proofs of our Lord's being Jehovah is in the matter of His repeatedly accepting worship. Let us note a few such instances, and as we do so, let us remember the well-known solemn warning to Israel in Exodus 34:14.

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD [Jehovah], whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

Turn now to Matthew 2, verses 1, 2.

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

Now read verse 11:

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Also note the following further similar instances:

"Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Matt. 14:33. See also Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25.

"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him." Matt. 28:9. See also verse 17.

"And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Luke 24:51, 52.

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped." Rev. 5:13, 14.

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." John 13:13.

Let us take careful notice that in no case did our Lord ever refuse worship, yet He knew full well that none but God (Jehovah) was entitled to this honor. In contrast to this, let us note how decisively and peremptorily others, who were taught of God, refused worship. In Acts 10, when Peter was commissioned to go to Cornelius and his household with the gospel,

"As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." vv. 25, 26.

When Paul and Barnabas visited Lystra, Paul healed the cripple who was impotent in his feet. Immediately the heathen concluded that the gods Jupiter (Barnabas) and Mercurius (Paul) were come down to visit them. Accordingly, "the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein." (Acts 14:8-17.)

Even the Apostle John in his apocalyptic vision of Revelation 19 is similarly rebuked by the angelic messenger for seeking to accord worship to the latter.

"And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God." Rev. 19:10.

Again in Revelation 22 the Apostle John repeats his error, and is again rebuked.

"I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed me these things. Then saith he unto

me, See thou do it not: . . . worship God." vv. 8, 9.

Perhaps the most outstanding witness to Christ's being worthy of worship is found in Hebrews 1:6 where it is God Himself who says,

"Let all the angels of God worship him."

Now if He be not the Jehovah of the Old Testament, how shall we reconcile the solemn prohibition of Exodus 34:14,

"For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD [Jehovah] . . . is a jealous God,"

with God's command that all angels should worship Him? The only logical reconciliation of the two passages is in the simple, yet blessed fact that Jesus is Jehovah.

22. Jehovah-Jesus, THE PIERCED ONE

When our Lord shall appear for the deliverance of Israel in the coming day, we read of Him as the pierced Jehovah. This statement is quoted by John in the New Testament and applied to our Lord.

"In that day shall the LORD [Jehovah] defend . . . Jerusalem; . . . and I will pour upon the house of David . . . the spirit of grace and of supplications: and 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." Zech 12:8-10.

"But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. . . For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled. . . They shall look on him whom they pierced." John 19:34-37.

No doubt is left to us as to the identification:

Jesus is Jehovah.

23. Jehovah-Jesus, ACKNOWLEDGED AS GOD

As the high point of our meditation on the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we would call special attention to the fact that He did not hesitate to accept the acclamation of being God. The following parallel seals irrevocably that Jesus is Jehovah.

"Therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD [Jehovah], that I am God." Isa. 43:12.

"Then saith he to Thomas, . . . be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." John 20:27-29.

O dear reader, in view of the abundant proof in the Word of God that Jesus is Jehovah, are you not willing to fall on your knees before Him and repeat out of an adoring heart,

"My Lord and my God"?

"Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father"! 1 John 2:23.

"There is no other name than Thine

Jehovah-Jesus! name divine;

On which to rest for sins forgiven,

For peace with God, for hope of heaven.

"Name above every name, Thy praise
Shall fill yon courts through endless days,
Jehovah-Jesus! name divine,
Rock of salvation - Thou art mine."

The Visions of John in Patmos, being Notes on the Apocalypse, by Edward Dennett. G. Morrish, 20 Paternoster Row, London. p. 306.

We are aware that many later translations have rendered Zech. 12:10, "and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced," but we believe this to be a mistake. On this point we quote from the able expositor, Mr. Wm. Kelly.

"There is really no serious doubt that the true reading is the latter (to Me), not the former (to Him). . . . It was in fact originally nothing but a marginal correction, due to the desire partly of eliminating so strong a testimony to the deity or Jehovah title of the Lord Jesus," et. seq. pp. 422-424. An exposition of the Gospel of John, London, F. E. Race, 3 London House Yard, Paternoster Row, E. C., 1898.

Also see the author's further note on the same point in his Lectures Introductory to the Study of the Minor Prophets, pp. 483, 484. London, G. Morrish, 20 Paternoster Square. Also see Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's Commentary on Old and New Testament, in loco. (Concluded)

Justification by Faith - Giving up: the Editor's Column

On July 11 Pope Paul received U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a private audience. Incidentally, U Thant is a Burmese Buddhist. The two notable figures discussed world problems and, something close to Romanism's heart, the release of Cardinal Mindszenty in Hungary. Rome wishes him out of the way there so that she may work more amicably with the Communist Hungarian government.

It might also be worthy of note in considering the trends that, while President Kennedy waited in Italy for the coronation of Paul VI, he sent a delegation of four men to represent the United States government at the coronation. The four were headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren of the Supreme Court that a few weeks before had barred the reading (without comment) a portion of the Holy Scriptures in public schools, as had been done for 150 years, and also forbidden the recitation of the so-called Lord's prayer there. Another man to officially witness the crowning of the papal sovereign was Rabbi Dr. Louis Finkelstein, a man who disbelieves in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a historical first, that a Jewish rabbi was officially delegated to serve on such an occasion in Rome.

We do not know, but this may have been in accord with Vatican wishes, for it now seeks rapprochement with the Jews. On last so-called Good Friday, Pope John stopped a mass in Rome to delete some words from it that were offensive to Jews. It is also reported that Pope John planned to create for the fall Vatican Council meeting a Committee on Jewish Affairs to become a part of the Secretariat for Christian Unity under Cardinal Bea. We quote from the B'nai B'rith Messenger of Los Angeles, "According to Mr. Lapide [of a Hamburg paper], Pope John XXIII wanted to bridge-over the centuries-old breach between Jews and Christians, i.e. between the Old and New Testament, which both preach the same eternal truth...."

- July 12, 1963. According to the same paper, Pope Paul will probably continue the same course.

This new papal attitude fits in well with that of ecumenical Protestantism. Our attention was recently called to a report of the American Jewish Committee as found in the Illinois State Library (it is probably in other such libraries also). On page 43 of the annual report of the AJC for the year 1952 is the following: "The close contact established last year with the division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches has extended to their established department of inter-group education with which together with the Anti-Defamation League we are now in almost daily consultation. This department makes significant use of the Committee's [AJC] resources for material and information which it channels through 2,500,000 instructors to 27,000,000 Sunday School students." Here we see the secret workings within ecumenical circles to erase any stigma of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus. Jewish organizations have long contended that the Sunday Schools teach anti-Semitism when they relate the New Testament accounts of the rejection of Christ. But the Old Testament testifies that a remnant of the Jewish people will in a later day weep and mourn and repent when they look upon Him whom they pierced (Zech. 12:10). That time has not yet come.

Even the National Association of Evangelicals had an American Jewish Agency representative, Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum at their spring meeting as an observer. And the liberal Christian Century commented on this that the NAE "manifested a wholesome trend toward greater responsibility in citizenship and churchmanship." Then the noted Rabbi gave an interview in which he pleaded for more dialog and mutual understanding between the two groups. This would be between professed followers of Christ, and rejectors of Him. Rabbi Tanenbaum is quoted as saying: "Far too many Jews and other Americans think of evangelicals as 'wild-eyed, hair-shirted fanatics' and far too many evangelicals think of Jews as 'disinherited' by God and living 'barren unredeemed existences.' " But those Jews who still reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Redeemer are lost in spite of all the efforts to alter the facts; but the Gentiles who also reject (or neglect) 'Christ as their only Savior "shall all likewise perish." The Word of God faithfully represents the guilt of all mankind - Jews and Gentiles - in the casting of the Son of God out of this world. The Lord Himself said to Pilate, "he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." These are FACTS faithfully reported to us by the Holy Spirit of God, and the spirit of compromise and human dialog will not change them. The world as such is guilty and is waiting for the just judgment of God. But when once the Word of God is undermined on this one solemn point, the basic fabric of it must be rent; for it stands or falls together.

The last vile state of Christendom as depicted in Rev. 17 makes the mention of its fornication with the kings of the earth. This means unholy and illicit intercourse between the secular powers of the earth and the religious mistress who will prostitute her great one-church prestige for her advancement in the earth. It is on its way, most surely.

And what place will the Jews who reject Christ have in the great apostasy of Christendom? Just this, that in those last days (after the true believers are taken to be with Christ) Christendom will tire of false, moribund profession and destroy the whole empty thing, root and branch. Then the man who will head the Jewish nation and be in league with the beast of the revived Roman Empire will step into the vacuum left by the desolated church and deceive what is left of Christendom and the whole world with Satanic powers. Let us read from the sure Word of God:

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth [or, hinders] will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming: even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:7-12. If men will not have the truth, God will let Satan deceive them with a lie.

And the man who will be the instrument of the deception will deceive the lost, both Gentiles and Jews. Judaism, except the elect portion which will be persecuted and flee, and Christendom will alike perish in the great apostasy in the righteous judgment of God. So today we see all this coming forward - apostasy on every hand - but the coming of the Lord for His own must precede this great delusion. Lord Jesus, Come.

If any Christian reads these lines who is in danger of becoming ensnared by the ecumenical apostasy, hear the words of the Spirit of God, "Come out of her, My people" (Rev. 18:4).

Those prophetic expositors of a century ago saw plainly from the book of Revelation that the Roman Empire (which had then ceased to exist as an entity) would be revived in a new form as ten separate governments under a federal head. This was also given prophetically in the book of Daniel, chapters 7 and 9. It was also clear from Revelation that there would be a mistress who would sit upon the new Roman beast (Rev. 17:1-8). This rider was to be a great church amalgamation to be known for its confusion, for the name Babylon suggests this. This will be the last noxious-to-God state of Christendom. The rider of the beast is to sit upon, or be carried by, the great Western political federation; it is also said to sit upon "seven mountains" (v. 9), which identifies it with the city of Rome- the seven-hilled city. It is further said (v. 1) to sit "upon many waters." This clause came forcibly to mind in a recent article which spoke of Roman Catholicism, thus:

"The man [the Pope] and the office cannot be sharply distinguished, of course, for whoever sits upon the oldest throne in the world must wholly serve one grand design-in G. K. Chesterton's words, 'one scheme... bestriding lands and ages with its gigantic arches, and carrying everywhere the high river of baptism upon an aqueduct of Rome.' "-Newsweek, June 10, 1963. Thus the great "one church" will sit upon and help direct the Western beast in government; it will also sit upon the seven hills of Rome, and bstride many lands as "upon many waters."

But after the true Church's rapture to be with Christ, the apostate composite of left-over Christendom will be utterly destroyed by the beast and his subservient kings during the seven years tribulation period.

Then it will be that the false prophet of the Jews will come forward with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. It will be the overthrow of empty Christian profession when militant atheism seizes control and carnage follows. After this will come the worship of man and of Satan in the last dreadful state of MAN before Christ appears out of heaven with His saints to put down all authority, and subject His enemies in God's time according to the decree of Psalm 2.

Other developments which point the way toward the fast-moving big church union have occurred. The Faith and Order Conference of the World Council of Churches convened in Montreal. One report on this says that "Faith and Order Conferences rank among the landmarks of the ecumenical century." Then after listing the representatives who were there, the article added: "Also present were 20 Roman Catholic observers-including five appointed by the Vatican-and Montreal's Paul Emile Cardinal Leger delivered one of the major addresses."- Time, August 2, 1963.

Other comments included those of Anglican Bishop Oliver Tomkins of Bristol, expressing his expectation of the opportunity for "positive and fruitful dialog" between Rome and other confessions. And now Protestant theologians are to study texts about Mary to see what Roman and Orthodox communions teach about "the Mother of God." If coming events cast their shadows, these are more than shadows of phantoms. They are taking on a very realistic image.

According to another report on the same event, Cardinal Leger called the meeting a "family reunion." It also commented that while the Reformation had worked to splinter Christianity, it "is

now at work in the opposite direction." Also Dr. Raymond E. Brown, a Roman Catholic New Testament scholar, and Lutheran Dr. Ernest Kasemann of Germany, agreed that the writers of the New Testament were as divided in their theologies as theologians are today, although they all were conscious of "belonging to the one Christian church."-Newsweek, August 5, 1963.

This is dangerous heterodoxy. It may not be realized, but it strikes at the very foundation of the Holy Scriptures as indited by the Holy Spirit of God; for there was no disagreement between the writers of the New Testament. Their theologies did not differ. To say that there is conflict or disagreement in the scriptures of the New Testament is to either deny that the Spirit of God gave them all, or to charge Him with inaccuracies and division. The Spirit of God used different men to put forth different parts, but there is no disagreement or divergence. They all speak part of the same blessed truth; it is all perfect harmony. Its design is like a gigantic arch where each part is necessary to the construction of the whole. Sacrifice any part of Holy Scripture, and you do violence to the whole sacred deposit. But such charges only presage departure from the truth and eventual utter apostasy. Romanism and Protestantism are both on a slippery, downhill road; and the present fast pace may be expected to accelerate.

Then, in the Fourth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation, held in Helsinki, Finland, the delegates "warmly applauded" at the introduction of "three Vatican observers." And the conference closed with the establishment of a foundation to promote "dialog with non-Lutheran churches-especially the Roman Catholic Church. The decision was a climax to a series of friendly exchanges throughout the meeting between Vatican observers and the Lutheran delegates."-Newsweek, August 19, 1963. Truly Protestantism has gone a long, long way down since it was founded in the blood of men who "counted not their lives dear" that the truth of God might be established. Should not the Word of God speak to those who inherited such deliverance at the great cost in suffering that the reformers paid?"Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." Rev. 3:3.

A conflict that Martin Luther would never have expected from those who followed the doctrine he propounded was touched off at the Helsinki conference. It centered on the theme of "justification by faith" apart from works. It was the keystone of Luther's Reformation days, but, alas! it is being scuttled today. Dr. Gerhard Gloege of Bonn University said, "that today neither the church nor the world knows what to do with this doctrine of justification. For the fathers it was the foundation and rule of faith and life. For the church today it is clearly an embarrassment."-Time, August 23, 1963. The article mentions a number of problems relating to this doctrine, one of which was, "that downgrading works seems less acceptable than ever to self-justifying, activist modern man." It seems that the truth of God must be changed to accommodate it to modern man who is bent on justifying himself. The Lord met many of this type when He was here-"Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts." Luke 16:15. So after all, it would seem foolish for the reformers to risk, and even encounter, death that the truth of God might continue. So modern man assumes to be wiser, and all things are now judged on expediency and what man wishes.

We continue to quote: "A more serious challenge to traditional Lutheran thinking came from the Federation's Commission on Theology: modern Biblical study makes it clear that justification is not, as Luther thought, the dominating theme of the New Testament."-p. 48. If justification is not

the theme of the epistle to the Romans, then what is? The whole epistle sets forth that subject-how God can be just while He justifies the ungodly person who accepts the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. It is the only ground of a sinner's acceptance before God. But, as we may expect, the winds of ecumenicalism are strong enough to blow away precious and sacred truth in the interest of at last being able to form a one-world church- "Babylon the Great," to be more precise! And the article goes on to state that this re-examination of this doctrine could lead to a healing of the breach between Rome and the Reformation. Alas! Alas! How have the mighty fallen! Truth is being trampled in the dust.

Another recent religious gathering of ecumenical note was the conference of 13,000 at the 24th annual North American Liturgical Week at Philadelphia. It is a Catholic group which is working for liturgical reforms within the Catholic Church. They are seeking to bring about more general participation in church liturgy, instead of having the priest do it all. Changes have already been made, and it is anticipated that more will be ordered by the to-be-resumed Vatican II Council. More use is being made of the language of the people, rather than having all performed in Latin. The movement is of 20th century origin.

This will probably change the performance at the mass, but it is not to change the doctrine of the mass which signifies a continual offering of an "un-bloody" sacrifice for sins. The repetitious offering of the mass is contradictory to the blessed truth that the Lord Jesus has in consequence of one sacrifice for sins, which can never be repeated, set down in perpetuity at God's right hand. He has perfected His people forever. The "Lord's supper" is not a sacrifice for sins, but a simple memorial -remembrance-of Himself in death.

This was one of the great conflicts of the Reformation, but the changes being worked out are calculated to bring Roman Catholicism and Protestantism closer together. We quote the words of another: "Liturgy, a source of religious strife during the Reformation, is today a force for Christian unity. Liturgical reform is bringing Catholic worship closer to Protestant practices. At the same time, some U.S. Protestant and Episcopal churches have introduced into worship practices once considered 'popish,' such as incense and eucharistic vestments at Holy Communion."-Time, August 30, 1963. The article further adds that both groups may yet find that "the old, divisive differences in forms of worship have... vanished."

The early Church had no such forms or customs. It was all simple reading, praying, or remembering the Lord in death. There was nothing in the day of "The Acts" ornate or appealing to the flesh; in those days it was truly "worship... in spirit and in truth." But when the power disappeared, man supplemented it with carnal ordinances and earthly forms of worship. And today, the more that vitality disappears from Christendom, the more formalized liturgy comes in to replace the vacuum which has been created. This is plainly evidenced by the trends toward Rome on the one hand, and, on the other, by Rome's minor concessions which will lull many Protestants into the deadening stupor which will mark the last stage of devitalized and debilitated Christianity. The coming of the Lord to call His blood-bought people home to Himself, according to His sure word and promise, is the only hope we have today. The present accelerating trends may soon become an avalanche of popular opinion which will sweep everything before it.

The Law and the Gospel

The church of Galatia was the scene of a conflict between the law and the gospel, or Sarah and Hagar. We have in the progress of Scripture many such scenes. The house of Abraham was such. There Hagar and Sarah for a season dwelt together, but in sad discord and strife. Again, the family of Jacob presented the same. Leah and Rachel, the two wives, dwelt together; but between them there was again the same disturbance, upbraiding, and envy. Elkanah's house was the same. Peninnah and Hannah were the Leah and Rachel again—pride and provocations from the one, and constant sorrow of heart from the other. And all these scenes were the expression of the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, or the law and the gospel, of which conflict the church in Galatia was the scene, when we reach the times of the apostolic ministry.

The trouble was brought in through unbelief, and could be removed only by strengthening the freewoman. Thus it was Sarah's unbelief that brought Hagar into the family. Had she, in the patience of faith, waited the Lord's time and not given her maid to Abraham, she would have been spared fourteen years of sorrow from Hagar and Ishmael. It was Jacob's craft on Isaac that brought down Laban's craft on himself in giving him Leah, and thus his getting her into his house as well as Rachel. Had his faith been more simple, his faith would have been more undistracted. And nothing healed all this sorrow,

and quieted this disturbance, but the fruitfulness of the beloved, or the freewoman. Then Sarah gets rid of Hagar, Rachel rejoices, and Hannah sings her song of holy triumph. So Israel brought the law, or the bondwoman, on themselves by their unbelief and self-confidence (Exod. 19); and Galatia, and the flesh in each of us, is the same cause of trouble. And nothing drives it away, nothing heals the house, the Church, or the heart, but strengthening the spirit, the gospel, or the freewoman, thus giving fruitfulness to the seed of God, the spirit of adoption, the principle of liberty in us.

Bring forth Isaac, and then send away Ishmael, and dwell in an undivided house, breathe the pure element of liberty, "Stand fast... in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." Gal. 5:1. Indeed we ought to do justice (may I so speak?) to the wondrous love of our God. It claims our happy confidence, our filial confidence. To render it merely a diffident or suspicious glance, as it were, is treating it unworthily. May the Sarah in our hearts cry out, and cry out lustily, "Cast out the bondwoman and her son."

Life, Not Negation

The teaching of the Holy Ghost unfolds to us what we have received in having received Christ. It is well to keep this principle constantly before the soul. It is not that which we renounce, any more than that which we do, which makes us Christians; but it is that which we receive. And this principle runs through the Christian life; it is a life which has its affections, its sensibilities, its energies, and its activities. Our Christian life is not a system of negation any more than is our natural life. This marks it forcibly from the common notion of religion. It is said, "Cease to do evil"; it is added, "Learn to do well." "Abhor that which is evil"; "Cleave to that which is good." "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying." Christians need to have the life already received nurtured by the ministry of Christ, the true and living Head, in order that the energies of that life may be called forth in its varied and appropriate activities.

The Love of God

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son."

If you would know God's love, consider His gift; for His love is as great as His gift, and it will heighten both if we consider the objects of this love, on whom this gift was bestowed- a world of sinners-yet in their sin, and in the very height of their enmity against God.

O the height and depth of that love which comprehends two such extremes! What can be conceived more distant from, or more unsuitable to each other! But, behold, divine love brings them both together, and gives the Son of God to man in the extreme of his guilt and misery.

Loving His Appearing

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." 2 Tim. 4:8.

Who are those who love His appearing? for such will not only have "a crown of life," but "a crown of righteousness." Precious thought! What then are we to understand by loving His appearing? Observe, it is not here His coming for us, but His revelation from heaven, His appearing in flaming fire, and His saints with Him. It gives us joy to know that now in heaven He is not only crowned with glory and honor, but angels, authorities, and powers are made subject unto Him.

"The crown is His, and His by right,

The highest place in heaven."

On earth, however, He is still, with very many, the rejected Stone, notwithstanding God's proclamation by His servants of forgiveness of sins, and of the gift of eternal life and glory to every one that bows to Him as his Savior and Lord. Every loyal heart must deeply feel the appalling indifference there is to the Lord Jesus Christ, and His present interests, almost on every hand. But we remember the solemn testimony of Scripture, that this is the prelude to the utter rejection by Him of the professing church as His corporate witness on earth after He has removed His loved and loving saints to meet Him in the air, and before His appearing with them to judge the world. How quickly these anticipations may become matters of fact!

"The stone which the builders rejected" will soon come forth in power. The "stone... cut out without hands" must ere long fall upon the nations, and "grind them to powder." Alas! how few seem to think of this; and how many are trying to satisfy themselves with a kind of Christianity without Christ, which they call religion! At this moment, what a mass of precious souls are being deceived by reasoning infidelity. They think themselves competent to judge of the things of God by their natural powers, and thus set aside the divine authority of His Word, instead of allowing it to judge them. On the other hand, multitudes are being ensnared by the infidelity of ritualism, which refuses to accept the "once for all" finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may be assured that the only deliverance from these fatal deceptions is resting on Christ, and finding peace and joy in what He has done, and what He is. Blessed be His name, with arms opened wide, and a heart full of tenderest love, He said, "Come unto Me,... and I will give you rest." What a boon is rest! especially rest of conscience as to our eternal safety. This, no one but He can give. No one else ever proposed it. Those only have it who have it from Him. Precious indeed are His words, "I will give you rest." Yes, He gives it.

Our Lord spoke of another rest - rest of heart, which those would "find" who pursued a certain course. It is, therefore, a conditional rest - rest connected with being heartily and practically yoked with Him, and learning of Him. The taking of His yoke is a distinct work and experience in the soul. Oh, those sweet words, "Take My yoke," "Learn of Me," "Find rest to your souls." His is the only

"easy" yoke, and the only "burden" that is really "light." You cannot describe it, but the heart knows it. Rest of conscience He gives. Rest of heart the believer finds if abiding in Him, walking with Him, and learning of Him who when walking down here as a man had perfect rest in His Father's will, even when rejected by those cities wherein most of His deeds of power were performed. Sweet intimacy! This is Christianity; and those who know it experimentally doubtless look forward to another rest - endless, eternal rest, for "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).

In the days of the apostles, believers knew they were called not only to believe, but also to suffer for His sake; and if not always suffering for Him, they were suffering with Him. They knew also the preciousness of Christ as the satisfying and joyful object of their hearts. It was truly said of some, "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; see also Rom. 8:17; Phil. 1:29. Such was the freshness and fervency of believers in the early days of Christianity. Their hearts were taken up with a Person who loved them, died for them, and redeemed them from all iniquity, and who assured them that an incorruptible inheritance was "reserved in heaven" for them, and that they were "kept by the power of God," through faith, for it, until His revelation from heaven with them. What marvelous words of comfort!

This surely is the time of our Lord's rejection. The world will not have Him; and Christendom, for the most part, as was the case at Laodicea, has Him outside the door. Yet He is knocking; perhaps it may be that one faithful soul will hear His voice and open the door for personal communion with Himself. To true hearts this is very affecting. Those who love Him best feel it most. He is not here, but His coming draws nigh.

In the death of His cross, instead of Satan overcoming Him, He through death rendered Satan's power null; and instead of Jew and Gentile getting rid of Christ by their "Away with Him," "Crucify Him," He was righteously exalted to the right hand of God, invested as the glorified Man with all authority and power. And He is soon coming to subdue all things unto Himself, according to the will of God. Though He manifests Himself spiritually to our souls, and is always in the midst of two or three who are really gathered together to His name, yet personally He is absent. We see Him not. Some keenly feel He is not here. Faith knows Him crowned with glory and honor.

Do we feel His rejection? Are we troubled on account of His absence? These are searching questions, and test what our state really is. If we can reply that we deeply mourn His absence, then we are necessarily detached in heart and walk, not only from the world which is so rapidly going on to its righteous doom, but from all around about us in the professing church that is contrary to His Word, How is it possible that we can be loving His appearing, if not seeking to please Him, and therefore tasting the sorrow of His present rejection? Do not the two always go together? Those who really mourn His absence, and because of it feel the loneliness and desolation of their path, cannot but cleave to Him with purpose of heart, while keenly feeling the folly and unbelief of those who keep up excitement with the world's pleasures, when our Lord's revelation from heaven in flaming fire is so near.

Again we press the question, Does our Lord's present rejection give a decided complexion to our course in this scene?

If so, surely the prospect of His having His rightful place on earth ere long, cannot but thrill our hearts with inexpressible delight. When we think of His coming out of heaven in His own glory, the glory of His Father, and the glory of the holy angels, accompanied by His glorified saints, and wearing His many crowns, we may well exclaim, What a blaze of infinite and eternal glory! while our hearts are ready to sing,

"Crown Him, crown Him, crown Him Lord of all."

It is the Lord Himself who thus appears. He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him. He died for all, has sent the gospel to all, has waited patiently on all, and now the divine long-suffering has reached its climax, men "wail because of Him." What a wailing that will be! Worse than useless then to cry to the rocks to fall on them, or to the hills to cover them, or to go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth for fear of Jehovah, and from the glory of His majesty; for He must reign till His enemies are made the footstool of His feet. All must be put in subjection under Him, according to the will of God. Yes, He will judge the quick and the dead. First the quick, or living, in various judicial ways and occasions as the Scriptures point out; for He will put down all rule, and all authority, and power. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death; and the last part of His reign will be occupied in judging the dead after their resurrection, every man according to his works; hence our Lord called it "the resurrection of damnation," or judgment. How unutterably solemn! And how blessed to our souls is the thought of our Lord's exaltation to His rightful place, and of the Church, His bride, reigning and sharing the inheritance with Him.

On earth all the tribes of Israel will have each its portion in the land according to the prophetic word (Eze. 47 and 48), knowing that Jehovah has been merciful to their unrighteousness, will remember no more their sins and iniquities, has delivered them from bodily sickness, given them abundance of peace and plenty, under the glorious reign of their true Messiah, the Son of David. What a time, too, when Gentiles will go up to Jerusalem to worship, and attend the house of prayer for all nations. Our Lord Jesus will then be revealed as the only Potentate - Kings of kings and Lord of lords, Governor among

the nations, and King over all the earth. We can think of Him too as Son of man, according to the 8th Psalm, having dominion over this creation as by Him delivered, and brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Is it not a deep joy to those who cleave to Him, and are often ready to weep at His still being the "song of the drunkard," and rejected by so many, to know for a certainty that in a little while on this very earth, as well as in heaven, and in the infernal regions, every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of the Father?

How does this contemplation of our Lord's glorious appearing and reign affect our hearts? Are we loving His appearing? Let us pause and well consider that, if so, He is not only the commanding object of our souls, but we are in a place where He is not, and where the prevailing sentence is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." How soon He may come and receive us unto Himself, to appear in glory with Him! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:4. May we be so occupied with our Lord where He is, so learn of Him, and live for His honor, that we may more and more "love His appearing!"

"If here on earth the thoughts of Jesus' love Lift our poor hearts this weary world above; If even here the taste of heavenly springs

So cheers the spirit, that the pilgrim sings; What will the sunshine of His glory prove? What the unmingled fullness of His love? What hallelujahs will His presence raise?

What but one loud eternal burst of praise?"

Lucifer in Isaiah 14: a Reader Inquires

QUESTION: Is it scriptural to refer to Lucifer in Isa. 14 as Satan?

ANSWER: The answer to your question is, No. Lucifer is not Satan. But inasmuch as many Christians have assumed that Lucifer is Satan, a more detailed answer is called for, also an explanation of what or who is meant by "Lucifer."

The confusion regarding Lucifer is due to a mistake by the translators. The original word should have been translated "bright star," or "morning star"; but these scholars chose rather to transliterate the word; that is, to merely spell the original word in English letters. That is what "Lucifer" is. If it had been translated into "bright star," no one would have supposed it to be Satan's personal name. The future beast of the Roman Empire will astonish the world; he will dazzle mankind and appear to usher in a new day for the earth. Men will feel that at long last they have a man who will bring in peace and order to a troubled scene. The Lord Jesus is the "morning star" of the New Testament who will appear for His own while it is yet dark and before He will shine forth as the sun in supreme majesty. The beast will so astonish men that they will say "peace and safety," and "who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?" But their hope will be short-lived; for Christ, the coming One, will cast the beast into the lake of fire and destroy his armies before He sets up His world kingdom. And even before He appears, the awful judgment of the great tribulation period will come upon all the earth, especially on the kingdom of the beast.

Before examining Isa. 14, let us notice the 13th chapter, where the destruction of the old Babylonian kingdom of the Medes and Persians was foretold. The 12th verse of that chapter is often misunderstood. There we read, "I will make a man more precious [scarce, or rare] than fine gold." This is often interpreted as Christ, but instead it is the Babylonian soldier. The kingdom would be overthrown regardless of its former military prowess.

When we come to the 14th chapter, we find that which is yet future. But it is not the destruction of the old kingdom. It is rather the complete overthrow of the last holder of Gentile supremacy-the end of the "times of the Gentiles." These times of Gentile domination over the Jews - God's earthly people - began when God turned them over to Nebuchadnezzar for chastisement. At that time God permitted His earthly house to be destroyed, and a large portion of the people to be taken prisoners to Babylon. From that day to the present, the Jews have been subject to Gentile control. Even today with the Jews back in Palestine, they have not their old city with its notable sites; and their borders are being watched by a Gentile mixed armistice commission.

To understand the "times of the Gentiles," we should understand the second chapter of Daniel. There Nebuchadnezzar was given a most informative dream. The man seen in his dream is "the man of the earth," of Psalm 10:18. He is the Gentile overlord who came in in God's judgment upon His earthly people for their idolatry. This image had

a head of gold - Nebuchadnezzar;

breast and arms of silver - Medes and Persians;

belly and thighs of brass (or copper) - Grecians;

legs of iron - Romans;

feet of iron and clay mixed - the future revived Roman Empire.

We are plainly told by God that Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold. Each subsequent world empire was inferior to its immediate predecessor. But while grandeur decreased from gold to silver, to brass, to iron; strength increased, as iron is stronger than gold.

Now it is not without precedent in Scripture for God to call a subsequent state by its original name. Thus in Isa. 14:4: "That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon." This will be the last holder of Gentile supremacy which began with Nebuchadnezzar. And the last holder of that God-given supremacy (that does not say that the holder may not misuse the power) will be the beast of the revived Roman Empire. It is not improbable that this man is alive today, only awaiting the time for him to step forth publicly into the world arena. This man will have "a look more stout than his fellows," and will blaspheme God and those who dwell in heaven; perhaps this indicates that he will realize that the true Christians, the objects of his hateful rage, have gone to heaven and are out of his reach. He is described in Rev. 13 and 17.

This is the "king of Babylon" of Isa. 14 He will be allowed by God to reach the pinnacle of world power, which he will abuse as man reaches the culmination of the "day of man." In him and his joint workers, man's wickedness and defiance of God will reach its zenith, only to be toppled into the abyss of torment.

The spirit of the coming "king of Babylon" is already widely diffused in the world; it marks the "last days." Here is the language of the coming "beast" of the Roman Empire: "I will ascend into heaven... I will exalt my throne... I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north... I will ascend above the heights of the clouds... I will be like the Most High." vv. 13, 14. This is the language of a man; it is man in rebellion against God, in defiance of God. Five times he says, "I will." And is not this the character of the day? I will travel about the universe; I will go to the moon; I will not be deterred by any god; I am master of my own destiny. This at least is the language of the heart of man as he reaches for the summit, only to be plunged into the great vortex of the wrath of God. "The mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north" is the place assigned by God for His Messiah. See Psalm 48:2.

Then as we read in Dan. 2, the stone cut out of the mountain without hands (Christ coming in power) will smite the image upon its feet - that is, the last form of the Roman Empire - and break all the nations in pieces to make room for His world kingdom which will be administered by Him as man for God's glory. He, the only one who ever had a right to say, "I WILL," said, "I delight to do THY will, O My God." The fall of man began with man's exercising his own will, and man's day will conclude with defiance of God, and self-deification. God looked down before the division of languages and saw the works that the children of men were doing, and said, "Now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." How must God see the brazen effrontery of the present day!

In Isa. 14:9, Sheol (the Hebrew for the Greek word, hades) speaks in a soliloquy. Sheol denotes the souls separate from the bodies, but still conscious. When the beast is brought low, others in like state will speak in reverie, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof?" vv. 16, 17. "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day." Isa. 2:17.

Today it is "O taste and see that the Lord is good"; but soon will grace give way to judgment. As it is said in Isa. 14, "I will sweep it with the besom [broom] of destruction." At the present moment the Lord is waiting patiently for souls to be saved; but He has promised just retribution to this world for their sins, and for rejection of His Son who came in grace to save sinners. Judgment is decreed; it is on its way; the day is set, and the Judge appointed. We say with the poet to any unsaved soul, "Why wilt thou linger... God's wrath upon thee... judgment so nigh."

Marriage: Obedience to God in the Matter

The question is sometimes asked of us as to how far it is right for a Christian to be united in marriage with an unbeliever. By a Christian I mean a truly saved person; and by an unbeliever, one who has not faith in our Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of the soul.

Before saying what we have to say on this subject, we would remind the reader that the children of God are called and set apart unto the obedience of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:2). We understand the Apostle's words in this way, that just as the blessed Lord when on earth loved to do the will of God, and found in the doing of it His meat and drink, so should it be with the believer now. He does the will of God not by constraint as if he were under law, but delights to do it. God's will governs him. This being so, what determines a thing to be right or wrong is the will of God. The question, therefore, with which we began may be stated thus: Is it according to the will of God that a believer should be joined in marriage with one who is not?

You may find yourself from time to time, dear believer in Jesus, in circumstances that make you deeply feel your need of divine guidance. We know Him who has said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Jas. 1:5. But in reference to the matter we are now discussing, there is no need to wait on God for direction. His will is already known, and all that is needed on our part is an obedient heart. And it is a happy thing that on such a subject, where the affections if engaged are apt to warp the judgment, God has spoken in no uncertain voice. The hallowed pages of the Old Testament, and those of the New alike, deal with it; and the testimony of the one is confirmed and strengthened by the other.

Have you ever noticed in your reading that the Israelites of old were expressly forbidden to sow their fields with divers seeds? Why did God bid Moses tell them that? Could not such a matter be left to the discretion of the farmer who, knowing the nature of the soil, would be able to decide whether it would be to his advantage to sow with mingled seed or not? Why was it not permitted him to plow his land with an ox and an ass together? Could he not be trusted to see that no harm should come of it, and that the weaker vessel should not be overburdened and cruelly used? And for what reason were the people not to clothe themselves with garments made of woolen and linen? Were they not competent judges of what would be most comfortable and conducive to health? (Deut. 22:9-11.) All such reasonings were silenced by Jehovah's thrice-repeated, "Thou shalt not." Can you doubt that under these seemingly singular prohibitions lay a great abiding principle, too likely to be forgotten, and do you need to be told what that principle is?

Turning for a moment to 2 Cor. 6:14-18, we find the Spirit of God, by the pen of Paul, speaking to us on this wise: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their. God, and they shall be My people.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Place this passage by the side of that in Deut. 22:9-11, and each will throw light upon the other. What an illustration of that fine saying of Augustine, that the New Testament is enfolded in the Old, and the Old Testament unfolded in the New.

And this is clear and beyond dispute, that Moses, the man of God, solemnly warned the tribes of Israel against making marriages with the people of the land whither they were going. "Thy daughter shalt thou not give unto his son,

nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son," were his emphatic words. Full well did he foresee the result of such unholy unions. "They will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods." Vain for them to say that it would not be so. The enemy of God and of their souls might suggest that naught but good could come of such alliances; for thereby the idolatrous partner would be weaned from his idols to serve the living God. Delusive dream! - the child of disobedience and unbelief. Instead of good, nothing but evil should come of it; for Jehovah would be forgotten, and other gods served, until His anger would be kindled against them, and they should be suddenly destroyed (Deut. 7:1-4). Do any require an example of this? They may find one in high places, even in Solomon, of whose sin in this respect Nehemiah vehemently reminded the Jews, who had themselves trespassed against God in this very thing (Neh. 13:23-30).

If this was so with an earthly people, will any be bold enough to say that what was forbidden to them is allowed to the children of God now, heavenly as they are in birth, character, and hopes? Shall the Jew be denied such marriages and the Christian be suffered to contract them? Shall we sow our fields with mingled seed? Shall we yoke the ox and the ass together? or wear a garment of linen and woolen? And if any persist in doing this, can that soul hope to escape a just recompense of reward? "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal. 6:7, 8.

Two things God has bound together; namely, obedience to His will, and our true and lasting happiness. Surely we know God well enough to believe that He would not forbid us aught that was for our real good. It was here that Eve fell, and lent her ear to the serpent's lie. Every admonition, every warning addressed to us in God's Word, proceeds from the same infinite love that has thought of our eternal need and so richly provided for it. Shall we not bow

to His will, and seek from Him the needed strength to place our own beneath the foot? Many a plausible reason may be urged to tempt you to such a step. You think perhaps you could be very useful in that home whose door is thrown open to you, though the one who invites you is no lover and follower of your Lord. Other circumstances join to press you forward. Your present surroundings are not the most agreeable, and this would free you from them. Your friends are fewer than they were, and the years are passing by. Yes, and a thousand other pleas equally affecting might be found, but where is God in all this? Are you not His child? Does He not love and care for you? Shall He, without whom not a sparrow falls to the ground - shall He, I say, not carry you in His bosom, even to gray hairs and old age? Trust Him then in your weakness. He will be a Father unto you. Let His will be your pleasure and, whatever may be the consequences, leave them to Him. Obedient and subject, His blessing shall be yours, and you shall prove the truth of

that sustaining promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Heb. 13:5.

We conclude in borrowed words, more weighty than our own. "It is absolutely impossible that a Christian should allow himself to marry a worldly person, without violating his obligations toward God and toward Christ. If a child of God allies himself to an unbeliever, it is evident he leaves Christ out of the question, and that he does so voluntarily in the most important event of his life. It is just at such a moment when he ought to have the most intimate communion of thought, affection, and interest with Christ, that He is totally excluded! The believer is yoked with an unbeliever. He has chosen to live without Christ; he has deliberately preferred to do his own will and to exclude Christ rather than give up his will in order to enjoy Christ and His approbation. He has given his heart to another, abandoning Christ, and refusing to listen to Him. What a fearful decision! To settle to spend one's life thus, choosing for a companion an enemy of the Lord's! The influence of such a union is necessarily to draw the Christian into the world.

He has already chosen to accept that which is of the world as the most beloved object of his heart; and only things of the world please those who are of the world, although their fruit is death (Rom. 6:21, 23). What a dreadful position! Either to fail in faithfulness to Christ, or to have constantly to resist just where the tenderest affection ought to have established perfect unity. The fact is, that unless the sovereign grace of God comes in, the Christian man or woman always yields and enters little by little upon a worldly walk. Nothing is more natural. The worldly man has only his worldly desires. The Christian, besides his Christianity, has the flesh; and, further, he has already abandoned his Christian principles in order to please his flesh by uniting himself to one who does not know the Lord. The result of such an alliance is that he has not a thought in common on the subject which ought to be the most precious to his heart with the person dearest to him in the world. They will have nothing but quarrels; as it is written, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. If not, they must first yield to worldliness, and then take pleasure in it; but this sad result is lost sight of when they first place themselves in the position which renders it inevitable.... May God grant to the reader of these lines, and to all His children, to seek His presence day by day."

Miracles

It is very simple but important to see that miracles do not necessarily imply the setting aside laws. Man produces effects previously unknown by him - change them he cannot. The only difference is that man uses the laws themselves as force to produce the effect; God, the fiat of His will. He may act beyond laws without setting aside any existing one, because He can quicken and create. But the argument that there are laws, and God would not set aside His own, is perfectly without force. Laws which bind nature, I admit; laws which bind God, I do not.

My Delights Were With the Sons of Men: Part 1

Familiar as we are with the thought, it is after all a wonderful thing that the Son of God should come into this world of sinners, and still more wonderful that He should die for them. Into this world the Son of God came, fully bringing out what we are, by the way in which He was received; but at the same time His coming was full of joy and blessing for us. He was the immediate object of the express delight of the Father; then He died and rose again, and so brought us into the same place - into light and blessing with Himself.

It is a wonderful thing in the first place to have God come into the world - grace and truth in the world - and that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not a question of our duties, or of future judgment; but it is into the midst of this world of defilement, violence, corruption, evil, and enmity against God-

Into the Midst of it He Came.

What makes it so especially wonderful is, that He came as a babe (though miraculously born) as one of ourselves, a real, true man in this world of woe. Still there was more: for it is a totally different thing for God to deal with men as children of Adam, as to what they are, and what they can bring to God, and what their righteousness is - there is a great difference between looking at a man as responsible to God, and God dealing with him according to His own thoughts. This is the truth, when grace is rejected. It is not that God overlooks our responsibility; but it is a totally distinct thing for God to reveal and fulfill the thoughts of His own heart, and for Him to investigate those of ours. Dealing with man on the ground of what he is, and what he has done, goes on to judgment. In Christ He is revealing the thoughts of His heart.

Thus we get His own intentions before ever the world was- the purposes and counsels of God which were not in the first Adam at all, but in the last. That runs through the whole of Scripture from the very beginning. As soon as ever man had sinned

Grace Opens the Door

to reveal it; there was the Seed of the woman that was to bruise the serpent's head. Adam was not the seed of the woman. The promise did not refer to the first man at all, nor was it a promise to him; but it was a revelation that there was One coming, the Seed of the woman, who should bruise the serpent's head and destroy his power. Therefore there was ground for faith to lay hold upon. Promises and prophets were always referring to the same thing. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." "To Him give all the prophets witness." Prophets had to deal with men, and bring the law to their consciences; but here is One in whom all the thoughts and counsels of God rest, and in grace to poor sinners - "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." "All things are for your sakes," though all surely for God's glory.

Another thing in connection with it is, that it is

Only When We Come to Christ,

that we can reconcile the purposes of God in the full blessing of life, and man's responsibility. Heathens and Christians have disputed over it. In the garden of Eden there was the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; life on the one side, responsibility on the other. Man failed, ate of the tree of knowledge, and could not get to the tree of life. Now the law took up the same principle - here again you have responsibility and life - and said, Do this and live. The Lord Jesus Christ, the second Man, comes, does His Father's will in everything, and sovereign grace takes up our responsibilities; He takes the consequences of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and He is the life. He bears the consequences of responsibility in His own body on the tree. It perfectly meets all our need, and a great deal more - God is perfectly glorified - and we get eternal life in Him, and the joy and blessing of it all in the full result of all these counsels of God, to be conformed to the image of His Son - nothing short of this.

Though the responsibility is proved, yet to be like the Son of God in glory has nothing to do with my responsibility. No man could have dared to think of such a thing; but it was the mind and counsel of God in Christ. It did not come out till after the cross, for we could not have had any part in it but by the

cross. Before ever the world was, it was the thought of God to have a

Saved and Redeemed People

brought into the same place as, and associated with, Christ. Of course the pre-eminence is His. "Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." Who could pretend to be the "fellow" of the Son of God, if it were not the fruit of the work of the Son of God? The mind of God rested on Him in connection with man.

The first Adam is totally set aside, having been tested, tried, and proved, up to the cross; then the second Man is brought in. God never would set up the last Adam along with the first; the first Adam was a fallen man; the last was the Man of God's counsels, and He sets Him up instead, when we had failed in our responsibility. Titus lays down the other principle (Titus 1:1, 2, 3). "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Then it was the hope of eternal life. 2 Tim. 1:9 gives the same truth: "Who hath saved us,... not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." These thoughts and purposes of God were given us in Christ Jesus before ever the world was. Now if you look for a moment at Pro. 8, you find a remarkable passage connected with this. There I see that before the world was created, Christ was there as wisdom, daily the Father's delight, and having His delights in the sons of men ("delight" is the same thought as "good pleasure").

We have then man put on his responsibility, and the first thing he does is to fall; he distrusts God, and that before there was a lust. He listens to Satan, he questions the love of God, he eats the fruit, and he falls. Then comes the law; man sets up the golden calf, and broke it. Last of all

God Sends His Son-

"It may be that they will reverence My Son"; but "now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father"; "they cast Him out." That closed the history of responsibility.

It was when man was a sinner and had broken the law, that the Son of man came into this world in grace. "Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He calls it the "end of the world" because man's moral history is ended - grace is not ended. Man is not less intellectual than before; he can invent railroads, telegraphs, and I know not what; but what have these things to do with the moral character of God or man, or with heaven? Death has come in, and this is all over. There are no telegraphs in heaven! Men are blinding themselves; there is not one single link with God, of thought or feeling of heart, but plenty with this world. Remarkable persons there are, but all belongs to the fashion of this world that passeth away; and when man's breath goes forth, his thoughts perish. You may put up a monument to him, but it speaks of death! God has put this world into man's power, and he has invented much; but, are children more obedient, wives more faithful, servants more honest? And since we have had all these developments of intellectual capacity, taking it even on the lowest level, are people happier - more to be trusted? A world in which people cannot trust each other is a miserable world! What is called progress does not give more confidence from man to man, to say nothing of God. There is not a single thing in it connected with the soul.

Man's history was thus closed at the cross. First, lawlessness, then lawbreaking, and then enmity to God; then comes that blessed perfect work of the last Adam who met the need in His own Person and brought in the full accomplishment of the purposes of God. He has brought man into an entirely new sphere by death and resurrection, and eventually glory, and has settled the whole question of responsibility.

But God speaks to our hearts, and says - and I desire that you should take this to your hearts - Now you must understand what I am doing; I want to get your hearts into perfect confidence with Mine, by the testimony of what is in My heart; and as to your sins, I have settled that. This is the blessed truth, that when God could not bear my sins,

Instead of Putting Me Away, He Has Put My Sins Away,

and I stand before Him according to the value of that which was done in putting them away. What I have on my heart to show you is, how God brings us into the consciousness that when this work is done, the bad tree is done with. Not only had I sinned, but I was a sinner; and the question of what I am is perfectly settled. It is not character, for there are no two alike; each one of us has a different character. I may say that this is a humble trait in me; so I may say of a crab tree - the flowers are more beautiful than those on an apple tree - but what do I care for the pretty flowers when the fruit is bad?

I cut the whole thing down! That is what God has done. When

I have a spiritual judgment of the thing in my mind, I do not think of the pretty flowers on the wild tree, but of the fruit. So with man. God has sentenced the whole thing entirely; it is all cut down, and grafted with Christ, and then I expect fruit.

My Delights Were With the Sons of Men: Part 2

When I turn to look at the thoughts and counsels of God, I see His

"Delights Were With the Sons of Men."

His "good pleasure" was not in angels; they are witnesses of His keeping a creature unfallen, but we are witnesses of His redeeming a creature who has fallen. There is no purpose about angels; He did not take them up, but He became a man. Now we get the moral character of the world tested by Christ. He came in goodness, not requiring anything from men, but bringing goodness to them. If you look at His life, He came in a power which removed all the present effects of sin. Death disappeared before Him; devils, disease, sickness, all fled away. He comes in a power sufficient to remove all the effects of Satan's power; and He does it in grace. That is the character of Christ's work; there was no miracle that was not the expression of meeting a need in man, or of setting aside Satan's power. The cursing of the fig tree is the only exception; there, responsibility was in question. He cursed the fig tree, and it is the judgment of man. Israel was under the culture of God. He looked for fruit, found none, and says, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever." The flesh is judged, set aside, and my heart is brought to own it - brought to the acknowledgment of its sentence at the cross.

Let us look at the Lord, the second Man, coming into the world. I see the place that He gets in this world; but when the angels begin to celebrate His praises, they go much further. What is the sign of the Son of man coming into this world? First, of course (but on that I do not now dwell), the promises to Israel must be fulfilled; but this is the sign (Luke 2:12), "Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

An Inn is the Place Where a Man is Measured; it touches the pride of man. The first floor for the rich, the garret for the poor; there was no room for Him! No room in the great inn of this world! He could go into the manger when He was born, to the cross at the end, and meanwhile have not where to lay His head. Is that the way you estimate the blessed Lord Jesus Christ? We are accustomed from education to exalt Him, but that is the world's estimate still - there is no room for Him! The world is never changed till the heart is changed; it is just what it was then, with the addition since of the rejection of Christ. Is this then your moral estimate of the world, that the Son of God got no place in it? That here He began with the manger, and ended with the cross, and meanwhile had no place to lay His head?

The Son of God comes in grace, and that is what sounds from heaven when the angels praise. It is beautiful to see them delighting in man's blessing, though they themselves were passed by. They are celebrating His praise - "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Do our hearts understand and estimate this, that God's heart was delighting in the sons of men, not by a general mercy, but by His being a man? There I have the object, the Person, before God's eye. He has come down into such scenes as these, and God says, Sinner though you are, I want your heart to trust Me; and that you may do so, there is My Son come down, and as a babe.

God's love was beyond a human thought. Why do they say, "Glory to God in the highest"?

It is Because His Son has Become a Man.

It was not in the fact of the angel's glory, but when I get this lowly babe that has not a place in the world, then the angels come out with this acclamation.

There is nothing like this wonderful fact, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." I get the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, present with me, a poor sinful man, that I may know how God reached me first where I was. He has come down to me as a man, and to prove God's good pleasure in men. The result, "peace on earth," is not seen yet; but you have "glory to God in the highest." I have now this blessed truth; I have learned where and how God has met me. If a man was a leper, He touched him, when another would

have been defiled; He used His holiness in grace to reach the most defiled.

At the end of Matt. 3, He takes up this wondrous place for us: Jesus comes to be baptized of John, and says, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." He takes this place the moment the Word of God has met the hearts of these poor sinners; and He says, I must go with them, because the Spirit of God has wrought in their hearts. It is that which defines the place of the Person.

He Takes His Place Among Us;

and mark - He was always the same Person from the manger, at twelve years old, and all along His path. But now He cannot let His people take one step, in what God had wrought in their hearts, without saying, I go before, I go with you. The Christ that could tell the woman all that ever she did was not there for judgment. If a person was convicted of sin, the Lord had been there. What for? To judge me? No, to bring me to Himself in grace. Now mark the wondrous bringing out of this place: "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water; and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The Heaven Opened!

There was never a person there before on whom heaven could be opened, and to whom a voice, the Father's voice, could say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There was not a thing in Him, but what heaven could delight in. This to me is a wondrously blessed truth. In this world is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Man in whom is the Father's necessary, perfect delight, and He owns Him as His beloved Son; and then the Holy Ghost comes down to seal and anoint Him. I have the place man must have according to the counsels of God, and heaven is opened on the world.

Another thing comes out, if possible still more wonderful - man gets into this place which is in the thoughts and counsels of God for him. It is then that Satan is fully manifested. And here

I get the full revelation of the Trinity; but it is when man gets into this relationship, with the thoughts and actings of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all in connection with man, and heaven opened; and it is that all the counsels of God might not only be in counsel, but in fulfillment

and manifestation. To think that Christ the Son of God should thus come, not for a judgment on sinners,

But to Open Heaven for Sons!

It is the pattern place of the saints. When He had thus publicly taken His place in grace with us, then God says, I will own you as My Son, and the Holy Ghost comes down and seals and anoints Him. And "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts."

But whatever the grace, you will always find that the Person of Christ is maintained secure. Heaven is opened to Stephen, and he looks up and sees Christ there; he is full of the Holy Ghost, and he looks up to heaven. But heaven looks down on Christ. Here Stephen had an object, but Christ was the object of heaven. His Person is always maintained and secured. Thus we are brought into the same wondrous place as this wonderful One. We always find the Person of Christ pre-eminent, but we find the saints brought into a place where He can take us and call us the "fellows" of the Son of God, with whom we are brought into fellowship.

Take another example of this, the mount of transfiguration. Moses and Elias are shown in exactly the same glory as Christ,

But the Person and Place of the Son of

God are Most Fully Maintained.

Peter thought it a great thing for his Master to be like Moses and Elias; but when he says, "Let us make three tabernacles," the voice from the cloud says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." Again, in the case of the tribute money, Jesus says to Peter, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" "Of strangers." He was the great King of the temple; and yet, lest He should offend them, He disposed of creation to find money to give, and says, "for Me and thee," thus bringing man into association with Himself. His Person is maintained, but this blessed Son of God cares to win the confidence of our hearts.

But though thus in association with man, He was there alone. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone" (John 12:24). There are three glories that are His brought out there. He is Son of God (chap. 11); He is owned as Son of David, riding upon an ass; then the Greeks come up, and the Son of man must be glorified - that is the revelation of Psalm 8. But if He was to be the Son of man, He was to be over all the works of God as man - "He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him " As yet He is seated on His Father's throne, not on His own. He is Son and Heir. What He is doing now is gathering out the joint heirs. He is only waiting for that, and when they are all gathered He will come. And the thing that we are all waiting for is that He should come. Then we shall be like Him, and with Him in the glory. But He was alone until, as the corn of wheat, He fell into the ground and died. But the moment redemption is accomplished, He can say, "Go to My brethren." And, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father."

My Delights Were With the Sons of Men: Part 3

Mary Magdalene was watching at the sepulcher. She was so near to the heart of Christ that all the world to her was but an empty tomb when Christ was not there. Her heart was right, though her intelligence and her place were wrong. She was seeking the living among the dead! The disciples went to their own home - sad work! So Mary gets the message, "Go to My brethren." He calls His own sheep by name - "Mary." Then she thought she had Him back again; but He says to her, "Touch Me not" - You cannot have Me back for the kingdom yet. He lets Thomas touch Him, but He was telling far more to her. Now the moment that the redemption is accomplished, that the work is done, He can say, according to Psalm 22, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." Having been heard from "the horns of the unicorns" (a figure of speech of course of impalement, of intense suffering), His first thought is, I must have My brethren in the same place. He was alone till He died; now He was risen into the new place, and He can say, My Father and your Father, My God and your God. "In the midst of the congregation will I sing praise unto Thee." It is the song of perfect redemption, and

He Leads the Praises.

He puts them into the relationship, and when thus brought and gathered together, He sings in their midst. All this is fulfilled in John 20. Now if Christ is leading our praises, is redemption uncertain? I should be out of tune if I were not joining. Is He to sing one song of praise and I another? That would be discord, not harmony. He has brought us into the same place as Himself, and triumphantly He leads our hearts to join in the song He sings.

Let us see the full and blessed perfection of that work. We were under the power of sin and Satan, and God's wrath had come in. What do I see this blessed One doing? Displaying God. He puts Himself alone in our place, to finish and complete that work where God must be glorified on account of sin, and man brought to be saved. If God had passed over the sin of

Adam and Eve in the garden, I should have been able to say sin does not matter; but when I look at the cross I cannot. There I see God perfectly glorified in every respect by a Man, and so much the more because sin was there. If God had cut off Adam and Eve, it would have been righteous, but no declaration of His love. So it was not possible for the cup to pass from Him; and at the cross I get God's full dealing with sin in righteousness, but with infinite love. It is beyond our need. God's majesty was maintained where all had been trampled in the dust; and now the Son of man is gone into the glory of God, and is sitting on the Father's throne, the witness that love has had its way, that grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

I have the pattern then, when the Lord was upon earth, of my place with Him. I see the work done on the cross that was needed to put me into it, and then I learn what the work is worth. It is worth the glory of God in heaven. And now I have the place before God, which is the consequence of that. I can rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and I have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby I cry, "Abba, Father." He has brought us into the place that the counsels of God required. We are in

relationship

To God As a Father,

and Christ is the first-born among many brethren. He brings us into this in John 17: "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them;... that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Then speaking of the present state, He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." The Holy Ghost thus conducts down the fullness of the Father's love to the Son into our hearts. It is perfect.

It is all unutterable grace, and therefore humbles us to the dust. But, has not God a right to have thoughts for Himself? Surely He has. He is going to show "the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness toward us, through Christ Jesus," and is, so nothing is too good for me. Can you think that this is so? What else can I think? Shall I think my own thoughts when

He has sent His Son to die for me? The poor prodigal thought, "Make me as one of thy hired servants," but never says it when he comes to his father. He confesses his sins of course; but when he has had the kiss and has been clothed, there are no more thoughts of the son. All is the effect of the thoughts of the father, so that even the servants are rejoicing that the son is brought back. What the father thinks has come out. I can now say, with a purged conscience, I am nothing; but I am loved as Jesus is loved - not only saved by Him, but blest by Him. "Thou hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me." Is this where our thoughts are? He passes on everything that was His to us, though it may be we are toiling along down here. If I walk in the Spirit, if my mind is full of Christ, I have no occasion to think of myself at all. If I have not to judge myself, I can think of Him; but if I fail, then I have to humble and judge myself. And the normal state of a Christian is to do all "in the name of the Lord Jesus." It may be the commonest affairs of daily life, buying and selling, furnishing my house, or dressing my body; but it is a very simple rule and cuts away a great deal.

We are sanctified to

The Obedience of Christ.

Let me say one word on this obedience. I say of my child, who wants to go another way, but who yields to me, it is very pleasant to see such obedience; but it was not so with Christ. He never had a will to wish to go the other way. When the tempter came to Him, he said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." What was His answer? It was as though He said, Nay, I am a servant; I

cannot command, I obey; "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word... of God." That is the obedience of Christ. The Father's will was His motive for everything. There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them; there is no "must" for me, but Christ's will. I have to learn what His will is; for we are made epistles of Christ, and the path we are to walk in is to manifest

the life of Jesus in our bodies. Everything I do should be the expression of the allegiance of my heart to Christ, and the manifestation of Him to others. The standard of walk is, what is "worthy of the Lord," not of man. Sometimes it is very difficult to be peaceful, patient, gentle, when a man wrongs and insults me; but were you not the enemy of God, and did not God forgive you when you

were His enemy? Well, you forgive your enemy. I quite understand the difficulties, but we have the blessed privilege of walking as He walked. If you want to do this, go and study Christ, learn what His path was down here, after you have learned your place in Him on high. It is a great comfort that, in looking at Christ, I not only see the thing I ought to be, but I get the thing I ought to be, "grace for grace." "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." There is real growth there, but in likeness to Christ; and it ought to be growth every instant.

We are in this place of Christ then before God; and what I should press upon you is to

Study Christ,

so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and encouragement, or that so sanctifies- nothing which so gives the living sense of divine love, that gives us courage. The Lord give us this courage, and enable us to study Him. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."

Nehemiah 8

This chapter both teaches and illustrates a truth which pervades the Book of God, and on which our salvation depends - that grace prevails; the work of God, through the blood 'of Christ, over the work of Satan, sin, and death; the gospel of peace, over all the terrors and accusations of the conscience.

It was thus in the story and in the experience of Adam. He ruined himself and retreated from the presence of God, a sinner; but the voice of mercy, revealing the mystery of the bruised and bruising Seed of the woman, followed him into his guilty distance and drew him back to God in peace and assurance.

The end of all flesh again came before God in the day of Noah. But the ark which God had prescribed, and which faith had adopted, rode above the water floods.

Judgment entered the land of Egypt, having title against every house there, the Israelite's as well as the Egyptian's. But the 'blood on the lintel, which grace had prescribed and which faith had used, sheltered the house which had thus been let into the secret of God.

The thunders of Sinai made all the host to tremble. Even Moses could not stand before them. He quakes and fears exceedingly. He can no more stand there than the feeblest Israelite. But he is taken above the place of the thunders, to the place where Christ is revealed to him in the shadows of good things to come; and there he is with unveiled face.

After this, judgment enters Canaan, as it had before entered Egypt. But grace again prescribed what faith again used; the scarlet line was now hung out, as the blood had then been sprinkled, and judgment passed by.

It was after this same pattern, in some sort, all through the times of Israel; for during that age, Mosaic or legal or conditional as it was, there were ordinances that bespoke the old truth, the truth that had been taught from the beginning. The temple set aside the sabbath then; that is, the priest did the business of the temple on the sabbath day. In other words, the service of grace prevailed over the demands of law (Matt. 12).

In due season, the gospel comes forth to reveal this great, this earliest, truth in all its glory; for this is the gospel in the blood of Jesus - "Grace triumphant reigns." It reigns, through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

This beautiful 8th of Nehemiah has a vivid illustration of this same truth which thus, as we see, pervades, and I may add, necessarily pervades, the Book of God.

The law was read in the presence of the congregation of Israel at Jerusalem on the first day of the seventh month. That day was the mystic or typical day of revival, the day of the blowing of trumpets, and of the new moon. (See Lev. 23; Psalm 81)

The people listening to the law on such a day as this are commanded, by those who then sat in Moses' seat, to let their minds be formed by the day, and not by the law. That is, they were told not to mourn, but to be merry. Very right that they should mourn, if they heard the law alone; but, hearing it on such a day as the first day of the seventh month, they heard it as in the presence of the grace and quickening and salvation of God, and their place and duty was to have their souls formed by grace. Right, again I say, it is, nay needful, that we should be brokenhearted in the sense of our sin and of our ruin, and under the hearing of the law; but when the healing of God visits us, we are to learn the joy that healing imparts, and have our minds framed accordingly. If the law and the first day of the seventh month come together, as here - if the service of the temple and the sabbath are in collision - the claim of the law must give place to that of that mystic day, and the sabbath yield to the temple, as we learn from Matt. 12:5.

We may remember our condition as sinners, but we are to enjoy our condition as saved (Eph. 2:11-18).

Booths were made in the feast of tabernacles. But they were only remembrancers, in order to enhance the present joy of the tribes of the Lord in the cities and villages and land of their possession, telling them, as such booths did, that they had once traversed a wilderness. So again, in the ordinance of the basket of first fruits. That his father had been a Syrian ready to perish was, on the occasion of that ordinance, to be remembered by the Israelite. But his well filled basket was at that moment in his hand and under his eye, that he might worship in the sense of a present goodly inheritance. (See Lev. 23:33-34; Deut. 26:1-11.)

And so here, in this beautiful chapter. The law rightly caused the people to mourn, but the day on which it was now read to them being the first day of the seventh month, mourning under the law must give place to joy. Yea, and more than that. It must now form the mind and character of the people.

And blessed it is to see grace forming character. (See Titus 2:11-14.) We may see it doing so in each of the cases I have noticed.

What, let me ask, formed Adam's character as we see him and his company in Gen. 4? It was the redemption he had learned. He is there seen as a stranger on the earth, and a worshiper of God.

What formed Noah's character in the ark? The deliverance he was then proving. We do not find him in the spirit of fear, with an uneasy mind handling the gopher boards of his house to prove whether they were keeping the waters out; but we see him opening the window to take a look out, in expectation of the new world.

What formed Israel's character in the paschal night of Egypt? They were feeding on the lamb whose blood at that moment was sheltering them. They were doing this in liberty of heart, and not anxiously thinking of the scene outside, whether indeed the angel had passed by their door.

What gave Moses a character when he was up with God above and beyond the fires of Sinai? He was there with unveiled face at home, as with the Lord.

What gave Rahab her character after she had hung out the scarlet line? She got as many under the salvation of it as ever she could, desirous to share her own well-assured and enjoyed blessing.

And what characterizes Nehemiah's congregation here as soon as they learn the mystery of the first day of the seventh month? They send portions to others, eat the fat and drink the sweet themselves, and learn the lesson of glory, now standing in the salvation of grace.

And I now further ask, What is to give the believer his character, what is to form his mind and his experience? Surely, the consciousness of being quickened and saved and accepted. He is to know himself brought nigh by the blood of Christ; though he may remember that he was a Gentile, a sinner, uncircumcised, far off, without God, without hope, a child of wrath even as others. The joy of the Lord is to be his strength, as it was to be Israel's in the day of Neh. 8 - a strength that shall deliver from self-seeking and the love of the world in its vanity and covetousness, leading him with largeness of heart, as it did Israel then, to seek to make others as happy as himself, and to wait for the glory, or the heavenly feasts of tabernacles.

For, as the gospel prevails over the law in the progress of the dispensations of God, so is it to prevail in the heart and conscience of the people of God. Many of us may be feeble, hindered by nature and by Satan, and the Lord knows how to comfort the feeble and to support the weak; but still we must recognize this which we speak of to be His way, and recognize it also as what ought to be our way.

God is to be apprehended by us in grace. We are to know Him as love, and find our dwelling in Him, on the title of the sacrifice which He Himself has accomplished in Jesus. The law may have taught us to deal with Him as righteous, and to think of Him as a judge - and He is all that, it is true, for all glories belong to Him, whether of power or of holiness, or of majesty or of truth, and of all beside. But the gospel teaches us to know Him likewise in grace, gives us communion with Him as Savior, and forms our character accordingly.

No Root

Some received the word with joy (Luke 8:13). This was a proof that the conscience was untouched; for when that is reached it is anything but joy, until forgiveness is known. The feelings may be moved for a time, and the word be listened to with a joy which will give place to sorrow. The reason truth is thus flippantly taken up with joy is because there is no root, and so it is received in joy and given up in trouble.

Our Blessed Hope

In the 14th chapter of John there is a very beautiful setting forth of the blessed hope. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me." At first it sounds very peculiar that the Lord should here tell believing disciples to believe in Him. I do not think it means that they were merely to increase in their former faith. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." I take it that the force is this: You believe in God though you have not seen Him; believe in Me, who am going to become invisible to you. I, who have been your visible Master, your Teacher present in your midst, am going to leave the world. I am going, therefore, to enter a condition of invisibility as far as you are concerned, because I shall be no longer on earth, but in heaven.

This follows most simply and naturally from the words of the next verse - "In My Father's house are many mansions." It is not that the Lord was going to have done with His body; He will never do that to all eternity. In that sense, therefore, it will never be a question of absolute invisibility, but only relative - to those disciples, certainly so. And this is necessary for Christianity.

If I were asked to give in very few words one specific difference between Christianity and Judaism, I would say that Judaism was a religion of sight; Christianity, of faith. We walk not by sight, but by faith. Here then, now, to test the truth of it all, the Lord enters into that condition, but not by becoming a spirit. The Lord is not a spirit; He has a spiritual body. An angel is a spirit, but the Lord Jesus is not. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones."

We must not at all allow such a notion as that the Lord Jesus, in His risen condition, has not flesh and bones - of course He has. He has no longer a life in the blood, because this is a life in connection with earth, a life which lives by food, air, etc. The Lord is capable of taking food. He partook of a piece of honeycomb and a fish; but this was not because He required them, but because they required to learn that He was truly risen from the dead. His we know, is a spiritual body glorified in heaven. And so shall we be, but the Lord here speaks of our faith meanwhile. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Although He had taken a body, and although He was to take that body after the resurrection, still He would be invisible by going to heaven. It is the Christian's faith contrasted with Jewish sight of the Messiah reigning visibly over the earth. "In My Father's house are many mansions." He was going thither.... "I go to prepare a place for you."

The Pathway and Its End

We are called to follow Christ, and to glorify Him. The Apostle Peter, in speaking of this blessed pathway, enumerates in his second epistle the moral qualities which should characterize us (2 Pet. 1:5-7). And in the end of verse 10 he adds, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." One may compare the entrance into the glory of the kingdom of our Lord, of the Christian who practices these things, to a fine vessel entering the home harbor after a long voyage, deeply laden with gold and precious stones. How different to one who, though saved by faith, pursues a pathway of negligence, to find at the end of his career, though he himself is preserved in mercy by the grace of God, his cargo (so to speak) is valueless and only fit to be burned (1 Cor. 3:15). May the gracious Lord exercise every soul who is satisfied with the fatness of His house, that he may be found practicing these things, so blessedly exhibited to perfection in the pathway of Christ Himself, while he looks for the accomplishment in the eternal future of the exceeding great and precious promises of God.

But do not be surprised, if you serve the Lord and pursue such a pathway, should you meet in some measure, or in some way, with a similar experience to the Apostle Paul's (2 Cor. 11:23-27). All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution (2 Tim. 3:12). It is impossible to be faithful to Him, and not suffer in some form or other at the hand of man.

Peace

At the birth of the Lord the earth was saluted with words of peace. "Peace on earth," the angels proclaimed in the fields of Bethlehem.

This, however, was but salutation. It was not the authoritative pronouncement of peace. It was like the word which the Lord afterward put into the lips of His twelve, or rather of the seventy, in Luke 10, when sending them out; for He then told them, into whatsoever house they entered, first to say, "Peace be to this house." This was a salutation, a wishing well, the proclamation of a good will toward the house, not an authoritative pronouncement of peace; that would rather follow on its being found that the son of peace was there.

Upon the resurrection of the Lord, however, we have the other thing. "Peace be unto you," the risen Savior said to His disciples, thus returned to them; and when He said that, He showed them His hands and His side. He gave them to read their title to peace. Peace was now not merely wished, but authoritatively pronounced, conveyed to them on the warrant of the cross. Jesus now gave peace to them, because He had already made it for them. And this is the peace that we, Who are in it, may testify to our fellow sinners. We do not merely, like the commissioned seventy, say, "Peace be to this house," as saluting it, or wishing it well; but we proclaim it to be the sure, settled, purchased peace which sinners have title to in the blood of the cross.

Peace in Heaven Now and Then

When Jesus was born, angels announced it to the poor of the flock, and the heavenly host praised God saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace - good pleasure in men. Such will be the result, and the angels anticipate it without reference to the hindrances or to the means. But Christ was rejected here below; and the disciples say, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest."

When the question of power is raised, in order to establish the kingdom, there will be war then (Rev. 12). In fact there can be no peace in heaven till Satan and his host are cast out. Then will the King be established in power, when the obstacles shall be taken out of the way. Psalm 118 celebrates this, His mercy enduring forever, spite of all the people's sins. It is the song of the latter day. If God sends peace to the earth in the Person of His Son, it is in vain not as to the accomplishment, but as to present effect.

Meanwhile, to faith there is peace in heaven, and when this is asserted in power against the evil spirits in heavenly places, there will be blessing indeed. Oh, what a time it will be! What a relief to the work of God's grace! For now it is ever toil and watching. What, always? Yes, always; and that is not the rest. But then it will be, as sure as God takes His great power and reigns. "I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens." etc. (Hos. 2). There will be an unbroken chain of blessing, and that too on earth. It will not be one "building, and another inhabiting," but blessing flowing down and around to the lowest and the least. Till then, as now, the word is, suffering in grace, not victorious power. Never fear persecution; it will make our face shine as an angel's. But God could not be silent if His own Son were cast out. He might leave Him to suffer, but not without a testimony. If there were no others, the stones would speak. And so if we are faithful and near to Christ, this will turn for a testimony.

Lectures on Philipians

Thus, this epistle brings us to a sort of transition. It supposes the assembly in ecclesiastical order. But the Apostle's absence in person seems to be intended of God to prepare the Church for the absence of apostles entirely. Thus God graciously gave the Church a kind of preparation for their removal from the scene. Practically, even while Paul was on the earth, he was shut out from them, and gone from the scene, as far as regarded apostolic vigilance. The time was coming when there would be no longer apostolically appointed bishops and deacons. The Spirit of God was, it would appear, thereby accustoming the Church to find in God the only stable means of support when apostles would be no longer within reach of those who used to look to them and to claim their wisdom in their difficulties. But though the Apostle was not there, they had the "bishops and deacons," not a bishop and several deacons, and still less bishops and presbyters (or, priests) and deacons, but several of the higher spiritual guides as well as of the lower.

In those days a bishopric was not a great worldly prize, but a serious spiritual care which, however excellent an employment, was no object of ambition or means of lucre. "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"; but it called for such self-denial, such constant trial by night and day, deeper even in the Church than from the world without, that it was by no means a thing for the best qualified in the Spirit to rush into, but to take up with the utmost gravity, as that to which he was called of God. For this, among other reasons, the Church never pretended to choose or constitute a bishop. It was invariably by apostolic authority. One or more apostles acted in this - not necessarily Paul only or the twelve. It might be a Barnabas; at least we find in certain cases Paul and Barnabas acting together in choosing elders or bishops. But this may show what a delicate task it was. The Lord never gives it to any person except an apostle or an apostolic man (that is, a man sent out by an apostle to do that work for him, such as Titus and perhaps Timothy). But there the Scripture account closes; and while we have provision for the Church going on, and the certainty of gifts supplied to the end, there is no means laid down for perpetuating the appointment of elders and bishops.

Was there, then, forgetfulness of ordinary need on the Apostle's, nay, on God's part? For this is really what the matter comes to; and he who supposes that anything of the kind was omitted in Scripture thus carelessly, in effect impeaches the faithful wisdom of God. Who wrote Scripture? Either you resort to the wretched notion that God was indifferent and the apostles forgot, or, acknowledging that Scripture flows from the highest source, you have no escape from the conclusion that God was intentionally silent as to the future supply of elders or bishops. But the God who knew and ordered everything from the beginning forgot nothing; on the contrary, He expressly, in His own wisdom, left no means, in the foreseen ruin of Christendom, for continuing the appointment of elders and deacons. Was it not then desirable, if not necessary, for churches to have such? Surely, if we reason thus, apostles were as loudly called for as the lower officials.

The fact is most evident that the same God who has seen fit to withhold a continuous line of apostles, has not been pleased to give the means for a scriptural continuance of bishops and

deacons. How is it then that we have no such officers now? Most simple is the answer. Because we have no apostles to appoint them. Will you tell me if anybody else has got them? Let us at least be willing to acknowledge our real lack in this respect; it is our duty to God, because it is the truth; and the owning it keeps one from much presumption. For in general Christendom is doing, without apostles, what is only lawful to be done by or with them. The appointment of elders and deacons goes upon the notion that there is an adequate power still resident in men or the Church. But the only scriptural ordaining power is an apostle acting directly or indirectly. Titus or Timothy could not go and ordain elders except as and where authorized by the apostles. Hence when Titus had done this work, he was to come back to the Apostle. He was not in anywise one who had invested in him a certain fund to apply at all times where and how he pleased. Scripture represents that he was acting under apostolic guidance. But after the apostles were gone, not a word about the power acting through these or other delegates of the Apostle.

God forbid that we should pretend either to make an apostle or to make light of his absence! It is more humble to say, We are thankful to use what God has given and whatever God may continue to give, without pretending to more. Is there not faith, and lowliness, and obedience in the position that acknowledges the present want in the Church, and that simply acts according to the power that remains, which is all sufficient for every need and danger? The true way to glorify God is not to assume an apostolic authority that we do not possess, but to act confiding in the power and presence of the Holy Ghost who does remain. It was distinctly the Lord Himself who, working by the Holy Ghost, acted upon all the saints, and who put each of them in that particular place in the body that He saw fit. It is not a question of our drawing inferences from a man's gifts that he is an apostle. To be an apostle required the express, personal call of the Lord in a remarkable way; and without this there never was adequate ordaining power, personally or by deputy.

As this may help to meet a question that often arises in the minds of Christians, and suggested by a verse such as we have before us, I have thought it well to meet the difficulty, trusting to the Word and Spirit of God.

The Apostle, then, introduces himself and Timothy as "the servants of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus." It is not exactly "to the church," as in writing to the Corinthians or the Thessalonians, but to "all the saints." We may gather from this that he is about to speak of what is individual rather than of what belonged to them as a public assembly; but it is not, as in Romans, on the basis of redemption. He was going to enlarge on their walk with God, saluting them as usual with the words, "grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Before he opens the epistle, the Apostle breaks forth in thanksgiving to God. "I thank my God," an expression often used in this epistle. It also is individual, knowing now the God in whom he trusted, besides being the expression of affection and of nearness. First, says the Apostle, "I thank my God upon my whole remembrance of you" (for such is the true force), "always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy." This leads me to make the observation, that nearness to God is always accompanied by the heart overflowing with the joy which His realized presence necessarily produces, as well as by a spirit of intercession for the objects of God's love on earth. There may be at the same time the deepest exercise of spirit, and not without the keenest pain; because in the presence of God every sin, sorrow, and shame is more truly and fully felt. What

God is, is known, and therefore perfect peace; what man is, and therefore the failure is realized and the dishonor brought on Christ is entered into by the Spirit. But here joy is the prevalent and abiding feeling, the great characteristic effect of the presence of God imprinted on the soul, where the conscience is void of offense toward God and man.

Not that even Paul could thus speak of every assembly, or every saint of God - far from it. His whole remembrance of the Philippian saints opened the sluices of thanksgiving to God. Yet, from the beginning, there was need of prayer; and he was continually supplicating for them all, and this with joy, "for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." What a wonderful thing that a man, though he were the great Apostle of the Gentiles, could so feel, and that there were here below saints of whom he could so write! Alas! in these selfish days we little know what we have lost, and whence we are fallen. He never prayed for these Philippians but with joy, and yet he was constantly bearing them before God. Had the Apostle been here, could he have thought so of us? Yet, wonderful as it was, it was the simple truth; and it is wholesome for our souls to judge ourselves by such a standard.

Another feature of the epistle to the Philippians is, that the practical condition of the soul is here developed more fully than anywhere else; and this not so much doctrinally as in action and experience. The Apostle lays bare his own motives as well as walk, and even Christ's also. Hence it is peculiarly in this epistle that we find displayed the exercise of individual Christian life. Here we have the power of the Spirit of God acting in the soul of the believer, enabling him to realize Christ in the heart and path here below. But what gave rise to this character of instruction? What circumstances brought it out? The absence of the Apostle from the Philippians, and from his ordinary ministry, while he was imprisoned at Rome. It was not, as at Corinth, that his absence brought out their ostentatious vanity, and party spirit, and worldly laxity, and quarrellings. It led the Philippians to feel the necessity of living increasingly with, and for, and to Christ. There was nothing for it but each one looking, and helping his brother to look, to the Lord Himself. This being the effect produced, the Apostle was full of joy in thinking of them. He had been several years away, and externally in the most dismal circumstances himself; but his joy was not dimmed one whit. On the contrary, there is not another epistle so full of actually tasted happiness; and yet there was never an epistle written when all on earth seemed more clouded and filled with sorrow. So thoroughly is Christ the one circumstance that rules all others to the believer.

When moving about and seeing both the devotedness of the saints, and sinners everywhere brought to God, one can understand the Apostle's continual joy and praise. But think of him in prison for years, chained between two soldiers, debarred from the work that he loved, and others taking advantage of his absence to grieve him, preaching the very gospel out of contention and strife; and yet his heart was so running over with joy that he was filling others with it!

Such is the character of the epistle to the Philippians. If there be a witness of the power of the Spirit of God working through human affections, through the heart of a saint on earth, in the midst of all weakness and trial, it is found here. It is not the picture of a man down under trying circumstances, for under them he never is, but consciously more than conqueror. Not that he never knew what it was to be cast down. He who wrote the second epistle to the Corinthians fully experienced all that which God in His grace made to be a kind of moral preparation for bringing out the comfort that was needed by the saints then and at all times. But this epistle shows us that

there is not

a single symptom of weariness any more than of perturbation of spirit. You could not tell from it that there was any flesh at all, though he was one who fully took the flesh into account elsewhere, as in Romans and Corinthians, where you have a fearful picture of what may be the condition of the Christian and of the Church.

Not only in Philippians is there no trace of this, but neither is there the dwelling upon our privileges and blessings, as in Eph. 1 What we have is the enjoyed power of the Spirit of God, that lifts a man day by day above the earth, even when he is walking upon it; and this by making Christ everything to the soul, so that the trials are but occasions of deeper enjoyment, let them be ever so many and grave. This is what we specially want as Christians in order to glorify God; and this is what the Holy Ghost urges on us when we have entered into our proper Christian birthright, individually, as in Romans, and our membership of the Church, as in Corinthians, and our blessing in heavenly places in Christ, as in Ephesians.

Then comes the question, How am I enjoying and carrying out these wondrous privileges, as a saint of God upon earth? To suppose that this is a hard question, and gendering bondage, would be to impeach the perfect goodness of God, as well as to fall into a snare of the devil. What God desires is that we should be blest yet more than we are. He would thus make us more happy. The epistle to the Philippians is one to fill the heart with joy, if there be an eye for Christ. He thanks his God for them for their "fellowship with the gospel from the first day until now." What going out of heart, and sustained vigor! It is not now "the fellowship of His Son," as in 1 Corinthians Corinthians, which indeed would be true of a Christian under any circumstances. So if Satan had contrived to turn a saint again to folly and sin, the Holy Ghost could remind him that God is faithful by whom he was called unto the fellowship of His Son. And can He have fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness? This is the reason why we should cry to God that, if He have called any to the fellowship of His Son, He would not allow the enemy to drag them into the dirt, but rouse their conscience to their grievous inconsistency.

But there is more. Here it is their fellowship with the gospel, not merely as a blessed message they had received themselves, but in its progress, conflicts, dangers, difficulties, etc. It does not necessarily mean preaching it, but, what was as good, or in itself even better - their hearts thoroughly in and with it. Need I hesitate to say that whatever may be the honor put upon those called to spread the gospel, to have a heart in unison with the gospel is a portion superior to any services as such? Most simply and heartily were the Philippians' affections thus bound up with the gospel; they identified themselves first and last with its career. This was really fellowship with God in the spread of His own glad tidings through the world. The Apostle valued such hearts especially. Nothing less than the sustaining power of the Spirit of God had so wrought in these dear Philippians.

The way in which the gospel had reached them we hear in Acts 16. It began with Paul in prison, when his feet were in the stocks; yet withal, in the midst of shame and pain, he and his companion singing praises to God at midnight! And here we have him, if alone, again a prisoner; and the praises of God are again heard-unwontedly in the great city of Rome. The Philippians were far away; but he could hear them, as it were none the less, singing praises to God, even as he was singing praises to God for them. It was the same blessed fellowship with the gospel that had

characterized not him only, but them too, from the very first day until now.

Lectures on Philippians

Chapter 1:6-17

But he goes further, and says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will complete it against the day of Jesus Christ." Remark the ground of his confidence. In the Corinthians it is because God was faithful. In Galatians, where there was a still a more serious trial, the Apostle says he was in doubt of them, till he thinks of the Lord; and then he has his heart lit up with a comforting hope that they were Christians after all. People that were practically slighting (little as they thought or intended it, yet virtually slighting) Christ for worldly elements - he could hardly understand how such could be Christians. To turn from a crucified and risen Christ to the rites of an earthly religion is worse than bare earthliness, destructive as this is. Here it is another thing. His confidence is grounded not merely on what God is in character and counsel, but on what he saw of Christ, by the Holy Ghost, in them. Thinking of what they had been and were then, could he hesitate to recognize the evident handiwork of God through His Son? He saw such an unequivocal enjoyment of Christ, and such an identification of interests with Him upon earth, that his confidence was not only in a general way that he would see them with Christ by-and-by, but in the solidity of the work of God in them all the way through. He who had begun in them a good work, he was sure, would complete it unto (or, against) the day of Jesus Christ (v. 6).

"Even as it is meet" (or, "just") "for me to think thus of you all, because ye have me in your heart." v. 7. Such is the version given in the margin, which here prevents the right force of the verse. It was due to them, he means, not merely because he loved them, but he felt and had proof that they had him in their hearts. A blessed bond for hearts at all times is the name of Christ and His gospel. How continually, too, one finds the state of the saints accurately measured and set in evidence by the state of their affections toward anyone that is identified with the work of God on the earth! There will be the strongest possible attempt of Satan to bring an alienation of feeling and a turning of the saints against all such, whether absent or present. It was so in the days of the Apostle Paul; those who were simply cleaving to the Lord slave to him also. It was the very reverse of a mere fleshly feeling, which was sought by his adversaries who, flattering others, were flattered in turn. Paul was perfectly sensible that the more abundantly he loved, the less he was loved; and what a handle this gave to Satan to turn away the saints from the truth.

False teachers and men who may be really converted, but whose flesh is little judged, and whose worldliness is great, always seek to win persons as a party round themselves, by sparing the flesh and humoring the natural character, so as at last to have their own way without question. (2 Cor. 11:19, 20.) The Apostle's object was to win to Christ. But faithfulness called him often to tread on what was painful to one and another. As long as love flowed freely and Christ was looked to, it was well; but when mortified feeling wrought, because they did not mortify their members on the earth, the tendency was constantly toward making parties, divisions, offenses, the forerunners of yet worse evil. But if the Apostle was one who scorned such a thought as gathering a party round himself, these saints had him in their hearts.

He valued this love. How was it shown? "Inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all partakers of my grace." They were casting themselves, heart

and soul, into the activities and sufferings of the grace of God in the Apostle. Did his bonds make them ashamed or suspicious? To have a friend in jail never was of good report. Did they begin to say in themselves, He must have been doing something wrong because he was a prisoner? On the contrary, seeing that the Apostle Paul had come into the deepest suffering, they looked upon it as the highest honor. If he had gone up to Jerusalem, it was not to spare himself; and though this visit may have been a mistake, certainly it was one of which no person ought to speak lightly. It was a thorough self-sacrifice every step of the way. The Apostle, though he was now as a consequence a prisoner in Rome, never yields to a spirit of regret, still less of repining, but regards all in the good hand of God as furthering the cause of Christ. Did not, for example, his own bonds turn to praise of God? There he was perfectly happy, perhaps never so happy as thus bound. The Philippian saints understood what it was to draw from the divine spring; and consequently their hearts were with him in joy as well as sympathy. Did it weaken the Apostle's love for them personally? "God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." v. 8. Happiness as the Lord's prisoner dulled none of his warmest feelings of love toward them.

But besides all this, his love for them made him intensely solicitous about their real wants, and he turns to the Lord for them accordingly. "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment." v. 9. He wished that they should love (not less, but) with a fuller knowledge and an exercised intelligence. Love, or charity, is the basis, else there would be no building up; this being laid and abounding, full knowledge, instead of puffing up, guides and guards. The more the intelligence is, if it be real and spiritual, the greater the desire to grow in it. Those who do not see anything in Scripture as an object for constant search, and growth, and desire after more, are those, it is to be feared, who see scarce anything in it that is divine. Directly it is discerned that there is infinite light in it, desire to know more and more is a necessary consequence. But it is for practice. And this epistle shows us spiritual progress in the Apostle and in the saints more fully than any other, while it is the epistle that shows us the strongest desire after going on. This is what we know from experience. Whenever we begin to be satisfied with what we have got, there is an end of progress; but when we make a little real advance, we want to make more. Such was the case with these saints, who are prayed for therefore, "That ye may approve things that are excellent," etc. They needed to grow in intelligence, in order that they might be able to judge of things, and so lay hold of what was more excellent.

"That ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ." v. 10. Wonderful thought! The Apostle actually prays for these believers as if he conceived it possible that, growing in love and intelligence, they might walk the path of faith till the day of Christ without a single false step; Paul's marvel, perhaps, would have been that we should count it wonderful. Alas! we know we fail day by day, because we are unspiritual. Why do we let out a vain word or show a wrong feeling? Because we are not realizing the presence and the grace of God. No progress in the things of God will ever keep a person - nothing but actual nearness to Him and dependence on Him. What is a Christian, and what the condition and experience which Scripture recognizes for him here below? He is by grace brought, in virtue of Christ's blood, into the presence of God; who has a power within him, the Holy Ghost, and a power without to lean upon, even the Lord Jesus Christ, and this uninterruptedly and always. Such is the theory; but what is the practice? As far as it is realized, the path is without a single stumble. And let us remember that such is the only sanctioned path for all saints. It belongs not of right to some advanced souls. It is what every Christian has to desire. We

can, therefore, readily understand how souls, hearing such thoughts as these, should embrace the idea of a state of perfection. But though the scheme is erroneous and utterly short of our true standard in the second Man, the last Adam, a Christian ought never contentedly to settle down in the thought that he must fail and sin day by day. What is this but calm acquiescence with dishonoring Christ? If we do fail, let us at least always say, It was our own fault, our own unwatchfulness, through not making use of the grace and strength we have in Christ. The treasure there is open for us, and we have only to draw upon it; and the effect is a staid, calm, spiritual progress, the flesh judged, the heart overflowing with happiness in Christ, the path without a stumble till the day of Christ.

More than this, let it be remarked, he prays that they might be filled with the fruit of righteousness, not merely such and such righteous acts in detail, but the blessed product of righteousness by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God (v. 11). There is no thought of, nor room for, imposing the law here, which is rather shut out from being the proper standard for the Christian. There is another, who is both our new object and our rule, even Christ Himself, the image of God, the life and power of fruit bearing for the believer. What a rule for our practical, everyday walk!

From the introduction, which bears ample witness of the Apostle's love in the Spirit to the Philippian saints of his confidence in them and his earnest desire for them, we enter on the first great topic on which he writes - his own condition at Rome. He felt that it was needful to lay it before them in the light of the Lord, not merely because of their affectionate solicitude, not only again because of evil workers, who would gladly make it a handle against himself and his ministry; but chiefly with the holy and loving end of turning it to their profit and even their establishment in the truth and diligence in the work and singleness of purpose in cleaving to the Lord.

Indeed the Apostle had every ground to expect a blessing through that which Satan was perverting to injure souls. It had already issued in good fruit as regarded the work of the gospel; and he looks for just as good fruit as to all that concerned himself, either in the present or in the future, whether by life or by death. Such is the confidence and joy of faith. It overcomes the world; it realizes Christ's victory over the enemy. What can man, what can Satan, do with one who is careful about nothing, but in everything gives thanks? What can either avail to disconcert one whose comfort is in God and who interprets all circumstances by His love, with unshaken reliance on His wisdom and goodness?

Such a one was the Apostle, who now proceeds to turn for the salvation of the saints at Philippi, so tenderly loved, what the malice of Satan and of his instruments would be sure to catch at greedily as a means of alarming some and stumbling others, as if God too cared not for His Church or His servant. It is experience we have unfolded rather than doctrine; it is the rich, and mellow, and mature fruit of the Spirit in the Apostle's own heart as he expounds to them the facts of his own daily life according to God. What a privilege to hear! and how sweet to know that it was not written merely, nor as much, to inform us of him as to conform the saints practically to Christ thereby! Blessedly as the lesson was learned in the bonds that lay upon Paul, for our sakes, no doubt, it has been written.

Therefore was the Apostle inspired. Inspiration, however, does not exclude the heart's holy feelings.

"But I wish you to know, brethren, that my condition (literally, what concerns me) has turned out rather (that is, rather than otherwise) unto the furtherance of the gospel; so that my bonds have become manifest in Christ in the whole Praetorium and to all the rest." vv. 12, 13. The devil had hoped to merge the Apostle in the common crowd of criminals; but God, ever watchful for good, made it plain that His servant was a prisoner for no moral offense, but because of Christ. Thus the enemy's cunning device had ended in a testimony for the Savior, and the gospel penetrated where before it was wholly unknown. His bonds were manifestly in Christ's cause. The grace of Christ was made known, and His servant was vindicated.

But this was not all. For as the Apostle tells them further, "Most of the brethren in the Lord, having confidence in my bonds, dare more abundantly to speak the word without fear." v. 14. Here was another step in the blessing, and of rich promise too. How unexpected of the enemy! He, however, was on the alert; and if he could not silence the tongues that bore their testimony to the Savior, would not fail to bring in mixed motives and tempt some to an unhallowed spirit and aim, even in a work so holy. It was not undiscerned of the Apostle; neither did it disturb in the least his triumphant assurance that all things were working together for good, not only to them that love God, but to the advance of the glad tidings of His grace; so this too he does not hide in sorrow or shame, but cheerfully explains. "Some indeed also on account of envy and strife, but some also on account of goodwill, preach the Christ; these indeed out of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel; but those out of contention, proclaim the Christ, not purely, supposing to stir up tribulation for my bonds." vv. 15-17.

Lectures on Philippians

Chapter 1:18-30

The truth is that the Apostle was then and there in the happiest enjoyment of that truth which, not so long before, he had held before the saints at Rome. He was glorying in tribulations by the way, as well as in the hope of God's glory at the end; and not only so, but glorying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1, 2, 11). His bonds but proved how entirely the liberty of grace is independent of all that man or Satan can rage against him who stands fast in it and has Him before his heart, by whom alone it came and could be given. There was no blindness to the feelings of some whose zeal in no way concealed their malevolent desires; but nothing weakened the spring of his joy in God, nor his thankful perception that, whatever man meant, the testimony of grace was going out widely and energetically; and Christ was held up and exalted more and more. For it was no question here of doctrine; there is no ground to think that even the contentious men did not preach soundly. It was the good that God intended that occupied Paul's thoughts, whatever might be in theirs. Hence he breaks forth in that blessed expression of an unselfish, full heart, "What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretext or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in this I rejoice, yea and will rejoice." v. 18. How happy is the simplicity, how deep the wisdom of faith, which thus sees in everything, even where flesh intrudes into the Lord's work, the defeat of Satan! What a present blessing to his soul who, thus delivered from self-confidence on the one hand and anxiety on the other, sees the sure, steady, onward working of God for the glory of Christ, even as by-and-by when Christ is displayed in His kingdom, all will be ordered to the glory of God the Father! (Chap. 2.) Hence in the consciousness of the progress of gospel testimony and his own blessing through all that to which his imprisonment had given occasion, the Apostle can

say, "I know that this will turn to my salvation through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; according to my earnest expectation, and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but, in all boldness, as always, now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." vv. 19, 20. Imprisoned, he could not separate himself from the mighty conflict which was on foot in the world; he knew victory was assured, however hotly the enemy might contest. Salvation here means the final defeat of the enemy, and so it is throughout our epistle, never a past thing as in Ephesians 2 and 2 Timothy 1:9, but always future, as in chapters 2 and 3, manifestly. In Philippians, as in Hebrews, etc., it is the full deliverance at the close. Both views are true, and each has its own importance.

We have seen the expectation and hope of the Apostle, that in nothing he should be ashamed, but in all boldness as always, now also Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. His eye was thus on Christ, not for the beginning and the end only, but all the way. In the next verse, 21, he proceeds to vindicate the confidence of his heart. For, says he, "to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." To be spiritually minded, the Apostle tells us elsewhere, is life and peace. Here, speaking of his own daily practice, he shows he had but one aim, motive, object, and business - Christ. And this was said, not at the start of his career, in the overwhelming sense of the Savior's grace to His proud and self-righteous persecutor, but after long years of unequalled toil, peril, affliction without and sorrows within the Church. "To me to live is Christ." No doubt, the principle was true from the beginning of his eventful life as a Christian. Still, as little do I doubt that it was emphatically and more than ever verified at the very time he was writing, a prisoner in the imperial city.

It is remarkable to what debates and difficulties the verse has given occasion, though the language is plain, the construction unambiguous, and sense as weighty as it is clear. "Interpreters [says a famous man] have hitherto, in my opinion, given a wrong rendering and exposition to this passage; for they make this distinction, that Christ was life to Paul and death was gain." Certainly this is not the meaning of the Holy Ghost who gave the Apostle to say that to him to live (that is, here below) is Christ and to die gain. That Christ was his life is most true, and is the doctrine of Galatians and Colossians in passages full of beauty and interest. (See Gal. 2; Col. 3.) But here it is no question of doctrine, standing, or life in Christ. The whole matter is the character of his living day by day; and this he declares is "Christ," even as the ceasing to live or to die, he says, would be "gain." And what does this writer substitute? "I, on the other hand, make Christ the subject of discourse in both clauses, so that He is declared to be gain to him both in life and in death; for it is customary with the Greeks to leave the word *pros* to be understood. Besides that this meaning is less forced, it also corresponds better with the foregoing statement, and contains more complete doctrine. He declares that it is indifferent to him whether he lives or dies, because, having Christ, he reckons both to be gain. So Calvin, followed by Beza, who adds that "Christ" is the subject of both members and "gain" the predicate, and that the ellipse of *kata* is not only tolerable but an Atticism! The reader may rest assured that a more vicious and violent rendering has rarely been offered. The truth is that "to live" is the subject, "Christ" the predicate of the first proposition; "to die" is the subject, "gain" the predicate of the second, as in the authorized version. The real force is lost by this strange dislocation of the French reformers, and the true connection is broken.

"For me to live is Christ and to die gain; but if to live in flesh is before me, this to me is worth the while; and what I shall choose, I know not, but I am pressed by the two, having the desire for

departing and being with Christ, for it is far better, but to continue in the flesh is more needful for you. And having confidence of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in your faith, that your boast may abound in Christ Jesus through me by my presence again with you." vv. 21-26. Thus the Apostle compares his continuance in life with dying; the former were to him worth while, and what to choose he could not say. Thus there was perplexity from the two things; for he certainly had the desire to slip all that anchored him here and to be with Christ; whereas, on the other hand, he felt that his abiding here would be more necessary on account of the saints. This is no sooner fairly before him than all is clear. There is no more pressure from two sides. He is confident; he knows he will remain and stay with them all for their progress and joy in their faith. How sweet and disinterested is the love which the Holy Ghost gives to the heart that is centered on Christ! Their spiritual interest turns the scale, whatever his personal desire.

Sure I am that we have most of us lost much by failing to realize that to us too this path is open, and that it is the will of our God concerning us. Too little are any of us conscious of the weakening, darkening, deadening effect on our spiritual experience of allowing any object or desire but Christ. How often, for instance, it seems to be taken for granted that a brief season after conversion is not only the due time for first love, but the only time when it is to be expected! In what bright contrast with all such thoughts stands the record we have read of the blessed Apostle's experience! Was it not meant for the Philippians? Is it not also for us? God never intimates in His Word that the saint must droop after conversion; that love, zeal, simplicity of faith must become increasingly poorer and weaker. There are dangers no doubt; but early days have theirs as well as later, and much passes muster at first through lack of spirituality. Where there is full purpose of heart in cleaving to the Lord, He gives, on the contrary, a deepening acquaintance with Himself. It is not, To me to live is for the gospel or even the Church, but, "To me to live is Christ." To have Him as the one absorbing, governing motive of the life, day by day, is the strength as well as test of all that is of God; it gives, as nothing else can give, everything its divine place and proportion. "To me to live is Christ" seems to me much more than to say, "To die is gain." For this is true of many a saint's experience, who could hardly say that. Yet there is not a clause more characteristic; it is the very pith of our epistle. Christian experience is the point. In Philippians, above all others, it is the development of the great problem, how we are to live Christ. As for Paul, it was the one thing he did; and so death, which naturally threatens the loss of this and that and all things, he, on the contrary, realized to be gain. This is the truth, and he enjoyed it.

For years the Apostle, a prisoner, had death before him as a not improbable contingency. Yet assuredly his eye is only the brighter, his strength not abated, but grown, his exercised acquaintance with God, His will and ways, larger than ever. Hence, instead of his thinking it was a question for the emperor to determine, he sees, feels, and speaks as if God had put it all into his own hands; just as in another chapter he says, "I can do all things through Christ (or Him) who strengthens me." Here you have him sitting in judgment on the point whether he is to live or die. He drops Caesar altogether and views it as if God were asking His servant whether he was going to live or die. His answer is that it would be much better for himself to die, but that for the sake of the Church it would be expedient for him to live somewhat longer. Thus the decision of the question is eminently Christ like, against his own strong desire, because his eye was single, and he sacrificed self for the good of the Church. Accordingly he concludes, with wonderful faith and

unselfishness, that he is going to live.

"I am in a strait between the two, having the desire for departing and being with Christ, which is very far better: nevertheless to continue in the flesh is more needful for you." Inasmuch as in his heart Christ thus predominated, who certainly was not balancing questions about his own gain, but other people's good; so Paul, therefore, thinks of and in His mind and says, "Having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith: that your boast may be more abundant in Jesus Christ through me by my presence with you again." I do not know a more astonishing and instructive proof of the power of the Spirit of God, in giving a man fellowship practically with God. The flesh being broken and judged in him, he could enter into the mind and feelings of God, and Christ's heart about the Church. Was it really desirable for the Church that Paul should abide? Then, without hesitation and without fleshly feeling, he can say, Paul will abide. Thus he settles the matter and speaks calmly and confidently of seeing them again. Yet is it a man in prison, exposed to the most reckless of Roman emperors, who thinks, decides, says all this!

At the same time he adds, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ; that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for (or rather with) the faith of the gospel." His heart's desire, when he came and saw them again, was to see them all unitedly happy, and not only this flowing in of Christ, but such a flowing out of Him that their hearts should be free to spread the knowledge of the gospel everywhere.

Next, he wished to hear that they were frightened in nothing by the adversaries, which is to them a proof of destruction, but "of your salvation, and this from God, because unto you is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." From this scripture it is evidently of great moment spiritually that we should keep up in our souls good courage in face of the foe, and confidence in God, not only for our own sake, but for others. There is no testimony more gracious, nor more solemn to our adversaries. But how blessed to know that the day comes when, if we are walking with God, every opposer, no matter how proud, will disappear; when all the malice, and wiles, and power that can be brought to put the saints down will only elicit the power of God in their favor! Faith knows all the power of God is its own before that day comes.

It is of the greatest importance that we should cherish calm, and lowly, and patient confidence in God, and that the heart should rest in His love; but this can never be, unless there be present subjection to Christ and enjoyment of what He is toward our souls. To their adversaries this boldness was a demonstration of perdition, as well as of their own final triumph over all that Satan could aim at their hurt. God intended this, because it was given them in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. Paul, who was suffering for Christ's sake at that very moment, was thoroughly happy in it, and commends the place to them. It was a good gift of grace; he could say, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places," though he was a prisoner. They had the same conflict as they saw in him when a prisoner at Philippi and now heard of in Rome. May our own souls prize this blessed place, if the Lord vouchsafe it in any measure to us!

Lectures on Philippians

W.K. Translation of Chapter 2

"(1) If therefore [there be] any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of [the] Spirit, if any bowels and compassions, (2) fulfill my joy, that ye may mind the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, minding the one thing: (3) nothing in strifefulness, or vainglory, but in lowly-mindedness esteeming one another more excellent than themselves: (4) regarding each not his own things, but each also those of others. (5) For let this mind be in you which [was] also in Christ Jesus; (6) who, being in God's form, thought it not an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; (7) but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, being come in men's likeness; (8) and being found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (9) Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave him the name that [is] above every name, (10) that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal [beings], (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, unto God [the] Father's glory.

(12) So that, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence with fear and trembling work out your own salvation; (13) for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (14) Do all things without murmurings and reasonings; (15) that ye may be blameless and sincere, irreproachable children of God amidst a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in [the] world, (16) holding forth [the] word of life, for a boast to me in Christ's day, that not in vain I ran nor in vain labored. (17)

But if also I am poured out upon the sacrifice and ministration of your faith, I rejoice, and rejoice with you all; (18) and in the same thing do ye rejoice, and rejoice with me. (19) But I hope in [the] Lord Jesus soon to send Timothy to you, that I also may be cheered knowing about you. (20) For I have none like-minded who will have a genuine care about you;

for they all seek their own things, not those of Jesus Christ.

But the proof of him ye know, that, as a child a father, with me he served in the gospel. (23) Him therefore I hope to send as soon as I shall see my concerns. (24) But I trust in [the] Lord that I also myself shall come soon. (25) But I thought it necessary to send unto you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-laborer and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and minister to my wants; (26) since he was longing after you all and uneasy because ye heard that he was sick. (27) For indeed he was sick near to death; but God pitied him, and not him only, but me also, that I should not have sorrow upon sorrow. (28) The more diligently therefore I sent him, that seeing him again ye may rejoice and I be the less sorrowful. (29) Receive him therefore in [the] Lord with all joy, and hold such in honor; (30) because for the work of Christ he was nigh even to death, endangering his life that he might fill up the remainder of your ministrations toward me."

We saw in chapter 1 how refreshing to the Apostle was the state of the Philippians, looked at as a whole; for, undoubtedly, there was that which needed correction in particular cases. Still their practical condition, and more especially as shown in the fellowship of the gospel, drew out powerfully his affections to them, as indeed their own were drawn out. Now this very fellowship bore witness to the healthful and fervent state of their souls toward the Lord, His workmen, and His work. For fellowship with the gospel is a great deal more than merely helping on the conversion of souls. Babies that are just born to God, souls that have made ever so little progress in the truth, are capable of feeling strong sympathy with the calling in of the lost, with the glad tidings flowing out to souls, with the joy of newly quickened and pardoned souls brought to the knowledge of Christ. But

there was much more implied in the Philippians' "fellowship with the gospel." It is plain that the bent and strength of their whole life was that of persons who thoroughly identified themselves with its conflicts and sorrows as well as its joys. There was nothing in them so to arrest and occupy the Spirit of God, that they could not be in the very same current with Himself, in the magnifying of Christ and the blessing of souls.

And thus it was that they were privileged to have fellowship with the Apostle himself. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." All these things had been in action, and the Apostle viewed each little offering to him, while he was in prison for the gospel's sake, in the light of Christ's holy, spiritual affections which had dictated it. In the case of the Philippians, it would appear that it was not merely the way in which the grace of God values the service of the saints. He interpreted it, not according to the thoughts of the saints, but according to His own, seeing, therefore, far deeper value in it than the human spirit had which had been led of the Holy Ghost in the service.

Take, for instance, Mary in the gospels, and the way in which the blessed Savior viewed her act of devotedness in spending upon His Person the box of precious ointment which she had reserved for that time. Where there is singleness of eye, there is One guiding the saints, though they may not know it distinctly. There is no ground to suppose Mary distinctly appreciated that she was anointing the Lord for His burial; but His divine grace gave it that value. The love that was in her heart felt instinctively that some awful danger threatened Him; that a heavy dark cloud was gathering over Him, which others feebly, if at all, entered into. In truth, God was in this intuition of divine affection.

But you may see something, perhaps, analogous in the providential care which God by times exercises; and there is even more than providence in the care of a Christian parent with a child. There is a feeling of undefined but real uneasiness - the Spirit of God giving a certain consciousness of peril - and this often calls forth the affection of the parents to the child in such sort as to avert the imminent danger or alleviate the sufferings in the highest degree. In a still higher sense this was true in the dealings of God with Mary. Alas! little indeed were the disciples in the secret, though they ought to have known what was impending more than any others, had it been a question of familiar intercourse and knowledge.

Certainly they had larger opportunities than ever Mary enjoyed; but it is far from being such knowledge that gives the deepest insight - far from being earthly circumstances that account for the insight of love. There is a cause which lies deeper still - the power of the Spirit of God acting in a simple, upright, loving heart, that feels intensely for the object of its reverence, for Christ Himself. If our eye is to our Lord, we may be sure that He will work with and in us as well as for us. He will not fail to give us the opportunity for serving Him in the most fitting manner and at the right moment. Mary had this box we know not how long; but there was One who loved Mary, and who wished to vouchsafe her the desired privilege of showing her love to His Son. He it was who led Mary (despised as indifferent by her believing but bustling sister) at this very time to bring out her love. Thus, besides ordinary intelligent guidance, there may be guidance under the skillful hands of Him who cares for us, and now acts yet more intimately by His Spirit dwelling in us.

In the case of the Philippians, there was the conscious fellowship of the Spirit; there was remarkable devotedness and spirituality among them, so that God could put particular honor upon them. In this respect they are in striking contrast not only with the Galatians but with the Corinthians also. Not that but these two were born of God; there was no difference in this. We are expressly told the Corinthians were called into the fellowship of the Son of God; such they were as truly as the Philippians were. It is of them that the Holy Ghost says, "God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." But there was a mighty difference here. There was not the same fellowship with the gospel among the Corinthians, and therefore it may be that the Apostle desires that they might have "the communion of the Holy Ghost" (2 Cor. 13:14.) Assuredly till then it had been enjoyed by them scantily. (Compare 1 Cor. 3; 4; etc.)

But in looking at the Philippians he could say, "If there be therefore any consolation [or rather encouragement] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit," etc. There was all this practical display of Christ so fully at work among them; such tenderness in their spirit, such entering into the mind of God touching the mighty conflict in which the Apostle was engaged, that they identified themselves heart and soul with the Apostle. He says, therefore, "If there be all this (which he doubted not but assumed), "fulfill ye my joy that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Here was their failure; they were not sufficiently of one mind; nor were they cherishing, as they should, the same love. Hence there was a measure of dissension among them at this time. True, it may seem to have been about the work of the Lord, in which they were truly zealous. Sorrowful as this was in itself, still this was not so low and unworthy as mere squabbling with one another, such as we hear of among the Corinthians. Not that it was to be treated lightly, but even the very failure and the cause of it proved that they were in a more spiritual state than the Corinthians.

In the same way you may find among the children of God now that which answers to the trial of an Abraham or of a Lot. Just Lot, dwelling among the wicked in the cities of the plain, was vexed from day to day with their unrighteous and ungodly deeds. What unbridled wickedness filled the scene which first attracted his too covetous eyes! Strange that a saint could find his home there for a season! Abraham failed, no doubt; but what a contrast even between the failure of an Abraham and of a Lot! When the latter, through unwatchfulness, fell into a sin which led the way to worse, it was not only a painful blot, but the consequences of it remained for ages to be adversaries to the people of God. Out of the miserable circumstances which closed his life, we see a shameful result and a constant affliction. Indeed the Israel of God will prove it yet in the latter days. On the other hand, Abraham had his trials and failures, and surely the Lord did notice and rebuke them in His righteous government. But though this shows that there is nothing worthy of God in man, that no good thing dwells in the natural man,

even of a saint, that the flesh is fleshly, let it be in whom it may; yet, for all that, the character of Abraham's very slips and unfaithfulness tells us that he was in a spiritual condition wholly different from his nephew Lot.

Just so it was, in measure, with the Corinthians and the Philippians. In the latter there was a want of unity, of judgment, and mind, but they were filled with the fervor of the Spirit; they were carried out in earnest wishes for the gospel and the good of God's people. Thus, even where you find the

service of the Lord the prominent thought, there is always room for the flesh to act. There is nothing like having-, Christ Himself for our object. This was what Paul knew and lived in, and wished them to know better. Service brings in room for the human mind and feelings and energy. We are in danger of being occupied unduly with that which we do or what we suffer. Behind it lurks also the dangers of comparison, and so of envy, self-seeking, and strife. How blessedly the Apostle in Chapter 1 laid before them his feeling in presence of a far deeper, wider and more painful experience, we have seen already. It appears there was something of this kind at work among the Philippians. Accordingly he here intimates to them that there was something necessary to complete his joy. He would see them of the same mind, and this by having not the same notions but the same love, with union of soul minding one thing. His own spirit was enjoying Christ increasingly. The earth, and man upon it, was a very little thing before his eyes; the thoughts of heaven were everything to him, so that he could say, "To me to live is Christ." This made his heart sensitive on their account, because there was something short of Christ, some objects besides Him in them. He desires fullness of joy in them.

The Spirit of God gives hearts, purified by faith, a common object, even Christ. What he had known in them made him the more alive to that which was defective in these saints. He therefore makes a great deal of what he might have withheld if writing to others. In an assembly where there was much that dishonored God, it would be useless to notice every detail. Wisdom would apply the grace of Christ to the overwhelming evils that met one's eye; lesser things would remain to be disposed of afterward by the same power. But in writing to saints in a comparatively good state, even a little speck assumes importance in the mind of the Spirit. There was something they might do or remedy to fill the cup of the Apostle's joy. How gladly he would hear that they shone in unity of spirit! He owned and felt their love; would that they cultivated the same mutually! How could they be more likeminded? If the mind were set upon one thing, they would all have the same mind. God has one object for His saints, and that object is Christ. With Paul, every aim, every duty was subordinate to Him; as it is said in the next chapter, "this one thing I do"; so here he wished to produce this one, common mind in the Philippian saints.

Lectures on Philippians

Chapter 2:3-10

He then touches on that which they had to watch against. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory." It is humbling, but too true, that the principle of the grossest evil outside works even among the saints of God. The traces might be so faint that none but an apostle's eye could perceive them. But God enabled His servant to discern in them what was not of Christ. Hence he sets before them the dangers alike of opposing one another and of exalting self, strife, and vainglory. Oh! how apt they are to creep in and sully the service of God! The chapter before had shown some elsewhere taking advantage of the Apostle's bonds to preach Christ of envy and strife. And there he had triumphed by faith and could rejoice that, any how, Christ was preached. Now he warns the beloved Philippians against something similar in their midst. The principle was there, and he does not fail to lay it upon their heart.

How is the spirit of opposition and self-exaltation to be overcome? "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." What a blessed thought! and how evidently divine! How could strife or vainglory exist along with it? When one thinks of self, God would have one to feel

our own amazing shortcomings. To have such sweet and heavenly privileges in Christ, to be loved by Him, and yet to make such paltry returns as even our hearts know to be altogether unworthy of Him, is our bitter experience as to ourselves. Whereas when we look at another, we can readily feel not only how blessedly Christ is for him, and how faithful is His goodness, but love leads us to cover failings, to see and keep before us that which is lovely and of good report in the saints - if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, to think on these things. This appears to lie at the root of the exhortation, and it is evident that it thus becomes a simple and happy duty. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

In short, it is made good on the one hand by the consciousness of our own blessing through grace in presence of our miserable answer to it in heart and way; and on the other hand, by the thankful discernment of another beheld as the object of the Lord's tender love and all its fruits, without the thought of drawbacks. Of their evil the Lord would not have us to think, but of what Christ is to and in them. For here there is no question of discipline, but of the ordinary, happy state of God's children. Certainly the Philippian assembly consisted of men who were full of simple-hearted earnestness in pushing out the frontiers of Christ's kingdom and whose hearts were rejoicing in Him. But toward one another there was the need of greater tenderness.

Besides, if one more than others was abused everywhere, it was the Apostle Paul. He was pre-eminently treated as the offscouring of all things. All Asia was turned away from him. Where was there a man to identify himself with his cause? Evidently this was the result of a faithful, self-denying, holy course in the gospel, which from time to time offended hundreds even of the children of God. He could not but touch the worldliness of one, the flesh of another. Above all, he roused the Judaisers on one hand, and on the other all schismatic's, heretics, etc. All this makes a man dreaded and disliked; and none ever knew more of this bitter trial than the Apostle Paul. But in the case of the Philippians there was the contrary effect. Their hearts slave to him so much the more in the hour of his imprisonment at Rome, when there was this far sorer sorrow of an amazing alienation on the part of many who had been blessed through his means. This faithful love of the Philippians could not but rejoice the Apostle's heart.

It is one thing to indulge a fleshly dependence upon an instrument of God, quite another to have the same interests with him, so as to be knit more closely than ever in the time of sorrow. This was fellowship indeed, as far as it went; and it did go far, but not so far as the Apostle desired for them. He thought of their things, not of his merely; and accordingly, he now gives them another word: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." If they loved him so much, why not love each other more than they did? Why so occupied with their own thoughts?

This egotism was another fertile source of evil. We all know that we are apt to value qualities which we possess ourselves and to slight those of others. This is unjudged nature; for, where there is power of love, it works in a direction quite the contrary. There would be the consciousness of how weak and unworthy we are, and the little use we make of what God gives us; there would be the valuing of what we see in another, that we have not got ourselves. How good for the Church to have all this and far more!

There he brings in what is the great secret of deliverance from all these strivings of potsherd nature - "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" (v. 5). In this chapter you will observe it is Christ as He

was; in the next it is Christ as He is. Here it is Christ coming down, though of course He is thereon exalted. The point pressed is that we should look at the mind of Christ that was displayed in Him while here below. In chapter 3 it is not so much the mind or moral purpose that was in Him, as it is His Person as an object, a glorious, attractive object now in heaven, the prize for which he was running, Christ Himself above, the kernel of all his joy. Here (chap. 2) it is the unselfish mind of love that seeks nothing of its own, but the good of others at all costs; this is the mind that was in Christ.

The Apostle proceeds to enforce lowliness in love, by setting the way of the Lord Himself before their eyes. This is the true "rule of life" for the believer since His manifestation; not even all the written Word alone, but that Word seen livingly in Christ, who is made a spring of power by the Holy Ghost to his soul that is occupied with Him. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal [on equality] with God; but made himself of no reputation [emptied himself]," etc. vv. 5-7.

What an illustrious testimony to the true, proper, intrinsic deity of Christ! It is all the stronger because, like many more, it is indirect. Who but a person consciously God in the highest sense could adopt not merely the unhesitating assumption of such language as "Before Abraham was, I am," or, "I and my Father are one," but the no less real, though hidden, claim to Godhead which lies under the very words which unbelief so eagerly seizes against Him? Where would be the sense of any other man (and man He surely was and is) saying, "My Father is greater than I"? A strange piece of information in the mouth (I will not say of a Socrates or a Bacon merely, but) of a Moses or a Daniel, a Peter or a Paul; but in Him, how suitable and even needful, yet only so because He was truly God and equal with the Father, as He was man, the sent One, and so the Father was greater than He! Take again that striking declaration in John 17:3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Of course He was man, He deigned to be born of woman, else unbelief would have no ground of argument on that score. But what mere man ever dared, save the vilest imposter, calmly to class himself with God, yea, to speak of the knowledge of the •only true God, and of Him, as life everlasting?

So again, the scripture before us. Nothing can be conceived more conclusively to prove His own supremely divine glory than the simple statement of the text. Gabriel, yea, the archangel Michael, has no higher dignity than that of being God's servant, in the sphere assigned to each. The Son of God alone had to empty Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. All others were, at best, God's servants; and nothing could increase that dignity for them or lift them above it. Of Christ alone it was true, that He took a bondservant's form; and of Him alone could it be true, because He was in the form of God. In this nature He subsisted originally, as truly as He received a bondman's; both were real, equally real - the one intrinsic, the other that which He condescended to assume in infinite grace.

Nor was this all. When "found in fashion •as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." v. 8. This is another distinct step in His descent of grace to glorify God. First, it was humiliation for Him to become a servant and a man; next, being man, He humbled Himself as far as death in His obedience (the blessed converse of Adam's disobedience unto death). And that death was the extreme of human shame, besides its atoning character. Yet must we carefully bear in mind that it would be as impossible for a divine person to

cease to be God, as for a man

to become a divine person. But it was the joy and triumph of divine grace that He who was God, equally with the Father, when about to become a man, did not carry down the glory and power of the Godhead to confound man before Him, but rather emptied Himself; contrariwise perfection morally was seen in this. Thus He was thoroughly the dependent man, not once falling into self-reliance, but under all circumstances, and in the face of the utmost difficulties, the very fullest pattern and exhibition of One who waited upon God, who set the Lord always before Him, who never acted from Himself, but whose meat and drink it was to do the will of His Father in heaven; in a word, He became a perfect servant. This is what we have here.

Christ is said to have been in the form of God; that is, it was not in mere appearance, but it had that form, and not a creature's. The form of God means that He has His and no other form. He was then in that nature of being, and nothing else; He had no creature being whatever; He was simply and solely God the Son. He, subsisting in this condition, did not think it robbery to be equal with God. He was God; yet, in the place of man which He truly entered, He had, as was meet, the willingness to be nothing. He made Himself of no reputation. How admirable! How magnifying to God! He put in abeyance all His glory. It was not even in angelic majesty that He deigned to become a servant, but in the likeness of men. Here we have the form of a servant as well as the form of God, but that does not in anywise mean that He was not really both. In truth, as He was very God, so He became the veriest servant that God or man ever saw.

But we may go yet further. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Mark that. There are two great stages in the advent and humiliation of the Son of God. The first is in respect of His divine nature or proper deity; He emptied Himself. He would not act on a ground which exempted Him from human obedience, when He takes the place of a servant here below. Indeed, we may say that He would act upon what God the Father was to Him, not upon what He the Son was to the Father. On the one hand, though He were a Son,

He learned obedience through the things that He suffered. On the other, if He had not been a divine person - the Son no doubt - He would not have been the perfect man that He was. But He walks on through unheard-of shame, sorrow, and suffering, as one that sought only the will and glory of His Father in everything. He would choose nothing, not even in saving sinners or receiving a soul (John 6). He would act in nothing apart from the Father. He would have only those whom the Father draws. Whom the Father gives Him, whoever comes to Him, He welcomes them; He will in no wise cast any out, be they ever so bad. What a proof that He is thoroughly the servant, when He, the Savior, absolutely puts aside all choice of those He will save! When acting as Lord with His apostles, He tells us that He chose; but in the question of salvation, He virtually says, Here I am, a Savior; and whoever is drawn to Me by the Father, that is enough for Me; whoever comes, I will save. No matter who or what it was, you have in the Lord Jesus this perfect subjection and self-abnegation, and this too in the only person that never had a will to sin, whose will cared not for its own way in anything. He was the only man that never used His own will; His will as man was unreservedly in subjection to God. But we find another thing: if He emptied Himself of His deity, when He took the form of a servant, when He does become a man, He humbles Himself and becomes obedient as far as death.

This is important because it shows, among others things, this also, that death was not the natural portion of our Lord as man, but that to which, when found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient. There was no death for Him merely as man, for death was the wages of sin, not of man as such without sin, still less of the Holy One of God. How could He come under death? In this was the contrast between Him and the first Adam. The first Adam became disobedient unto death; Christ, on the contrary, obeyed unto death. No other was competent so to lay down His life. Sinners had none to give; life was due to God, and they had no title to offer it. It would have been sin to have pretended to it. But in Christ all is reversed. His death in a world of sin is His glory - not only perfect grace, but the vindication of God in all His character. "I have power," He says, "to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." In the laying down of His life, He was accomplishing the glory of God. "Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him." So while God was pleased with and exalted in every step of the Lord Jesus Christ's life, yet the deepest moral glory of God shines out in His death. Never was nor could be such obedience before or in any other. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

In this chapter it is not a question of putting away sin. It is ignorance of the mind of God to confine the death of Christ, even to that astonishing part of it, while fully admitting that there is not, nor ever will be, anything to compare with it. But the death of Christ, for instance, takes in the reconciliation of all things, as well as the bringing us who believe unto God; for now that the world is fallen under vanity, without that death there could not be the righteous gathering up again out of the ruin that which is manifestly marred and spoiled by the power of Satan. Again, where without it was the perfect display of what God is? Where else the utmost extent of Christ's suffering and humiliation, and obedience in them? The truth, love, holiness, wisdom, and majesty of God were all to the fullest degree vindicated in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is not a single feature of God but what, though it expresses itself elsewhere in Christ, finds its richest and most complete answer in His death. Here it is the perfect servant, who would not stop short at any one thing, and this not merely in the truest love to us, but absolutely for the glory of God. It is in this point of view that His death is referred to here; and the Spirit of God adds (vv. 9, 10), "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at [in virtue of] the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly, and earthly, and infernal [ones]."

Lectures on Philipians

Chapter 2:11-13

It is not merely a question of saints or of Israel, but "every knee shall bow," etc. This takes in angels and saints, and even those who are forever under the judgment of God; for to "under the earth" attaches the worst possible sense. Thus the infernal beings, the lost, come in here; the verse includes those that have rejected salvation, no less than those who confess the Savior. It is the universal subjection of all to Christ. Jesus has won the title even as man. If unbelievers despised Him as man, as Son of man He will judge them. As man they must bow to Him. The lowly name that was His as Nazarene on the earth must be honored everywhere; God's glory is concerned in it. In the name of Jesus, or in virtue of His name, "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." v. 11.

It is not, again, a question of His being Son (which of course He was from all eternity), but Lord also. We know that the spirit of this is true for the believer now. Every soul that is now born of God

bows his knee in virtue of the name of Jesus, and to Jesus. The Christian now confesses by the Holy Ghost that Jesus Christ is Lord; but this homage will be made good to an incomparably larger extent by and by. But then it will be too late for salvation. It is now received by faith which finds blessedness and eternal life in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Neither is there any man that confesses Him to be the Lord by the Holy Ghost but a saved person. But there will be more than this by and by. When the day of grace is past and God is not merely gathering out an elect body, the Church, but putting down all opposing authority, then the name of Jesus will be throughout the universe owned even by those who do it by compulsion, and who by that very acknowledgment confess their own eternal misery.

In Eph. 1:10 we are told of God's purpose for the dispensation of the fullness of times to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." There is not a word, it has often been remarked, about things under the earth, because there it is not a question of universal compulsory acknowledgment of Christ even by the devils and the lost, but very simply of all things being put under the headship of Christ. Neither lost men nor devils will ever stand in any such relation to Christ. He will surely judge them both. In Ephesians it is Christ viewed as the head of the whole creation of God, all things heavenly and earthly being summed up under His administration. Besides that, He is the head of the Church, which consequently shares His place of exaltation over all things heavenly and earthly, as being the bride of the true and last Adam. "He has made Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." Christ fills all in all; but the Church is that which fills up the mystic, glorified man, just as Eve was necessary to the completeness of God's thoughts as to the first Adam.

The Church is the bride, the Lamb's wife. This mystery is great and largely treated in Ephesians; but it is not the subject of our epistle, where the aim is practical, enforced from One who came down from infinite glory and made Himself nothing, and who now is exalted and made Lord of all, so that every creature must bow. This is put before the Philippians as the most powerful of motives and weightiest of examples for selfabnegation, in love, to God's glory.

As a whole, we have seen that the state of the Philippian saints was good and healthy. It was not with them as with the Galatians, over whose speedy lapse into error - and what error it was! - the Apostle had to marvel and mourn. And as in doctrine, so in practice, what a change for the worse! Their love, once excessive one might say, was turned into bitterness and contempt, as the sweetest thing in nature, if soured, becomes the sourest of all. "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth? They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you that ye might affect them." Gal. 4:13-17. "But," adds the Apostle, with cutting severity, "it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

What a refreshing contrast was the condition of the Philippians! It was not only that their love was true and fervent, proving their fellowship with the gospel and their hearty sympathy with those engaged in its labors and sufferings; but their faithfulness shone out yet more when the Apostle

was not in their midst. "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence...." What reserve in his tone to the one, and what opening of affections, heartily expressed, to the other! And no wonder. In Galatia, Christ was shaded under nature; religion it might be, but unsubject to God, aye, and unloving too, in spite of vain talk about love. In Philippi, Christ was increasingly the object; love was in true and wholesome exercise; and obedience grew firmly, because liberty and responsibility were happily realized, even the more in the absence of the Apostle and without his immediate help.

Accordingly he exhorts them thus: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in you both the willing and the working of [according to] his good pleasure." In Eph. 2, the saints are viewed as seated together in heavenly places in Christ; they are regarded here as working out their own salvation with fear and trembling. How can we put these two things together? With perfect ease, if we are simply subject to the Word of God.

If you try to make out that there is only one meaning of salvation in the New Testament, you are in a difficulty indeed; and you will find that there is no possibility of making the passages square. In fact, nothing is more certain and easy to ascertain, than that salvation in the New Testament is more frequently spoken of as a process incomplete as yet, a thing not finished, than as a completed end. It is not then a question of taking away something, but of getting a further idea. Take Romans

13:11, 12, for instance. There we find salvation spoken of as not yet arrived. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." From the context we find that it is connected with "the day" being at hand; so the salvation spoken of there is evidently a thing that we have not actually got, no doubt, coming nearer and nearer every day, but only ours in fact when the day is come. "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand." Salvation here, therefore, is manifestly future.

In the first epistle to the Corinthians (chaps. 1, 5, 9, 10), the same thing appears, though it be not so marked in expression. Take Hebrews again as a very plain instance. It is said there (chap. 7:25) that Jesus is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." The passage plainly is limited to believers. It is a saving of those that are in living relationship to God. Christ is looked at as a priest, and He is a priest only for God's people - believers. It would, therefore, be an illegitimate use of the verse to apply it to the salvation of sinners as such. Again, in chapter 9, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." There cannot be the shadow of a doubt that there the Spirit speaks of salvation (salvation of bodies, and not merely of souls) as a thing only effectuated when Christ in person appears to us, when He receives us to Himself in and to His own glory.

But without going through all similar statements in other epistles, let me refer to the first epistle of Peter. It appears to me that, with the exception of a single phrase in 1 Pet. 1:9, salvation is always regarded as a thing not yet accomplished, and only indeed accomplished in the redemption of the body. That one phrase is: "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of [your] souls." Now soul salvation will not be more complete for believers after Christ comes than now when they believe and are being carried through the wilderness; it is an already enjoyed blessing as regards the resting place of faith. But, with that exception, salvation in Peter applies to the deliverance that crowns the close of all the difficulties we may encounter in the passage through the desert-world,

as well as to the present guardian care of our God who brings us safely through. It is a salvation only completed at the appearing of Jesus. (See chap. 1:5; 2:2, "grow unto salvation" in the critical text; and 4:18.)

This too I believe to be the meaning of "salvation" in the epistle to the Philippians; and that it is so will appear still more clearly when we come to chapter 3, where our Lord is spoken of as a "Savior," even when He comes to transform the body. "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change," etc. The real meaning is, We look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, who will change our body of humiliation, that it should be conformed to His body of glory. There is the character of the salvation; it is a question not of the soul merely, but of our bodies. If we accept this thought as a true one and as the real scope of salvation throughout the context, interpreting the language here by the general object that the Holy Ghost has in view, the meaning of our verse 12 becomes plain: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." It is as if the Apostle said, I am no longer with you to warn, exhort, and stir you up when your courage is flagging - you are now thrown entirely upon God. You have got the ordinary helps of bishops and deacons, but there is no present apostolic care to look to.

No doubt the Apostle's absence was an immense loss. But God is able to turn any loss into gain, and this was the gain for them, that they were more consciously in dependence on the resources of God Himself. When the Apostle was there, they could go to him with whatever question arose; they might seek counsel direct from him. Now his departure leads them to wait upon God Himself for guidance. The effect on the spiritual would be to make them feel the need of being more prayerful and more circumspect than ever. "As ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. I am not there to watch over you and to give you my counsel and help in difficulties, and emergencies, and dangers. You have to do with a mighty, subtle, active foe. Hence you have not to look to the hills, but to God, and to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Lectures on Philippians: Introduction

(1) Paul and Timothy, bondmen of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi with bishops and deacons. (2) Grace to you, and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.

(3) I thank my God upon my whole remembrance of you, (4) always in my every supplication for you all making the supplication with joy (5) for your fellowship with the gospel from the first day until now, (6) being confident of this very thing, that he who began in you a good work will complete [it] until [the] day of Jesus Christ; (7) even as it is righteous for me to think this of you all, because ye have me in your heart; and both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye are all fellow-partakers of my grace. (8) For God is my witness, how I long after you all in [the] bowels of Jesus Christ. (9) And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in full knowledge and all intelligence, (10) that ye may approve the things that are excellent, that ye may be pure and without offense against [the] day of Christ, (11) being filled with the fruit of righteousness that [is] by Jesus Christ unto God's praise and glory.

(12) But I wish you to know, brethren, that my affairs have turned out rather for furtherance of the gospel, (13) so that my bonds have been manifest in Christ in the whole of the pretorium and to all the rest; (14) and that the most of the brethren in [the] Lord, being confident by my bonds, more abundantly dare to speak the word fearlessly. (15) Some, indeed, also for envy and strife, but some also for goodwill, preach the Christ: (16) these, indeed, out of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel; (17) but these out of contention announce the Christ, not purely, thinking to stir up tribulation for my bonds. (18) What then? Notwithstanding,

every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is announced, and in this I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice; (19) for I know that this will turn to me for salvation through your supplication and [the] supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, (20) according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed; but in all boldness, as always now also, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. (21) For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die gain; (22) but if to live in flesh, this to me [is] worth while; and what I shall choose I know not. (23) But I am perplexed by the two, having the desire for departing and being with Christ, for it is very far better; (24) but remaining in the flesh is more necessary on your account; (25) and having this confidence, I know that I shall remain and abide with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; (26) that your boast may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence again with you. (27) Only conduct yourselves worthily of the gospel of Christ; that, whether coming and seeing you or absent, I may hear of your concerns, that ye stand in one spirit, with one soul striving together with the faith of the gospel; (28) and not frightened in anything by the adversaries, which is to them a showing forth of destruction, but to you of salvation, and this from God; because to you has been given on behalf of Christ, not only the believing on him, but also the suffering for him;

having the same conflict as ye saw in me and now hear of in me.

CHAPTER 1

Let us seek, with the blessing of God, to develop a little the special features of this epistle on which we now enter. For the better understanding of what comes before us, we may also compare its character with that of others. Some of its features may be gathered from the very first verse. The Apostle introduces himself in the simplest possible manner: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ." Elsewhere, even if he presents himself as a servant, he does not fail also to add his apostolic title, or some other distinction by which God had separated him from the rest of his brethren. But here it is not so. He is led of the Holy Ghost to present himself upon the broadest ground to the children of God in Philippi; on this he could fully associate Timotheus with himself. Thus we may gather from the very start of the epistle that we are not to look for the wonderful unfoldings of Christian and Church truth, such as we have in Romans, Corinthians, or Ephesians, where the apostleship of Paul is most carefully stated.

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle" (Rom. 1). He was not an apostle by birth, but by the call of God. He adds further, that they were saints by the very same divine call whereby he was an apostle - "called to be saints," both through the sovereign grace of God. There was nothing in either that could have been an inherent claim upon God. There was deadly sin in both; but the grace of God that had called them to be saints, had called him to be not a saint only, but an apostle. As such, he addresses them in the full consciousness of the place that Christ had given him and them, unfolding the truth from the very first foundations on which the gospel rests, the grace of God, and the ruin of man. Hence in that epistle you have something that more approaches to a doctrinal treatise than in any other portion of the New Testament. God took care that no apostle ever visited Rome, till there were many saints already there, and then He wrote by the Apostle Paul. The proud imperial city cannot boast of an apostolic foundation; yet, spite of that, man has put in the claim and pressed it with fire and sword. Paul, however, wrote in the fullness of his own apostleship and brings out the truth of God to them most carefully, so that the very ignorance of the Roman saints was the occasion for the Holy Ghost to give us the most elaborate statement of Christian truth which the Word of God contains. By Christian truth, I mean the individual instruction which the soul wants in order to the consciousness of its solid standing before God and the duties which flow from it. There the Apostle writes expressly as an apostle. It could not be understood as a human composition. There must be the authority of God, claimed by the Apostle; and while he strengthens them in their position of saints, by the very same he makes room for that development of Christian truth, for which the epistle is remarkable.

In the Corinthians he addresses them, not merely as saints, as individual Christians, but as an assembly; and there also he asserts his apostleship. Does not this serve to illustrate the truth that there is not a word inserted or omitted in Scripture, but what is full of instruction for our souls if we are willing to be instructed? To the Corinthians he does not add as in Romans, "a servant of Jesus Christ," but simply, "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God." There he carefully puts Sosthenes upon his own proper ground, as a brother, while he distinguishes his own apostleship. The reason is obvious. The Corinthians were in a turbulent state, going so far as even to gainsay the apostleship of Paul. But God never lowers what He has given because men do not like it. It was a part, not more of God's grace to Paul, than of his humble obedience before God, to

act and speak as an apostle; if he had not, he would have failed in his duty; he would not have done that which was essential for the glory of God and the good of the saints. Everything is in its proper place. So if the Corinthians were questioning what God had wrought in and by the Apostle Paul, and the place He had given him in His wisdom, the Apostle asserts it with dignity; or rather, the Holy Ghost represents him only as an apostle to them, speaks of others but not as apostles, and addresses the Corinthians as "the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

None but one who knew what God is to His saints, and how He holds to the power of His own grace, would have contemplated those at Corinth in such sort as this; none but a heart that understood God's love to His own, and, alas! to what lengths they may be drawn aside where the flesh gains advantage - none but one admirably, divinely acquainted with his own heart and with God - could ever have addressed them in the language with which that epistle opens. But it was God who was writing through His Apostle. And as the conduct of the Church on earth is the thesis of the epistle to the Corinthians, He shows us there the principle of putting away and of receiving again, the administration of the Lord's supper, and its moral meaning; the working of the various gifts in the Church, etc. All these things, as being the functions of the Church, are found in the epistles to the Corinthians. But even in the exercise of gifts, it is gifts in the assembly. Therefore, there is no reference to evangelizing in 1 Cor. 12 and 14, because the evangelist's gift does not, of course, find its exercise within the Church. He goes, properly speaking, outside the Church, in order to exercise that gift. You have prophets, teachers, etc. All these were gifts of a still higher order and regularly exercised in the assembly of God.

Here also we shall see how appropriately the preface falls in with the object of the Holy Ghost throughout: "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons; grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." Now this is the only church where we have the "bishops and deacons" addressed as well as the saints. The reason may have been that it was, more or less, a transition state. We have three things in the Church of the New Testament. The first is - apostles, acting in the full power of their gift and office. Then, besides deacons, bishops or elders (for these two mean the same officials, only called by a different name), apostolically appointed to the charge which the Lord had given them; the bishops having to do with that which is internal, the deacons with that which is external, but both of them local offices, while the Apostle had his authority from the Lord everywhere. The Holy Ghost shows us thus the full regimen in the churches; that is to say, the apostles acting in their high place, who were called to establish the foundations of the Church practically, and to govern it upon a large scale throughout the whole breadth of the Church of God upon earth; and beside them, these local guides, the bishops and deacons.

Third. The Apostle was now separated from the church, and hence no longer able to watch over the saints personally. He writes accordingly to those who had no longer his apostolic care, not only where they had not, but, in this case, where they had bishops and deacons. Yet in the latest epistles, where the Apostle is filled with the sense of his speedy departure, there is not the slightest allusion to any provision for perpetuating these officers - not even when writing confidentially to one whom he had called on to ordain elders in Crete, nor to another invested with a charge at Ephesus.

Pope - Ecumenicalism - Communism: the Editor's Column

The reunion of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism is in the air; it is only a matter of time and circumstances. No one would have thought that such tremendous strides to that end would have been made in five short years. Of course the Lord may come at any moment - that moment is imminent - and take to Himself the whole Church, composed of every truly saved soul from among both Catholics and Protestants. Such a departure of the saints will scarcely make a ripple on the progress of ecumenical discussions; in fact, it may well accelerate absorption of Protestantism by Roman Catholicism when no one is left with true Christian life to stand in the way of merger and the sacrifice of basic truths. And while God is ruling behind the scenes to bring about His grand purposes, there are naturally many hurdles for ecumenicalists to make until Rome makes some very minor concessions, and Protestants have been softened enough to fly the papal banner.

To quote the words of another regarding the present activities: "Men are scheming and dreaming. Men are plotting and planning. Men are bargaining with each other under the canopy of 'dialog' to the end that they may, without loss of front or face, claim that great progress is being made in the interest of the Spirit, while what they will attain will simply be a one-world church held together by the exaltation of a church, its power, and its place of leadership among the nations." - Christian Beacon, July 11, 1963, p. 4.

The great preparation for Protestants to go back to Rome with ecumenical banners flying, is the giving up by the liberal Protestant clergy of what is known as "sola Scriptura," which was the battle cry of the Reformation. Then they would acknowledge nothing but the Word of God as authority both for doctrine and practice. But Dr. Eugene Carson Blake's sermon in Bishop Pike's cathedral on December 4, 1960, proposing union of four large Protestant bodies, set the stage for the march to Rome. He plainly stated that Protestants had lost something by holding only to Scripture, and that considerable was to be said for tradition as found in Catholicism. Since the unerring and infallible Word of God has been scuttled in much of Protestantism, and large segments of it have been relegated to the "myth" category, then why maintain as the reformers did that the Bible is an all-sufficient guide? The stripped-down version that these blind leaders of the blind would leave us, may just as well have all the error and mysticism of tradition thrown in. This will furnish the grand catalyst for eventual union of all with Rome. Infidelity and so-called "liberalism" make strange bedfellows.

One of the conservative Curia clerics stated of John XXIII that it would take 50 years to undo what John had done. It will never be undone, but Paul VI in all probability will carry it to completion. One of the Roman Church men said that John has sown the seed, and Paul will bring the harvest into the barn.

But let not Protestants deceive themselves; Rome will open her arms to receive Protestants; they will be welcomed (apostates and all) into the one great church - then it will be Babylon the Great, the last noxious state of Christendom before it is finally rejected and destroyed by atheistic forces under secular power of the soon-to-be-revived Roman Empire and its diabolic head. But Rome will

not take one step to leave her position - Protestants must do all the going. This would be true even with an amiable John XXIII, but Paul VI has already made it clear. One of his statements is: "We will resume, as already announced, the Ecumenical Council, and we ask God that this great event confirm in the church its faith, refresh moral energies, and rejuvenate and adapt its forms to the needs of the times, and so present the church to the Christian brothers, separated from its perfect unity, in a way to make attractive, easy, and joyous to them the sincere recomposition in truth and charity, of the mystic body of the sole Catholic Church." Their condition for unity will be a return to Rome and acceptance of Rome's claim to be THE Church. Furthermore, Rome is not going to change her dogmas, whatever other minor changes she may make. But diluted, polluted, and devitalized Protestantism under modernism is going that way. Ecumenicalism is in the air; there is a longing to have a one-church world.

This great world-church is called in Scripture "Babylon the Great" which is to be the habitation of demons, and the hold of every unclean and hateful bird; and in "one hour" her judgment will come. Read Rev. 17 for the account of the great corrupt and corrupting religious system which is false to Christ; it is described as a wicked and defiled woman. In the 18th chapter it is the same final world-church seen in its organization - a great system of religion in the world. Some people prefer to see these two chapters as representing different things, but the last verse of chapter 17 is conclusive: "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth."

This reigning over kings was actually true of the Roman Church in ages past when crowns were at her disposal, but it is to be true also of that great amalgam of Christendom under her mantle in its dreadful last state. Even today Rome is moving to become a power in world politics. We quote the following: "Moreover, the elevation of Giovanni Battista Montini to 'the chair of St. Peter' probably spells additional participation for the Vatican in world affairs. The Vatican has long been reputed to be a diplomatic listening post for the world, and Montini brings to it extensive experience in political affairs. He is widely recognized as a first-rate diplomat and served for years as Vatican secretary of state under Pope Pius XII." - Christianity Today, July 19, 1963, p. 29.

An appraisal of Pope Paul from another source is briefly stated: "Overall, he is seen as sure to continue the changes that came during the reign of Pope John, and to identify the Church more and more with the world and its problems." - U.S. News & World Report, July 1, 1963, p. 44. The same publication said in another issue: "The reign of Pope John XXIII has brought significant change to the Roman Catholic Church, and to the role it is playing in world affairs." June 10, p. 50. And in another place: "Pope Paul, however, is making it clear that, like his predecessor, he intends to pursue an 'active' role for the Church in world affairs." July 15, 1963, p. 37. In still another issue, this is given: "The new pope has already made it clear he hoped to continue many of the former Pope's policies. But the decision to move ahead so quickly surprised many.... For the world, the image of Pope Paul VI was emerging rapidly. It was of a vigorous, 65-year-old Pontiff with relatively 'liberal' views on Church affairs and world problems and an impatience to convert his views to action." July 8, 1963, p. 19.

It is not surprising that in the superintending ways of God the last five years have brought significant changes in the Church of Rome and in the world at large. No one expected that the aging John XXIII would startle the world with innovations and step into the arena of world politics

as he did. (Here we quote the words of another: "No one in 1958 suspected that the amiable Patriarch of Venice, Angelo Roncalli, was going to change the course of history." - Time, July 14, 1963.) Now a new pope that is definitely not the choice of the old ruling Curia is installed in spite of them. Nor is it without significance that in this period John F. Kennedy was elected to the presidency of the most powerful Western nation. Not many years ago it was considered that a Catholic had no chance to attain this high post, but he is there. Some Protestants tried to prevent his election; others actually aided and abetted it, especially in the great ecumenical camp.

Indicative of the new order, we might quote from Christianity Today: "In sweltering Rome, these questions gained surprising relevance this month - in fact and, curiously enough, in fiction. The fact lay in what may have been, according to the American newspaper in Rome, 'the biggest double feature here since Nero fiddled while the city burned: the coronation of Pope Paul VI and the visit of President Kennedy.'" July 19, 1963. Paul VI was crowned on June 30, and the President was received in audience on July 2. And what is the fiction? A new book entitled, "The Shoes of the Fisherman," was released just seven days after Pope John's death. It is concerned with the Pope as the medium between the United States President and the Soviet Premier. It was written by a veteran Vatican correspondent, and could well be a trial balloon to suggest Rome's capability to be the arbiter of international affairs. In fact this has been suggested in several articles as a likely scheme. It has been suggested that Premier Khrushchev and

President Kennedy meet each other in Rome.

In the days of Pope Pius XII, international communism was considered a malignant disease and an intractable foe. It seemed then that Rome and communism would be locked in a life and death struggle to the end. But Pope John, in spite of Curia opposition, sought what is called an "opening to the left." Even Italian politicians had to accommodate themselves to the changed papal attitude. Rome has lived through many vicissitudes and has learned how to adapt herself to the inevitable. All the ideologies of different times have burned themselves out, and Rome has remained. She boasts that the gates of hell cannot prevail against her, but the very virus of atheistic communism with which she seeks to co-exist, will in the end be the means of her utter destruction. The days are coming when peace shall be taken from the earth, and men will "kill one another" with the sword - hand to hand conflict and carnage. (Rev. 6:4.)

It is striking indeed that there is an increasing attitude by men in high governmental places that this nation must get along and live with communism - in Cuba, or in the world at large. This fits in well with the new papal attitude. It is also the attitude of the leaders of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A., and of the World Council of Churches. (The reception of Communist-controlled churches from "Iron Curtain" countries into the latter organization is significant.) But the darker the days get, the brighter our hope of seeing our blessed Lord in the air at any moment. O how can any Christian who reads his Bible not discern the times in which our lot is cast! Christians, lift up your eyes and look; the Morning Star has not yet appeared above the dark horizon, but are there not a few streaks in the sky that presage His coming? And when speaking of communism, we do not mean to indicate that man may not be living without God and afar off from Him where communism is abhorred and refused. Capitalism is not synonymous with godliness.

Pope John — Ecumenical Council: the Editor's Column

This is being written as the apparent terminal illness of Pope John XXIII seems about to remove from the world scene one of the most unusual popes of all times. Or to use the words of another: "the most popular pope of modern times-and perhaps ever." Time, Jan. 4, 1963.

The one great development of his pontificate was the calling of the Ecumenical Council in Rome, known as Vatican II, which according to Catholic statistics is only the 21st such council in Christendom. The first was in the year 325; it was called by the Emperor Constantine the Great to settle the question about Arianism which denied the true deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The present council convened on October 11, 1962. It is now in recess, but is set to reconvene on September 8, 1963. A necessitated change of popes could alter this.

Most Christians little realize what great importance may be attached to this Vatican II council, or how momentous and far-reaching its effects may be. Time commented that, by his calling this council, Pope John made the biggest individual imprint on the year 1962, and quoted Dr. Carroll L. Shuster, an executive of the Presbyterian Church, as saying, "The council may have an effect as profound as anything since the days of Martin Luther." Jan. 4, 1963.

Two things stand out prominently in the aims of Pope John; they are, the rejuvenation of the Catholic Church and (mistakenly) to make it without spot and blameless. He also envisages another revival, as at Pentecost, in which Protestant and Orthodox Christians will all embrace the Roman Church, but which he hopes to make more Catholic and less Roman.

This has touched off a serious schism within the Roman Church. There is a very strong, long-entrenched, conservative body in Rome, frequently referred to as the Curia. Webster's Collegiate Dictionary describes the Curia as "The body of congregations, tribunals, and offices through which the Pope governs the Roman Catholic Church." It opposed the calling of the council in the first place, and has withstood Pope John in his plans for reform and liberalization. This central administrative body is composed of (and we quote):

"Mostly aging Italians quite insulated from the modern world. They have exerted vast influence and control not only on the worldwide church but on the Pope himself. . . . This top-heavy, slow-moving and ultra-conservative body controls all the seminaries that teach young priests, all the church's missionary activities, all of its ecclesiastical and liturgical legislation. . . . It is the genius of Pope John XXIII that he sensed that the time was ripe for internal renewal in the church, and opened the way for it. . . . It was a major accomplishment that the Vatican Council ever got going at all." Time, Jan. 4, 1963.

The same article tells of the Pope's having said to Richard Cardinal Cushing, "I'm in a bag here." Through careful maneuvering, the Pope was quite satisfied with results when the first session of the council ended.

Every effort was made by the Curia to block the Pope's intent and to frustrate the bishops from around the world. They were mostly for change, and in one case voted 1922 to 11 for allowing bishops to decide whether they wanted part of the Mass to be said in the language of the people. At one point, Holy Office Consultor Antonio Piolanti told one of his classes in the Latern University, "Remember, the Pope can be deposed if he falls into heresy." *ibid.*

The Pope and the bishops realize more than the Curia that while Rome numbers her communicants higher than ever before, they have a smaller portion of dedicated Catholics percentagewise, and that atheism, humanism, and plain materialism have cut into the power and influence of Christianity. Monsignor John Tracy Ellis said, "religion is just an irrelevancy in the lives of many people - the great majority." *ibid.*

They are beginning to realize that present conditions are even harder to overcome than the paganism of the early days. Theologians even speak of the "post-Christian" age (*ibid.*).

Now some of our readers may rightly inquire, But what has all this to do with us, or with living Christ in this present evil age? It has just this relevancy for us: the end of this age is upon us, and in the light of current developments which presage the imminence of our Lord's return, "What manner of persons ought [we] to be in all holy conversation and godliness." 2 Pet. 3:11. We are not looking for a post-Christian era, but awaiting the coming of the Lord to take us out of the world first.

Only stoicism, or blind unbelief, can fail to discern these times. Even the ungodly know that the profession of Christianity is empty, and that in its debilitated state offers nothing for this weary world to grasp. In spite of man's achievements, and his boastfulness, death still stalks in all lands; and there is a conscious feeling of uneasiness, and at times of impending doom. For this, devitalized and empty profession offers no solution. Man is without God and without hope still.

Another question is in logical sequence. What good will the reform movement in the Roman Catholic Church accomplish? Will it strengthen true religion? Will it save souls for heaven? Our judgment is that it will serve no useful purpose; and for the most part it will, if it has not already done so, unleash the inherent infidelity of the human mind. We have known for some time that modernism has been at work in the Roman Church; now the present council attitude will tend to make it honorable. Modernism - basic infidelity - has thoroughly permeated Protestantism. There is scarcely a segment of it where the leaven of the Sadducees is not at work. It is now free to accelerate rapidly within Roman Catholicism.

Now let us take a look at Rome in this light. In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, an Oratory now offers the 8,000 Catholic students at "Pitt, Carnegie Tech. . . . and Chatham College" seminars of such subjects as,

"modern Biblical criticism or the psychology of religious experience, often using texts by avant-garde theologians - Austria's Karl Rahner, or France's Henri de Lubac. . . . One Oratory student recalls how

he was stunned by his discovery of experiments in modern genetics that offer man the distant prospect of creating life. 'But I consulted one of the priests here,' he says, 'and I discovered that there is no dogmatic - denial of the possibility of the spontaneous generation of life.'" Time, March

15, 1963. [This is a basic ingredient of the hypothesis of evolution.]

The article further quotes Father Walsh as saying that "opening up new dimensions of reality which reason unaided by faith is capable of knowing." *ibid.*

Is such "progress" helping man to know his relationship and responsibility to God better? It plainly undercuts the Word of God, and, while it may for a time hold young Catholics, reason will soon take over and Christianity be cast aside. God's Word says, "overthrowing reasoning and every high thing that lifts itself up against the knowledge of God, and leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5; J.N.D. Trans.

And everything we KNOW is by faith - "We know that the Son of God is come" (1 John 5:20); "We know that we are of God" (v. 19); "We know that we have passed from death unto life" (chap. 3:14); we "know" we "have eternal life" (chap. 3:14); "We know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 8:9). "Faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Heb. 11:1; J.N.D. Trans. It enables us to lay hold of that which is not seen, but which is eternal, and of that to which we confidently look forward, as though we actually possess it.

Now lest any of our readers suppose that we are grasping at little straws in the wind, we quote again:

"The battle, now nearly a decade old, is between the progressive majority of Catholic Biblical scholars and a cadre of Roman theologians who follow the rigidly conservative views of the Holy Office. . . . Theologians tend to emphasize the divine inspiration and the factual truth of Scripture, and can fall into literalist absurdity - believing, for example, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, even though Deuteronomy tells of his death." *Time*, May 3, 1963.

Now this is plain infidelity, though called by any other name. As Mr. William Kelly said, If Moses did not write it, then who did? It is clear that God buried him, by angelic hands, but no one else was there to see it. So those conceited critics who say that Moses could not have written it before his death, create an even greater problem; for no one else could have written about it in detail, except by inspiration.

Then there is another crass statement of unbelief; namely,

"It has long since been established, for example, that Isaiah was written by two, perhaps even three, writers who lived centuries apart." *ibid.*

We need not go outside of the pages of inspiration to expose the infidelity of the supposedly scientific study that "established" that the book of Isaiah was written by "at least two, or perhaps three" Isaiahs. The Word of God says in John 12:37-41 that Isaiah the prophet said, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" This beyond question came from the 53rd chapter; then it also says, Isaiah said again, "He hath blinded their eyes," etc. Beyond controversy this is taken from the 6th chapter. Now according to their educated guesswork, these two chapters fall into separate parts written by different authors. Who tells the truth, the Word of God or the modern false prophets?

The article says that "Pope Leo XIII cautiously encouraged Catholic scholars to join the scientific investigation of Scripture begun by Protestant Germany's 'Higher Criticism.' It was a false dawn. Under Leo's successor, Pius X (1903-14), church officials took arms against the heresy of

modernism." *ibid.*

Now the Higher Criticism of Germany, plus many more modern features of infidelity, is well entrenched in the Roman Church. We could quote much more to prove our point, but there is no profit in expanding on man's daring unbelief, be it Catholic or Protestant, or Jewish. We just noted a statement elsewhere, that Israel is 40% agnostic. Perhaps a stronger word might be fitting for a large part of the 40%. Even the Premier Ben Gurion seldom attends a synagogue.

And what shall we say of Protestantism? We have no yardstick by which to compare the inroads of infidelity in Roman Catholicism and in Protestantism, but our supposition is that it is far more advanced in the latter, so that the whole is permeated by it.

Catholic scholars are relegating the visit of the wise men to see the Child Jesus to the realm of myth, as well as the disturbances at the time of the death of Christ (darkness, rocks rending, graves opening, etc.); but Protestants praise this bold step as making Scripture more comprehensible. It all tends to make infidelity more reprehensible to a true believer, wherever it is found. The critics also approve of saying that the sermon on the mount was a compilation. To be sure it was. Any spiritual Christian believes that, but he also understands that the compilation was exact and was dictated by the Holy Spirit in order to bring together those statements that will be realized in the introduction to the coming kingdom.

No matter where we look - Europe, the United States, Canada, or elsewhere - there is the sad spectacle of giving up the belief in a personal God with whom we have to do. The Holy Word of God is relegated to the myth category, and its precepts are despised. Who would ever have thought that enlightened, so-called Christian nations would so soon depart from God.

The "Right Reverend" John A. T. Robinson of Woolwich, England has recently published a book, the title of which we will not reprint; yet it has become a best seller book in England. He calls in question every basic and elementary truth of the Word of Him who cannot lie. He says that the gospel message must be "demythologized." He also believes with a German Lutheran that we are approaching "religionless Christianity." And the "Reverend" Peter Hollis of Birmingham, England gave him support. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury gives him comfort by saying that

"when the ordinary Christian speaks of God as being up there, he does not literally mean that God is in a place above the bright blue sky." *Time*, April 12, 1963.

Well may we cry, "How long, O Lord"? O the marvel of the patience and forbearance of God! How longsuffering He is! But such will not always be so. We read in the Scripture of the Master of the house being angry. Yes, God will soon show His anger and wrath against all ungodliness of men, specially against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

In Los Angeles, Dr. James W. Fifield, Jr., of the First Congregational Church, instituted "an inspiring program . . . for the Lenten season . . . and the Congress of Faiths."

This rank modernist used in it a picture he once saw in China about the "Eternal Supper" where the [blessed Lord of glory] was seated at a table with Buddha, Mohammed, and Confucius - on equal terms evidently with great imposters. Was not Peter rebuked for putting the Lord on the same level as those saints of old, Moses and Elijah? What will God have to say to such bold effrontery? This daring man also suggested that all people who hold such varied and opposing

beliefs can amalgamate into a theistic front army without deserting their particular order. Truly "God is not in all their thoughts" -not the God of the Bible at least.

During the latter part of May, the Presbyterians held a conference in Des Moines, Iowa. They censured Bible reading and prayer in public schools as not being an "effective witness." While the head man, stated clerk, Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, said that unless the Christian Church changes, it will be bypassed. Time, May 31, 1963. They also noted with evident pleasure the

"increasing warmth of Presbyterian relations with Roman Catholics." *ibid.*

The whole sad story of deterioration of Protestant and Catholic loyalty to the Word of God is being written in indelible ink by Him who searches the heart. He who stands in the midst of the "seven golden candlesticks" judging the state of Christian profession will soon spew it out of His mouth as a most nauseous thing (Rev. 3:16). What solemn words! "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of My mouth." We can see that rampant infidelity has infiltrated and permeated both Romanism and Protestantism, and the end result will be that the whole herd will run violently down a steep place into the sea when the unclean spirit enters into them. (See Mark 5:13.) And of combined profession, God has foretold that it will become "the habitation of [demons], and the hold of every foul spirit" (Rev. 18:2).

Much is delineated in Revelation 17 and 18 about the final consummation of religious iniquity. It may attempt to join hand in hand to fight atheistic materialism today, but it will in the end be destroyed in toto by those very forces in the hand of the Roman beast who will be in league with Satan himself.

It seems evident that the Roman pontiff's burning desire to re-invigorate Catholicism and to make it attractive to the Protestant communions is not a mere flash, but has much ground under its feet. It is doubtful that a sudden shift of popes could change the picture. Let us remember that our God is moving all the scenes about us, and His will will be done.

A recent book, THE COUNCIL, REFORM AND REUNION, by Hans Kung of Germany, is an important part of what he calls "rapprochement." He carefully notes how so-called critical research has brought the two sides closer together. A common denominator will be the callous giving up of one vital point after another, until nothing separates them. Take all of the truly saved people out of all confessions at the coming of the Lord, and nothing remains but chaff to be cast into the fire.

Dr. Hans Kung correctly evaluates Protestantism as a whole when he said:

"Is it not true that every sort of 'liberalizing' is allowed, so long as it does not lead in the direction of the Catholic Church? Is one not free to deny or minimize the divinity of Christ, and 'interpret' his resurrection away to nothing, so long as one does not show too much understanding of the New Testament witness to a Petrine or episcopal office? . . . Are Protestants trying to immunize themselves against the impressiveness of the present-day Catholic Church to the point of having a fixation about compromise?" p. 99.

Dr. Kung sees through the hollow shell of profession now extant in Protestantism, and yet wants to bring it all into the Roman fold. The emptiness of profession is very apparent to any who have eyes to see. No wonder that the Lord says to Laodicea - the last state of Christendom - "thou art lukewarm." Anything opposed to Christ - His name and His Word - is tolerated. It is no wonder the

Spirit calls to true believers, "Come out of her My people."

To prove that Dr. Kung's evaluation of Protestantism is correct, we will quote from the dust jacket of the book which is printed by the Catholic publishers of Sheed and Ward. It is from the pen of a notorious modernist - "Rt. Rev." James A. Pike, Episcopal Bishop, Diocese of California:

"The Rev. Dr. Kung's book is one of the most important works on the Christian scene today. . . . More than any other book I have read, this one affords a measure of hope - as to the ultimate possibility of the reunion of the Roman Catholic Church and other churches. . . . Upon its publication, I shall provide a copy for every priest in my Diocese."

Then under Dr. Pike's endorsement is a short one from a noted Catholic who speaks approvingly of Dr. Kung's book thus:

". . . He has forthrightly expressed the hopes we all have for the coming Council." Gustave Weigel, S.J.

The heart that beats true to the Lord Jesus Christ must feel the prevailing and increasing apostasy; it must also be conscious of one, and only one, way of deliverance; that is, the COMING OF THE LORD to take His beloved Church to Himself in the Father's house. "Lord Jesus, Come."

4 Now it is press time: The Pope has died and his mortal remains have been placed in a casket which is encased in two other caskets. The election of a new pope is to begin on June 19. The length of time required to reach the deciding vote may indicate the measure of the difficulty to reach an accord,

for the recent conflicts within the Vatican are almost sure to come to a head in the election of Pope John's successor.

An editorial in a Jewish newspaper expressed sorrow at the Pope's death; it also made the following comments:

"As he [Pope John XXIII] lay on his deathbed, this man of God turned to the Old not the New Testament when his confessor Monsignor Cavagna approached him. The Pope greeted him with Psalm 121 [this is according to the numbering used in Catholic Bibles-it is Psalm 122 in Protestant Bibles] referring to the One True God, to the rebuilt Jerusalem, the tribes of Israel, the House of David and the Torah." -B'nai B'rith Messenger, Los Angeles, June 7, 1963.

The Jewish people would doubtless seize on such an event to indicate what they consider the pre-eminence of Judaism over Christianity, but it is common for professed Christians to not distinguish between the shadows of the Old Testament and the more blessed realities of the New. In many quarters Christianity and Judaism are scarcely distinguished. As to whether or not Pope John knew the Lord Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour, we have no way of knowing. The darkness of the Roman system is not conducive to either the assurance of salvation or to having joy in the Lord. There cannot be any delight in the thought of instantly departing from the body to be with Christ in paradise when the horror of purgatory looms before the soul.

Pope John — Peace on Earth: the Editor's Column

It was generally supposed that the election of Pope John XXIII on October 28, 1958 was merely a delaying action. People thought that because of his advanced age the new Pontiff would be merely a "caretaker" Pope who would hold the post, do little, and leave decisions for another Pope shortly. This proved, however, to be a mistake; for Pope John has become in a short space of time one of the most popular popes in the Roman Church's history. He is an innovator, and an ingenious leader who dares to depart from custom. He seems to be a man very suited to this time when great things are in the making-ecclesiastically, scientifically, militarily, within nations and in the international arena. There are portents on all sides of inevitable great changes in store for the world. Changes of great magnitude and of unheard-of natures in the making.

What many Christians forget is that God is moving behind the scenes, and is working to bring about the literal and absolute fulfillment of all His will. We are living in the most unusual epoch of the Church's history; we are at the end of an age. The political heads and the religious leaders are practicing for the final stages. Each will fill his own place and all work together to bring about God's purposes for this world. His firm decree has gone forth that Christ shall reign and trample His enemies under His feet (Psalm 2). At present He sits at God's right hand until the appointed moment (Psalm 110). Men have forgotten that God's wrath hangs over this world for having cast His Son out of it; His judgment has lingered long, while His grace has acted to save all who receive the Lord Jesus as Savior; but the day of righteous judgment is at hand.

One of the recent events that marks the way is the papal encyclical entitled, "Pacem in Terris," or "Peace on Earth." It was dated April 10, 1963. It is highly significant for its content and for its form of address. It is not only addressed to the Roman Church in the customary way, but "to all men of goodwill, on establishing universal peace in truth, justice, charity

and liberty." It is thus addressed to "all men" in such a way that it has brought forth praise from nearly all quarters - even from the communist presses. It was lauded by the United States government (a new departure), by Protestant and Jewish leaders; and of course it had the usual Catholic approval.

Its content is based on the principles which are acknowledged in the world. Much is built on the "nature of man," and appeals flow there from. Its whole premise is faulty, for universal peace cannot be secured by "men of good-will" working on a humanistic foundation. Even the flood did not change the evil nature of man; for when it was over God said, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. 8:21). God's covenant to not again bring such a deluge on the earth was based on the fragrance of Noah's burnt offering sacrifice, rather than by any change wrought in man's heart by witnessing the power of God's judgment for wickedness. Noah's offering spoke to God of what the coming sacrifice of Christ would furnish to Him as a basis for blessing men.

It is amazing that the Pope said:

"Every human being has the right to honor God according to the dictates of an upright conscience, and therefore the right to worship God privately and publicly."

This certainly has not always been the attitude of Roman Pontiffs, as Church history attests; and we hope that this will be followed in all places. Nevertheless, there is fundamental error in the statement; for man has no right to worship God in a way that seems right in his own eyes. God will only be approached according to His holy Word, and that approach is through the death - the sacrificial death - of the Lord Jesus Christ. Man has no right to worship God after the dictates of his own conscience, nor will God accept it.

The papal encyclical expresses the desire for the one world government which friends of communism have advocated. There is much in it that would fit in perfectly with the National and World Councils of Churches - everything and everybody to get together and live in peace and harmony. According to this theory, all that is required is for "men of good-will" to destroy their weapons and beat their swords into plowshares; but that time has not come, and it will not come until God's

Christ first treads all His enemies under His feet and reigns triumphantly. First will come what is being practiced now - "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears." Joel 3:9, 10. Armaments are not yet to be destroyed. How can there be good will among men and nations while the Christ of God is rejected and the Prince of Peace is despised?

The very foundation of the United Nations is at variance with the Word of God. There, nations which professedly honor God compromise their position and exclude prayer to God to please open and avowed atheists. It is just the latest effort of men to have peace on earth with God shut out. It is a story as old as Cain who murdered his righteous brother, went out from the presence of God, and built a city to enjoy the world apart from his Creator. Wars and conflicts have been the usual course, and no League of Nations, World Court, regional federations, "balance of power" (or balance of horror) grouping of nations has ever yet prevented war. The United Nations has had what it calls successes, but in the end it may prove to have been the greatest disappointment of all. It is doomed to failure - "Associate yourselves... and ye shall be broken in pieces.... Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught." Isa. 8:9, 10.

When we see how closely the encyclical parallels the hopes of men in general, and approaches to church federation aspirations, we need not be surprised to read in the New York Times:

"Protestant, Greek Orthodox and Jewish leaders were lavish in their comment on the document itself and on the Pope for having issued it.... Dr. Lewis Webster Jones, president of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, called the encyclical 'a masterpiece.' "

According to the same report, J. Irwin Miller, president of the National Council of Churches said:

"We are gratified at the growing area of agreement among leaders and peoples of the Judeo-Christian heritage, and of other religious faiths on basic matters affecting the peace of the world and the well-being of God's whole family " N. Y. Times, April 12, 1963.

The National Council of Churches found the papal letter contained "remarkable similarities" between their thinking and that of the Roman Church. Others expressed satisfaction at his call for "a strengthened world order through a strengthened United Nations." The whole thing is from man, appeals to man, is for man, and will end in the confusion of man.

Pope John XXIII has created many "firsts" in papal history. He was the first to receive a Shinto high priest from Japan. Not long ago he received Mr. Nikita Khrushchev's daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Aleksei Adzhubei, in a private audience. The avowed atheist is the editor of the Communist party's official newspaper, *Izvestia*. There are indications that the adamant stand against communism which was first taken by Pope Pius XII is being given up by John XXIII. He has made a number of conciliatory gestures in their direction and on a reciprocal basis seems to be reaping some profit. *Time* magazine for February 22, 1963 says:

"Last week the Pope produced in Rome a living gain from his policy of easing tensions: Ukrainian Archbishop Josyf Slipyi of Lvov, [was] freed after 18 years of Soviet confinement.... The Vatican regards Slipyi's release as only the beginning. 'This was a simple act of personal respect by the Russian government for Pope John,' says one Vatican official. 'It also gives us hope that other negotiations will work out.' "

There are other favors the Pope would like and may get. One is to have Josef Cardinal Mindszenty out of political asylum in the U.S. legation in Budapest. Archbishop Josef Beran was arrested in Prague in 1950, and his present whereabouts is unknown. A line or two from *U. S. News and World Report*, March 18, 1963 issue would be apropos:

"There had been other signs of easier relations between the Vatican and the Kremlin. Russian Orthodox priests were permitted by the Kremlin to attend the Ecumenical Council in Rome last autumn." p. 21.

Augustin Cardinal Bea came to the United States at the crucial time and, besides sounding his notes for religious ecumenical advances, he commented on his Church's relaxing mood toward communism. He said before he left Rome that the U.S. was angry and he was afraid they would soon be angrier, according to *Time* for April 5, 1963. Thus an effort is being made to influence the United States to accept Rome's changed attitude toward communism, which was scarcely necessary from the ecumenicalists' viewpoint here.

Inherent in the suggestions of an enforced world order for mankind is the suggestion for a one-church world. And this is coming according to the "scripture of truth." We are not in darkness, nor are we uninformed about the future. God has treated us as friends and has unfolded to us what He is about to do. This great day of grace is going to culminate in man's wickedness rising to its absolute peak - a great religious confederation on earth without Christ, which God names "Babylon the Great." It is in the preliminary stages of its making; the coming of the Lord to take all true believers to Himself in the Father's house is the next event; then that nauseous, hateful thing will come into full bloom, only to be spewed out of Christ's mouth and later destroyed by human agency under the leadership of the Roman beast (Rev. 17) in a sudden effort to get rid of even the name of God. It will be suddenly destroyed by the atheistic forces that are growing apace side-by-side with ecumenicalism. Two great antagonistic forces - lifeless profession with increased stress being placed on ritualism on the one hand, and godless, ruthless, atheistic forces on the

other.

Dear reader, if you are one of Christ's blood-bought sheep, "let us not sleep as do others." May God give each of us a deeper realization that we are AT THE END, and may the blessed prospect of soon being with Christ cheer our hearts, while we walk in more genuine separation from the world and in faithfulness to Christ. Heed not the false leaders who say that true, practical Christianity in separation from evil is not for our day, but was suited to "Bible days." Never was there a time when simple, loving devotedness of heart to Christ was more called for.

Pope Paul VI - Cardinal Montine: the Editor's Column

We are living in days of great changes. So enormous and rapid have been the changes that we somehow overlook the portents that are implicit in them. Men of God of a century ago who expounded Scripture prophecy (not from current events, but from understanding of the Word of God) gave us outlines of things to come at the end of the Church era. They were granted an insight into the dispensational dealings of God with this world that many at that time assumed to be novel and unrealistic; but for us who have passed the midtwentieth century, we can see rapid changes preparing the way for the time of the end. Strong winds of change are blowing in nearly all directions - religious, secular, international, national, racial, economic standards of values, and moral standards. Much is crumbling before the restless urge of man as led on by the god and prince of this world. Communism, atheism, humanism, materialism, and ritualism vie with each other for the loyalties of men as we begin what is now often referred to as the "post-Christian era."

Nowhere has change been more pronounced during the past century than in the Roman Catholic Church. Only 90 years ago the papal power was fighting for its very existence. The reformation swept large segments of Europe away from religious Rome; it had little or no hold on the growing giant of North America where Protestantism held sway. Large sections of Italy which had been under papal power in the papal states, were wrested from her as Garibaldi launched a war to take these states for the secular power of Italy. On July 2, 1871, the city of Rome fell to Garibaldi's forces; and the papal power was confined to the 109 acres of Vatican city and to the Latern palace. The church lost a 3,000,000-square-mile area extending from sea to sea, and inhabited then by more than 3,000,000 people. So great was the papal defeat that a New York newspaper commented that papacy had lived out its life and must die. This was the general picture that presented itself when "men of the

Book" were explaining from that Book that ecclesiastical Rome was destined to rise and again exercise sway over "the kings of the earth."

In recent years tremendous changes have overtaken the Roman Church. Pope Pius XII who died on October 9, 1958, had been an able administrator and a diplomat of considerable stature. He spoke of changes, but he was a prisoner of the past in the hidebound Roman Curia who ruled the church offices. Just before Pope Pius's death the Curia had forced him to give a great setback to the man who was very close to him. He was a man by the name of Montini who had been in the Secretariat of State for 30 years or more and was closest to Pius XII; he was demoted and sent to Milan, Italy, as the archbishop, but yet denied the rank of cardinal, usually attached to the great Catholic center of Milan. He had wanted changes made that would enhance the stature and favor of Catholicism in the world.

When a successor to Pope Pius XII had to be chosen, Montini's name was mentioned, although he was no cardinal. A conflict was then going on between right and left factions within the church, and after considerable balloting, Cardinal Roncalli was elected pope and took the name of John XXIII. This was evidently a maneuver to put an old man in who would do little and make no

innovations, thus giving the Curia a chance to accomplish their purposes. But Pope John moved the Catholic Church more than any other modern pope. The first man to be made a cardinal by him was the exiled Montini of Milan. (We commented on some of the changes made by Pope John XXIII in our June editorial. And as we noted then many of the changes have helped to turn the Roman Church in the same direction as Protestantism has been going - to a modernist theology - this being the catalyst necessary to the uniting of the two systems of religion.)

In the less than 5 years of John's pontificate, he changed the image of the Catholic Church; he broke with the past and sought to make Rome the great focal point of Christendom; he enlarged the church's participation in world affairs; he made overtures to the communist powers; he sought ways to draw the Jews into favor toward the church; he made numerous bids for Protestant favor and showed favors to them where it was apt to do the most good. In fact, during that very short space of time he changed the church's image in the world. He broke with precedent and custom when it suited his purpose, and he by his Vatican Council II brought the bishops to Rome, and Rome to her communicants more than was ever before done. He did not live to conclude Vatican II, but he laid the groundwork for the liberal element in the hierarchy to take over. And when the time came for the election of his successor, it could have been done in one ballot; for Cardinal Montini was out in front with no real contender for the highest position in Christendom. He was a liberal (previously banished to Milan for his liberal views) and would not only continue the Vatican Council begun by John XXIII, but would press forward aggressively on his own. The conservative Curia has been circumvented from regaining control. Liberalism is to be accelerated. The new pope, called Paul VI, is a man in a hurry to get on; and almost at once he announced the continuation of Vatican II, to begin September 29, only three weeks later than John XXIII had planned - a short time indeed for the necessary change in management and direction.

After Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini of Milan was elected pope on the sixth ballot, he chose the name of Paul VI; and so the reign of Paul VI began. When he was crowned in St. Peter's Square on Sunday evening, June 30, he wore the three-tiered, two-pound crown, and sat on a white silk throne against a red cushion. All the regal splendor surrounding the installation of the new reigning head of one half billion Catholics, sounds strangely incongruous with the blessed, lowly Lord Jesus Christ. The new "Vicar of Jesus Christ" (meaning, Christ's representative or vicegerent on earth) is indeed a contrast to the One he claims to represent! What a sharp line of demarcation! The Lord Jesus had no throne on earth; some would have made Him a king when He fed their poor with bread. That would have been convenient for them and a boon to man; but when He as the light exposed their sins, they would not have Him. "He was despised and rejected of men." This self-styled "vicar" is hailed and honored by men. Christ would not have regal honors from men. When He comes back to reign and subjects His enemies, He will have the kingdom of this world from the hand of God the Father. It will then be fulfilled, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." Psalm 2:8.

And as for a crown, the only crown the Lord Jesus ever had here was a crown of thorns. That, which under God's judgment for man's sin spoke of the curse, was placed upon His holy head in galling mockery. He is now crowned in heaven at God's right hand, but He would be rejected on earth today, as He once was. The Apostle Paul chided the earthly minded Christians at Corinth for enjoying the world and its prosperity, forgetful that they were followers of the rejected Jesus. He said, "Ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might

reign with you." 1 Cor. 4:8. Paul had no crown here; he was beheaded here, not crowned. He viewed the world as that which crucified his Lord, and so he would reject it; they, on the other hand, viewed him as a follower of the man they crucified, and so would have none of him. He said, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14. Other titles given to the pope are, "Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of Vatican City." Test each and all of these by Scripture and you will find each one is contradictory to the present place or portion of a follower of the rejected Lord.

And as for the pope's being the "Successor of St. Peter," you would suppose that Peter would have given some hint about that in his epistles. Peter rather warns the elders among the flock not to lord it over the sheep; surely that means something that is forgotten. In his second letter, he warns about false prophets coming in among them, but says not one word about a successor. He brings to the minds of those to whom he wrote that which they had received so that they could keep those things in remembrance. In all fairness, it can only be concluded that claims to Petrine succession are groundless and false.

Cardinal Montini, after his election, chose to be known by the name of Paul VI. That seems strange, for the Catholic Church has always doted on Peter rather than Paul. Peter was the Apostle to the Jews, while Paul's mission was "far hence to the Gentiles." And Roman Church practices bear far more resemblance to Judaism than to what Paul preached - not that Peter preached Judaism, but Paul preached the heavenly calling of the Church and that Christians were followers of a rejected Christ. Peter's God-given ministry dealt chiefly with the subject that while the converted Jews lost all here, they would inherit a kingdom.

True, there had been five other popes before this man, who chose the name of Paul, but one would scarcely like to seek to emulate all of them. Pope Paul I was pope from 757 to 767. Paul II was pope from 1464 to 1471 and (according to Life magazine) he is remembered for extravagant carnivals, horse races, and lavish banquets. Paul III, 1534 to 1549, was scarcely a man to follow. As a cardinal he fathered three sons and a daughter, and when pope, he made cardinals of two nephews at ages 14 and 16. He also called the Council of Trent which, after years of intrigue and dispute, assembled in December, 1545, and continued its sessions until 1563.

"The avowed object of this famous council was... the pacification of the church, the healing of her diseases, the restoring of her unity, and the blessing of her children; but its real object was the condemnation of the doctrines of the reformers, Luther, Zwingle, and Calvin, and the immediate persecution of all who would oppose its decrees. This was the secret arrangement between the pontiff and the Emperor, for they were well aware that the Protestants would never subject themselves to the council, or yield obedience to its canons." - Church History by Andrew Miller. (See it for the sources of his quotations.)

It was this council which put its official seal on the Apocryphal books of the Old Testament. This was a plan to seal of Protestant debate and argument that they would accept only the Word of God as their rule. This action placed that which plainly was not the Word of God into their book by the decrees of the Council of Trent. These were binding on all Catholics. The next Paul was number IV (1555-1559) who according to Life was a fanatic inquisitor who sent hundreds of clergy,

including a cardinal, to prison or the gallows for heresy. At his death mobs rioted in the streets as a celebration. The inquisition was a part of the war against Protestantism.

And from the same source we learn that Paul V (1605-1621) ruled harshly according to canon law. The history of Paul VI is yet to be written. He is reportedly a liberal and one who praised John XXIII for his leading the way.

The name Paul may have more appeal to Protestants than that of Peter, but to follow the Holy Scriptures which were written by the Apostle Paul would devastate the basic premises of Catholicism. John XXIII was a jovial man of a naturally warm nature, and he drew many leading Protestants to him. Paul VI may wish to follow John's beginnings, but he is a theologian and a man steeped in all the ruling mechanics of the Roman hierarchy.

John XXIII in his aim to bring Protestants back to Rome set up the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity under the liberal octogenarian, Cardinal Bea. And Life says that "Most of the Protestant observers assigned to the Secretariat... were openly jubilant when his [Montini's] election was announced, and one of them even brought a bottle of champagne over to the Secretariat headquarters to celebrate the event with his Catholic friends. Then, of course, the Pope's own words were reassuring to all denominations; 'We open our arms to all who glory in the name of Christ. We call them with the sweet name of brothers.' " "Brothers" sounds much better than the former epithet of "heretics," but "brothers" seems to include apostate Protestants also - men who speak of Christ but deny Him, His virgin birth, His deity, His sacrificial death, His glorious resurrection and ascension - would we call them "brothers"?

The Potter's House

"The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear My words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel." Jer. 18:1-6.

Let us in spirit pay a visit with the prophet Jeremiah to the potter's house, and may both writer and reader be caused to understand the words of the Lord.

What did the prophet see? The potter busy at work, fashioning a vessel on the wheels. And as he watched their swift revolutions, behold, "the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter." We almost see the look of disappointment upon the faces of the workman and the prophet as the beautiful vessel upon which he had spent such pains became suddenly marred in his hands and worthless.

But a vessel he must have, and hence, returning to his work, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. The second time, the work succeeds; he forms a vessel suited to his taste. Evidence of the workman's skill is perceptible throughout; perfect symmetry and matchless design characterize his work; there is not a single flaw. The potter is satisfied; it has turned out exactly as he wished; the vessel is as it seemed good to him to make it.

Jeremiah remains a silent spectator of the scene. Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD," etc. We are at no loss then to perceive the significance; for the words show us that the potter is a figure of Himself, and the clay of Israel.

Israel was chosen by the Lord for His own glory on the earth. The Lord fashioned this privileged people as a choice vessel for His own praise. How marvelous the plans and purposes of the divine workman! How excellent the skill employed in the work! But alas! alas! the vessel was marred in His hand. Israel is marred. The Lord was disappointed [if we may use the word] in His people, and was compelled to set them aside. To this day, they are a marred vessel on the earth, a people scattered and lost. Scripture even speaks of them being scattered among the nations "as a vessel wherein is no pleasure" (Hos. 8:8).

But how blessed to know that there is a moment coming when once again the Potter will remold the clay, and Israel shall be a beautiful vessel upon the earth for His glory, the fruit of His own perfect skill. The Lord will put His own comeliness upon His people; His law shall be written in their hearts (Jer. 31:33, 34); no longer stony, but hearts of flesh. And Israel shall be "another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it." "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in Mine hand, O house of Israel."

But may we not gather further instruction, under the Spirit's teaching, from this interesting passage?

As with Israel, so is it also with man. God created man for His own glory, after His own image and likeness. Man was a beautiful vessel of clay, the workmanship of the divine workman. Wondrous indeed the power and skill displayed in the work. But, alas! this vessel too was marred in the hand of the potter, and man became a moral ruin on the earth.

Now it is deeply important to receive God's thoughts about man's state. We are very slow to accept His judgment with regard to it, and to believe that our case is as bad and as hopeless as it is. And yet how plain His word. Scripture after scripture testifies to our fallen condition. (Rom. 3:23; 1 Cor. 1:21; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19; 2 Tim. 3:1-5.) But men are blind, and their very blindness adds but one more proof of the fact. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. 4:4.

And not only so, but one would think that the scene around, its misery, disease, and death, the daily record of horrors, would open men's eyes in some measure to their state, and lead them to consider their latter end. (Deut. 32:29.) But no, men love darkness rather than light, and hundreds of thousands swiftly tread their short path of life, blind, and content to be so.

Some time ago the writer with two Christian companions was passing the night in a town beautifully situated in a fertile valley, surrounded with wood-clad hills, and mountains in the distance. It was a lovely evening in June, when nature was clothed in its most beautiful garb. Having visited one or two in the town, and finding we had an hour to spare before dark, we strolled outside. Coming upon an isolated hill covered with trees, we climbed the narrow winding path which led to the top. The view of the surrounding country was exceptionally beautiful, and the setting sun added to its charm. But what was our surprise to find ourselves in the midst of a large cemetery, with hundreds of tombs among the trees, or in the open plateau which crowned the hill.

Casting the eye to the left, on the face of the opposite slope stood an immense structure. This, upon inquiry, we found to be the county asylum.

Again looking off to the left, among other buildings, a large hospital met our view. And fronting us, towering on a rocky height overlooking a river, stood a large castle and prison.

To this beautiful locality thousands of tourists direct their steps every year. How many, we wonder, look upon it with the same eyes as we did! The scene was lovely, but sin was manifestly there and marred all. How powerful this silent testimony to the utter ruin of man, and yet how few have eyes to see it! And this is only one spot among thousands on this sin-stricken earth, where a similar testimony may be seen. How fearful the effects of sin in the human race! A prison for men, because of the terrible fruits of their evil wills; an asylum for those who lose the reason given them of God; a hospital for the poor body racked with disease and suffering; and a grave at the end of their toilsome pilgrimage on earth!

What further proof need we of the fall of man? Surely the vessel is marred, utterly marred, in the potter's hand. And reader, after death comes the judgment (Heb. 9:27). God has said it.

But oh, how blessed to turn our thoughts away for a moment from such a scene, and to read in the wondrous Book of God the glorious words, "If any one be in Christ, there is a new creation"! 2 Cor. 5:17; J.N.D. Trans.

Yes, God has returned again to His work. He has made it again as seemed good to the potter to make it. The first vessel, the first Adam, the first man, is marred, utterly marred. God has cast it aside as a worthless thing. The cross of Christ, His Son, is man's judicial end - in one aspect the testimony of God to man's utter ruin and worthlessness. The vessel was marred in paradise at the outset. Traces of its original beauty remain, but the vessel itself is utterly worthless, and God in grace has begun over again. God wanted a vessel for His glory - to suit Himself - and He has made one as it seemed good to Him. This vessel is the new creation.

Glorified as to sin in the finished work of Christ, God raised His Son and glorified Him, the beginning of the creation of God (Rev. 3:14). And now all believers in His name, washed from their sins in His precious blood, are a new creation in Him

"If anyone be in Christ, there is a new creation" (J.N.D. Trans.): "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God," etc. 2 Cor. 5:17, 18.

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works," etc. Eph. 2:10.

"Having put on the new man" (J.N.D. Trans.) "which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4:24.

"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew... but Christ is all and in all." Col. 3:10, 11.

Wondrous work of God, the new creation! Here the foot of Satan has never trod. The empty grave of Christ stands between all in Christ and the enemy of God. No defilement there; no sin there; no evil there. All is perfect; all is in Christ, in Christ forever before God. No patchwork mending of the old vessel, but an entirely new vessel altogether. No human busy bodying here. "Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship." Eph. 2:9, 10. This is God's masterpiece - the heavenly Potter's most excellent work. A new vessel, all His work; the manufacture, pattern, and design, are suited to His eye and heart. No possible flaw here; all is of God, as it seemed good to Him to make it.

How blessed for all who are the subjects of His grace! What do you think about it, dear reader? There is no salvation out of Christ, and nothing suited to God but what is His own work. Then why extend useless efforts in trying to improve the flesh, and vainly seek to mend the vessel that God has long given up as marred, utterly marred, and worthless? Wherefore labor for that which satisfieth not (Isa. 55:2)? God has begun over again. By faith we receive pardon, are justified, and have eternal life. And having believed, we are sealed (Eph. 1:13). And having eternal life and the Holy Ghost, we are in Christ a new creation, where all is of God. We form part of the new vessel, so to speak, the blessed and eternal handiwork of God.

But God has further purposes and plans soon to be matured. Meanwhile, many in Christ are left for a moment on earth. What for? To glorify Him. To do this, we must search and obey His Word. God looks for conduct suited to the favored position and portion into which His grace has brought us. Many are the exhortations to practice addressed to all that are a new creation in Christ. Space

fails to call the reader's attention to more than one.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God [Christ] rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." Col. 3:12-17.

Prayer: the Lord Praying 1 to 9 Times

Let us consider Him, our blessed example and pattern. He commenced, carried on, and ended His ministry with prayer. We read of His praying:

At the time of His baptism (Luke 3:21).

"He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (chap. 5:16).

"He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (chap. 6:12).

"He was alone praying" (chap. 9:18).

"He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray" (chap. 9:28).

"He was praying in a certain place" (chap. 11:1).

"He . . . kneeled down, and prayed" (chap. 22:41).

"He prayed more earnestly" (chap. 22:44).

And finally at the close of His marvelous life, amid the agonies of the cross, He prayed for His enemies (chap. 23:34).¹

President Kennedy's Assassination - Diem: the Editor's Column

Little did we think when our last issue went to press carrying the comment, "every major power could have a new ruler within a year," that before this issue would follow into print the United States would have a new president. The sad and shocking events of November 22, 1963 cast a pall over much of the world. On that day President John Fitzgerald Kennedy was assassinated as he and his wife, and the governor of Texas and his wife, rode in an open automobile in Dallas, Texas. The President was rushed to a hospital, but nothing could be done by medical science to save his life. He had been mortally wounded by two bullets fired from a window of a warehouse overlooking the path of the procession. Governor John Connally of the State of Texas was seriously wounded, but a sudden movement of his body had saved his life. He is reported to be recovering - a close call!

It is indeed a tragic and inglorious close of life for President Kennedy at the comparatively young age of 46 years - the youngest President to serve the country. He had reached the very pinnacle of world fame, only to be felled in a moment of time. We might use the words of David when Saul and Jonathan were slain: "How are the mighty fallen!" (2 Sam. 1:19). We are impressed with the brevity of life and the frailty of man. And oh, the dread finality of one's being cut off! There comes a moment when it cannot be stayed or altered - the man is gone, "and the mourners go about the streets" (Eccles. 12:5). "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more." (Psalm 103:15, 16).

We will probably never know what motivated Lee Harvey Oswald to commit this heinous and despicable act which stunned the world by cutting off a world figure of eminence. The act widowed Mrs. Kennedy and made her children fatherless. We cannot begin to estimate the far-reaching consequences of this premeditated murder; but before long the world will have regained its composure, and other men will step into the void and carry on.

But a more serious question is, What about Mr. Kennedy's soul? We are mindful of the words of the Lord Jesus, "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him." (Luke 12:4, 5). It is not for us to pass on the destiny of Mr. Kennedy's soul; that is in the hands of the God with whom we each have to do. He is the searcher of all hearts. What we do know is that if Mr. Kennedy had a personal trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior, then he is now absent from the body and present with the Lord. This is true of him or of any other person, but nothing whatsoever can alter the condition of a man's soul when once he has passed out of this life. Man's destiny is sealed at that moment. No prayers of Pope Paul VI, or of all the clerics in the world, can change anyone's state after death. In Scripture we read of some of whom it was said, "These all died in faith." All such go into paradise to be with the rest of the redeemed. Every man alive on earth is a sinner, and no one but God can forgive sins. He is willing and ready to do this for each and every one who takes his place as a sinner

before Him, and accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as his only Savior. God desires that all men should be saved, but He will not forgive guilty men unless they trust in the atoning work of Christ. Unless men believe in the Lord Jesus they will "die in their sins." That is the awful alternative to dying in faith. May these solemn considerations as a result of the President's death stir many people to face the future now in the presence of God to the saving of their souls. It is the judgment to come after death that makes death so dreadfully solemn: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb. 9:27).

Daniel's song of praise to God in his second chapter comes forcibly to mind at this time: "Daniel said, Blessed be the name of God forever: for wisdom and might are His: and He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings." (vss. 20, 21). And this is as true of elected officials as of kings and emperors. God overrules in all the affairs of men. Another has said, "God is behind the scenes and moves all the scenes He is behind." The knowledge of this fact should keep the Christian calm and quiet even in the midst of tumult and confusion. The all-powerful, all-wise, and all-seeing God who providentially orders all, is the One whom we know as our Father. We "know not what shall be on the morrow," but we know Him who does, and who orders all things according to the counsel of His own will.

The imperious Nebuchadnezzar was to lose his reason for a time and be driven from men until a time would come when he would "know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." Never was there a man more exalted than the great Babylonian emperor, and he was brought low. In the fourth chapter of Daniel, we get incidents related which have a prophetic character as showing the insanity of Gentile powers in the days of the "times of the Gentiles." Then the time came when Nebuchadnezzar lifted up his eyes to heaven, and his reason returned to him. "And at the end of the days, I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honored Him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom is from generation to generation: and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (vss. 34, 35). When Christ comes to reign and puts down all His enemies, the "times of the Gentiles" will have ceased. Then will the Gentiles recognize and honor God as the Most High God - His name in connection with the Millennium.

Crime and violence was to further stalk Dallas and its neighboring city, Fort Worth, Texas. As soon as the assassination of President Kennedy was enacted, the Dallas police and the Secret Service men, who were there in abundance to guard the chief executive, fanned out in a search for the culprit. As they closed in on Lee Harvey Oswald, in Fort Worth, he turned and shot a pursuing police officer, killing him. Surely God's verdict of Romans 3 is true: "Their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known." (vss. 15-17). What had begun as a beautiful, bright day was soon marred by crime and horror.

The net of circumstantial evidence closed tighter and tighter around Lee Harvey Oswald, and he was formally charged with the murder of the President, the police officer, and the attempted murder of the governor of the state; he was lodged in the city jail of Dallas.

The violence in men was not to end there, however. On Lord's day morning, November 24, as the city police authorities were preparing to remove the prime suspect from the city to the county jail for safer keeping, another man entered the scene. This man in some manner obtained entrance to the city jail as officers were leading the manacled Oswald to an armored truck and walked up to Oswald and shot him. Another murder, and this inside of the city jail - violence complicated by violence. And another man was ushered into eternity to meet a Holy God - cut off without warning and with no time for even the thought of preparation. It may be said that he only got what he had meted out to others, but the solemn fact remains that he was thrust into eternity from whence God will cast him at a later date into hell where he will remain for all eternity devoid of peace or hope.

It may be hackneyed to say that "two wrongs do not make a right," but these words are appropriate in this place. When God put government into the hands of men after the flood, He said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed"; but this is no sanction for man to take the law into his own hands and murder another. When men take the law into their own hands, violence is the result. In fact, anarchy is but the multiplication of such acts. The law is responsible before God to take the life of him who takes life, and this in spite of the sentimentalists who decry capital punishment. Before the flood, corruption and violence filled the earth, and no man's life was safe; and when the Son of Man comes to reign, the conditions prevalent in the days of Noah will already have returned (see Luke 17:26).

Nor was the United States the only country visited by assassination of those in high places. Just twenty days before the death of President Kennedy, the established government of South Vietnam fell in a bloody coup. Both President Ngo Dinh Diem and his brother were wantonly killed, and the powers of government taken by others. Many there were ushered into eternity by acts of violence. But worse is yet to come, for we read in Revelation 6 that a time is coming when peace shall be taken from the earth, and they will "kill one another." How is it that men can brush aside the solemn precursors of worse to come, and go heedlessly on, careless of the destiny of their immortal souls? Is the answer not to be found in that "the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4)?

One thing that Christians in these Western lands can yet be thankful for is that God is restraining the powers of darkness for His people's sake, so that the nation was not thrown into confusion; but an orderly transition took place, and Lyndon Baines Johnson became the new President of the United States.

But while we view the tragic events of the last month with solemnity, let us not forget that the world in which we are temporarily strangers is the same world yet that cast our blessed Savior out of it. God sent His beloved Son into the world saying, "It may be they will reverence Him" (Luke 20:13). But they conspired against Him and cast Him out. He was nailed to a wooden cross and held up as a spectacle to heaven and earth that the rulers of this world rejected Him who came in love and grace. His death was not the result of one man's decision, but His was the official verdict of a subdivision of the Roman Empire. Governor Pontius Pilate in solemn court turned Him over to be crucified after having rendered verdicts of not guilty on several occasions. Herod from Galilee also mocked Him and made no move to secure His release. The soldiers, the common people, the leaders of religion, all clamored for His death. Before God, the world and all mankind were

rendered guilty, and the world's trial was ended. It has been a condemned world from that day. Judgment has been decreed, the day set, and the Judge appointed. May we beseech sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

In closing these remarks, may we add a word of caution to Christians. We should be careful to not "speak evil of dignities." This is quite common today, but those in authority have God's sanction in the office they hold. Whether they are wise, or unwise, we should render respect to them as God's ministers (Rom. 13:6). Not that God will not hold them responsible for their acts, and His government will operate in that sphere as in all others; but we should be careful in how we treat them and speak of them. Let us not engage in striving, but be mindful of our heavenly calling and destiny. May we sing with the poet,

"This world is a wilderness wide!

We have nothing to seek or to choose;

We've no thought in the waste to abide;

We have naught to regret, nor to lose.

"The Lord is Himself gone before;

He has marked out the path that we tread;

It's as sure as the love we adore,

We have nothing to fear, nor to dread."

Propitiation and Substitution

Many puzzle as to whom Christ died for. Some say that He is a substitute for the whole world; others, that He died for only the elect. Both are wrong. He is a propitiation for the whole world, a substitute for all who believe. And believers are the elect of God, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). The Word of God is plain.

The following illustration may serve to simplify: I put down a large sum of money on a table for a room full of people who are in debt. Are any benefited as to their debts? Not unless they believe. But some do believe me; what do they do? Why, take some, to be sure, and use it. Any who do not believe, leave it alone.

So Christ died for all (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). God hath set Him forth a propitiation for all (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2). And all are hopeless debtors to God on account of their sins.

But some poor burdened one believes God, and can say of Christ, with Paul, "Who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Christ is that person's substitute, and he may know too that he is one of the elect.

Another does not believe, and therefore remains in his sins; and not only so, but God will cast him into the lake of fire for his unbelief (Rev. 20:15).

"The sinner who believes is free,

Can say, The Savior died for me;

Can point to the atoning blood,

And say, This made my peace with God."

My reader, you may know that Christ died a propitiation for all; but unless you believe on Him, He is not your substitute, and you cannot be saved.

It is blessedly true that Christ died for all.

But can you say from the heart, Christ died for me.'

Public and Private Prayer

Man's proper place is one of dependence upon God, and this the Lord, though God as well as man, frequently manifested in His own life on earth. He prayed; He spent a whole night in prayer; He prayed earnestly; He prayed in secret; He prayed openly. In the wilderness, on the mount, on Jordan's brink, and in the garden of Gethsemane the Lord Jesus Christ poured out His soul in prayer to God.

Prayer too, public and private, characterized the early Christians. Of the first converts we read, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts 2:42. Their enjoyment of the grace of God did not lead to forgetfulness of their dependence upon God; nor in the hour of God's interposition on their behalf did they fail to remember how all their resources were in Him. For when Peter and John, who had been taken before the council_ were restored to their own company, the hostility of the ecclesiastical rulers to the spread of the truth having now become manifest, the whole company, to whom the two apostles reported all that the chief priests and rulers had said to them, lifted up their voice with one accord to God for the continued successful prosecution of the work (Act., 4:24).

Again, when Peter was in prison, arrested by the political power which at that time had sway at Jerusalem, and his martyrdom was determined upon for the morrow, fervent prayer was made on his behalf; and a prayer meeting was held for that purpose in the house of Mary the mother of John, surnamed Mark (Acts 12). And that meeting had not broken up, though it was past the hour of midnight when Peter in person announced to them how their prayer had been heard and his release had been effected.

Nor was it only in Jerusalem that meetings for prayer were held; for when the Holy Ghost had marked out Barnabas and Paul at Antioch for the work to which He had called them, many prophets and teachers there assembled laid their hands on them, after fasting and prayer, recommending them to the grace of God for the work they had been called on to undertake (Acts 13:3; 14:26). On another occasion, at Tyre, when Paul was on his way to Jerusalem for his last visit there of which we have any record, the whole assembly, including the wives and children, knelt down in prayer outside the city, on the seashore, with those of Paul's company (Acts 21:5). A refreshment, doubtless, this must have been to the Apostle's heart - a service, too, well-pleasing to God.

Besides these instances of common prayer in which the whole company took part, we learn from Scripture how repeatedly saints were wont to resort to it. The twelve, when exercising their apostolic powers in appointing the seven deacons, engaged in prayer before they laid their hands upon them (Acts 6:6). Similarly, Paul and Barnabas, when appointing elders in every city, prayed with fasting, and commended them to the Lord on whom they had believed (Acts 14:23). And Peter and John, in Samaria, prayed that the converts might receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:15). Peter, too, when raising up Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:40), and Paul, when about to heal the father of Publius (Acts 28:8), alike confessed their entire dependence upon God for the exercise of

such powers on man's behalf. Of Stephen we read that his latest utterance was one of intercession for his murderers (Acts 7:60).

Of Paul we learn that, though the character of his future work was told him at his conversion ere he rose up from the ground (Acts 26:17, 18), yet it was when engaged in prayer in the temple at Jerusalem that he received his directions to depart to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17-21). In the house which was left desolate to the Jews, for the presence of the Lord was not there, the divine command to depart to the Gentiles was communicated directly to the vessel fitted for the service.

On another occasion, in a place and under circumstances very different from the last, Paul and Silas in the prison at Philippi with their feet made fast in the stocks, at midnight prayed and sang praises to God. Their bodies were subjected to the power and malice of man. Their spirits were free and unfettered. They prayed and they sang praises to God (Acts 16:25), and an answer came. God acted in power and in grace. An earthquake shook the prison, opened its doors, and set the prisoners free; and the word of God by Paul and Silas converted the jailer and his household. Again, at Miletus, the Apostle did not bring to a close his farewell interview with the Ephesian elders until he had prayed with them (Acts 20). Prayer characterized him, as his epistles demonstrate (Rom. 1:9, 10; Eph. 1:16; 3:14; Phil. 1:4; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; Philem. 1:4).

Paul valued the prayers of others, and counted on them, as his epistles also teach us (Rom. 15:30; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:7; Col. 4:3; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1; Philem. 1:22; Heb. 13:18). But he seems not to have asked the prayers of any who were walking in ways that he had to reprove. To the Galatians he made no request for their fellowship with him in prayer, though we cannot doubt from the tone of his letter that he prayed for them (Gal. 4:19). Nor did he solicit the prayers of the Corinthians till Titus had assured him of their godly sorrow. A silence of this kind on the part of the

Apostle surely has a voice for us. To ask for the prayers of others should never be a matter of form on our part.

Prayer for oneself (Jas. 5:13); prayer for others, for saints (Eph. 6:18), and for all men (1 Tim. 2:1); prayer too for the work of God upon earth (Col. 4:3, 4) - with such requests are we permitted to approach God. Nor is this anything new; for saints in Old Testament times addressed Him, and in accordance with the revelation of their day drew nigh to God as the Almighty (Job 8:5), or as Jehovah God of Israel (1 Kings 8:23) who dwells between the cherubim (2 Kings 19:15). As seated on His earthly throne, Israel addressed to Him their supplications. Christians, however, are privileged to call on God as their Father who is in the heavens, and to pray likewise to the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 12:8); but nowhere are they authorized in Scripture to pray to the Holy Ghost. Praying in the Holy Ghost (Jude 20; Eph. 6:18) is what Christians are exhorted to do; but never are they told to pray to Him. Praying in the Holy Ghost, we shall express the desires which the Spirit of God has formed in our hearts, and as the Spirit would lead us to present them; and, as having access to the heavenly sanctuary, we pray to Him who is in the heavens. Prayer then should ever be in accordance with the revelation vouchsafed to God's saints. What was suited to Solomon and Hezekiah would not be fitting for us. We should not address God as the God of Israel, nor speak to Him as dwelling between the cherubim.

The old Jewish form of prayer clearly no longer suited the disciples of Christ. The prayer, or prayers, John taught his disciples ceased to be the proper expression of the hearts of Christ's disciples when they had learned from the Son about the Father. It is plain, then, that prayer should always be in harmony with, and based upon, the revelation of God which has been vouchsafed us. Souls in those days felt that. The Lord then endorsed the thought as correct, and afterward abundantly confirmed it; for just before His departure, on the night previous to His crucifixion, unasked by the eleven, He discoursed in a marked way on this important subject. Of the power of prayer, when offered up in faith, He had taught them only a few days before (Matt. 21:21, 22; Mark 11:22-24). Now, in the immediate prospect of His departure, He teaches them a good deal more. He was about to leave them to go to the Father, henceforth to be hidden from their sight. They should, however, have a clear proof that He was where He had told them that He was going; for they should do greater works than He had done, and whatsoever they should ask in His name, that He would do, that the Father might be glorified in the Son, adding, "If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it." (John 14:12-14.) The world, the Jews, might taunt them with trusting to a crucified man; but as answers came to prayers offered up in His name, they would have abundant proof, both that He was with the Father, accepted on high, though rejected on earth, and also that He was caring for His own.

Now here for the first time we read of prayer to be offered up in His name. When He gave the disciples the prayer of Matt. 6, He did not tell them to present their petitions in His name; and in John 16:24 we distinctly learn from His own lips that this was something quite new. "Hitherto," He said, "have ye asked nothing in My name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Publish the Name of the Lord

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not He thy father that hath bought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee?

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock; butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape." Deut. 32:1-14.

It is a great comfort to our hearts, beloved brethren, when evil comes out, that all the evil and the sin (and each one that proves what is in his own heart, and finds there what perhaps he never suspected, and that Satan has used it for the casting down of confidence in the soul) has already been taken into account by God; and while it might surprise us, God, I may say with reverence, is not taken by surprise. When it was needful for the testing of the creature that the question of good and evil should be raised under the law (and we all have to learn it practically in one way or another), yet God is always beforehand. We get that in the beautiful Psalm (105:16, 17): "Moreover He called for a famine upon the land"; it was not by chance - He called for it - but then, "He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant." God had provided before the want came.

It is beautiful here that when the Lord takes up a people, the first thing He does is to proclaim His name to them. When Moses is sent to the children of Israel, and gets his commission, he asks the Lord by what name He would make Himself known to them. There is a great deal wrapped up in that for us, as for them - the way in which God reveals Himself to us. Immediately God proclaims His name to Moses: "I Am THAT I AM." "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations." Exod. 3:14, 15.

So before they start upon their journey, before it is a question whether they will ever reach Canaan, or of what they are as proved in the journey, God comes in first with what He is, what is in His name for the people He has taken up. Surely there is our strength - in what God is.

In the passage from Deut. 32, Moses summons the heavens and the earth as witnesses on God's side; because on the people's part there could be nothing but breakdown, and hence cursing. In the previous chapter this utter breakdown is foreseen; yet in chapter 30, He speaks of the word of faith: "It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?... But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it - that was not the word of law. Under law there was nothing but a curse; this was the 'word of faith. The Apostle so explains it in Rom. 10:8 - in reality there was a new thing. When they had come into all the judgments which Jehovah had prophesied, and were brought to their wits' end, it would be a question not of law, but of faith - the word "in thy mouth" and "in thy heart."

Moses was commanded to write chapter 32 as a prophetic song to be laid up for a testimony. He begins this in verse 2 after summoning heaven and earth to witness. In Psalm 50 they are summoned as witnesses too. But that is not what I want to call your attention to. Up to this point he could not have said, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew." In all he had been saying, as putting Israel upon their responsibility in the land, he could not use such words as these: "As the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." But now he can, for he is taking up another point - what God is. He will have to foretell all the breakdown of the people; that will have to come out; they will go through all that is said in the after part of the chapter till they come to their wits' end; then they will find out what God was for them. But before that, here is the doctrine that drops as the rain, and distills as the dew.

O fellow-Christian, is not that what suits our hearts? God knows how to come in. Is it not necessary for Him to teach us the lesson of good and evil? That may be necessary, but the doctrine which drops as the rain is before that.

What was the great capital sin that Moses speaks of here? It was idolatry, the giving up of God in that name in which He had revealed Himself. If the heart turns to the Lord, when the Lord is really before us, there is always recovery. It is when the heart departs from the Lord (see Heb. 3:12) that there is no recovery. What then is to recover me? A person may say, "I have been doing wrong; I will set to work and do better." There is no recovery in that. "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the LORD, return unto Me." Jer. 4:1. That is recovery. The grand sin of Israel was leaving the Lord. Quite true, they fell into all kinds of evil and sin and pride, but here was the great sin; and if the heart departs from the Lord, there is no center to recover to. As another has said, "A groan to God, however feeble it may be, however little we may have the sense that we are heard, yet if it is to God there is no consequence of sin which is beyond the reach of this groaning. The charge to Israel was, "They have not cried unto Me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds." Hos. 7:14. There was no turning of heart to God. Take the prodigal son: the recovery was really when he said, "I will arise and go to my father" - the turning of heart to the Lord.

Israel's great sin was idolatry. The sin of Christendom will be consummated really in giving up Christ. Then all is gone. But here Moses says, "I will publish the name of the LORD." What was treasured up for Israel in that! "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is

perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He." Of course I do not say that the revelation of God here comes up to what we have now. I am only speaking of the principles we get as Moses brings out this simple lesson that he learned at the bush when the Lord made known His name. Not "I was" or "I will be," but "I AM" - an ever-present God forever. That was their strength. God our strength - "He is the Rock."

Now let us turn for a moment and look on our side, at the revelation made in those words, "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." John 20:17. And look at Phil. 2:6-11: the Lord Jesus Christ empties Himself, comes down and takes the place of a servant here, obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Now God has "given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Jesus - What a name we have now! The Father and the Son. The Father, the source of all blessing, revealed, unfolded to us by the Son. The Son unfolding the Father here on earth, and then taking His place in heaven as having fully unfolded what God was, walked as a man upon the earth glorifying God. Now a name has been given Him above every name, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." But do we know the power of that name? We sometimes sing:

"To sound in God the Father's ears

No other name but Thine."

What that name is, as known to us by the power of the Holy Ghost, what there is there, what there is in that Rock, I do not pretend to say much about; but I just quote Phil. 2 because there is a reference to Deut. 32:5 in that very chapter. "They have corrupted themselves" - that is what they have done - "their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation." Now in Phil. 2 we are exhorted to let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus. There is to be the simple subjection of heart to that name of Jesus; that name having all its power upon our souls; that name, not only as Savior but as Lord, is to sway our hearts.

That is one great point, I think, in that chapter - the name of Jesus having its full power and sway in our hearts. Thus we get the result a little lower down. As the Apostle to the Gentiles, he is absent, and contemplates his passing away from them; but then there is what God does: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.... That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke." Now we get the contrast of this in Deut. 32:5. There was what God was, but Israel never knew the power of that name. Until the last day, when really they see the Lord Jesus and find He is their Jehovah, they will never know it. They did not know the power of that name Jehovah, but in Philippians 2 we do; we know the power of the name of Jesus, not only as salvation, but as commanding our hearts, having its sway in the secret of our souls. Well, then, what is the effect of it? Exactly the contrary of what we get here in Deuteronomy (the very words are referred to in Phil. 2:15) - we are to be sons, blameless and harmless, luminaries, shedding a heavenly light on the scene down here, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, the Lord Jesus having His sway over us.

How the Lord pleads with Israel in that passage in Isa. 45, which is quoted in Phil. 2 "I am the LORD, and there is none else." Again, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by Myself,... that unto Me every knee shall bow,

and every tongue shall swear." Now is brought out the connection of the names of the Father and the Son; for if Jesus is confessed as Lord, it will be to the glory of God the Father.

O that there may be a place in our hearts where that name is owned, and that that name may really sway our affections! Then it would come out - "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." Moses had to say of Israel, "Their spot is not the spot of His children." It is a question now of other people seeing the power this name has upon us.

When the name of Jesus sways our hearts, we have before us the salvation spoken of in this epistle; that is, the final triumph of Jesus over all the power of the enemy. That is referred to in the word salvation. Paul was in prison when he wrote the epistle to the Philippians, and this triumph was in his mind when he said, "I know that this shall turn to my salvation." In chapter 3:21, our bodies of humiliation become the subjects of the Savior's power. All will be subjected to Him; even things infernal will have to bow to His name. Our hearts have bowed to that name now. If that name is hidden in our hearts, then we shall answer to what is said, "the sons of God, without rebuke [it is really what the blessed Lord Himself was], in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation." He was shedding forth heavenly light in the scene down here.

Only one word more. Just this: "The LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." vv. 912. There could be no failure on God's side. If He brought them into the wilderness, well, "His way is perfect"; what was it but to find God there? If Paul speaks of infirmities, he can say, I take pleasure in them, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. God has led His people into the wilderness; there He led them and instructed them, but He kept them as the apple of His eye. He brought them out of Egypt to be their God, and then "there was no strange god with him." "Little children," John says, "keep yourselves from idols." If the blessed Lord Jesus Christ has His name really sovereign in our hearts, if it is treasured up there and has power and sway over our souls, there will be no "strange god" - "the LORD alone did lead him."

Then we get all the blessings they received from Him (vv. 13, 14). Then, alas! (v. 15) "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked:... he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." It was the turning away of heart.

O may the Lord keep us in the secret of that doctrine that drops as the rain and distills as the dew - what God is to us and for us - our hearts knowing it and entering into it. We know how it is when there is failure; we are legal often and try to alter and put it right ourselves. That is not the doctrine that drops as the rain; that does not make the tender grass grow. What can really be the revival of our souls but this "doctrine that drops as the rain"?-this name of the Lord Jesus Christ getting fresh power in our souls, swaying our hearts, so that we not only know Him as Savior, but as Lord?

Questioning — Christian Truth Doctrine: the Editor's Column

During the last week of January, we witnessed the obstinate refusal of President de Gaulle to allow Britain to enter the common market of Europe. He dreams of a united Europe under the leadership of France as in his nation's heyday, but this in nowise changes God's plans or purposes - they will stand, and He will do all His pleasure. Men's and nations' fortunes change quickly. We still see in the present European trends the shadows of things to come. We just watch from the side lines, not as participants but as spectators, having the final results foretold and in our hands.

At this point we depart from our usual editorial practice and turn to a most unpleasant subject, but hope, the Lord willing, to return to our usual mode next month.

Since unwarranted use is being made of a partial list of Christian Truth subscribers to circulate misleading statements and so create doubts in the minds of our readers as to the soundness of doctrine we are putting forth, we feel that a word of warning is in order. The individual who is doing this alleges that this publication and its editor are unfaithful in presenting the present portion of those who die without Christ, so as to leave the impression that we may condone the blasphemous teaching of soul sleeping. In order that the reader may judge for himself, we herewith reproduce photographically three pages from the February, 1960 issue. This was printed the month following the completion of the article in question. It was inserted at that time so that there could be no such misunderstanding as is now being propagated. This explanation in 1960 was for the purpose of clarifying the meanings of certain Greek and Hebrew words which refer to the eternal punishment of the lost, the present state of bliss for the spirits and souls of departed saints, and a state of unutterable woe and despair now for those who have died in their sins.

Editor's Column

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

We wish to further call attention to certain remarks which we deem derogatory to the glory of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here is one: "No one, outside of our Savior, has yet attained to immortal life?" This may sound innocent enough, but is it? That blessed One was the author, or originator, of life; He had life in Himself; yes, He was the life. As a man, He could lay clown His life and take it again. No mere man could "lay down" his life Even as a man, no one could take His life To say that He attained to immortal life at His resurrection is to degrade Him. Really, it is a part and parcel of that false doctrine found in Seventh-day Adventism (which Mr. Armstrong seems to have taken from them intact) called "conditional immortality." Its reasoning is that man does not possess an immortal soul that lives on and on after death, either in weal or woe. It is a flat denial of the Word of God which tells of those who die in faith as being "absent from the body, and present with the = Lord." The soul and spirit do not die at the death of the body, nor do they sleep. Luke 16 takes us behind the scenes and lets us see the misery of the soul of a man in hades, whose body,

was buried on earth. "Conditional immortality" is false in every way. In the working out of that scheme, the Lord Himself is supposed not to have existed when He lay in the tomb; whereas, He sustained the universe at that very time. Therefore, to say that He had to await resurrection to get immortal life is a denial of the glory and truth of His Person. "Conditional immortality" also denies that the converted thief went to Paradise that day to be with Christ, as promised.

We are sorry indeed that anything we have printed should have been the cause of uneasiness on the part of any dear Christians, but cannot in the light of what we have written and always maintained see how it could have happened. We stand where we have always stood - for the truth of God-and must leave the criticisms of those who "watch for iniquity" and "make a man an offender for a word," with the Lord, "the righteous Judge."

The articles from old issues of Christian Truth, from which these excerpts have been taken, are still available from the publishers in their entirety in pamphlet form. The first is entitled Arminianism Versus Calvinism, and the second, The Armstrong Heresy.

Remember Him

"Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead, of the seed of David." 2 Tim. 2:8; J.N.D. Trans.

The sevenfold forms of service in this chapter have often been noticed. The first three characters of the Lord's labor seem to be especially emphasized in these verses, and the Lord Himself presented as the great Exemplar of His servant. He preeminently was faithful as soldier, athlete, or husbandman. The Apostle tells Timothy how to consider what he says in bidding him to call to mind Jesus Christ - David's seed - whose holy separation, obedience, and labor as man on earth, an obedience unto death, is attested by His resurrection. Avoiding or resisting every entangling alliance "with the affairs of this life," refusing every unlawful aid in His strife against sin, He was ever about His Father's business. He rendered to Caesar his things, rejected the praise of men and their desire to make Him a king. He refused the testimony of demons to His deity, or the temptations of their prince. He Himself, the first fruits to God, of His own labor, now, after first laboring, is a "partaker of the fruits."

Rest at Noon

Sol. 1:7

This song, though primarily applying to the earthly bride, Jerusalem hereafter, guides us now as to the Church, the heavenly bride, who is now on earth, and to those affections proper to her; and hence it is suited to each of us individually.

And this verse in the song speaks so plainly for itself that little need be said. It ought to be the heart's language of every Christian. "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest." The heart desires to know the place where Christ finds that which satisfies Him - where He feeds. Where does He find this, if not in the company of the saints today? On earth He said He had "meat to eat that ye know not of." In the Psalm again we read of Him speaking as a man on earth: "My goodness extendeth not to Thee; -to the saints that are on the earth, and to the excellent.... In them is all My delight." Psalm 16; see J.N.D.

Trans. And again, in Pro. 8 "My delights were with the sons of men."

Is your heart then occupied with what we have here - the desire to know where the Lord finds His delight now? It is in the company of His people (Matt. 18:20). But surely, if so, He desires also to find His food, His refreshment, in us individually; and one asks the question, to be answered by each of our hearts, "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest?" Can I, can you, be content that He finds no refreshment in our company? Are we content to get through a single day, or hour, apart from communion with Him - giving Him in us no refreshment?

Second, the verse goes on, Tell me "where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." The heart desires to know this also; for if the Lord finds His portion in us (the Lord's portion is His people), He will give us also to rest in Him. The love of the bride and Bridegroom, though differing, is a reciprocal love. "We love Him, because He first loved us." He gets nothing from us to satisfy Him, but He gives ten thousand fold more to us to satisfy us. Noon is the time of day when the sun is highest. And to us, when the trial is bitterest, the way all hedged in, the desert a trackless waste of sand without a shadow in it to shelter us, He causes His "flock to rest at noon." As we read also in chapter 2, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight." And when do you want a shadow? It is when the sun is high in the sky. Is Jesus then this to you? Have you found in Him not merely your Savior, but your rest (the rest to your souls of Matt. 11)? No rest can the flock find but with Him, in His company. But we want to know more of this for ourselves as individual Christians, one plodding on under one difficulty, and another under another; but Jesus - the One to whom each of us can come and say, "Thou whom my soul loveth" - Jesus, enough for all the difficulties I find in my daily path, and more than

enough - rest for me in them all.

And if He gives me "rest at noon," if I find the place where He makes His flock to rest when the sun is highest, what about His care for the flock, and of me, during the other hours of the day? For the

day is all the time the sun shines. If I am thus with Him, and prove Him in that part of my little day when I wanted

Him most, what a path is that of the Christian! Hereon earth I am learning that Christ desires always to be in my company, and to have me consciously in all the rest of what the knowledge of His

presence and company with me can and does bring. Again I would ask myself, and I would ask you, Have we found this place in the midst of the desert of this world? A desert indeed, but the heart which

has known Jesus in all its cares thus can say, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake " Can you say this? The Lord guide your heart into it more and more!

We Rest Where God Rests

God says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"; "Mine elect in whom My soul delightest"; and working these (His) thoughts into my soul, I too see Jesus to be precious, and find my delight in Him. Thus, He who was crucified for me, who "bare our sins in His own body on the tree," is precious to God and precious to me.

God could find no rest save in Jesus. We may look throughout the world, we shall find nothing which can satisfy our hearts but Jesus. If God looked for truth, for righteousness, all He could desire He found in Jesus; and He found it in Him for us. Here is that which gives comfort to the soul. I see Jesus "now in the presence of God for us," and God is satisfied; God delights in Him.

It is Christ Himself in whom God rests, and will rest forever; but then Jesus, having borne and blotted out my sins by His own blood, has united me to Himself in heaven. He descended from above, bringing God down to us here; He has ascended, taking up the Church in union with Himself there. If God finds Jesus precious, He finds me (in Him) precious also.

Jesus, as man, has glorified God on the earth. God rests in that. As man, and "the head of His body the church," He "has passed into the heavens, now to appear in the presence of God for us"; it is this which gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is within ourselves as its ground of rest; it receives, loves, and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is His rest.

It is not by human knowledge or intellect that we attain to this. The poor ignorant sinner, when enlightened by the Spirit, can understand how precious Jesus is to the heart of God as well as the most intellectual. The poor dying thief could give a better account of the whole life of Jesus than all those around him, saying, "This man hath done nothing amiss"; he was taught by the Spirit.

Are we much in communion with God? Our faces will shine, and others will discover it though we may not be conscious of it ourselves. Moses, when he had been talking with God, wist not that the skin of his face shone; he forgot himself; he was absorbed in God. As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and our hearts being occupied with Him, they will be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this too will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our own hearts.

Samaria, Galilee, Judea: Jesus Seen in John 4 and 5

John 4 and 5

How simple and important are those words found in this scripture, "Wilt thou be made whole?" Chap. 5:6.

But their value will not be rightly prized if we do not look carefully at the occasion that drew them forth.

The Lord was in Jerusalem. He was in the great center and representative of human religiousness, and surrounded at that moment by its various provisions. It was the sabbath. It was a feast time in the city of solemnities. The ordinance or angelic ministry of Bethesda was before Him, and multitudes lying around it. The temple was at hand, and the Pharisees were all abroad.

In the midst of all these, speaking as they did the same language, and calling on man to be religious, the Lord plants Himself. But it is as a new thing, another thing than all that was there already, that He now appears. He does not notice the feast or the sabbath or the temple. The ordinance He sets aside, and the Pharisees He provokes. His words went to cancel all, and bring in something entirely of another kind. "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man may at once free himself of all rivalry and resistance; he may cease to look around for human aid; he need wait no longer nor doubt as to the long-desired blessing. It was there for him in Jesus without rivalry, without help from man, without delay, without doubt, without ordinance or angel. The only question was, Would he take the blessing from Jesus? would he be debtor to Him? would he stand by and see the salvation of God? would he let God, in grace, work for him?

What words indeed they were in the midst of such a scene! what effecting, weighty words! They were a call for religiousness and its provisions and dependences, to faith and the provisions and sovereignty of grace.

This was in Judea. But there is Samaria and Galilee as well as Judea, and we must look at each of them.

These regions, morally, are very different. Samaria was the defiled, Galilee the rational, Judea the religious. These are the characteristic differences between them, as we see them in these chapters.

Samaria was the defiled, the outcast, the place without the camp, as we may say. It was a type of the world of sinners. It had no character to lose. But being such a place, it was just the place which the Son from the bosom came to visit, and to which He would exercise Himself.

Galilee was the rational, the proud, and the intellectual. The Lord's experience at Nazareth had already shown Him the character of that country. It was a place where pride had prevailed over convictions, and where He had been refused (however He might commend His authority to them), because He was the carpenter's Son. He had proved there that a prophet had no honor in his own

country (Luke 4). He, therefore, rather tries another city in Galilee on this occasion, and He goes to Cana. But Cana is not Samaria to Him. There was pretension there. The Galileans receive Him because they had seen His miracles. They accredit Him for themselves ere they accept Him. And nowhere is the pride of pretension more detected than in the intellectual world.

Judea was the religious. If Galilee were the intellectual world, Judea was the religious world. Though of a different kind, neither will do for the Son from the bosom. He had not come among men to vindicate or adopt them as religious, nor to educate and cultivate them as intellectual. His business was with defiled man, with man as a sinner; and pretension on man's part in any form will not do for Him.

There is amazing comfort for the soul in seeing how the Lord was differently affected in these different regions.

In Samaria He sat on the well with one of the defiled nation, and afterward abode for two days in the midst of a number of them. Conscience was stirred there, and He is therefore among them with-out reserve. There is no weight on His spirit. He was in His due place, the place which gave Him opportunity to act as from Himself, and to let it be learned what He was, and for what He had come into this world. He found a home in Samaria. There He found stirred consciences, or contrite, humbled hearts (Isa. 47:15).

Toward Galilee He looked out with a weight upon His spirit (chap. 4:44). Galilee was not that natural scene for the divine Stranger to serve in, that Samaria was. He did not come here, as I said before, to educate and cultivate intellectual man. And therefore, while we see Him taking His place at the well of Sychar with all ease, and then dwelling for two days among the Samaritans as at home, here in Galilee He finds no home, and enters it with reserve. He ministers grace and power there, but it is without refreshment of spirit. He has no meat there which His disciples know not of. Samaria had provided that. Judea He had to test; rather, indeed, to cancel. Judea was the religious, as Galilee was the rational; Galilee had its pretensions, Judea its preoccupations; and to Judea the Lord has to propose Himself as the end of the law, the substance of its shadows, the object of all its ordinances, and the One that was to take the place of all that was there. He takes His stand at the side of Bethesda, and simply says to the impotent man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He would be accepted as the end of all ordinances, the life and power of all the institutions of the city of solemnities. He is personally doing what the Apostle doctrinally is doing in the epistle to the Hebrews, substituting Himself in the place of all the provisions of the Mosaic or Levitical dispensation. He entered Samaria freely, Galilee with reserve; but in Judea, He found no place at all. The sabbath, the pool, the temple, the feasts were there before Him, and He is challenged as an intruder, and has to withdraw.

All this turns to our comfort. We learn from it what Jesus is, and we find Him out to our comfort. It is when our necessities welcome Him, as in Samaria, that He gives us His presence; it is when our pretensions are made, whether they be intellectual or religious, that we, either wholly or in part, lose Him. The Lord at the well of Sychar and at the pool of Bethesda shows Himself differently.

And let me add, that as we begin, so we must go on with the Lord, as sinners, as Samaritans, with exercised consciences. If we let go conscience and take up intellect, if we part with a broken heart and take up religiousness, if we leave Samaria for either Galilee or Judea, communion with Jesus

will fail. For Jesus left home when He left Samaria, and found no other in either Galilee or Judea.

Surely, then, we see these regions to be morally diverse, and the blessed Lord to be related to each of them in divers ways. Conscience was stirred in Samaria, and no miracle asked for; and there Jesus was at home. Mind rather than conscience was exercised in Galilee, and miracles were the ground of faith; and there Jesus did a deed of grace and power, but did not dwell. Religion shut Him out from Judea.

Does not all this tell us about Jesus to our comfort? Wretched, self-ruined, corrupted child of nature, the Son of God will approach; but pretension in no form will do for Him. It may be intellectual pretension that discusses Him and weighs Him in its own balances; it may be religious pretension, which still trusts its doings in spite of the offers of His grace; but neither will do for Him who came into a scene of ruins, just because it was ruins, foul, black, leprous, uncleanable ruins. Let the sinner be the sinner, Jesus will approach him, for He came to seek and to save him; but let man pretend or assume, Jesus must be reserved.

It is a sweet meditation to go along these priceless chapters and make these discoveries of the Son of God. We may study Him, profoundly study Him, when we have Him thus before us; for it is heart and conscience, and not the mind merely, that will then sit at the lesson.

With all this, however, I must put one thing forth - the mode the Lord took with the defiled Samaritan, thus to get for Himself a home there. As He came both to seek and to save, this scene shows Him to us both seeking and saving.

She was a child of nature, ruined, polluted nature. Her heart knew nothing beyond the ordinary enjoyments and occupations of everyday life.

The Lord begins by inviting her confidence. And this He does in the skillfulness of love, seeking a favor at her hand.

He acquires the confidence He sought. She feels at ease in His presence.

He then uses the confidence He had gained, for her good. He awakens the curiosity of the one He had gained. He uses such a form of words as lets her feel that it is no ordinary person she has encountered. She takes up the word, "Sir," showing that her soul had been arrested and fixed. And having thus gained both her confidence and her attention to Himself as no common person, He uses His advantages still for her, but with faithfulness to her present condition. He addresses Himself to her conscience; and after a very short delay, He gets it exposing her to herself, for her confusion and amazement.

Thus He has acquired her confidence, her attention, and her conscience. But there is much more. She struggles, and would fain hide again - as Adam of old. A question about worship shall do for her what the trees of the garden did for him. But He follows her into her covert, and answers her inquiry in such a form of words as seems only to fix the attention of her soul more deeply upon Him, and awakens her wonder more earnestly, so that she would almost identify Him with the promised Messiah.

He then stands revealed to her. This, however, is for her satisfaction; as before she had stood revealed to herself, by His words, for her confusion.

She leaves Him, and the disciples return; but they learn from Him, and their provisions were now unneeded. He had sent away a poor sinner happy, and this was meat and drink and rest to Him.

What secrets are disclosed in these things of Samaria, Galilee, and Judea; and what methods of grace in these dealings with the woman!

As to her, the Lord seeks, and then saves. He sought the confidence of a sinner - then fixed her sours attention on Himself - then exposed her to herself, and finally, revealed Himself to her in light and joy and liberty; and when the whole process is over, He takes more joy in the issue of it than she did herself.

This is the Jesus we have to do with, and whom it is our privilege, as it is our duty, to study.

He can find a home among us on this earth only in the poor sinner that with broken heart deals with Him; and such a home as this He must get for Himself by the in working power of His Spirit. We find a sample of all this here. The prophet, I may say, had sketched or anticipated this in Isaiah 47:15-19. But all this tells us of the Savior we have found. His different experience in Samaria, Galilee, and

Judea, tells us that He gets a home only in the midst of broken-hearted sinners; a n d

His dealing with the woman shows how He gets that home for Himself.

Self-Occupation

Self-occupation is a great mistake for the Christian. Of course, until a sinner has learned the plague of his own soul, he must be turned in upon himself. Thus he will cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and find salvation and peace in turning to God. So too a Christian must be reminded of himself as long as he thinks there is anything good in him. But when he can say with Paul, "I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing," he is privileged to turn from himself to Christ, to find his all in Him.

And what a relief it is! Instead of thinking about my feelings, my attainments, my work, my dignity - to live in the joy of the Lord, in what He is for me, in letting Him work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, in the desire that He may be glorified. This is what is meant by the words, "To me to live is Christ"; living is Christ.

Are you thinking of yourself? Then you are in danger of being a Pharisee, or being miserable. Do you long to be happy, or holy? Turn to Jesus the Author and Finisher of faith; find your all in Him.

The Serpent's Judgment

Gen. 3

The skeptic sneers at the sentence on the serpent, the meaning of which is evidently its entire humiliation. Going on its belly and eating dust would present this thought to anyone familiar with Scripture. The import of the words is beyond all question the expression of judicial degradation, and the feeding on it even to death. Hence its full, final judgment is expressed in these words, "and dust shall be the serpent's meat" (Isa. 65:25). But this one sentence, thus ignorantly scorned, gives the source, explanation, and judgment of what has characterized the universal race of man over the whole globe to an extent without rival - unless perhaps the worship of the sun, which was generally identified with it. Where the polished idolatry of Greece and Rome has never penetrated, the exaltation of the serpent has reigned paramount, and even in all its details proves the truth of the Mosaic account of the fall. The fact that a single verse of simple statement accounts for what has governed the whole world, though it embraces nothing of the corruption that characterized what so governed it, is the strongest possible evidence of the divinity of the record we possess.

It is evidently impossible here to give an account of the Ophiolatrea, or serpent-worship. I can only notice some of the remarkable elements of it. It is found in China, Egypt, Babylon, England, France, Ireland, North America, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Scandinavia (that is, Sweden and Norway), Greece, Italy, Africa in its most savage parts, Palestine, India - in a word, all over the world. It is connected with the principal gods of the East, of Greece, of Rome, and with the most solemn worship of the countries mentioned. In Sweden and Norway, and in Macedonia, serpents were kept in the houses as household gods; in Greece and elsewhere, in temples, as public ones. They were considered the preservers of Athens, as of Whidah on the coast of Guinea; and the savage of Louisiana carried a serpent and the sun as the symbols of his religion, and tattooed them on his skin.

If we turn to the elements which characterized it, we find it accompanied with a tree, and a naked woman constantly its priestess. In India and Mexico, the deliverer is bitten in the heel by the serpent which, in these and other cases, is destroyed by being smitten on the head. Further, he is worshiped often erect, and not prostrate on his belly, and was fed alive with sweet cakes of honey. We find him frequently associated with a tree, and conversing with a woman; and this in countries, in sculptures, and in heathen accounts which leave no possibility of alleging fraud or intention.

It has been shown that the early history of Greece relates to colonies partly from Egypt, but partly from the Hivites, serpent-worshippers driven out from Palestine by Joshua, as indeed were the Carthaginians. Can anyone doubt for a moment the bearing and origin of all this, and the importance of showing that that Old Serpent which had elevated himself to be the god of all the world, was, by present ocular proof, a venomous, prostrate reptile? There he was, manifested and marked out by his condition under the finger of God. And when we see the whole world filled everywhere with these traditions of the serpent, of the worship of the serpent (and of the serpent erect and not on his belly), is not the immense moral importance of this declaration (which in one

little word explains it all, gives the terrible and real secret of it all, and reveals the ruined condition of the rebellious and disobedient man) evident to any serious, sober-minded person?

Scripture has not invented these facts; the whole state of the world, as research and learning have brought to light, has demonstrated the truth of the account given in Genesis - the divine importance of the key given in a few short words. That is, the whole history of the universe demonstrates the folly of the flippant sneers of ignorant or will-

fully blind infidelity, spinning thoughts out of itself, as a spider its Webb, to catch those who may be foolish enough to fall into it, and neglecting the universal testimony of the world.

I may just add, as curious, that a living serpent was kept in the temple of Esculapius, the god of healing. [See editor's note.] So serpent-amulets among Britons were supposed to preserve from all harm. Serpents were carried in baskets by the Bacchanals, Bacchus having in Greek the same name as the object of serpent honor in India, as indeed was the case with another name in Egypt.

Another remarkable fact connected with it was, that the notion of gaining wisdom from serpents was universal. This went even to the notion that eating their flesh gave it. They gave oracles. The progress of idolatry seems to have been this: Satan seized upon the idea of God in men's minds and the obscure traditions of what had happened; where he could, he connected this directly with himself; and serpent worship was universal, as we have seen. Still, the sun being the great and splendid benefactor of man, and in unity, man's heart connected this with one supreme God. This allied itself with the universe. Thus the serpent and sun worship, both being intimately associated with the idea of the unity of Deity and the universe, became connected.

Sometimes the worship of the sun drove out the serpent worship in its grosser form, yet was always connected with it - how should it be other-

[EDITOR'S NOTE: It would be of interest to note the present day use of the symbol of the serpent in the medical profession. We now quote from an up-to-date book: "CADUCEUS, staff surmounted by two wings and entwined with two snakes. Among the ancient Greeks the caduceus was carried by heralds and ambassadors as a badge of office and a mark of personal inviolability, because it was the symbol of Hermes, the messenger of the gods. In modern times it is used as the emblem of the medical branches of the U.S. Army and Navy, and has also been adopted as a

Caduceus

symbol by the medical profession. The name 'caduceus' is given also the staff of Asklepios, the Greek god of healing, which is entwined by a single snake."]-Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia, p. 1269.

wise? Thus Apollo, who is the sun, established his worship at Delphi by slaying Typhon, an immense serpent, who was also said to have been cast down from heaven by Jupiter. He then gave oracles in his place; still the serpent was sacred to him, and was otherwise associated with the Delphic worship. So, in the Scandinavian mythology, the great serpent produced by the evil spirit, Loke, against the supreme God, is cast into the sea. He is the enemy of the gods. Thor will destroy him, but he will die in doing it. So the wolf, produced by the evil spirit, now chained, will in the end break loose and devour the sun.

On the other hand, Hercules, and other such mystic personages answering to Thor in many respects, a kind of godman, destroys serpents in all manner of fables. And Krishna in India, and Teotl in Mexico, reproduce traditional accounts of scripture redemption, connected with what is said of the serpent in Genesis. Caesar produces as the doctrine of the Druids that man's sins could only be expiated by man's death.

Now idolatry, as far as we can say from Scripture only, came in after the flood. Hence we have the next step in idolatry, a vague tradition of a reign of bliss under Saturn, which recalled paradise; and then his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, who became the supreme gods of heaven, earth, and sea; the ark being so distinctly remembered that in the grand procession they carried a statue about in a kind of ship. Indeed, it is very probable that the Greek word translated "temple" is really identical with that of "ship." That is, in a word, the worship of the serpent connected itself with that of the sun and whole host of heaven; and, in cultivated Greece and Rome, merged, through retaining both, into tradition as to paradise, Noah's three sons, and the flood. The purest of all serpent-worship was perhaps in England.

This serpent-worship retained its power longer than we suppose. In idolatrous Egypt, so judged in Scripture, there was a sect of Gnostics who connected it with their

pretended Christianity; and under the name of Ophites (that is, "serpent worshipers") had a living serpent which was let out to glide over the sacramental elements to consecrate them, it being the source of wisdom; exactly as was done with Isis, the great object of serpent-worship, on whose temple was written, "I am all that hath been and is, and shall be; and my veil no mortal hath ever removed"; and exactly as the worship in England was carried on in the serpent-temple at Abury and other places, as recorded in British bard's writings of that day.

In Brittany, in France, where the remains of these dragon-temples are abundant, it is curious to see the mounts ("barrows" as they are called) where the sun was worshiped with the serpent, now all dedicated to St. Michael, whom the Revelation represents to us as the destroyer of Satan's power. And within man's memory, in a village wake, the serpent worship was commemorated, though none understood what it meant.

But I have said enough to demonstrate the importance of showing that the serpent was to go on his belly and eat dust.

The world has consecrated it - has shown the place the serpent had in this history. The connection of it with the worship of the host of heaven is shown in the fable that Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, seized hold of the great serpent that was attacking Jupiter and the gods, and flung it into heaven, where it became the constellation Draco. Indeed, all the constellations are idolatrous gods. And to this day the planets known to antiquity are all marked by the symbolical signs connected with this mystic worship - that of a circle and cross.

In a word, while many traditions of truth were preserved, the serpent was deified. The Englishman little knows, when he tends his sheep or plows over Hackpen, that the hill he has beneath his feet has for its name, "the serpent's head" (for such, in old British, is the meaning of Hackpen; and there was the head of the immense serpent formed by stones, the circle of deity through which it passed being in the center, and known as Abury, a name which is undoubtedly supposed to recall the universal name given to the serpent as worshiped); nor that Arthur Pendragon is "Uther of the

dragon's head"; nor that when he calls his mother, he uses most probably one of the names of Isis, the Egyptian goddess, which identifies death and the woman; for Moth signifies "death."

The reader who wishes to have more details on this must consult Bryant and Faber; or if he has not access to these, a work more popular, but with perhaps fuller information -Dean's "Worship of the Serpent."

Settled Peace

A dead and risen Christ is the groundwork of salvation. He "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." Rom. 4:25.

To see Jesus by the eye of faith nailed to the cross, and seated on the throne, must give solid peace to the conscience and perfect liberty to the heart. We can look into the tomb and see it empty; we can look up to the throne and see it occupied, and go on our way rejoicing.

The Lord Jesus settled everything on the cross in behalf of His people; and the proof of this settlement is that He is now at the right hand of God. A risen Christ is the eternal proof of an accomplished redemption; and if redemption is an accomplished fact, the believer's peace is a settled reality.

We did not make peace, and never could make it; indeed, any effort on our part could only tend more fully to manifest us as peace breakers. But Christ, having made peace by the blood of His cross, has taken His seat on high, triumphant over every enemy. By Him God preaches peace.

The word of the gospel conveys this peace; and the soul that believes the gospel has peace - settled peace before God, for Christ is his peace. (Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20.)

In this way God has not only satisfied His own claims, but in so doing He has found out a divinely righteous way through which His boundless affections may flow down to the guiltiest of Adam's guilty progeny.

Thoughts on Song of Solomon

Of all the songs of Solomon, amounting to 1,005, there is only one that has come down to our day. Written by the Spirit of God, and inserted in the volume of the Book, while some inspired communications have perished, this survives and will, may we not say it, be a comfort and delight to the godly remnant of His people in the latter day, when the circumstances of the spouse, described in this song, will be found to delineate, as the prophetic word of God only can, the condition of the people whose hearts have been turned to the Lord during the time of Jacob's trial and the domination of antichrist. But, as it gives us the exercise of the heart that seeks after an object which will satisfy it, and the unchanging affection of the one it seeks after, we can read it with profit to ourselves, since, while illustrating the changing character of our affection toward the Lord, it brings out the abiding character of His love. To point out the unchanging character of His love as here brought out is the object of the present article.

The words of the spouse commence the book. We hear her voice at the beginning - she breaks the silence, as it were - and we hear her voice at the close. She speaks of her beloved, and to him. He speaks to her, and her only, and manifests to her his love. She begins by declaring her desire to receive the proof of his affection. She knows what his love is. "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth," she can say, assigning as a reason, "for thy love is better than wine." It is no stranger that she thus addresses. "The virgins," she continues, "love thee." Under what circumstances there had been previous acquaintance is not related. Nothing of the past is told us about him, but she acquaints us with something of her previous history. She had been in trial (chap. 1:5, 6). Her mother's children were angry with her, and made her keeper of the vineyards. Of him, we learn what offices he fills - he is king and shepherd, and Solomon is, as such, the representative of the Blessed.

At the outset of the song she is occupied with two things - her beloved and herself. Throughout it, he is occupied with but one object - his loved one. "I am black, but comely." "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys," she says. To her companions she said the first; to her beloved she addressed the second. Her description is correct; it is no overstatement. He assures her she is comely (chap. 1:10) and tells her that as "the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters" (chap. 2:2). He thus takes up her language about herself. She is all that in his eyes. He sees a comeliness in her, though she may have been exposed to the sun's rays. Why should she think of herself? Fair is she in his eyes, nor is that all; he would have her with him, and she knows it; for she gives us the very words of his invitation (chap. 2:8-13). He will not be satisfied without her, so he invites her to go forth with him. Her countenance too he would see, her voice he would hear. "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away," he says. What is her answer? "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe

or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether." Chap. 2:17.

She would have him with her, but she does not respond to the invitation to go forth with him. The ordinary time of day for going out had not arrived; the suited hour, she thinks, had not approached.

She would judge for herself of the fitness of the time to go forth, instead of leaving that, as she ought to have done, to him. She did not go forth as he asked her, so does not find him with her, as she had requested. His absence draws out her heart after him, and she goes out at an unseasonable hour to seek for him. Her question to the watchmen shows where her heart is, as, full of him she loves, she mentions not to them the name of her beloved (chap. 3:3). She finds him, and constrains him to return with her. In this she shows her love, and in being thus constrained he proves his love to her. She had declined his invitation; he refuses not to go with her. He had been slighted by her; she should not know what it was to be slighted by him.

After this we have a description of his majesty coming out of the wilderness. It attracts; and the daughters of Jerusalem are exhorted to go forth and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the days of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart. All are occupied with him. With what is he occupied? Is he thinking of his majesty? Do his thoughts center round his crown? He is occupied, but it is with her who is his love, and with nothing else. Of her he thinks, with her beauty and sweetness he is taken up. She had failed, but his love could not fail. "Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes." Chap. 4:1.

Before, he had endorsed what she had said of herself; here, unasked, he expresses what she is. What he had said in chapter 1:15, he reiterates at the beginning of this chapter. How little could she have expected this after the way she had acted. But he does more than this. At first he had only spoken of her eyes; now he gives a full description of his spouse. Nothing escapes his notice; with every feature he is conversant, and all find favor in his sight. So we read, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." Chap. 4:7. Comely and fragrant is she to him. Beautiful objects of nature and art alone could describe her appearance; the most valuable spices that were cultivated must be enumerated and massed together to express her sweetness. What delight he finds in her! How true, how deep must be that love which is thus occupied with such a one as she. To him she is all that is comely, all that is fragrant, and this he tells her himself. She knew his desire for her presence with him; she learns from his lips what she is in his eyes.

Another opportunity is offered her of responding to his invitation; but how does she use it? He calls to her from without, not to go out to him, but to open the door that he might enter the chamber where she was. But a short time before she had taken him into her mother's chamber. He stands without and tells her his condition, his "head... filled with dew, and... locks with the drops of the night." Surely, she will at once open the door to him. She hears his voice, knows what he says, but remains where she is. "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?" Chap. 5:3. Self comes in and keeps her from opening the door. At first, we saw her thinking of her appearance; now she thinks of the trouble it will cost her. Before, when he had spoken, she intimated that his invitation was premature; now, she would tell him his call was out of season. Need we wonder at her? Have not many practically acted as she did?

Again he withdraws himself; he could not act otherwise, for she must be made sensible of her coldness. Yet he would assure her of the unchanging character of his love. She might change or grow cold; he could not. She opens the door, but he is gone. Was that all she found? In his love he leaves her a token of affection which she well understood. "I rose to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the

lock." Whence came this? "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door." He had anointed the handle of the door with this perfume in token of his unabated affection, even when she was cold toward him. What proof could she give of her love? His withdrawal witnessed of her remissness. What a proof had he left of his, as her hands dropped with myrrh, and her fingers with sweet scented myrrh on the handles of the lock.

A second time she seeks him abroad in the streets. Her remissness draws her a second time into a position unsuited for such a one. The watchmen found her without, and put her to shame as they took away her veil. Her companions are made acquainted with her condition, as she sends a message by them to her beloved if they found him. She might have spoken to him face to face, but she would not; and now she is reduced to be uncovered by the keepers of the wall, and to solicit the help of her companions to recover her beloved. To their request about him, she answers at once, giving a full description of his appearance. He has seen beauty in her; she has seen comeliness in him. Suffering as she did for her conduct toward him, she is once more with him (for he was willing to be found of her); and he is proved to be unchanged, for, as before, he speaks first. He waits not to hear what she has to say in extenuation of her fault; he speaks, not to upbraid or condemn, but to assure her of her beauty in his eyes. "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners." As before, he has but one object of special delight - herself. "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one." How perfect was his love! It had an object at the beginning of the song from which nothing would divert it. Unworthy of it she was, but he could not change. He sought her, he desired her; his dove, his undefiled was but one; there was not another to be compared with her in his eyes.

At the close of the song (chap. 8:12) she avails herself of an opportunity of showing his value in her eyes. "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred." But is this what he cared for? Would the thousand pieces of silver satisfy him? Let us hear his response: "Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it." Her voice to him was more refreshing than any present of money she could bring. He desired to hear the sound of her voice; nothing short of that would fully please him. What he had said in chapter 2:14 is what he concludes with here. His last recorded wish is to hearken to her voice. "Cause me to hear it." In him there was - in Him who is really figured here, there is - no change.

A few words to point out, as far as the original guides us, where the change of speakers takes place, may be of use.

Chapter 1:1, the title; 1:2-7, the spouse; 1:8-11, the beloved; 1:12-14, the spouse; 1:15, the beloved; 1:16-2:1, the spouse; 2:2, the beloved; 2:3-3:5, the spouse; 3:6-11, the companions probably of the spouse; 4:1-15, the beloved; 4:16, the spouse; 5:1, the beloved; 5:2-8, the spouse; 5:9, the companions; 5:10-16, the spouse; 6:1, the companions; 6:2, 3, the spouse; 6:4-12, the beloved; 6:13, the companions say, "Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee." The spouse answers, "What will ye see...?" etc.; 7:1-9, as far as "best wine," are the words of the beloved. Here the spouse breaks in, "For my beloved," and continues to 8:5, when the companions ask, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?" The spouse answers, "I raised thee up," etc., and continues to 8:7; 8:8, 9, the companions or

brethren of the spouse, according to some; 8: 10-12, the spouse; 8:13, the beloved; 8:14, the spouse.

Some regard chapters 2:7, 3:5, and 8:4 as the language of the beloved, but probably without sufficient grounds.

The Sun and the Moon

Now, as the sun is a beautiful and an appropriate symbol of Christ, so the moon strikingly reminds us of the Church. The fountain of her light is hidden from view. The world seeth Him not, but she sees Him; and she is responsible to reflect His beams upon a benighted world. The world has no other way in which to learn anything of Christ but by the Church. "Ye," says the inspired Apostle, "are our epistle,... known and read of all men." And again, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ." (2 Cor. 3:2, 3.)

What a responsible place! How earnestly should she watch against everything that would hinder the reflection of the heavenly light of Christ in all her ways! But how is she to reflect this light? By allowing it to shine on her in its undimmed brightness. If the Church only walked in the light of Christ, she would assuredly reflect His light; and this would ever keep her in her proper position. The light of the moon is not her own. So it is with the Church. She is not called to set herself before the world. She is a simple debtor to reflect the light which she herself receives. She is bound to study with holy diligence the path which He trod while down here, and, by the energy of the Holy Ghost who dwells in her, to follow in that path. But alas! earth with its mists, its clouds, and its vapors, intervenes and hides the light and blots the epistle. The world can see but little of the traits of Christ's character in those who call themselves by His name; yea, in many instances they exhibit a humbling contrast rather than a resemblance. May we study Christ more prayerfully, that so we may copy Him more faithfully.

Tasting That the Lord Is Gracious

Having "tasted that the Lord is gracious," we come to His Word, and receive from Him that which we feel to comfort, nourish, and refresh our souls. The Word always comes with savor from Himself. It is known as "the word of His grace." I may study the Word again and again; but unless I get into communion with Him by it, it will profit me nothing, at least at the time.

God reveals not His things "to the wise and prudent," but unto "babes." It is not the strength of man's mind judging about "the things of God" that gets the blessing from Him; it is by the spirit of the babe desiring the "sincere milk of the word." He says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." The strongest mind must come to the Word of God as the "new-born babe."

And so too in speaking of God's truth; whenever we cannot speak "as the oracles of God," through the power of communion, it is our business to be silent. We should be cautious not to trifle with unascertained truth; nothing hinders growth more than this - trifling with unascertained truth - we can then act as teachers and not as learners. Our position as regards the truth of God must be ever that of new-born babes desiring "the sincere milk of the word," that we may "grow thereby."

But there is nothing so hard for our hearts as to be humble, nothing so easy for them as to get out of this place of lowliness. It is not by precepts merely that we are either brought into this state, or preserved there, it is by tasting "that the Lord is gracious." It is quite true that God is a God of judgment - that He will exercise vengeance on His enemies - but that is not the way in which He stands toward the Christian. He is made known unto us as "the God of all grace," and the position in which we are set is that of tasting "that He is gracious."

How hard it is for us to believe this - that the Lord is gracious! The natural feeling of our hearts is, "I know that thou art an austere man." Are our wills thwarted, we quarrel with God's ways and are angry because we cannot have our own. It may be perhaps that this feeling is not manifested, but still at any rate there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the grace of God - the inability to apprehend it. See the case of the poor prodigal in the gospel - the thought of the fullness of his father's grace never entered into his mind when he set out on his return; and therefore he only reckoned on being received as a "hired servant." But what does the father say? What are the feelings of his heart? "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it:... for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." This is grace - free grace.

So too in the case of the woman of Samaria (the poor adulteress, ignorant of the character of Him who spake with her - "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," and therefore the suited One to meet her need), the Lord says to her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Hadst thou only understood what grace is, thou wouldest have asked, and I would have given.

There Is No God

So say a few, and so think many; but the wish is the father of the thought, and it is amazing what thoughts and sayings the will of man can invent.

The idea of God is distasteful to the natural mind

"God" implies authority, and we all know that restraint is irksome; but, further, when "God" means holiness, and the judgment of evil, and the disallowance of that which we naturally like, then we do our utmost to banish from our minds, if possible, the existence of any such God at all.

No sooner had Adam sinned, than he hid from God behind the trees of the garden - that is, sin had placed a moral gulf between the now fallen creature and his God. Man recoiled from God. Distrust had displaced love, and confidence had given way to dread.

Why hide from God? Yes, why? In that guilty deceitful action, we may discover all the springs of sin. Hiding from God is but the negative of hatred of Him, and hatred is but the spring of the heart utterance, "No God."

O the heart! What a fountainhead of mischief and misery it is! Well says the Scripture, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And hence we read that "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Psalm 14:1. Such a saying may not have reached the lips - may not have taken verbal form - but in unspoken heart language, the utterance is made, "No God."

Now, is it not remarkable that the root principle of all the infidelity of the day should have been announced in so old a scripture as Psalm 14:1?

How prescient is Scripture! Did we know it better, we should be less taken aback by the evils that meet us. They are all anticipated and announced, in principle, in the Word of God; and there they are also condemned.

The wish that there should be no God - none to exercise full authority over us, or restrain our wills, or condemn our sins, or call us into judgment - none, in short, to whom we should be thus responsible - is latent in every human bosom. Sin has produced that wish; and how easy it is to advance from the idea to the belief, from the wish to the word, "No God." Yet, after all, he who should thus speak is called a "fool"; for can there be folly more self-evident than the rejection of God? Could you conceive the unfallen creature making such a denial? Impossible! It is reserved for fallen man to do so. Then how awfully blinding must sin be!

Further, "No God" may be said by the scientist, as readily as by the secularist, by the profound scholar and thinker, as by the gross and profane. Wisdom cannot make God known, for "the world by wisdom knew not God." Learning, research, application of mind the most unwearied, is of no avail here.

And so, if science reaches the conclusion that there is no God, it but demonstrates the fact of its inability to find Him out.

The senses may take in a great deal, but their discoveries must be within the range of their apprehension. They cannot go beyond the sun. Their range is therefore limited.

Now, God is beyond the sun, beyond all creation; and, if He is to be known to man, He must deign to reveal Himself. What in us answers to a revelation on God's part? Clearly, reason does not need revelation. It only demands certain data. Granted so-and so, and reason will furnish a conclusion. But then data are not a revelation.

Creation and things visible are data, and from them man may conclude that there is a God - indeed, should do so - should own "His eternal power and Godhead"; but, even in so doing, he would but conclude mentally that God is. His data are only external facts presenting themselves to the senses. There would not yet be any inward knowledge of God, any certainty.

It is not, therefore, reason that responds to revelation, but faith. God makes Himself known to faith. So we read that the righteousness of God is "revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17). Faith is not unreasonable, but it transcends reason. It dwells in a region far outside that of reason or science. It has to do with God in His proper sphere.

The man who says, "There is no God," lacks the one quality that makes any of us divinely wise. Without faith we are fools; but the more we exercise that God-given grace, the more we please Him, and the more intimately we know Him.

"I know," said Paul, "whom I have believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). Notice the order of the words. Believing was the first act, and knowing was the result; and the knowledge is inward, the fruit of faith and of faithfulness, of walking in rich communion through storm or sunshine, winter or summer, an acquaintance as of one friend with another. Where there is faith, there is the knowledge of God; and where there is subsequent faithfulness, that knowledge is intensified and made precious.

Alas! how much they lose who throw overboard this worthiest of all knowledge as a thing unattainable or as a delusion. The loss is irreparable. If Satan can blind the mind by science, or poison the heart by sin - if he can succeed in making the heart endorse its own evil wish - he has accomplished his devilish end. Only remember that the devils believe and tremble (Jas. 2:19). To believe and know is the blessed portion of the Christian, but to believe and tremble is the dreadful state of devils.

I have met a very learned man who once had written a pamphlet to disprove the existence of God. He was satisfied that his work was unanswerable by reason; but the thought struck him that, while he had satisfactorily silenced the feeble voice of reason, he had not touched that of faith. But how could he deal with faith? It seemed too intangible a foe. What could he do?

He was honest. He said to himself that if God reveals Himself not to reason, but to faith, the only thing for him to do was to ask God graciously to do so. On bended knee he sought that favor, and an abundant answer was the kind result. God is good; for "God is love," and cares for the soul of the helpless atheist as for all. He so loved the world that He gave His Son. This man believed, and thus knew God, and lived for many years a most devoted Christian life. The pamphlet, which had seemed so conclusive to his darkened mind, was given to the flames, when God was made known to his soul through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and then the one labor of his life was to tell of that Savior God whose existence he had once denied.

That is but one instance. Happy the man who, in utter distrust, not only of his mind, but of his heart as well, humbles himself on bended knee before that God against whom he has most certainly sinned, and who thus gives eternal love the occasion of kissing, embracing, clothing, and welcoming the poor prodigal to all the deep and certain blessings of the Father's house.

"That Thou should'st be so good to me,

Should'st be the God Thou art,

'Tis darkness to the intellect,

But 'tis sunshine to the heart."

"Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me." Jer. 9:24. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." John 17:3.

Three Ways

We may walk so as to have ourselves in the presence of, or in company with, the Lord.

We may act so as to bring our fellow saints or fellow sinners into His presence or into His company.

We may be living so as to be keeping ourselves before our fellows or companions.

The first is the way of a worshiper.

The second is the activity of a true servant.

The third is the fruit of vanity and want of single-heartedness, and will surely keep us uncertain, without joy and strength, and prove a snare as well as bitterness in the latter end.

The True Grace of God Wherein Ye Stand

1 Pet. 5:12

God is made known to us as the "God of all grace," and the position in which we are set is that of tasting that He "is gracious." How hard it is for us to believe this, that the Lord is gracious. The natural feeling of our hearts is, "I know that thou art an austere man"; there is the want in all of us naturally of the understanding of the grace of God.

There is sometimes the thought that grace implies God's passing over sin; but no, grace supposes sin to be so horribly bad a thing that God cannot tolerate it. Were it in the power of man, after being unrighteous and evil, to patch up his ways, and mend himself so as to stand before God, there would be no need of grace. The very fact of the Lord's being gracious shows sin to be so evil a thing that, man being a sinner, his state is utterly ruined and hopeless, and nothing but free grace will do for him - can meet his need.

We must learn what God is to us, not by our own thoughts, but by what He has revealed Himself to be, and that is "The God of all grace." The moment I understand that I am a sinful man, and yet that it was because the Lord knew the full extent of my sin, and what its hatefulness was, that He came to me, I understand what grace is. Faith makes me see that God is greater than my sin, and not that my sin is greater than God. The Lord that I have known as laying down His life for me, is the same Lord I have to do with every day of my life; and all His dealings with me are on the same principles of grace. The great secret of growth is the looking up to the Lord as gracious. How precious, how strengthening it is to know that Jesus is at this moment feeling and exercising the same love toward me as when He died on the cross for me.

This is a truth that should be used by us in the most common everyday circumstances of life. Suppose, for instance, I find an evil temper in myself, which I feel it difficult to overcome; let me bring it to Jesus as my Friend, and virtue goes out of Him for my need. Faith should be ever thus in exercise against temptations, and not simply my own effort; my own effort against it will never be sufficient. The source of real strength is in the sense of the Lord's being gracious. The natural man in us always disbelieves Christ as the only source of strength and of every blessing. Suppose my soul is out of communion, the natural heart says, "I must correct the cause of this before I can come to Christ"; but He is gracious, and knowing this, the way is to return to Him at once, just as we are, and then to humble ourselves deeply before Him. It is only in Him and from Him that we shall find that which will restore our souls. Humbleness in His presence is the only real humbleness. If we own ourselves in His presence to be just what we are, we shall find that He will show us nothing but grace.

It is Jesus who gives abiding rest to our souls, and not what our thoughts about ourselves may be. Faith never thinks about that which is in ourselves as its ground of rest; it receives, loves, and apprehends what God has revealed, and what are God's thoughts about Jesus, in whom is His rest. As knowing Jesus to be precious to our souls, our eyes and our hearts being occupied with

Him, they will be effectually prevented from being taken up with the vanity and sin around; and this, too, will be our strength against the sin and corruption of our hearts. Whatever I see in myself that is not in Him, is sin; but then it is not thinking of my own sins, and my own vileness, and being occupied with them, that will humble me, but thinking of the Lord Jesus - dwelling upon the excellency in Him. It is well to be done with ourselves, and to be taken up with Jesus. We are entitled to forget ourselves; we are entitled to forget our sins; we are entitled to forget all but Jesus.

There is nothing so hard for our hearts as to abide in the sense of grace, to continue practically conscious that we are not under law, but under grace; it is by grace that the heart is "established," but then there is nothing more difficult for us really to comprehend than the fullness of grace, that "grace of God wherein ye stand," and to walk in the power and consciousness of it.... It is only in the presence of God that we can know it, and there it is our privilege to be. The moment we get away from the presence of God, there will always be certain workings of our own thoughts within us; and our own thoughts can never reach up to the thoughts of God about us, to the "grace of God."

Anything that I had the smallest possible right to expect could not be pure, free grace - could not be the "grace of God."... It is alone when in communion with Him that we are able to measure everything according to His grace.... It is impossible, when we are abiding in the sense of God's presence, for anything, be what it may - even the state of the Church - to shake us; for we count on God, and then all things become a sphere and scene for the operation of His grace.

The having very simple thoughts of grace is the source of our strength as Christians; and the abiding in the sense of grace, in the presence of God, is the secret of all holiness, peace, and quietness of spirit.

The "grace of God" is so unlimited, so full, so perfect, that if we get for a moment out of the presence of God, we cannot have the true consciousness of it, we have no strength to apprehend it; and if we attempt to know it out of His presence, we shall only turn it to licentiousness. If we look at the simple fact of what grace is, it has no limits, no bounds. Be we what we may (and we cannot be worse than we are), in spite of all that, what God is toward us is LOVE. Neither our joy nor our peace is dependent on what we are to God, but on what He is to us, and this is grace.

Grace supposes all the sin and evil that is in us, and is the blessed revelation that through Jesus all this sin and evil has been put away. A single sin is more horrible to God than a thousand sins - nay, than all the sins in the world are to us; and yet, with the fullest consciousness of what we are, all that God is pleased to be toward us is LOVE.

In Rom. 7 the state described is that of a person quickened, but whose whole set of reasonings center in himself;... he stops short of grace, of the simple fact that, whatever be his state, let him be as bad as he may, GOD IS LOVE, and only love toward him. Instead of looking at God, it is all "I," "I," "I." Faith looks at God, as He has revealed Himself in grace....

Let me ask you, Am I, or is my state, the object of faith? No, faith never makes what is in my heart its object, but God's revelation of Himself in grace.

Grace has reference to what GOD is, and not to what we are, except indeed that the very greatness of our sins does magnify the extent of the "grace of God." At the same time we must

remember that the object and necessary effect of grace is to bring our souls into communion with God - to sanctify us, by bringing the soul to know God, and to love Him - therefore the knowledge of grace is the true source of sanctification.

The triumph of grace is seen in this, that when man's enmity had cast out Jesus from the earth, God's love had brought in salvation by that very act - came in to atone for the sin of those who had rejected Him. In the view of the fullest development of man's sin, faith sees the fullest development of God's grace. I have got away from grace if I have the slightest doubt or hesitation about God's love. I shall then be saying, I am unhappy because I am not what I should like to be. That is not the question. The real question is whether God is what we should like Him to be, whether Jesus is all we could wish. If the consciousness of what we are-of what we find in ourselves - has any other effect than, while it humbles us, to increase our adoration of what God is, we are off the ground of pure grace. Is there distress and distrust in your minds? See if it is not because you are still saying, "I," "I," and losing sight of God's grace.

It is better to be thinking of what God is than of what we are. This looking at ourselves, at the bottom is really pride, a want of the thorough consciousness that we are good for nothing. Till we see this, we never look quite away from self to God. In looking to Christ, it is our privilege to forget ourselves. True humility does not so much consist in thinking badly of ourselves, as in not thinking of ourselves at all. I am too bad to be worth thinking about. What I want is to forget myself and look to God, who is indeed worth all my thoughts. Is there need of being humbled about ourselves? We may be quite sure that will do it.

Beloved, if we can say as in Rom. 7, "In me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing," we have thought quite long enough about ourselves; let us then think about Him who thought about us with thoughts of good and not of evil, long before we had thought of ourselves at all. Let us see what His thoughts of grace about us are, and take up the words of faith, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Trust God in All

God will accomplish His own purpose, no matter by what instrumentality; but if His child, in impatience of spirit and unbelief of heart, will take himself out of His hands, he must expect much sorrowful exercise and painful discipline.

This is where the excessive feebleness of our hearts is constantly disclosed. We do not lie passive in God's hand -we will be acting, and, by our acting, we hinder the display of God's grace and power on our behalf. "Be still, and know that I am God," is a precept which naught save the power of divine grace can enable one to obey. "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4:5, 6. What will be the result of thus acting? "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." v. 7.

However, God graciously overrules our folly and weakness; and, while we are called upon to reap the fruits of our unbelieving and impatient ways, He takes occasion from them to teach our hearts still deeper lessons of His own tender grace and perfect wisdom. This, while it assuredly affords no warrant whatever for unbelief and impatience, does most wonderfully exhibit the goodness of our God, and comfort the heart even while we may be passing through the painful circumstances consequent upon our failure. God is above all; and, moreover, it is His special prerogative to bring good out of evil.

Weakness and Strength

Self-confidence is weakness, because it asks no help from God. Self-distrust is strength, when it casts itself on divine power.

The strength that God promises is for the burden He appoints, and not for the needless burdens we pick up for ourselves.

A Word for All Who Seek the Lord

A few years ago I had the privilege of being present at an interview between a young man who had a love for souls and a venerable servant of the Lord. Having before me all those who labor in the vast harvest field who may read these lines, I will relate the last words that passed on this occasion so full of interest.

Before taking leave of the old servant of God, and after having expressed the pleasure that it had been to him to make his acquaintance, the young man made a request somewhat in these words: "We have just met for the first time and perhaps it will be the last one down here. You have worked many years in the Lord's vineyard and are drawing toward the close of your pilgrimage and of your service. You have far more experience than myself, for I have only just started in service. May I venture to ask you for a Motto which will be a help to me in my work if the Lord sees fit to lengthen out my term of service down here?"

A Motto! Many who read these words might be disposed to reproach the young man for showing so little spirituality in asking a man for a motto when he had the Word of God. But I will never forget the answer that came from the lips of the old man - an answer full of grace and going to the heart. I will always remember the unction and power with which he pronounced these words: "In the first place, endeavor to produce in the conscience of your hearers a deep sense of sin and of hatred against it; and then, when they have believed the gospel, endeavor to produce in the hearts of those who have believed a true and sincere affection for the Person of the Savior."

Let all those to whom God has given in any measure to be engaged in presenting the gospel consider carefully those weighty words.

A true and deep work of conscience is extremely necessary in these days of lightness and indifference. Let us never weaken the sense of the gravity of sin in attempting to make the gospel simple; nor fail in insisting on the necessity of real "repentance toward God." And then let us always cultivate in ourselves as well as in each new convert a sincere affection for the Person of Christ - an affection that will manifest itself in a prompt and unreserved obedience. The Savior has said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." To do His will, cost what it may, is the proof of our affection for Him, just as love for His Person is the powerful motive and the source of all obedience. "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" The Lord refuses the outward fidelity of a disobedient heart.

The Word of God — Dangers: the Editor's Column

Since we have considered the recent multiplicity of new translations of the Bible, most of which are leavened with the evil of modernism (euphemism for infidelity), it would be well at this point to turn back to the Apocrypha of the Old Testament. Many Christians today who were reared in Protestant surroundings are almost unaware of its existence. But as the ecumenical tide continues to rise, and more and more of the liberal Protestant clergy are drifting toward the Roman Church, and there is more talk about including the Apocrypha in some of the new versions, it seems propitious to consider what the Apocrypha is and what recognition should be given it.

Simply stated, the Apocrypha is a group of books and parts of books which have been added to the Old Testament. The title "Apocrypha" means "hidden," "secret," or "occult." These books do not properly belong in the Bible, and even a cursory examination should convince any unbiased person of this fact. The added books are:

I Esdras

II Esdras

Tobias

Judith

Chapters of Esther, not found in the Hebrew nor Chaldee

Wisdom of Solomon (unknown author writes as though he were Solomon)

Jesus, son of Sirach; or Ecclesiasticus

Baruch, including the Epistle of Jeremiah

Song of the Three Holy Children

The History of Susanna

Bel and the Dragon

Prayer of Manasseh

I Maccabees

II Maccabees

The Jews had the Old Testament exactly as we have it today, only they divided it into 22 books, thus: 5 books of the law, 8 books of the prophets (this is an arbitrary "8" for this section included Joshua, Judges, the books of Samuel and Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the minor prophets - of these there are 12). Under the title of "Other Writings" or "the Psalms" they had the remaining 11 books. Thus, adding together their numbers of 5, 8, and 11, we reach a total of 24;

but they referred to them as 22 books. This happens to be the number of the characters of their alphabet, so it may have been an effort to make the number of books conform to that, which caused them to call them 22 books.

The Lord Jesus sanctioned their three-fold division of the Old Testament thus: "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures [other writings] the things concerning Himself." Again, "That all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me." Luke 24:27, 44. At this point we call attention to the fact that neither the Lord Jesus nor His apostles ever quoted from the Apocryphal writings, although those who have counted them say that the New Testament has 263 direct quotations from the three recognized sections of the Old Testament, and 370 allusions to them. That the Lord and His apostles quoted from the three major divisions of the Old Testament, but not once from the Apocrypha, should be enough evidence to discredit it for any subject-minded Christian; but there is much more to be said against its authenticity.

To carry the examination of the Jewish reckoning of the books of the Old Testament a little further, we might add a quotation from the Jewish historian, Josephus, who was born in the year A.D. 37. He was thoroughly cognizant of Jewish standards of belief and could speak with some measure of authority on such a matter. We quote: "We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another (as the Greeks have), but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and how firmly we have given credit to those books of our nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them." At least some portions of the Apocrypha must have been extant at the time of Josephus - which was also the time of the apostles - but he does not credit them as being divine, or as forming any part of their Scriptures.

This brings us to another proof against its inclusion in the sacred canon of Scripture. God's Word declares: "What advantage then hath the Jew?... Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Rom. 3:1, 2. The word "oracles" refers to the Old Testament. It was certainly a distinct favor and advantage to have the Word of God put into their hands - entrusted to them. This not only gave them a vantage point, but it also increased their responsibility. In this matter of trusteeship, they were more consistent than the Gentiles who without qualm or apology easily sell their present favored place by denying the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and easily part with what the Scripture of Truth says of the Lord Jesus. Now, whether the Jews acted up to their responsibility or not is not the question; but they zealously guarded the precious deposit against encroachments, alterations, or diminutions. Therefore, if the Jewish people were its custodians, and they rejected all parts of the Apocrypha as not a part of God's inspired Word, it is one more reason for our rejecting the Apocrypha.

Another reason for our refusal to accept the Apocrypha is that it never claims to be the Word of God. It does not say, like other portions of the Bible, "Thus saith the LORD." We shall see more of this when we examine some of its statements. It should be quite evident to any reader that it is NOT the inspired Word of God. The difference between day and night is not more easily seen than the difference between the Holy Scriptures and the words of mere men.

As we have heretofore noted, the Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, except a few portions having to do with Gentiles, which were in Chaldee, or Aramaic. No part of the Old Testament was originally written in Greek, but in Hebrew, and translated into Greek by 72 scholars at Alexandria, Egypt, about 270 B.C. There is no evidence that any part of the Apocrypha was ever in Hebrew, although Jerome who translated the Greek translation into Latin in the 4th century said that some fragments of the Hebrew of the Apocrypha had been seen; but it is all very indefinite and nebulous.

One thing is certain; that is, the Apocrypha was introduced into the Old Testament in the days of the Church in the Christian era. It was not done by the Jews, nor was it done in the beginning of the Church period. Cyril of Jerusalem (315-386) referred to the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament and lets us know that in his day no part of the Apocrypha had been added to the Greek translation, often referred to by the mark "LXX" (in references). The oldest copy of the Septuagint in which is found the Apocrypha is the Vatican Version, supposed to have been made in the latter part of the 4th century. And in 363 the Eastern, or Greek, Church held a council in Laodicea in which they decreed that the Apocryphal books were not inspired, and so were not to be used in churches. Even names of which Rome boasts, such as Athanasius, St. Augustine, Hilary of Arles, Origen, Eusebius, including Gregory the Great (564-604) speak of the Apocrypha as not a part of the true canon of the Old Testament. And their Jerome, who made the Latin Vulgate from the LXX at the behest of Pope Damasus (Pope from 366 to 384), whose secretary he was, said that, while the Church reads them, they are not canonical. (We need to remember, however, that the words "canon" and "canonical" have been bandied about until one scarcely knows what meaning a certain writer has in mind when using it. "Canonical" used in this sense is generally supposed to mean those books of the Bible which are received as inspired by God. But God has given no such list, and certainly men cannot by decree make a book "canonical" in the sense of its being inspired if it is not. But there are certain marks inherent in God's Word which commend themselves to a man's conscience, and the Old Testament as we have it was recognized as such by its lawful custodians.

Mr. J. N. Darby, in volume 18 of his Collected Writings (p. 487), wrote that -"no church ever took them [the Apocryphal books] to be canonical scripture for fifteen hundred years." This remained for 'the Council of Trent to do in the year 1546. Not until then were they considered to be a part of the inspired Word of God, and this was done by a pope and a servile and subservient group of chiefly Italian and Spanish bishops. The council was called and then dismissed, and met off and on for some years under Popes Paul III, Julius III, and Pius IV.

The council was convened during strife and wars in Europe over the reformation. The reformers sought to correct abuses within Rome, but the council was convened largely to challenge such efforts at reform, and to enforce the pope's absolute dictation. At it, no effort was made to correct anything or to pacify those who were protesting. It led to a stiffening of papal attitude, which in turn led to the excesses of the reformation.

Andrew Miller in his Church History quotes thus from Mosheim: "The Trentine fathers authorized nothing new; but it is equally true, that they authorized much, hitherto thought, from its want of any sufficient authority, open to individual acceptance or rejection. To these divines,... sitting in the sixteenth century... is the church of Rome indebted for the formal authentication of her peculiar

creed." This same historian also quotes from another, Scott, saying: "Doctrines which had hitherto been considered as mere private opinions, open to discussion, were now absurdly made articles of faith, and required to be received on pain of excommunication. Rites - which had formerly been observed only in deference to custom supposed to be ancient, were established by the decrees of the church, and declared to be essential parts of its worship." Vol. 3, p. 479. Into this category falls the forcible acceptance of the Apocrypha as inspired by God, and mandatory compliance by all Catholics. It has been found in all Catholic Bibles since the latest confraternity edition dedicated to St. Joseph is no exception.

We will quote a few excerpts from an entirely neutral source. The Council of Trent was "the eighteenth ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church... held with intermissions from 1545 until 1563.... In the fourth session (1546) sacred tradition was put on a par with Scripture, all the books contained in the Vulgate, including the so-called Apocrypha, were declared to be canonical, and the Vulgate version was pronounced 'authentic.' The doctrine of Justification was after much discussion laid down (1547) in terms which involved the emphatic condemnation of the Lutheran teaching.... Doctrinal decrees were issued on the Mass [this would require a large article to handle in itself, for it nullified - as far as it could - the finished work of Christ, and made the mass a sacrificial offering] purgatory, the veneration due to saints [and their images], and the doctrine of indulgences.... The council set the standards of Roman Catholic faith and practice to the present day. The only things added have been the two definitions of the Immaculate Conception [of Mary] and the infallibility of the Pope." - Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia, pp. 8574, 8575. The latest is that of Mary's bodily "assumption" into heaven.

Thus it will easily be seen that this in no way lessened the great tensions in Europe, for Martin Luther's explanation of the divine Word about "justification by faith" had taken hold of much of central Europe. In this way the Roman Church was furnished with an ecclesiastical hammer to bludgeon all nonconformists. And the words of mere men, some ungodly ones at that, were forced on the consciences of her communicants on the threat of excommunication and a charge of heresy. Tradition and the words of men written in the Apocrypha were declared on the "highest" authority to be received without quibble, as divinely inspired.

And all this was done by men who claimed to be God's representatives. Has the church on earth been as faithful in holding the divine deposit as the Jews were with the Old Testament?

Now let us examine some of the passages of the Apocrypha and see whether they do or do not commend themselves to our consciences in the sight of God. First let us notice the book called Tobias. Who wrote it, or why, we do not know; but certainly no conclave of ecclesiastics could ever make it other than it is, just plain fiction. Here is an angel using an alias who orders a young man to take the heart, liver, and gall of a fish to use as a charm against evil spirits, and to restore eyesight to a blind man. It savors of the magic of sorcery from the East, which God's Word condemns. Besides this, the same book teaches false doctrine: "alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." Chap. 12:9.

The first book of Maccabees may contain some factual history, but it is NOT inspired by God, while much of the second book is little better than nonsense; for instance, the writer says that he is attempting to abridge five books of Jason, and then after many words he says: "But to pursue

brevity of speech, and to avoid nice declarations of things, is to be granted to him that maketh an abridgment." Chap. 2:32. Is God the author of this? Yet, a footnote to the page says that it is "the Holy Spirit who assists the sacred writers... in seeking out the matter."

And the closing words of the writer of 2 Maccabees are worse, if possible: "Which if I have done well, as it becometh the history, it is what I desired; but if not so perfectly, it must be pardoned me." Chap. 15:39. Does this commend itself to any open mind as the voice of the Spirit of God? One writer of note wrote: "It is blasphemy to ascribe such words [those just quoted above] to the Holy Ghost."

Martin Luther truly said of the Apocrypha, "The Church cannot give more force or authority to a book than it has in itself. A council cannot make that to be Scripture which in its own nature is not Scripture." And another has said, Stamping a spurious metal with an official gold designation cannot convert it into gold. Then why was Rome so eager to stamp the spurious books inspired? Because it served her purposes and general doctrine. We have just seen the error in Tobias about alms taking away sins. This suits a general doctrine of works. Rome also uses Maccabees for the doctrine of purgatory. But lukewarm, indifferent, ecumenical Protestantism would be content to go along with the Apocrypha. And we say this now, before such a combination of the true Bible with the added books is available.

One more evidence against the Apocrypha is to be found in its unrelated connection with the rest of the Word of God; for instance, nothing should come between Malachi and the New Testament, for it passes from a godly remnant waiting for Christ and speaking one to another of Him, in those days of apostasy, on to the little godly remnant who were waiting for Christ and speaking of Him in the beginning of Matthew and Luke. Men, who were out of the current of God's thoughts, have put the books of Maccabees between them.

Then the book of Esther shows the secret workings of God in providence, while He disowned the idolatrous Jewish people. He wrought for their preservation, though outwardly unseen; hence, His name is never mentioned in the book of Esther; but, in the Apocryphal added section, the very first verse mentions God.

We close with three quotations from Scripture: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it." Deut. 4:2.

"Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Pro. 30:6.

"I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. 22:18, 19.

The — Dangers — Cont' 1962 Word of God: the Editor's Column

Think of the base lukewarmness that will brook anything derogatory to God and His Word and which would allow professed Christians to sit in the sessions of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches in Paris last summer and listen without protest to John Marsh of Mansfield College at Oxford University saying:

"The priestly writers of Israel seized upon the myths of Babylonia about the creation of the world, and made them serve the high monotheism of their belief in Yahweh."

And remember that most major Protestant denominations and many lesser ones are part and parcel of the National Council of Churches in the U. S. A., and it in turn is a part of the infidelgoing World Council of Churches. O Christendom, Whither art thou bound? To the great apostasy, no less. And it is almost upon us. It has not far to go. The coming of the Lord to remove the true believers and leave Christendom's house empty like the temple of old would bring to culmination that dreadful apostasy.

The Revised Standard Version is owned in full by the said National Council of Churches.

We probably should quote the following regarding the R. S. V.:

"For ten years, Thomas Nelson and Sons has held exclusive publishing rights to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.... Lately the RSV has been selling a million copies a year. Last week the Nelson monopoly ran out, and five more publishers jumped into the RSV field after

being blessed in a special service at Manhattan's Riverside Church."-Time. October 12, 1962.

This means more advertising and more propaganda for the property of the modernist National Council of Churches which is committed to the one church objective - ecumenicalism.

Speaking of the World Council of Churches, one of their presidents, Archbishop Ramsey, the highest ecclesiastical voice in Britain, is on a tour of the United States at present. He is an ardent proponent of uniting all profession - Protestant, Roman, Greek, and communist-controlled churches - into one great monolithic body. And he himself said recently, that he expects to find some atheists in heaven. How does he expect to get there himself? His speech betrays him.

The following organizations will now be engaged in printing, and will be pushing the sale of the Revised Standard Version: A. J. Holman Co.; Oxford University Press; William Collins Sons and Co.; Harper and Row; and The World Publishing Co.

The New English Bible New Testament published by Oxford and Cambridge Presses is in our opinion a more dangerous and worse translation than the R. S. V. New Testament was. We have a short tract on a few of its more glaring errors, some of which cannot be classified as honest mistakes. Its deference to Mary, and its concessions to Roman theology, are abhorrent to any, unless they have a predisposition to cast in their lot with the Roman Church at some future date. This translation is owned by the major denominations in Great Britain.

The publicity that the "panel of biblical scholars," which is at work on the Old Testament, is getting seems to indicate a public relations operation. The article about British scholars using the scissors and deleting "nonsense" passages is a newspaper report from London by the Associated Press. Our source of the article is the Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, August 20, 1962. Mr. Godfrey R. Driver, Professor of Semitic Philology, who is director of the group now at work, says that "nonsense" passages are getting a thorough reworking. Would that the gentleman would state what in the Holy Word of God is "nonsense." He also says that he finds "some of it quite incomprehensible." Well he might; he is not alone in that state. But let him state it clearly that the fault may lie in him. Does it not say that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise"? (1 Cor. 1:27).

It has been said of late that to translate the Bible from Hebrew or Greek into English, all one needs is sufficient education in these languages. This plainly is not so. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." Also, "the natural man [He may be educated above all his contemporaries, and remain a mere man of nature] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (See 1 Cor. 2.) Professor Driver might be interested to know that the NEB translation of this verse says, "neither can he grasp it." This reminds us of a word, "incomprehensible."

The false prophet of divination, Balaam, was respectful, for he said, "God is not a man, that He should lie;... hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless... and I cannot reverse it." Numb. 23:19, 20. Salaam would have changed God's word if he could, but he would not go that far. O that some modern critics would follow his example!

We are glad to have a professor of philology at Oxford say that the "Dead Sea Scrolls were very disappointing indeed." We have been expecting some critics to come forth with great claims for making changes based on them.

Professor Driver also follows the R. S. V. in changing the word "virgin" in Isa. 7:14 to indicate only "a marriageable young woman." May we ask what sign that would be? It is to be expected that a marriageable young woman would marry and have a child. But the Jewish scholars before the day of Christ, those who knew their own language better than any professor at Oxford, made it a "virgin" in their Septuagint Greek translation from the Hebrew. But modernism (which has swept Christendom) must get rid of the supernatural and the direct testimony of God to the deity of Christ. Did not Gen. 3 foretell that it would be the Seed of the woman which would bruise the serpent's head? We are much afraid that the wish is the parent of the thought, and the thought the parent of the bold words.

A larger text of a newspaper article, as it appeared in the Sunday Times of England on August 19, 1962, says that the word "leprosy" is also to disappear from the new Old Testament. The author says that it is only a skin disease with white flaking of the skin. But while they were removing the word, did they also eradicate the dread disease from that part of the world? God uses leprosy as a figure of the defilement of sin, and says of a man who had it in his forehead that he was "utterly unclean." Of no other form or place of leprosy was this said; it indicates what God thinks of man's reasonings against Him. Another remark from the Sunday Times may well speak for itself:

"These radical changes come at the end of a tortuous and fascinating process of scholarship and inspired guesswork."

What a word to couple with guesswork!

In this new work, both "thee" and "thou" will be removed except in personal address to God. This leaves many loopholes in the Old Testament for treating Christ as a man in the prophetic word. Time will tell what these scholars will do. They are going to allow Satan to address God as "you" because he could be expected to be less reverent. But let anyone, in all soberness, ask himself if he thinks God will permit even the devil to be disrespectful. Will such conduct be tolerated by the Queen of England because some subject is "bumptious"? Well may we cry out from the heart,

"Lord Jesus, come!

And take Thy rightful place

As Son of man, of all the theme!

Come, Lord, to reign o'er all supreme,

Lord Jesus, come!"

We marvel at the long-suffering of God with this wicked world, and now with a Christendom that has a form of piety but denies the power of it.

Perhaps the most shocking and amazing article on new translation comes from an article in the New York Times, entitled, "A New Translation Alters Bible." This work is being done under Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky, Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College. Dr. Orlinsky is editor-in-chief of this new work. Perhaps some of our readers will remember his name, as he was one of the panel which executed the R. S. V. Old Testament. He was the only scholar in the panel who disavowed even nominal Christianity. We felt his presence on the panel might have caused some of the renderings of the Old Testament. How can a man who denies that Jesus is the Christ, objectively translate those passages which point to Him. Any little difficulty would be resolved according to his predilection. The whole list of the panel at that time was not one to inspire confidence, for the men were almost all taken from schools of modernist commitments or leanings.

Now Dr. Orlinsky is free to revise the Old Testament. One of the first things we read is that "Scholars Find Moses Crossed a Marsh, Not Red Sea." "Scholars" covers a lot of area and prepares the way for more. The objection to Israel under God's direction by the hand of Moses crossing the Red Sea is older than any of these "scholars." It is an old infidel objection which we have heard for many years; now it is to be legalized in the name of scholarship. Infidels have scoffed at the miracle of the Red Sea being driven back and a pathway dried for the feet of the Israelites. They have sought to make it as this article says - that "Moses crossed a marsh." This easily removes God from the picture and makes Israel their own deliverer. But will they account for the fact that all the hosts of the Egyptian armies were drowned in a marsh, and the Pharaoh who led them never came to find a resting place in the British Museum as a mummy? This work looks to us like the same old unbelief of the ages. God is left out.

It might be well to call the reader's attention to the fact that many scriptures attest to the same thing. It is not merely doing away with a word in Exodus. See also Exod. 15:4, 22; Josh. 2:10; 4:23; 24:6; Psalm 106:7, 9, 22; 136:13, 15; Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:29. Did all of these writers conspire together to tell an untruth? Or would anyone dare to say that the Holy Spirit of God perpetuated a fiction? No, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Incidentally, the Greek Septuagint Version gives it the same way in each instance and calls it the Red Sea. Would not Jewish scholars 2000 years closer to the events and to the original Hebrew language know as much then as scholars do today?

The coming new Jewish revision of the Old Testament also renders the first words of Genesis thus:

"When God began to create the heaven and the earth."

Another article referring to another translation says that the Bible must harmonize with evolution. Is that the purpose of the change of Gen. 1:1? But let Dr. Oscar Riddle, the great biologist, and one of the greatest evolutionists, answer that: "some opportunists among the liberal clergy of various countries are busily engaged in making the obscurities the basis for the assertion that the conflict between science and theology is approaching reconciliation. The difficulties and the vicious error of this claim are evident to logical thought.... For those who assume they can believe that the natural processes of evolution are God's chosen methods of creation, there are some most awkward facts that deprive Him of the attribute of mercy." - *The Unleashing of Evolutionary Thought*, pp. 61, 63.

Here is a giant in the field of biology and of evolution, and he scorns anything like compromise between God and the evolutionary process. While we leave this outspoken atheist to the God he will yet have to meet in judgment, he is at least honest enough not to try to mix evolution and the God of creation - even a god who works in evolution. He has nothing but contempt for the would-be compromisers. We affirm boldly that we must have either creation or evolution, and our readers know where we stand as between the two. It is not and cannot be both - the real evolutionist being the judge.

The modernist theologian is not honest. Let him show his true colors and not try to help accommodate the Word of God to his unbelief. Either the Bible is what it claims to be (and which we unhesitatingly believe), or it is the biggest fraud on earth.

The new Hebrew Old Testament on which they are working is to delete the word soul and make it mean "the man himself." The *Time* account, of October 19, 1962 says that these translators

(probably better, "interpreters") have decided that the Spirit of God who moved upon the face of the waters was merely a primeval wind. How convenient! At one fell swoop it removes the suggestion of one Person of the Trinity, and opens up the way for the evolutionary process to do the work. And this form of apostasy is not confined to modern Jewish teaching; it is in the warp and woof of a very major part of Protestantism, and is even found in Catholicism now. We have seen numerous remarks of late from various Catholic men of renown who espouse modernist religion.

We were recently informed that one of the largest Protestant denominations in the United States, which has churches and seminaries from the Atlantic to the Pacific, does not have one seminary

which teaches the young budding preachers that the early chapters of Genesis are fact and truth. The first ten chapters of Genesis are explained away as "myth" or fable which is used to illustrate something. To illustrate what? nothing but their unbelief, as far as we can see.

In one of these inane explanations of what might be taught by these myths was that somewhere along the evolutionary process man lost contact or communion with God. Please tell us when the evolving amoeba, tadpole, or whatever one may call him, ever had communion with God to lose. God said that He created man in His image - representation - and after His likeness - moral likeness. Paul said in Athens, "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Acts 17:29. How much less is he like some wriggling little creature who decided to be like man. There is no folly too great for the unbeliever whose basic desire is to satisfy himself that he will not come into judgment from a holy God. He will accept anything if it will only insure him against having to meet God; but meet God he MUST. And if there is a creator whom the creature must meet, then that God must be a holy God. Scripture says that angelic beings veil their faces before Him and cry, "Holy, holy, holy."

Christians, beware of the fast inroads of modernism which are nothing but stages of bold atheism. And young Christians, beware of your teachers and professors at schools and colleges. Most of them are only "blind leaders of the blind" who would

insidiously plant infidelity and rank atheism in the pliable young heart and mind. "Let them alone." Do not argue with them, for their arguments are fallacious, and they are masters of it. Young Christians often do not see through the folly of their statements. "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8:20. And beware especially of those religious schools which purport to teach only the truth, and yet are now accommodating themselves to the unproved and unprovable hypothesis of evolution. Let there be no compromise with the devil's religion.

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