

CHRISTIAN TRUTH VOLUME 17

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A collection of articles and writings by P. Wilson, R.G. Rule, C. Buchanan from Christian Truth Volume 17, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

95 Chapters

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Christian Truth Volume 17

2 Timothy 3:17

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

NOTE: The word which is rendered "perfect" in the above passage occurs but this once in the entire New Testament. In the Greek, it is "artios" and signifies ready, complete, well fitted, as an instrument with all its strings, a machine with all its parts, a body with all its limbs, joints, muscles and sinews. The usual word for "perfect" is "teleios," which signifies the reaching of the moral end in any particular thing.

Accepted in the Beloved

It is very wonderful to contemplate the way of the grace of God to a poor sinner - the depths from which it rescues him, and the heights in which it sets him. If we look only at ourselves, even after the knowledge of this grace has filled our hearts with peace and joy, we can never understand why a holy God should take up such as we are; we can do nothing but wonder while we praise. But the moment the eye is fixed on Christ, we cease to wonder. For there in God's presence is a Man ("the man Christ Jesus"), the Object of His infinite delight, the joy of His heart. In the face of that Man the glory of God, the token of His perfect satisfaction, unceasingly shines. And that Man was my substitute upon the cross, the place of judgment and death. Well may I cease to wonder when I see Him where He is.

There are two extremes to the gospel, if I may so say; they are Christ the beloved Son, forsaken on the cross, and poor sinners accepted "in the beloved." Extremes indeed, unknown and unintelligible to the natural man, but very wonderful and very precious to those who have, through grace, been enabled to look away from the things that are seen, to those unseen and eternal things of which that glorified Christ is now the center. And there it is that these extremes meet in the Person of the One once forsaken as the Sinbearer, because that was the only way in which a holy God could be perfectly glorified about sin. Now He is glorified by the very God who then hid His face from Him; and the radiancy of that glory shines in the face of the One who once cried out in the agony of being forsaken by the God whose heart He knew, and whose glory He vindicated as none other did or could - "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

As I look back for a moment at that cross of shame with its unfathomable depths of light and love, and then look up by faith and see Him who was on it for me, the perfect delight of the God who for the moment had in righteousness to forsake Him - now too the Head of that new creation which shall never be stained with sin or saddened with death - I may well lose sight of myself, and cease to wonder that I am "accepted in the beloved."

The Answer to Infidelity

If ever there was a day when it is important for every true follower of Christ to stand fast and to be true to his profession, I believe it is the present day. There is no answer to infidelity like the life of Christ displayed by the Christian. Nothing puts the madness of the infidel and the folly of the superstitious more to shame and silence than the humble, quiet, devoted walk of a thorough-going, heavenly minded, and divinely taught Christian. It may be in the unlearned, and poor, and despised; but like the scent of the lowly violet, it gives its fragrance abroad, and both God and man take notice of it.

Works, if only hypocritical doings, go for nothing; but works that are the genuine expression of living and walking with God in Christ are of the same value as the hands of a good clock. A good clock without hands is, for practical purposes, of no value; but the hands on the face tell the measure of the value of the works within, and record the lapse of time. "We are His [God's] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10. Now is the time for works, and for overcoming, to him that has an ear to hear.

Apostasy

Whenever did God bring in a blessing without the enemy seeking to turn it to a corruption? If there had not been Christianity, there could not be antichrist. There is invariably with the light of God the shadow of the adversary. Accordingly, Scripture is most explicit that the falling away [or apostasy] must come. The falling away from what? From Christianity, to be sure; and very likely from the divinely inspired testimony in general—from that of the Old Testament as well as of the New. Nor do I conceive there will be long to wait for this. Time was when the only persons who used to attack the Bible were wicked men such as Bolingbroke and Paine, Voltaire and Rousseau. Now, I am grieved to say, it is fashionable for clergymen—university professors, ecclesiastical dignitaries—to be infidels. God forbid that I should single out individually any one individual, or any one denomination, because it is easy to see that it is found in all the nations and tongues by which Christianity is at all professed. Skepticism is confined to no class, and is rampant in popery, though perhaps more open in Protestantism. Honest I can call it nowhere. It professes anything, while it believes nothing. The hard thing would be to say where it has not penetrated.

The Apostasy: the Editor's Column

The Thessalonian Christians were disturbed by receiving a letter purportedly from the Apostle Paul saying that the troubles they were enduring were because they were then passing through "the day of the Lord." This was false, but the Lord used the erroneous report to bring out certain truth in order to aid believers then and later to a more correct understanding. Let us read some verses from a more correct translation of 2 Thessalonians 2: "Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as [if it were] by us, as that the day of the Lord is present." vv. 1, 2; J.N.D. Trans.

These Christians knew enough of Old Testament prophecy to understand that "the day of the LORD... is... a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness.... for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?" (Joel 2:1-11). Isaiah also tells of the same time: "The day of the LORD of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty,... and 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" (chap. 2:12-17). Then Amos 5:20 speaks of it: "Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it?" Therefore the outlook for "the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Mal. 4:5) is most awful to contemplate. So there was justifiable reason for the Thessalonians to be alarmed by the report which was falsely signed by one claiming to be the Apostle Paul.

That dreadful day will stand in sharp contrast with this present time which is the "day of man." Man is now having his sway almost unrestrained in this world. We reviewed a book written by a famous biologist who is an avowed and dedicated evolutionist, in which he says that men in his class look forward to the day of man and to the giving up of God and the name of God, and that there will be no loss felt at His passing. But woe be to unrepentant mankind, for his day will terminate at the "day of the LORD"-0 dreadful day for the inhabitants of His earth!

But the faithful Apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ explains that that "day of the Lord" "[will not be] unless the apostasy have first come, and the man of sin have been revealed, who opposes and exalts himself on high against all called God" (or object of veneration); "so that he himself sits down in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2 Thess. 2:1-4; J.N.D. Trans. (This will be the fulfillment of the evolutionist's wish previously mentioned.)

When man first fell from his God-given estate, it was by sin-the sin of man. All of his black history of multiplication of sins will culminate in its full-blown form when the "man of sin" deifies himself. At that time there will be a full trinity of wickedness when the political leader of the Western world will astonish man by his greatness; the false Christ in Jerusalem will aid and abet that great political and military head, and Satan himself will sustain both of the others. All three heads of wickedness will receive worship which alone is due to God. But before the end comes, there will be "the apostasy," or complete abandonment of even the form of Christianity, or the name of God. In other words, it will be fully developed atheism. This wickedness was already in its early stages when the

Apostle wrote (2 Thess. 2:7)-it was working then-today it is very far advanced, and each week indicates an increase in the pace of its acceleration. All this spells out in unmistakable words that the coming of the Lord for His own is at the very door; for He will first call His own to meet Him in the air before the full apostasy matures.

There are to be two developments in apostasy, and both are already well along, so that we look for the Lord to take us to Himself at any time. Of these evils we read: "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." 1 John 2:22. This combines Jewish and Christian apostasy; to deny that Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah, is the Jewish form of unbelief; to deny both the Father and the Son is antichrist as opposed to the blessed truth of Christianity. There is a drawing closer together of the Jewish and "Christian" antagonisms to God. We call attention to the fact that in 2 Thessalonians, where apostasy is definitively foretold, it will be seen that both characters of antichrist will coalesce. In the end, when apostasy has come to its head, it will bear more the style of atheism. Both the Messiahship of Christ and the blessed truth of the "Trinity" will be rejected.

As the Roman Ecumenical Council's third session is drawing to a close with the promise of another session to be called later-the time as yet unspecified-it seems that a major portion of that vast assemblage favors the issuance of a statement freeing the Jews of any special guilt in connection with the death of Christ. This is also in accord with the wishes of a sizeable portion of the Protestant National Council of Churches of Christ. This is in flagrant contradiction of the Lord's words to Pilate: "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the GREATER sin." Also the Lord speaking prophetically in Zech. 13:6 answers some regarding His wounds in His hands saying they came from what happened in the house of His friends. Whose house was that? To ask this question is to answer it. But who is it that dares to gainsay the word of Him who is THE TRUTH? But this accommodation seems requisite for Jewish and Christian drawing together for the apostasy, according to 2 Thessalonians; for the Word of God tells us that the antichrist will come "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." 2 Thess. 2:9-11. The deception will be so strong "that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt. 24:24). God will have an elect Jewish remnant on the earth at that time whom the antichrist with all his supernatural powers of deception will not be able to sway.

In that last great bundle of deceived souls at the end will flock eagerly the remnants of Christendom with deceived Jews who will accept their acclaimed leader as their Messiah. Such will be the condition of the world after the Lord calls His saved ones home. All the powers of darkness will be let loose to deceive the rejecters of Christ. So we see professed Christianity now denying the word of Christ regarding the guilt of those who rejected their own Messiah when He came to them in grace. The antichrist will be the "hireling" of John 10, and the "idol shepherd" of Zechariah 11. In that chapter the Lord was prophetically offered to Israel by God as their shepherd; but on rejection of Him, another will come in his own name and be received by them. Christ came in by the appointed way, the door; He came according to all the prophecies and promises of God in the Old Testament, but was rejected forthwith.

Another scripture that informs us of the self-exaltation of the antichrist is found in Daniel 11: "And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvelous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished.... Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers [this indicates his Jewish background], nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." vv. 36, 37.

Another ominous sign of the coming end of the age and the fast approaching "apostasy" may be read in reports from the Episcopal triennial General Conference held in St. Louis, Missouri, late in October. There again the modern, infidel-leaning bishop of the San Francisco diocese, James A. Pike, who was once a lawyer, reaffirmed his unorthodox and heretical views by saying in a sermon that "the Trinity" (that word used to describe the divine verity of three distinct persons in the Godhead) is "well-intentioned idolatry." This is a flat denial of the basic truth of Christianity, and is "antichrist." Not only is it shocking that such a blatant statement could be uttered in a church convention by one very high and noted ecclesiastic, but that it could be done with the acceptance of many notable persons in that great assemblage is appalling.

At that time the convention elected the Rt. Rev. John Elbright Hines of the diocese of Texas as Presiding Bishop and official spokesman for the 3,500,000 church body in the nation. It is also important to note that the bishop elected as their head had only three years ago defended California's Bishop Pike when he described the basic truth of the "virgin birth" of Christ as a myth. This is also antichristian; it is a denial of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is Arian falsehood, which early infected the church and has never been eradicated. It is strongly entrenched today in supposedly orthodox bodies, as well as among the Unitarians, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and many others. With that brushed aside there is no barrier to linking of Judaism and so-called Christianity. Either the Lord Jesus took human form in an altogether unique way, or He was not what He and the Word of God claimed Him to be; and if this was not true, the whole fabric of Christianity is a colossal hoax. We say this with a measure of fear, for God forbid even the lurking thought! Christ was truly God and truly perfect man. Deny this, and we have no Savior -all is lost. The testimony of the whole Word of God is to the deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus. He was as described back in Genesis 3, "the seed of the woman." Many good articles have been written which set forth the scriptures reaffirming His deity and His virgin birth when He came down and assumed human form; so we rest this unassailable truth here. The opposition is no newer than that of the Pharisees when the Lord was upon earth. At that time they went so far as to charge Him with being a Samaritan, and having a demon. Man in his patent unbelief is daringly brazen.

Now in the same attitude of unbelief, Bishop Pike contends that the apostles had no doctrine of the Trinity. We say not that they had formulated a creed about the Trinity, for no creed in itself contains all the truth, or is necessary for the maintenance of the truth. But if it is meant that the apostles did not speak of or know of the Trinity, it would be arrant folly, easily refuted. Many times the truth of the Trinity is affirmed and reaffirmed in the New Testament, as well as indicated in the very beginning of the Old Testament. "In the beginning Elohim created"-it is in the Hebrew where the name of deity is a word indicating a plural number of persons with a singular verb. There the Trinity is spoken of acting as one. Then when we come to the New Testament we find that the Apostle Matthew clearly states that truth in his fourth chapter. There, by the Holy Spirit, we are taught that when the Lord Jesus went to be baptized of John at the beginning of His ministry, there

was witnessed the Son on earth; and the Father spoke to Him from heaven, while the Spirit of God rested on Him in the form of a dove. In The Acts, Stephen being "full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." And many times another apostle mentions the distinct Persons of the Godhead together, as in Hebrews 10; the will of God, the work of Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost are brought together. Many times the distinct Persons of the Godhead are mentioned individually, as "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." 2 Cor. 13:14. Is any formal declaration of mere men necessary to sustain the unalterable truth of God? May no man like Judas be allowed to betray the Lord or His truth to the enemy, although he be clothed in clerical garb. It would amount to betraying the Son of man with a kiss. For this, Judas was called the "son of perdition" (see John 17:12); and the future consummation of wickedness, the antichrist, is also called the same (see 2 Thess. 2:3). After that, Judas went to "his place," and the antichrist will be cast into hell by the Lord Himself when He comes to tread the winepress of the fierceness of His wrath (Rev. 19:15).

Christian readers, in view of the fast approaching "apostasy" may we heed the exhortation found in the last epistle, Jude: "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith [that is, Christianity] which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men." vv. 3, 4. May God preserve the feet of His saints!

The Ashes of the Red Heifer

The ashes of the red heifer in Numbers 19 were but for only a remembrance. The thing itself, "ashes," would intimate that. It was the remains of the victim, and not the victim itself. It is not atonement, but cleansing. It is the washing of the feet, and not the washing of the body. It is the personal action of the Lord in heaven, upon the remembrance or virtue of His own accomplished redemption at Calvary.

But in that same chapter, we see the sensitiveness of divine holiness. The slightest touch of anything dead, conveyed pollution. Y e s, the priest who prepared the victim, the Israelite who buried the ashes, the Israelite who sprinkled the unclean, were all alike unclean, and had to wash themselves, for they had dealt with that which dealt with sin; and that was enough to make washing needful. They were outside the sanctuary till they were cleansed.

But, beloved, how will all this magnify the Lord Jesus, when we think of His life in connection with this. He was ever dealing with sin and the results of it. He was raising the dead, He was cleansing the leper, He was touched by the polluted, He was allowing the approach and the contact of all kinds of defiled ones- and yet, unstained in the midst of all, just because He took in relation to all, not merely the place of a priest or an Israelite, but the place of the cleansing Victim.

The heifer is the only thing (the ashes for sprinkling) that is undefilable in Numbers 19. And Jesus is the only One that was here alike undefilable. Instead of pollution getting into Him through the touch, virtue went out of Him to dismiss the power of death and blot out the stain.

The heifer was without blemish and never had yoke. She was pure, and she was free-beautiful premonitions of Jesus! He was free as well as spotless, which none are but "Jehovah's Fellow."

Indeed, Christ's relationship to sin, is God's. In Genesis 3, man became like God, in knowing good and evil. But man knew it, because he had brought himself under the power of evil; God knows it as being essentially and infinitely above it. Man touching it, sympathizes with it; God touching it, withers it. And so, Jesus.

Jesus was ever dealing with sin in the days of His flesh, but was as unspotted at the end as He was at the beginning, for He dealt with it either as the Victim who put it away, or as the God of holiness, that is in Himself supremely above it - in whose presence it cannot abide, and who, touching it, dismisses it, and withers it.

At His Feet

We find Mary at the feet of Jesus on three different occasions in her history, each one full of the deepest comfort and instruction. Let us look a little at them in their order.

That which stands first in moral order is found in Luke 10. "Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

There is something very blessed in the way in which her position and occupation are here described-she sat, and she heard-she had found out, in her measure at least, somewhat of His attractions; and her heart was restful enough to be quiet and still before Him; she could afford to sit at His feet. Alas! how little there is of that among us - so little real repose of heart and soul, and therefore so little real waiting on the Lord without distraction. It is an utter impossibility to make the Lord our one object, while we are as yet an object in ourselves, or while our hearts are restless and cumbered; and it would seem as if Satan's great aim at the present time is to introduce almost anything to the exclusion of Christ. Things good and lawful in themselves, which have their own place and importance, are thrust by Satan in upon the minds of God's people, if by any means Christ may be thereby excluded from the one sole exclusive position which is His; namely, the absorbing, commanding motive and object of the heart. Take service, for instance, the blessed privilege of the saint, yet where it is the motive or object, Christ is displaced. In the history before us, Martha was, we are told, cumbered, and the Lord told her she was careful and troubled about many things. As yet she had not learned to sit restful at His blessed feet; she was thinking with anxiety how best she could serve His body. Mary sat at His feet, in repose and quietness-heard His word-thus meeting His heart and thoughts; her heart was at rest, her eye was turned toward Him, and her ear was opened to His voice. She was absorbed; He was her one Object; she had but one thought. Oh, how blessed it is when this discovery is made- He has eclipsed and distanced all else.

And, observe, the order here is, important. She sat and she heard. There is no place for the word of Christ in the ear, no liberty to hear, unless the heart is silent. There is a remarkable instance of this in Colossians 3: "Let the peace of Christ [not God] preside in your hearts" (J.N.D. Trans.) etc. Then follows, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Observe, the word of Christ dwells, where the peace of Christ rules; this latter decides all questions, is the umpire or tribunal under which the heart rests. But let me here guard against any misunderstanding. I have occasionally heard saints speak as if they were the antitype of Martha, because they were engrossed with their own concerns or cares; their businesses or their families commanding their entire thoughts, they excuse themselves by bringing Martha, the sister of Mary, down to their own level. Now this is

entirely a mistake; it was no selfish, personal interest with which Martha's mind was occupied. She received Jesus into her house, and she busied herself in order to serve Him. But herein consisted the great difference between her and Mary - the latter served Christ according to His thoughts, while Martha sought to render Him service according to her own thoughts. Mary consulted His heart, while Martha consulted her own; and hence the difference in the service. And is not this to be found largely among the saints at the present moment? How few there are who get near enough to the heart of Christ to know what would suit Him, and then to give Him according to all the thus discovered desires of His heart. This was Mary's better blessed part in this her first position - she sat and she heard. She was all repose, all ear, all eye for Christ. May the Lord grant His beloved people to know it more abundantly in these last restless days.

The next occasion finds her at His feet as a mourner (John 11). The bright day and dark day in her history, if I may so speak, serve to bring out the resource which He is to her. Lazarus, whom Jesus loved as well as Mary, has sickened and died; the desolations of the wilderness, the sorrows of the way, are to be known. There is but one place where the sun goes not down at noon. A three days' journey and no water found, and then what is discovered, bitter, taught Israel what sort of a place the wilderness was; and the tree cut down to sweeten the bitter waters, unfolded to them God's interest and care, if they only would learn it. We know how Israel carried themselves at Marah (Ex. 15). Let us see Mary there in John 11, and first notice how such a Marah does not break her rest: "Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house." She who sat at His feet and heard His word, will not move without His word; but as soon as this message reaches her, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee," then we read, "As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto Him." She tarries for His word, His call, even in her deep, deep sorrow; but as soon as she heard His word, she was as fleet of step to reach Him, as she had been slow to move before. Oh, how blessed this is, dear reader, to wait thus for the Lord and trust in His word. But this was not all; for as soon as she reached Him, she cast herself down at His feet - a well-known spot to her-with the simple confession of the glory of His Person on her lips. "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Now, mark what a contrast to all this is found in Martha; restless as she was, when she heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet Him, with her heart charged with thoughts of the relief which she might get from Him. "I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." There is no time in which the unsubdued restlessness of our hearts manifests itself more than the day of sorrow and bereavement. Relief is the highest and best thought we have in such a day, if we are unrestful; and hence you find it marked in Martha. But not so Mary; she finds her solace, comfort, and resource in Him, at whose blessed feet she cast herself. And He who spake to her and walked with her, in this the day of her sorrow and anguish, was now actually Himself filling the blank in her heart.

And let no one think or say this was insensibility; superiority to that which presses upon your heart, is surely not to be insensible to it; but it is one thing to have sorrow rolling over you like a great wave, above which your head is never lifted; it is another thing to find in Christ that which sustains and uplifts the soul in the darkest day, when death has spread its sable mantle over all the heart could prize. I feel convinced that God intended us to feel the sorrow, and I am persuaded that the deepest acquaintance with Christ, and what He is in such an hour, is in nowise inconsistent with keen feeling.

"Many long years ago I was wounded with a wound, which has been green ever since. The Lord be praised for that blow! Through eternity it will proclaim His love to me!" Such is the language of one who has learned what it is to be solitary, and yet superior to it all in Christ. The wound may be green, while the heart finds its resource in Him who was dead and is alive again for evermore.

I have said relief was the foremost thought in Martha's mind: "I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee." Who cannot see to what this pointed? It was the cry of the heart for relief. Is it amiss to look for such? Does God never give it?

Ah, reader, let me tell you what you will find to be real blessing: it is a resource known ere relief comes that gladdens the heart of Christ; the relief in His service, and He does serve us, blessed be His name. The resource is Himself. Herein lay the wide difference between Mary and Martha in John 2; the former found Him her resource, when death desolated her heart and her home; the latter looked to Him as the servant of her need. He would lead her higher, even to set before her heart Himself, who was the resurrection and the life; but she was not up to this. And hence, I feel sure, when "she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee," it was the testimony of her own conscience, that she could not meet Christ, but that Mary could. The Lord was above Martha; in one sense, indeed, He was above and beyond them both; for they both in their turn speak of death, but life is His great theme. He had life in Him and before Him; and as another has blessedly expressed it, "The empty sepulcher displayed and celebrated it (John 20); the risen Christ imparted it" (John 20). But, to return, how blessed it is to see the Lord Jesus, keeping the truth of Himself, as a resource before them both in such an hour; and to Mary He does not speak a word about His intention to raise up Lazarus, though He was on the road to do so at that time; and why? He is her resource, and fills the blank in her heart at that moment; and this she has ere relief comes. Is the relief less sweet when it comes, because He, whose service it is to us, is first known as the resource of the heart?

May the Lord give each of us to know this better as we pass through a desert land, the valley of the shadow of death.

Let us turn now and look at Mary "at His feet," on another occasion, for which those we have considered prepared her. In John 12 we find her there again; but how different from the two former or previous occasions! He was the contributor in these, she in this! She expresses Him as she had learned and known Him. It was a peculiar moment; death seems to have been in all their thoughts; the chief priests, in the hatred of their hearts, would seek to put to death the man who, alive among men, was the living exponent of Him who is the resurrection and the life. The Lord J e s u s Himself thinks of death, that death by which He was about to glorify God and put away sin; and never did it come more forcibly before Him than when a picture of the kingdom presents itself. Israel for the time owning Him, and the

Greeks wanting to see Him; then it was that those blessed words dropped fatness from His lips, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." But there was one beside whose thoughts were filled with death at that moment; and so we read, "Then took Mary," etc. The action here recorded and commended by the Holy Ghost was the fruit of acquaintance with the heart of Christ. She made His heart and His desires her study, not her own. This is the great secret of true and approved devotedness. Many are rendering Christ service, which is all very well in itself, but dates its origin no further back than their own wishes and desires. Mary's thoughts were

formed by communion with Himself, and found their fitting expression at this moment; and how much they met the desires of His heart, these words tell: "She hath wrought a good work on Me." Mark 14:6. There was but One who commanded Mary's affections at this moment, and there was but One who understood her; misapprehended and blamed for what was but waste in their eyes, Jesus vindicates her? she hath wrought a good Him say, "Why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on Me."

Their greatest, loftiest thought was to be a benefactor of man-it were waste to anoint the body of Jesus- the expression of communion with His thoughts, as well as the Father's thoughts about Him-but to bestow it upon the poor, to benefit man - what could be more praiseworthy or desirable?

Again her action here told her estimate of all, even the very best, when He was going to die. Her world she would bury with Him. If He dies, all that could any longer detain her heart here is dead too. Alas, how little we who have Christ alive in glory, know what it is to find our all there where Christ is. Not only not having it here, where Christ was, but is not, like Mary, but having it there in glory where Christ is, with whom the Holy Ghost has united us, and given the consciousness of that union in our souls.

May we learn the blessedness of having to do with Christ and, as we know Him, to be the expression of Him in this poor world, until He comes forth to receive us to there we may be also. Himself, that where He is,

Attempts to Discredit the Word of God: the Editor's Column

Each year as it comes and goes brings with it some more of men's vain attempts to discredit the holy Word of God-the Bible. It might be supposed that they would weary themselves in the ceaseless pursuit of evidences against the Book that reveals the Creator and shows men their responsibility to Him. But, No; the search is pressed. Old arguments finally die while the Bible remains impregnable as always, but within a generation or two others take up the same threadbare arguments as though they had discovered something new. On they press in their determined zeal until like the lemmings they are at last destroyed with their mission unaccomplished. One writer referred to the Word of God as an anvil which had worn out many a hammer.

The New York Times, Nov. 7, 1963, told of a noted cleric who has at length "proved" that the Apostle Paul did not write the following epistles which are ascribed to him: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First and Second Thessalonians, First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews. He is willing to concede that Paul wrote the epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and Philemon, although he considers the last named to be too short to really test on his scales.

This Scotch minister, the Reverend Andrew Q. Morton, who has received this dubious distinction of "proving" the point only arrived at the same conclusion (as he himself admits) as "F. C. Baur and other biblical critics at Tubingen University in Germany 100 years ago." The only novel thing about Mr. Morton's test is that it was accomplished by the aid of a modern computer. This is supposed to add an air of modernity to it, and to make it seem irrefutable and beyond the realm of human tampering, although we know that no computer can select its own material (that must be fed into it by human hands and brains); nor can it make the final evaluation of the answers. The human element and human predilection cannot be entirely discounted.

In this case the animus of the individual cannot be ruled out.

The general method used in such a case is to arrive at certain patterns of the Greek language which Mr. Morton says was done by comparing writings from Socrates to Aristotle. Then he began with Galatians, which all critics "admit" was written by Paul because of his "stinging or offensive retorts." This is an untrue aspersion cast not only upon Paul, but upon Paul's Lord. He then fed into the machine the various sentence lengths, and frequent or infrequent use of words like "and" or its equivalent, ignoring the fact that great men vary their style according to the subject in hand, its urgency, its reflection on other things, etc., and this without any thought of inspiration. But the whole scheme we are considering casts doubt upon the invaluable element of divine inspiration. It reduces all to mathematical equations, and the Holy Spirit of God is shut out of His own holy domain.

Through the years, scarcely any part of the inspired volume has not been disrespectfully handled by unholy hands. Starting with Genesis, nearly every book in the Bible has come in for the irrational attacks of so-called rationalists. And every time they lay hands on one part of the sacred

volume, they do violence to another part, or to it as a whole. These self-appointed critics conjecture that Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and claim that whoever did merely compiled a lot of scattered legends. But will they explain how that many "scattered legends" belong together, and together form one indissoluble entity? They claim certain writers knew only of Elohim, and others only of Jehovah; but the precise exactitude with which each name is used is beyond question the sign of divine revelation. Each name has its own special meaning, and neither is ever used for "God" out of its context.

When Solomon, the writer of three books, wrote the book of Proverbs, which is full of instruction for a people in relationship with God, he used the only suitable name - Jehovah; when he wrote Ecclesiastes, the book of man's experimental research under the sun apart from revelation, he uses the name suitable to that condition - Elohim; when he wrote the beautiful "Song of Songs," where prophetically we have Israel being wooed back to Jehovah in a future day, he used neither Jehovah nor Elohim, but says rather, "Let HIM kiss me with the kisses of His mouth." How incongruous it would be to say, "Let Jehovah kiss me." But there are none so blind as those "men of the cloth" without the fear of God before them. That Book which at every word breathes the wisdom of God and His perfection is a meaningless jumble to them, a subject for critical review by a human being pronouncing on what is becoming of God.

The Lord Himself says that Moses wrote of Him; but they say, No, Moses did not write it. Other critics claim that there were two or three, or more Isaiahs. But the Lord who knew better than all of them put together refers to Isaiah the prophet, both in writing the 53rd chapter and the 6th chapter - two chapters which learned critics claim could not have been written by the same man. Away with such learning which is self-condemned. "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Let us consider the attacks on the epistles Paul wrote:

Will our readers accept the slur that Paul wrote such a caustic letter to the Galatian assemblies, because his authority was called in question there? Was not his authority more called in question at Corinth when he wrote the letters to the Corinthians? His manner was certainly peremptory and his language strong and unequivocal to the Galatians, but it was his zeal for the truth of God rather than self-vindication. They were turning away from the gospel, from Christianity itself. If Paul had not resisted that onslaught of the enemy, Christianity would have vanished, and a corrupted form of ritualism taken its place.

Paul said himself, "The salutation of Paul with mine own hand," in writing both to the Thessalonians and the Colossians. And to the Thessalonians he said, "We would have come unto you, even I Paul." Now because a modern critic says that the case "is open and shut," that Paul did not write these, are we to say he knew better than Paul, or allow that the Spirit of God indicted a fraud? Away with such a thought! "This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you."

We may go on to the epistles to Timothy and Titus and compare them with the divine historical records of The Acts, and there see how they are allied together and to Paul; but some people are satisfied with superficialities, or to take the word of mere men as authority. We will leave the majestic epistle to the Hebrews for consideration in the words of another.

It may be interesting to note that Mr. Morton refers to Germany and the thoughts of 100 years ago. In that day Germany was the home and culture center of what was called "higher criticism." It was

the bad root from which modernism sprang with all its ugly fruit. It became a sign of erudition to be able to find flaws, imperfections, incongruities, in the sacred pages. Many feel that it also spawned the superman theory which eventually devastated Germany, and Marxism came from the same general area and age.

Now let us quote from an article printed in April, 1864, which deals with the same general subject that plagues us in 1964. This was written by a servant of Christ, Mr. William Kelly:

"The kind of opposition men make to Christianity proves its truth in the main, proves the consciousness of a real claim of God in it on the soul.

"No doubt men have attacked Paganism as false. They have resisted Mohammedanism, though its sword was its principle argument, so that there was less of this.

"But the constant and laborious exercise of free criticism, the close and sifting examination the Bible has gone through for ages, the anxious research after errors or contradictions within., proves anxiety to show that it is not what it pretends to be. Why all this anxiety? Those not immediately under the influence of Mohammedanism are long satisfied that it is false, and leave it there; but these minute researches after a flaw in the Scriptures continue - are repeated - renewed. Men take it up on every side. Astronomy and geology are called in to aid. Geography is ransacked; history, antiquity, style, manuscripts of all kinds, foolish writings of the fathers, absurd writings of heretics, apocryphal imitations of its contents; nothing is left unturned to find something to discredit it - wise writings of philosophers to prove they could do as well, or were the source of the good, or even of the alleged absurdities of doctrine; every other influence sought out which could have moralized humanity, that it may not be supposed to be this. Why all this toil? Why, if it be a doctrine like Plato's, should it not have produced its effect, and our philosophers be as cool about it as about other things? It has - their conscience knows it has -

God's claim and God's truth in it; and they will not allow that the true God, that Christ is the source of it; for then they must bend, and admit what man is.

"And this shows itself in the most curious way. Though they pretend to think nothing of Christ, or that He was an imposter, they will not allow that the authorized books of His religion give a true account of the doctrines of the religion. If I read the Koran, I am satisfied to take it as the account of Mohammedanism, absurd as it may be; and I say Mohammedanism is absurd. So of the Vedas and Puranas.

"But when the Christian books are in question, they are no doubt charged with error, contradiction, etc.; but the free critics will not even allow them to teach real Christianity after all! They are not a true, not an authentic account of Christianity! Why (if it be a mere fable, an imposture) be so difficult about the exactitude of the account of it? Surely the main propagators can give a sufficient account of the imposture and its doctrines, for anything that concerns us. But no. There is the consciousness that God is in Christianity. The conscience, in spite of the will, knows it has to do with God here; and it wants a true revelation, a real and authentic account of what God is. It is right. But though curiosity and a favorite subject may absorb many for a time, or an individual all his life, men are not so continuously, so perseveringly anxious to get at the truth of a fable. They do not reject the sacred books of any other religion as not being a true account of that religion. They take them as they are, because they know they are a fable. Or even if it be known to be the

work of men's minds, it is the same."

We have quoted from writings from 1864 to 1964 to demonstrate that the same spirit of men against God and His revelation is still at work. We will now quote from a writer whom we know only by initials - "R. B." - which was printed about midway between the others. It was dated September, 1906, and was written to counteract the same spirit of criticism regarding the Word of God - the exquisite and sublime truth of that treatise of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrew believers in Jerusalem - a book of the Bible that has come under much criticism from men of darkened understanding, who operate only by the light of nature within them, which is darkness. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" Matt. 6:23.

"It is no doubt the calm, measured, stately, almost rhetorical, style of the epistle to the Hebrews, that has led many to conceive that it cannot be the work of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. They compare the balanced sentences of this epistle with the rugged and impetuous language so characteristic of the Pauline writings. But even on this ground the argument is by no means convincing. For what can be more measured and stately than the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, or the 11th chapter of the same epistle? The fact is that a great writer adapts his style to his subject matter, quite apart from the question of whether he is inspired or not. As one, J.N.D., has beautifully said, the same divine water is in every vessel, be it a Paul, a Peter, or a John; but it takes the shape of the vessel through which it flows. And, we may add, the shape may vary in the same writer with the occasion. There is the tumultuous fervor of the indignant upbraiding; there is the calm and ordered flow of eloquent exposition. Hence they are evidently right who judge that Paul, and no other (in spite of those who ascribe it to the eloquent Apollos), is the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. And this opinion is powerfully buttressed by the words of Peter in his second epistle (3:15, 16).

"Now there is no more majestic statement even in this epistle, or indeed in the whole of the Bible, than is contained in the wonderfully balanced sentence with which this treatise (for such it strictly is, rather than a letter) opens. For you will see that it really is one sentence only from verses 1 to 4 inclusive. And the part of it most emphasized is the main part. 'God... Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.' Other truths of equal, possibly of greater, moment (one most certainly is so, where the Son is spoken of as being the brightness of God's glory), are grouped around it, adding strikingly to the grandeur of the whole, but yet subservient to the point that the Apostle is pressing; namely, that 'God... hath... spoken... in His Son.' He reminds his readers how God spoke of old by the prophets (here no doubt a general term and taking in all the Old Testament writers), but that now it was no longer a question of hearing prophets, however venerable, lawgivers, however sage and discerning, nor psalmists, however tuneful. It was imperative to recognize, what was not so obvious to them as Hebrews, as it happily is to us, that the final messenger has come, and that he that is of God would hear Him (John 8:47). Each prophet had contributed his quota to the grand total, and the Apostle in no way seeks to weaken the weight of their testimony. Quite the contrary. Just as the Lord Jesus, on a memorable occasion, actually placed Moses' writings as a testimony above His own spoken words (John 5:47), so the writer urges that their acceptance of the sublime truths that were now being unfolded would be the proof that the Hebrews really held and understood and believed all that lawgiver and psalmist and prophet had written of old. If they believed that God had spoken in His Son, this would show that theirs was no merely national and patriotic clinging to their ancient oracles. They would own the Crucified as both Lord and Christ.

"God had spoken. This is the only book of Holy Scripture that commences with the sacred name, so august, so comprehensive and incomprehensible. How easy to utter it! How often it is taken in vain by profane men! How lightly even Christians may use the word! Everything is wrapped in it, so to speak. It is God, the Son, as we read in this very passage, who upholds all things by the word of His power. And by Him were all things created (Col. 1:16). The mind may proceed to lose itself forthwith in mazes of perplexity, as we contemplate the immensity of creation, and the insignificance physically of this tiny earth, which faith knows, on God's sure warrant, to have been the scene of nothing less stupendous than the incarnation. For here 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and,' says the Apostle John, 'we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.' John 1:14. Here the believer rests, while he who trusts to his own keenness of perception is baffled and dismayed.... We know that God has spoken unto us in His Son."

If then God has spoken unto us, we are under bounden duty to heed what is thus spoken. This is, doubtless, the reason that men labor so tenaciously to prove that the Bible is not really God's word to us. Privilege and responsibility are correlatives. It is indeed an immense privilege that the mighty God should concern Himself with the small creature man so as to reveal the otherwise unknowable to him; but our responsibility to heed Him is commensurate with that privilege. It is not a matter of our choice whether we listen and obey or not.

Another point we would make is that Scripture is right and is perfect, and it is ignorance that causes men to set one part of Scripture against another in a futile attempt to prove that it contains errors or inconsistencies. On this point we will again quote from William Kelly:

"Remember, there is no discrepancy [in Scripture] whatever. No more impudent belief can well be, than to set one part of the New Testament against another, or indeed any part of the Bible against another. Such a handling of Scripture is not only dishonest, but profound ignorance. There is not in all the Bible one passage that really contradicts another. Of course, there are passages that may seem at variance; but then, as we begin to get a little more light, these diminish in their number; and hence modesty would feel, if there were but fuller light, all the appearances of inconsistency would vanish away. It is just the same thing in the moral world, nor is it otherwise in the natural world. There are everywhere apparent contradictions and exceptions, but a larger knowledge of things brings these under a deeper rule. So it is with the Word of God. Greater spiritual wisdom causes these apparent anomalies to disappear. Sometimes they may be in the translation; sometimes they may be in faulty manuscripts of the original; sometimes, and most frequently, they are in our own understanding. But the great lesson learned throughout is, that the Bible becomes more manifestly the Word of God in its every detail. No doubt the more ignorant people are, the more fault they find with the Bible; the wiser they become, the more they rejoice in it, and bless God for it."

May our readers be content to be simple about Scripture and accept without reasoning the treasure we have in the very Word of God - of Him who cannot lie. And He has said, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." 1 Cor. 3:19, 20. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" Isa. 2:22. "But the natural man 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." 1 Cor. 2:14. "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." Psalm 39:5.

We especially speak to our young readers and urge that they weigh everything in the "balances of the sanctuary," and that they be not led away after men, be they high or low; for if they speak not according to God's Word there is "no light in them." Be not impressed with their pretensions to superior intelligence, or special education, to any legitimate degrees, whether of Ph.D. or even D.D. They simply are not wiser than Scripture; and any pretension to it will but manifest their folly in the end. God is true, and He is not mocked. "Every word of God is pure.... Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Pro. 30:5, 6.

Be First What You Would Do

It is quite possible for the Word to reach the heart, and even to interest one very much, as the seed which fell on the rock (Luke 8), and yet for no real power to be there. The Spirit of God is careful on this subject to show the difference between receiving the Word humanly and divinely. "Our gospel came not unto you in word [or sense] only, but also in power [the power of action], and in the Holy Ghost" (1 Thess. 1:5). The latter was wanting to the soils — numbers 1, 2, and 3. Number 4 — the good ground — only had it. I believe one's practice is the measure of the truth one has received in the Holy Ghost. You are an exponent of that by which you are controlled, and you like to be so. "Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John 15:14). The expression in action is the grand result — the life of Jesus manifested in the body, which is "full of light, having no part dark" (Luke 11:36). It is thus that the Father is glorified. It is not only what is in my heart, but what is the effect in my body. The works James compares to the spirit of the natural body (James 2:26).

We are to exhibit in our bodies the color and beauty of the truth committed to us. The act indicates the power. The external in everything indicates the internal. Let a man ape as much as he likes, or study to represent himself in a light not genuine, only give him time, and he is sure to betray himself. The effort to express any quality in action can be an effort that shows that the quality does not exist. The quality ought to be expressed, but it cannot be expressed unless possessed; and the attempt at expression without possession is affectation. It is an effort to exhibit a right thing without the power.

Hence we should seek not so much to do, as to be. You may remark in your prayers whether you are praying to be, or praying to do. You may say, "But it is right to do." I admit it; but the question is — How do I get strength to do? I reply, "By first being." As I depend on Christ, as I draw from Him, as I feed on Him, I am enabled to act Him. It is a great thing to do, but I cannot do until I am first qualified.

A child attempts to be a man, and the desire is right; but he must go through many an exercise and many a lesson before he can act as a man. The effect of over-education in the present day, both in the Church and in the world, is to lead the young into the idea that they are qualified to do anything that their seniors do; and it is simply burlesque. I do not at all want to weaken the desire to do. The "friends" of Christ do (John 15:14); but I say, if I am only seeking to do, I am occupied with my doings, and I am like a tree over-weighted with leaves and wood, and no fruit. If Christ is living in me, I cannot but express Him; but I am making no effort to do so. The deeper anything is in our hearts, the less we care to let others see it; but because of its depth and power it tells of itself, as it is said, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."

I believe, if I am studying to be true to what I am as of Christ, I shall do with ease and cheerfulness what is pleasing to Him, without any of the effort which the one trying to do constantly evinces. Everyone can see what is natural and easy to a person and what is not; and we all know that that which is done with ease is generally done with skill. This is a doing day in one sense, that is, there

is a great deal of activity toward others. But there is very little of the life of Jesus manifested in the body, which is an action that expresses Him with regard to everyone, as He walked here, and it imparts a color and a tone to every duty and occupation of life.

Bethesda

John 5

The Lord is seen occasionally at Jerusalem, in John; but not so in the other gospels. But unlike what He is in Galilee, where thousands followed Him, in Jerusalem He is a solitary man, as we may observe in John 2; 3; 5; 7; 8; 9, and 10.

At His last entrance into the city, I mean by the road from Jericho, through Bethany and the Mount of Olives, which is recorded by all the evangelists, I know He is followed by a multitude; but that is no exception to what we have observed, that He was a solitary man in Jerusalem, though in the midst of thousands when in the parts of Galilee and around all the shores of the lake of Tiberias.

In John too the feasts are treated as though they were bygone elements. They are spoken of much in the way that the Apostle Paul in his epistles would speak of Mount Sinai or the legal ordinances. They are called, in this Gospel, "the feasts of the Jews" (chapters 2, 5, 6, 7), save indeed in chapter 13:1, where the passover of that day is honored by our Evangelist as a divinely instituted feast, because the Lord was then about to fulfill it as the true paschal Lamb.

There are peculiarities in John, and very characteristic of this - that in John the Lord is at the end of His question with the Jew, and is standing as among sinners, disowned by the world that was made by Him, and rejected by His people to whom He had offered Himself. See chapter 1:10, 11.

It is in perfect and consistent wisdom that the Spirit of God has not told us what feast this was which had now drawn the Lord to Jerusalem. It mattered not which of them it was; for He was about to show Himself in the city of the Jews, the city of the feasts and solemnities of that people, as One that would supersede them all, and all that belonged to them. So we have not only a feast there on this occasion, but we have the sabbath day, and the religious rulers of the people, the temple, and this singular and wonderful ordinance of Bethesda, all before us in this scene.

This pool by the sheep market at Jerusalem, or Bethesda, was a certain provision made in the grace of God in the behalf of His people at Jerusalem. The system established in Israel did not provide it. It was extraordinary and occasional - as the raising up of a judge or a prophet had been in earlier days, or the mission of an angel, now and again, as to a Gideon or a Manoah. So the stirring of this pool. But withal, it was a testimony to the fact that there were resources of mercy and of power in the God of Israel for His people, beyond all that was then ordinarily dispensed to them. Its very name intimated this: Bethesda, "house of mercy." And as being this, it was a pledge to Israel of Messiah. It told of Him beforehand, as ordinances and prophets had done.

But, Jesus beside the pool at Bethesda, as we see in this chapter, is a sight that, in the spirit of Moses at the bush, we may well turn aside to see. If He had, of old, been reflected in that water, He stands there now to dry it up. Nay more; He stands in contrast with it.

The sight reminds me of the epistle to the Hebrews.

There the Apostle sets the Lord Jesus beside the ordinances of the law, as here the Lord sets Himself beside the pool close by the sheep market, which was as one of them. And the same thing takes place here in John 5 as in that epistle.

There was a witness to Christ in each of these. Bethesda bore witness to Him; the ordinances of the law did the same. But, let Jesus stand beside the pool, or be brought beside the ordinances of the law, we shall find contrast to be as strong as similitude. We have but to listen to the Lord here, and to the Spirit in the epistle there, in order to learn this clearly and fully.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" was the only word which the Lord took with Him when He addressed the poor cripple at that place. Was he ready to put himself, just as he was, into His hand? Was he willing to be His debtor? Could he trust himself, with his need and infirmity, alone with Jesus? This was all. And surely this, in its simplicity, is in complete and full contrast with the cumbrous, weighty machinery of Bethesda. No rivalry, no delay, no uncertainty, no help sought and rendered, are here as they are there. Here with Christ it is, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life." It is, "Why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." But neither of these voices, nor anything like them, is heard from the troubled bosom of that strange, mysterious water. The angel that stirred it at certain seasons had never awakened such sounds as these.

"Wilt thou be made whole?" Simple, and weighty, and full of consolation!

The Lord was then in Jerusalem. He was in the great center and representative of human religiousness, surrounded at that moment by its rich and various provisions. It was the sabbath. It was a feast time. The city of solemnities was in one of its palmy hours. The temple was at hand, the Pharisees were around, and a great multitude of expectants and votaries gathered about the pool by the sheep market, the ordinance of angelic ministry of Bethesda. In the midst of all this He stands. But it is as a new thing, another thing. He takes no notice of the feast day, nor of the sabbath, nor of the temple. His words sound as though they pronounced the doom of all these. "Wilt thou be made whole?" was their funeral knell. The poor cripple whom they addressed may at once free himself, whether of rivals or of friends. Those who might have struggled with him, or those who might have aided him, he may now equally overlook. And he need not wait. Delay and hope may be exchanged for present enjoyment. He need neither doubt nor tarry. Ordinances and angels, and helpers and rivals, delay and uncertainty - all were thus blessedly and gloriously disposed of by Jesus in his behalf. When Jesus appeared, when the Son of God stood beside this pool, the only question was, would the poor cripple leave all for Him, and in that way stand by and see the salvation of God?

What a word was this, in the midst of such a scene, and at such a moment! "Wilt thou be made whole?"

The poverty of the pool is exposed. It is seen to be but a "beggarly element." It has no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth. And after this same manner, the Spirit exposes "the worldly sanctuary," and all its provisions and services, in the epistle to the Hebrews. There the Apostle, under the Holy Ghost, sets Jesus again beside Bethesda, beside the system of ordinances that had gone before, and exposed them all in their poverty and impotency. There had been a reflection of Christ in these ceremonies of the temple, as there had been in this water by the sheep market; but the reflection has no substance - it was a shadow - and it was gone when the true light

filled the place. Jesus alone is glorified. When the Spirit brings Him in, in that epistle, He keeps Him in, saying of Him, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." And here, the Lord Himself speaks to the poor cripple of nothing but of His own healing power: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." He was to carry that which •once, while he was hanging over the pool, bore him. He needed nothing else. He knew the healing of the Son of God, and he was free.

Thus it might have been with him. He represents this to us. But, perhaps, he was but an unconscious type of the way of the Son of God with sinners. For, personally, he does not seem to enter into the scene. Instead of being abstracted and fixed by the Lord, instead of looking up in the Stranger's face with wonder and delight at the words addressed to him, and at once transferring himself, just as he was, in all his sorrow and need, into His hand, he talks of his present condition. Natural this is, I know - done every day - the common way of man. We need not wonder at it, nor that this man was afterward found in the temple instead of being, like the Samaritan leper of Luke 17, at the feet of his Deliverer. These are but the ways and workings of the legal, religious mind, whether in Judea or in Christendom; for it has no ear for the proposals of grace. And again I say, we need not wonder at this one man, this cripple that was healed, when we see at that moment "a great multitude of impotent folk" lingering round that uncertain, disappointing pool, though the Son of God was abroad in the land, carrying with Him and in Him salvation without money and without price, without doubt or delay, for all who would come to Him and that too in defiance of all hindrance or rivalry, and independent of all help or countenance.

All this reads us a lesson. Indeed it does. The pool thickly frequented, Jesus passing by unheeded! The pool sought unto, while Jesus has to seek and propose Himself! What a picture of the religion of the heart of man! Ordinances with all their cumbrous machinery waited on-the grace of God that brings salvation slighted! or at least this grace has to propose itself, to be preached and pressed, like Jesus at Bethesda, while these ordinances, like that pool, are crowded by willing votaries every day.

But further. This pool has its neighborhood, as well as itself, for our inspection; the scene has its accompaniments or its accidents for our further instruction.

We read here, "and on the same day was the sabbath."

In the other gospels, when the Lord is challenged for doing His work on such a day, He answers either from the case of David eating the showbread; or from the priests doing work in the temple; or from a word of the prophets, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice"; or from the fact that they themselves, His accusers, would lead out their ass or their ox, on the sabbath, to watering. B u t here, on this occasion, in John's Gospel, being challenged on this same ground of healing on such a day, He says, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Wondrous sentence! But let me first notice how characteristic of John it is. The Lord does not here, as in the other gospels on like occasions, as we have just seen, put Himself in company with David, or with the priests, or with the words of the prophets, or with the ways, the common accredited ways, of men, but with God. It is not what David had once done, nor what the priests would do, nor what men, even His accusers themselves, were doing every day, but what the Father had ever been doing in this needy, ruined world, that the Lord pleads as the standard of His actings. And on the distinguished occasion then before Him, restoring the cripple at the pool of

Bethesda, He had given a sample of this.

This is full of character. But surely it is full of wonder too. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Man at the beginning forfeited the sabbath. By sinning he broke the rest of creation. He lost the garden, and became a drudge in the earth, that he might get bread by sweat of face, and live. But when man thus lost his rest, the Lord God left His, and at once began to work again.

He had hallowed the seventh day in memory of His having finished His creation work. He rested then. And having rested, He enjoyed His rest, walking with the creature whom His hand had made in His own image, after His likeness, in the garden which He had formed and furnished for him. But when sin entered, and the creation rest was gone, the Lord God not only began at once to work, but to work for His self-ruined creature, as we read, "The LORD God made coats of skins, and clothed them" - clothed the man and the woman who had now reduced themselves to the condition of guilty, exposed sinners.

Wondrous display of God! The glorious framer of the heavens and the earth, the One whose fingers had just garnished the sky above us, and whose creatures were filling and furnishing the ground we tread on, now turns His hand (to His praise be it remembered forever) to make a covering for a sinner. God in grace, the Father of our Lord Jesus, thus began to work. And so, onward through Old Testament days, He was acting in love, showing mercy. He was not enjoying His rest as Creator of a finished work, but working, in grace, in the midst of ruins, on new creation principles, as patriarchs and prophets and Israel, and the ordinances of the law, and this very pool of Bethesda, had, in their several ways and seasons, been witnessing. And now, on this model, Christ had come forth to work, as the healed cripple of this chapter witnesses. So, standing at the margin of this mystic water, and with the healed man before Him, He could say, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Wondrous! The rest was left, and work was re-commenced. The pillar of the wilderness was "a like figure" of this. After leaving Egypt, Israel forfeited the rest of Canaan which had been promised them, and on to which they had gone, and on to, which they were journeying.

And they had to wander outside of that rest for forty years. But the cloudy pillar, or rather the glory that dwelt in it, would be a wanderer also. If Israel, like Adam, had forfeited their rest, the Lord God of Israel would fain be without His. And thus the cloud went about with the camp, rehearsing again the divine grace of the Lord God at the beginning. The God of Israel was as the God of creation had been; for He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

The gospel is a great system of working as by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And on the authority of what has been done, on the title of what God Himself has wrought in the accomplished redemption of sinners, Jesus, in the gospel, still turns to guilty, helpless man, and says to each and to all, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

Surely the sequel is well weighed. Bethesda reflects the Son of God, the Savior. The house of mercy and the Lord and dispenser of mercy are in company. But while it reflects Him in its measure, it sets Him off in somewhat larger measure. It causes the glory and the riches of His grace to shine forth the brighter because of its own faint and dark ground; and as in the Mosaic ordinances, so in this pool at the sheep market, we have Him as much by contrast as by similitude.

Let me add, as a reflection upon this pool at the sheep market, that the relief which grace provided in the age of the law was only occasional, as I have already noticed - as by a judge or a prophet - and as also the angel stirring this water now and again witnesses. But now, in this age of the gospel, grace or the salvation of God is the standing thing, the thing ministered. This is the "day of salvation." And yet, I doubt not, there are special or occasional seasons of the Spirit's peculiar working and visitation. There are times of "visitation" now, as there had been of old, though it be fully true that the present is a dispensation of grace, as the former had not been. The city of Corinth had such a time vouchsafed to it, as Jerusalem had before it (Luke 19:44; Acts 18:10). Individuals, likewise, have such times (1 Pet. 2:12); and indeed if Bethesda witnessed this at Jerusalem in other days, times of revival, as we call them, have witnessed the same in course of the age of Christendom.

The Birthright of Double Portion

Genesis 48 shows us the bestowing of the birthright upon Joseph; and the birthright and the inheritance are, in some sense, one.

In Israel, or under the law, the birthright carried the double portion. The first-born was to have a double share of the father's goods; and the law enjoined that this should be his by an indefeasible title, a title that was not to be challenged. The double portion was not to be given to any other child of the family on any ground of personal affection or partiality whatever (Deut. 21:15-17).

But though this were so, the birthright might have been either sold or forfeited by the first-born himself. His own acts might alienate it, though his father's partialities or prejudices could not. And we find this to have been the case. Esau sold it, and Reuben forfeited it (Gen. 25; 1 Chron. 5). In the case of the sale of it by Esau, Jacob who bought it, of course, had title to it. The bargain and sale made it his. That is clear. But in the case of the forfeiture of it by Reuben, who is to take it? It reverted to the father; but on which of the sons would he confer it? That was a question, and it is that question which this chapter answers. It presents us with the solemnity of the aged father, dying Jacob, investing Joseph with the birthright which Reuben his first-born had forfeited.

Upon hearing of the illness of his father, Joseph comes to his bedside, bringing his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him. None of the other sons of Jacob were present. The Spirit of God, through Jacob, had a special business with Joseph.

Jacob begins the action by reciting to Joseph the divine grant of the land of Canaan. This was a setting forth of the family estate, the property which he had to leave among his children. He then adopts the sons of Joseph.; for this was needed to the investing of them with the rights of children, inasmuch as, in a great legal sense, they were strangers to Abraham. Their mother was an Egyptian. They were a seed, therefore, whom the law would in its day have put away (Ezra 10:3). But Jacob adopts them. He takes them into the family. "And now," says he to Joseph, "thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine." They are constituted of the seed of Abraham, and made children of Jacob; and this being done, Jacob at once sets them in the place of the first-born; for he adds immediately, "As Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine."

This was a solemn act of investiture, by which the rights of the eldest, the double portion which attached to the birthright, passed over to Joseph in the persons of his two sons. See 1 Chron. 5; Eze. 47:13. (The title now bestowed was afterward realized, when the family estate, the land of Canaan, came to be divided between the tribes; for Joseph then got two portions in his two sons, who were treated as though they had been two distinct sons of Jacob.)

But we have still to ask, Why was Joseph thus preferred? The forfeited right had reverted to Jacob, and from his hand it had to be disposed of afresh. But why was it given to Joseph? Was this merely grace? I could not say so. Grace, I know, on this great occasion, takes its way; and were we duly emptied, we should delight in the way of grace, even though we ourselves might get,

in its distributions, only a left-hand or Manasseh blessing. But while all this is so, I still question whether it were merely grace which thus conferred the rights of the eldest son upon Joseph.

I rather judge that Joseph earned it. If Jacob aforesaid bought it, Joseph, I believe, had now earned it.

We have already, in the history, tracked his path to the inheritance. It was the path, like that of his divine Master, whose shadow in the distance he was, of sorrow and rejection and separation, and yet of righteousness and testimony. And this path had ended with praise and honor and glory in the kingdom or inheritance, and the birthright is kindred with the inheritance.

Breakdown of Morals: the Editor's Column

There is considerable concern in many quarters over the relaxed tone of morals in young people's circles, and it does not stop with young people. To be precise, it is more like a complete breakdown of morals. The surprising thing is that anyone should wonder about the source of the present phenomenon. On every hand bad seeds are being sown; there is no mystery then when they suddenly spring up and bear an abundant crop of noxious weeds. The simple reason for the lavish crop of moral delinquency is that this nation, and most other nations, have given up the "fear of the Lord." There is now "no fear of God before their eyes."

On every hand there is a concerted drive to remove the fear of God from the consciences of the people of the land. Atheism is growing apace. Atheists bask in the favor of the courts which render decisions approving their objections to the mention of God, or of prayer to Him. God is restricted in this land; that is, as far as men can restrict the omnipotent. They ignore the fact that He is supreme and will be justified when He speaks, and clear when He judges (see Psalm 51:4). He is the One "with whom we have to do," and there is no escaping that settled fact (Heb. 4:13).

Just a few days ago the courts struck down a law of many years' standing in California forbidding Gypsies to practice clairvoyance, fortune telling, and kindred things. These practices were forbidden in the Word of God for His earthly people, the Jews. And if it had no place then, it is more reprehensible now in the full revealed light of Christianity. But fortune tellers must have their day in court; and about the same time an officer of the law refused to prosecute conspiring and avowed adulterers, saying there was no law against it. Years ago a noted Biblical expositor said of "higher criticism," which was spreading fast in Germany then, that they [the Germans] would reap the whirlwind for the dragons' teeth they were sowing. In the light of what happened twice in a quarter century when their land was largely devastated, his words seem to have been prophetic. But, no; they were simply the words of soberness based on the knowledge of the sure government of God. The same can be said of this land and all others which are giving up God and throwing off inhibitions which even nature should teach men. We read of some who by what they know naturally as brute beasts dishonor themselves. Now they sink lower than the beasts.

The schools of the land have taught that God did not create man, but that he merely evolved from slime. In this he takes pride that he is such an exalted product of fanciful chance. He will accept any theory of his beginning (no matter how degrading) rather than accept God's sure word, and for one reason only; if he can satisfy himself that God did not create him, then he can throw off responsibility to God. The wish is parent to the thought. And then if he can persuade himself that he is, after all, nothing more than an intelligent beast, then by deduction, he may just as well live in a bestial manner and satisfy all the corrupt tendencies of his evil heart. By the fall, man became God's enemy; this could not be said of any mere beast.

If we turn to the religious world to observe underlying causes of the moral breakdown, we find hosts of professed ministers of the gospel who are modernists and liberals. They deny the very basic elements of the Word of God. It is uncommon today to find men who fully believe and affirm

the inerrancy of God's Word, its relevancy to the problems of the day, the deity of Christ, the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus, His sacrificial death, His bodily resurrection, and His coming again. Men in the pulpits do not hesitate to call the very facts of Scripture but allegories. Anything that happens to annoy church members can easily be explained away. Can we wonder that when such daring infidelity parades in clerical garb, the precepts of God's Word are treated as fables? But young believers, remember that "Every word of God is pure"; and there is no safety in this wicked world but in taking heed to that Word in all departments of our being. Mankind has fallen until all that governs people's morals today are their lusts and popular opinion. As conduct becomes lower and lower, man allows more and more. What was scorned a year ago is accepted on the basis of "it is not thought anything of today." And thus there is no floor under the lowest state of morality. As this sinks, man tolerates more. When the fear of God is removed, there is no stability, nothing under his feet which is sure and unalterable. A common expression today is, "Everyone is doing it." This is NOT true; but if it were true, what is that to the man that trembles at God's Word? "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing." Eccles. 12:14.

There is now a certain type of sophistry abroad that supposes that if people do not get caught in their immoral, or amoral, deeds, all is well. Whereas, it is written, "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known" (Matt. 10:26). "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." Luke 12:2, 3. "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" Psalm 94:9. God is omniscient, and nothing can be hidden from Him. Everything that is said and done, and even what is thought (Psalm 139:2) is all open before Him. May Christians remember that "Thou God seest me." There is the government of God here and now, for "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. 6:7. Then for those who die in their sins, there is the great white throne of His judgment, where the books will be opened and they judged according to their works (Rev. 20:12). And for those of us who are saved by the precious blood of Christ, all our works will come before Christ at His judgment seat, when our lives pass in review before Him. These are solemn realities.

Romans, chapter 1, gives a true account of the debauched condition of the heathen world. God had given them over to their sordid life with all its frightful consequences because they turned their backs on Him. This then led to the dissolution of the Roman Empire and nearly to the breakdown of all society. Now, in so-called Christian lands, these conditions are coming back, or are already here, with the shocking addition that they are allowed while professing the form of godliness. And a worse judgment is now on the way, for God tells us that a time of trouble is coming which is worse than anything the world has ever known.

Every day brings it closer. The world's entertainment- picture shows, television, books of horror and filth - almost every means of news dissemination glories in man's shame. Books that were banned by unbelievers a few years back, now are sold by "respectable" merchants, and sin is made to appear appealing; and stolen waters seem sweet indeed. Pro. 14:9 says that "fools make a mock at sin." Is not this largely true of these forms of thought dissemination? Even what were considered staid and respectable magazines now make excursions into the defiling filth of fallen man. And why? Because there is a demand for it, and money to be made by pandering to it.

Christians, beware, lest we walk in the counsel of the ungodly. If we form our lives after the pattern of this present evil world, we are apt to be snared in the devices of the god of this world.

We recently read an article which was written to warn young people of the hidden dangers about us. The author pleaded with them to see how far they could steer their vessel on life's sea away from hidden rocks and reefs, and not be the daring kind who see how close they can come and yet avoid being wrecked. He commented on how many had foolishly pursued the opposite course and ran aground. Many dear young Christians have spoiled their testimony for Christ and blighted their whole lives by carelessness in this regard. The rocks, the reefs, the shoals, abound with historic wrecks of lives. The Word of God is a sure chart to keep us safe. We need to cry, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe." Do not trust your cleverness; you are no match for your wily foe. People with more human sagacity than you have been trapped by him. Keep away from evil companions-"Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." Prov. 4:15.

Dear young men and women who know the Lord, even when you are in the company of other young Christians, beware how YOU behave. Keep your hands to yourself. What if even some Christians call you disdainful names-will they answer to God for you at the judgment seat of Christ? Will they bear all the shame and reproach of a shattered testimony after you make the shipwreck? Perhaps some of them may be doing what you and they should not do; "choose you this day whom ye will serve." Would you not rather have the Lord's blessing than the pleasures of sin for a season- with all its regrets, sorrow, and remorse, and then have to answer to the Lord for your conduct? Do not trifle with even the borders of sin.

The Bridegroom and the Bride

"And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Rev. 19:8, 9.

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." John 3:28.

All these, therefore, who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, are, like John, friends of the Bridegroom, and, while not in the intimacy of the bride, will have their own special portion, and will rejoice greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice.

It is to be observed that, while the fact of the marriage is stated, and the wife is seen as made ready, also the guests as invited, the joys of the feast are not exhibited. The reason is that no one could be permitted to enter into that which must forever remain a blessed secret between the Bridegroom and the bride. The bride, later on, shall be shown out in all her magnificent beauty, "having the glory of God"; but no stranger could "intermeddle" with the joy of the Lamb's union with His wife. But its significance and importance in the counsels of God may be gathered from the universal joy it occasions in heaven, and from the place it occupies in His ways in relation to the earth.

By His Stripes

In Notes on Exodus, by C.H.M., he says, "It is by His stripes, not by His obedient life, that we are healed; and those stripes He endured on the cross, and nowhere else." Surely this is so. We ought to carefully distinguish between the sufferings He endured at the hands of men, as the faithful and true Witness for God in a scene of evil, and those sufferings in which atonement was wrought when He was forsaken of God. In the latter He is alone. As to the former, others might through grace walk in the same path, and in their measure endure similar sufferings. Five times did the Apostle Paul receive of the Jews forty stripes save one, and thrice was he beaten with rods. This was fellowship in Christ's sufferings. But in the atoning sufferings none could have fellowship, and in their fullness and depth they must ever remain unknown to us. Up to the cross there was no forsaking, no hiding of God's face, no withdrawal of the light of that Countenance in the sunshine of which the blessed Lord had ever walked. But when in infinite grace He stooped to be made sin, then all was changed. We therefore assuredly believe that the stripes by which we are healed He endured on the cross, and nowhere else.

A Castaway: 1 Corinthians 9:27

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9:27.

Some people use the above verse to prove that even a true Christian can be lost. This is a mistake, as we know from many passages of Scripture (John 10:28-30, etc.). The word "castaway," however, must not be taken in a limited sense, as though it meant merely disapproved in his ministry. It is not so used in the New Testament.

What makes the difficulty in some minds is, that they fail to see that it is not here a question of a true Christian's being a castaway, but of his being a preacher and a castaway. Alas, we know there are many such, and Paul wanted to show by his whole mode of life, in which he kept his body under, that he was not one of these.

He says in chapter 4:6, "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes"; this explains the words in our verse, "I myself." It was not that Paul himself could be lost or cast away, but he applies it to himself as a preacher to make the case plain.

Christ Is Our Shepherd

It may be questioned whether this relationship of our blessed Lord to His people occupies its due place in our souls. It is quite true that it is found most frequently in the Old Testament scriptures; but it would be to suffer great loss to suppose that it was only a Jewish relationship. Indeed, John 10 expressly forbids this conclusion, for the Lord distinctly states, "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 [not fold], and one shepherd." v. 16. Peter also, writing to the believers of this dispensation says, "Ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." 1 Pet. 2:25. And again, "Feed [shepherd] the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." 1 Pet. 5:2-4. The Apostle Paul uses the same figure when addressing the elders of the church at Ephesus. "Take heed," he says, "therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed [shepherd] the church of God," etc. Acts 20:28.

Christ, therefore, is the Shepherd of His people now; and they are His sheep-collectively, His flock. There is, however, this difference. To the Jews, had they received Him, He would have been a Shepherd on earth; and even in the Millennium He will be the Shepherd of His earthly people. "And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even My servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd." Eze. 34:23; see also Jer. 23:1-4. But He is our Shepherd as the One who has died, risen again, and is seated at the right hand of God. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews thus says, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep," etc. Heb. 13:20. It is, therefore, from His place on high that He now shepherds His people; and hence He is termed the chief Shepherd, because in His tender care for the sheep, being absent from them, He provides those who shall "feed the flock" under His guidance and directions. When He therefore ascended up on high, He gave some pastors, etc. (Eph. 4:11); for it is through these, and such as have the place of rule, that He now exercises the functions of the Shepherd for His people.

The relationship then in both dispensations is expressed by the same term, but the blessings secured by it are determined by the respective positions and needs of the sheep. Hence that beautiful 23rd Psalm - the solace of God's people of all ages - could be adopted by saints of all dispensations. Nay, it is so worded that the Lord Himself, when on earth as a man, could use its language, as well as the pious remnant among the Jews, and believers at the present time.

1) Let us then, in the first place, consider a little the Shepherd Himself. To the Jews He said, "He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." John 10:2. And there He stood before them as the One who alone came in to Israel by the way appointed of God, who answered to all the conditions predicted of Him in the Scriptures - the One therefore, to whom the door was divinely opened to give Him access to His sheep. But the people as such received Him not, and

hence He became also the Door of the sheep (v. 7). "All that ever came before Me," He says, "are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, 'and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." John 10:8-11.

Here then is the great characteristic of the good Shepherd-He giveth His life for the sheep. He is the Christ who died; and if He died for all, then were all dead (2 Cor. 5:14). This brings in the whole secret of redemption. The sheep had gone astray - were lost, and would have perished everlastingly - but the good Shepherd went after that which was lost - even down into death-the death of the cross - and sought until He found. This explains to us the epithet, "good" Shepherd. All we like sheep had gone astray, and turned everyone to his own way; but the good Shepherd offered Himself for our sins, gave His life for the sheep, and the Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:6). As the Apostle Paul reasons, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:6-8. The whole heart of Christ, as well as of God, was revealed by His death; for there was nothing in us to draw out His affection, to move Him to take our place and to redeem us with His precious blood. In the same night in which He was betrayed, He took bread and gave thanks - and founded the memorial of His accomplished sacrifice. Thus side by side we behold His perfect goodness, and man's perfect evil; but the full exhibition of what man was could not hinder the manifestation of what He was. Nay, just as the light of the sun when shining on a dark thundercloud seems all the more bright and intense, so the love, grace, and goodness of Christ are magnified by the unmitigated evil which on man's part brought Him to the cross. The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.

By giving His life for the sheep He acquired the title to their possession. Thereon follows another action, He giveth His life to the sheep. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10. And again, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish." v. 28. With this we may connect another word: "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved," etc. v. 9. We add this scripture to show the way in which Christ bestows life-that it is never apart from faith in Himself. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3:36). So here He is presented as the door, and whoever enters in by Him is saved- has eternal life. It were a fatal mistake to suppose that while He absolutely bestows life as a gift-and indeed as a sovereign gift - that it could ever be possessed without a personal faith. For this is the appointed means of its possession - that indeed which characterizes them as His sheep, and thus separates them from the world.

Again it is said, "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (v. 3); also that He knows His sheep (vv. 14, 27). He had just exemplified this in the case of the blind man. He had met him in his blindness, opened his eyes, led him out of Judaism, and made him a worshiper of Himself as the Son of God. There are also several beautiful illustrations of these characteristics of the good Shepherd recorded in the Gospel. Take one from the first chapter of this Gospel. "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." vv. 47, 48. From all eternity He has known His sheep; and in His own time He addresses them by name, calls them by a word of power; and His voice, penetrating into their souls, leads them out, constraining them to recognize it as that of the good Shepherd. Just as on the morning of His resurrection, when He said, "Mary," and she instantly responded, "Rabboni," so now, He speaks, and the sheep hear His voice and straightway follow Him. It is thus He has called every one of His flock, and thus that He will still gather His sheep, until the last one that is straying upon the mountains or in the deserts is brought under His shepherd care. I "know My sheep" is surely a word of rich consolation to the hearts of His own. In the wilderness still, though following His lead and often faithless and weary, how often does the temptation come to doubt His care and love? I "know My sheep" should calm every anxiety and dispel every fear, revealing as it does that His eye is ever upon us, comprehending all our case, all our needs, yea, knowing us altogether!

We have already alluded to the composite character of His flock-being now made up of Jews and Gentiles-as He teaches in the 16th verse. Indeed, the whole history of the formation of the flock is there set forth - "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 fold [flock], and one shepherd." This is the special feature of the flock during this dispensation. In the past, Israel alone was His flock; hence the 23rd Psalm commences, Jehovah is my Shepherd. But inasmuch as when He came unto His own, His own received Him not, He by His death broke down the wall of enclosure that separated the Jews from the Gentiles, and laid the foundation in His blood for the gatherings out of both alike through faith in His name. Ever since Pentecost, therefore, He has been calling His sheep from every land, and from every clime; and they hear His voice and they are brought; and together, whether Jews or Gentiles, they form the one flock under the one Shepherd.

Another characteristic of the Shepherd is, that He keeps His sheep in safety. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [I do not insert the word man with our translation, for the term any will include Satan as well as man-as it was intended to do] pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man [no one] is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." vv. 28, 29. He thus guarantees absolute security to His own. The wolf may catch [the same word as pluck] the sheep away from him who is an hireling, and not the shepherd; but none can catch [pluck] them out of His hands. What rest of heart it should give us, as we read these blessed words!

2) It may be profitable if we ponder a little more in detail upon some of the characteristics of the sheep.

They hear His voice (vv. 4, 16, 27). This goes back, as already explained, to the very commencement, when He called His own sheep by name, and is that which distinguishes them as His sheep. The Lord Himself draws the contrast. "Ye," He said to the

Jews, "believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice," etc. (vv. 26, 27). We may combine this with another trait, "They know not the voice of strangers" (v. 5). Herein lies the safety of the flock. They at once recognize the voice of the Shepherd, but though a stranger should simulate the tones of the Shepherd ever so closely, they know not his voice; that is, they detect it as that of a stranger. This is that which is taught by the Apostle John.

"Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.... These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." 1 John 2:20, 27. There is no need, therefore, that we should seek to be familiar with all the errors that abound on every hand in order to escape their seductions; it is enough for us that we know the voice of the Shepherd, and our safety will be in ever listening to it, becoming increasingly acquainted with it, maintaining evermore the attitude of her who sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His word (Luke 10:39). This will be at once our preservative from danger, and the means of our safety and blessing.

Consequent upon hearing His voice, the sheep follow the Shepherd. "He goeth before them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice." v. 4; see also v. 27. The sheep have no will but that of the Shepherd; and ceasing to follow Him, they become wandering sheep. "All we like sheep," says the prophet, "have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way." Isa. 53:6. In Eastern lands, and indeed in some parts of Europe, the shepherd ever goes before the sheep; and when he moves onward, so do they; and when he stops, they stop likewise. Our blessed Lord alludes to this in the scripture before us, and uses the custom to convey most striking instruction. For to follow the Shepherd necessitates that the eye of the sheep should be ever upon Him, that, indeed, they should ever be on the watch to ascertain when He would have them to move, and where He would have them follow. Everything is thus left in the Shepherd's hands; it is His to discern a coming danger, to provide for their sustenance, and to indicate their path. Their responsibility is to follow-to follow the Shepherd wherever He may lead - to follow Him until He shall come to receive them to Himself.

It is also said that the sheep know the Shepherd. They not only know His voice, but they also know Himself. "I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." vv. 14, 15. This is the highest blessing which the sheep can receive, for it implies entering into His own thoughts, ways, and desires; yea, the knowledge of Himself. It is thus that we are brought into communion with Him. We may know His voice, and be following Him, and yet be without much acquaintance with His character. To know Him is what the Apostle John gives us as descriptive of the fathers in God's family. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning." 1 John 2:13. This, therefore, is the highest and most blessed attainment which the believer can make. And the Lord desires that it should be made-and in an infinite measure-"As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father." He knows us and He desires that we should know Him. May He Himself lead us into an ever increasing acquaintance with Himself, so keeping Himself before our souls that we may grow daily in the knowledge of Him - of what He is, as well as what He is to us and for us-through the Dower of the Holy Ghost!

Christ Is Our Shepherd

3) It may help us still further to understand the relationship, as well as the privileges of the sheep, if we add to the foregoing considerations the teaching of Psalm 23.

The Lord (Jehovah) is my Shepherd. Everything depends upon the relationship, whether we can truly adopt this language. Everyone can say the Lord is a Shepherd; and hence all the significance

of this statement is connected with the little word "my." To say "my" Shepherd is the language of faith. How blessed if we can then adopt these words as our own, and say He is our Shepherd. And what follows? "I shall not want." We shall not want, not because we are sheep, but because He is our Shepherd. This conclusion flows, not from what we are to Him, but from what He is to us. It is very strengthening to the soul to see this clearly, for many of us are apt to begin with ourselves; and consequently, as we discover what poor, feeble, wayward creatures we are, we fall into doubts and anxieties. B u t when we begin with the Lord, consider what He is - what He is in Himself, as well as what He is in relationship to us - we obtain the well-grounded assurance that we "shall not want." For surely it belongs to the Shepherd to provide for the sheep. How foolish it is even in children to question their parents as to how their wants are to be met on the morrow! Much more foolish would it be on our parts - when we have such a Shepherd. Enough for our hearts surely to know that He is ours, and in that sweet confidence we can leave everything in His hands, who "shall feed [tend] His flock like a Shepherd" (Isa. 40:11). He is ours, and we have everything in Him; and hence the heart can rest in perfect peace, in the full assurance of His unfailing love, omnipotent power, and unwearied care.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters"- or, as we have it in the margin, pastures of tender grass, and waters of quietness. He thus provides suited blessings needed sustenance, and rest, and refreshment. But even this fails to convey the richness and bounty of the provision which He makes for His flock. The pastures are pastures of tender grass on which the sheep feed with appetite and delight until they are satisfied; and when they are satisfied - as with marrow and fatness - they lie down by the cool and refreshing waters of quietness. As it is said in John 10, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." v. 9. What unfolding of the heart of the Shepherd-ministering thus to the need of His own, watching over them to minister to all their necessities. Happy are the sheep who are placed under such constant, loving, and faithful care!

"He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." Psalm 23:3. As a hymn says,

"If e'er I go astray,

He doth my soul restore."

This belongs here also to His office of Shepherd. We need not say that the foundation on which He does this is His own finished work-the propitiation which He has made for our sins (1 John 2:1, 2). But in the psalm this restoration is looked at as effected by the Shepherd. The sheep wanders, goes astray, and the Shepherd goes after that which is lost, and finding it, brings it safely back. Every sheep is thus under His eye, and cannot stray without His knowledge; and when any of us have strayed, we surely should never have returned, if He had not followed after and drawn us back again by the ministrations of His love.

And just as we are indebted to Him, for restoration, so also for being kept and guided into right paths-paths of righteousness - paths which are according to His own will. Mark, moreover, that He so lead s us "for His name's sake." It is again-it cannot be repeated too often-what He is-on account of. His own name. And therefore His own glory is concerned in guiding us into these paths of righteousness. We can thus ever plead with Him on this ground; and whenever we do so, our

plea is irresistible. It was so with Joshua. When the Israelites were smitten, after the sin of Achan, before the men of Ai, Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, and pleaded with God; and the whole burden of his cry was at last expressed in the one question, "And what wilt thou do unto Thy great name?" (Josh. 7:6-9.) Rising to this height, the answer immediately came. Let it always, then, be remembered that the Lord is concerned for His own name's sake, to lead us in the path which is according to His will.

The Psalmist now waxes more bold. He has told us what Jehovah is, and what He does. This gives him confidence, and he is consequently able to say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Psalm 23:4. The valley of the shadow of death is not so much passing through death, as the character of our pathway through this scene. We are passing through a judged world. Death hangs over it like a pall; and hence to the believer, who enters into God's thoughts about it, it is the valley of the shadow of death. But what is his antidote against fear? It is that "Thou art with me." This indeed is the source of all our security and blessing - the Lord is with us. And being with us, we have His rod and His staff to comfort us - His rod to direct, and His staff to support. Do we sufficiently enter into this? Is it as constantly present to our souls as it should be-that the Lord is with us? and that His rod and His staff comfort us? The scene may be never so dark and desolate, and we may be never so weak and weary, but we have boundless resources in the One who is our Shepherd - His own presence to cheer our souls, and His rod and His staff to guide in perplexity, and to support in weakness. Blessed be His name!

We have now another feature, as well as another character, of blessing. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with 4 oil; my cup runneth over." v. 5. It is not only that the path may lie through the valley of the shadow of death, but enemies are around. But He that is with us is all-sufficient for this difficulty. They may rage, and seek to destroy, but, as David says, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." He will be the sustenance of His people, and cause their enemies to see that they are upheld, sustained, and provided for, by the Lord. As the Apostle writes, "He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Heb. 13:5, 6. But we have more: "Thou anointest my head with oil"-the unction of God-the Spirit of power - and hence he adds, "My cup runneth over." Nothing is wanting; no, he is filled to overflowing with goodness and mercy, and in such a scene as this. This is all the result of having the Lord as our Shepherd, for all flows from Him-from what He is to us in this relationship. And let it not be forgotten that this is our present portion. These are not blessings which we shall have, but blessings which we now have. How we narrow the heart of God by our unbelief! And hence our need of learning ever more of Himself, that we may understand more fully the immensity of His grace, and the riches of His provision for us, while passing through the wilderness. Surely we may say, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want"!

The conclusion is as simple as beautiful. "Surely goodness and mercy shall [not have followed, but shall] follow me all the days of my life." How do we know this? Because of what the Lord is as our Shepherd. It is confidence in Him, and the knowledge of what is suited to Him, that enables us thus to speak. And yet more: "And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." All leads up to this. Blessed as we are now, and enjoying so much because of what Christ is to us as our Shepherd, we shall enter upon larger blessings and more perfect joys when He shall return to

receive us to Himself, and we shall be forever with Him. But we must not miss the present application of the words. The effect of grace upon the heart is to draw us ever closer to Him from whom it flows, and to produce in us the desire to dwell in His house forever; yes, to dwell before Him, and in His presence, everlastingly. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire [meditate] in His temple." Psalm 27:4. The heart is thus attracted to, and absorbed in the contemplation of, the One whose beauty had been unfolded in His ways of grace and love; and hence we can find no rest or satisfaction except in the presence of its Object. All-every blessing-is centered in Him; and, therefore, the soul that knows it desires to be always with Him. Happy are they who have learned the lesson, that they want nothing outside of Christ - that He is enough their "hearts and minds to fill"!

May the Lord Himself unfold more and more to us of His beauty, as well as the unspeakable character of the blessings which are ours, because by grace we have been brought into relationship with Him as our Shepherd.

"I love the Shepherd's voice:

His watchful eyes shall keep

My pilgrim soul among

The thousands of God's sheep.

He feeds His flock, He calls their names,

And gently leads the tender lambs."

Christ the Food of His People

Both the manna and the old corn of the land are types of Christ. The former presents Him in His humiliation - the Bread that came down from heaven, but not simply as the humbled One. It is rather Christ adapted to all the wilderness needs of His redeemed. The old corn of the land is Christ in glory - Christ known in those heavenly relationships in which divine grace sets the believer. As those who are risen with Christ, we feed on Him as the old corn of the land. Viewed in one light the Christian, though out of Egypt, is yet in the wilderness journeying to the rest that remains, and as such he needs Christ as the manna. Viewed in another light he is on the other side of Jordan - risen with Christ - and then Christ as seen in the old corn of the land is his food. Christ suited to our circumstances here is the manna. Christ leading our hearts into that scene of heavenly blessedness where He lives, so that we know and live with Him there, is the old corn of the land. An experimental knowledge of Christ in both ways is our privilege; and we shall suffer, and that greatly, if we think little of either.

Christ the Object, Motive, and Power

If you read the epistle to the Philippians you will find:

In chapter 1, Christ is the Life;

In chapter 2, Christ is the Pattern;

In chapter 3, Christ is the Object;

In chapter 4, Christ is the Power.

There we find Christ the Motive, Power, and Object of the Christian life. What more can be needed?

There is a new motive - not self, but Christ. A new power - not natural energy, but Christ. And a new, blessed, and worthy Object to command my entire life - not my poor, ignoble interests, but a living, loving, glorified Savior.

"One thing I do," said the Apostle Paul; "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul was a man of like passions with us, but his heart was so intense, and His pursuit so keen, that none of these things around moved him; neither did he count his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy. Happy man! Bright, victorious witness!

I am persuaded that wretched difficulties which appear before Christians, are but the phantoms of half-hearted indecision, and that they would vanish like vapor if they had but the moral courage for gracious refusal of all that is of the world.

Go and bathe your heart, dear friend, in the ocean fullness of His love. Let it be suffused by and satisfied with the story of His grace; and then seek that you henceforth may be marked by one bright idea-the glory of Him who died for you and rose again.

The City of Refuge: the Editor's Column

After Cain killed Abel his brother, the Lord said to him, "Where is Abel thy brother?... What hast thou done?" (Gen. 4:9, 10). This was a searching question, for Cain was of that wicked one, and killed his brother because Abel's more excellent sacrifice was accepted by God, while his own bloodless offering was rejected. Cain was responsible, but he said to God, "I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?" This reply in effect threw the blame for Abel's death on God, as though God had accepted him, and it was up to Him to look after Abel.

After this, God tried fallen man in various ways-without law, under law, with priests, prophets, kings-but mankind under every test only proved that he was bad. Israel under the promises and best culture brought forth no fruit for God. He sent servants to receive the fruits of the vineyard; but these were beaten, stoned, murdered, and generally ill-treated.

At last God "sent unto them His Son, saying, They will reverence My Son." But the sequel to this final effort to get man to, be fruitful was the saddest result of all. Instead of reverencing God's beloved Son when He came into the world, they conspired against Him; for "when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance. And they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him." (See Matt. 21:34-39.)

Mankind went astray from their Creator from the very beginning, and every effort of God's for man's recovery was fruitless. Then the supreme gift came when God, having tried everything else, sent unto them His beloved Son. This brought out the ultimate of human hatred; for as the Son said when He was here, "They... hated both Me and My Father." And God's love and the Son's love were manifested as He went about doing good; but prophetically we hear the Son say, "They... hate Me without a cause" (Psalm 69:4). Thus God's Son was cast out of the world after He came into it in love and kindness. This was the end of the trial of man. He has been proved not only godless, but a positive rebel against God come in goodness.

God may well ask of mankind today, Where is My Son? He sent Him out of the goodness of His heart, but He is not here. What is the answer to the challenge, Where is My Son? He was cast out in cold indifference, and generally today there is no concern about Him. We may use the word which was once true of Joseph-a type of Christ in His coming-as he said, "I seek my brethren"; but "They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

One thing that is overlooked today is that God has not forgotten what was done to His Son. The wrath of God is decreed from heaven; and while He has been long-suffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, judgment is sure and certain. And every one who has not confessed his sin and bowed to the blessed name of Jesus, is going to perish in his sins eternally.

There have been many recent attempts to absolve man of his guilt of the crucifixion of Christ. Some Gentiles have excused themselves and charged all of the guilt against the Jews. These in

turn are seeking to absolve themselves of this guilt, while Protestants and Catholics are not adverse to aiding and abetting the Jews in this matter. The great ecumenical group of the National Council of Churches has been running printed articles taken from the B'nai B'rith Jewish organization which seeks to exonerate the Jews of this guilt, and charge that the linking of that people with the rejection of Christ produces anti-Jewish bias, and has even been guilty of bringing on foul deeds against them. Let us examine these allegations in the light of the sure Word of God-the Word of Him who cannot lie. Furthermore, the Word of God tells us of the future blessing that is in store for this people who are beloved for the fathers' sakes. God has said that the one who touches the Israelites, does so with damage to himself. God has decreed, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of His eye" (Zech. 2:8)-he injures himself. Search history and see how many nations have sought to damage, if not to utterly exterminate, the Jews; and see how many of them have suffered for their folly.

Let us look into the Old Testament and observe what God has to say about blood-guiltiness. When God put government into the hands of man after the flood, He decreed that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This was God's firm decree then, and He has never altered it. Some men take it on themselves to change this, but they go contrary to divine decree when they do so.

When God took up the seed of Abraham and gave them His law, He gave them just and right laws. He decreed not only that the man who commits murder must be put to death, but that for accidental manslaughter, no blood should be shed. And in order that no one in the heat of avenging the blood of one who died under the hand of another should take the life of one who was only guilty of accidental manslaughter, God ordered the Israelites to set aside 6 cities in their land-three on each side of the Jordan River-to be known as "cities of refuge." These were for 'the refuge of one who had not wantonly and accidentally killed a man, "As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbor, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live.... That innocent blood be not shed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and so blood be upon thee." The law was precise, and great care was to be observed lest an innocent man be put to death.

On the contrary, if a truly guilty man who had murdered his neighbor sought to avail himself of the use of a city of refuge to escape his just reward, "If any man hate his neighbor, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities; then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die."

When the time came for the Lord Jesus to be condemned to death, we find that mankind in general rose up against Him. Rich and poor, high and low, ruler and ruled, priest and people, Jew and Gentile, and pagan all alike were arrayed against the Lord of glory. The 69th Psalm is a prophetic utterance of the Lord's. There we see, "They that sit in the gate [the judges] speak against Me; and I was the song of the drunkards [those of low degree].... Reproach hath broken My heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." vv. 12, 20. Even His disciples forsook Him and fled. One of His own betrayed Him to the enemy, and bold Peter fled at the challenge of a servant girl in the High

Priest's court. Truly the thoughts of many hearts were revealed at that scene. Well may we inquire of the reader, What is your thought of Christ? There is no neutrality in this matter-each one is either for Christ or against Him.

Judas not only betrayed his Lord, but he sold Him for a little paltry silver, and then betrayed Him with the sign of friendship-a kiss. O act of infamy!

After His unlawful arrest in a mob scene, "They... led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled." Matt. 26:57. These were the highest authorities of religion in the land. Surely justice, righteousness, and fairness should be expected there; for they claimed to be acting for God.

Now let us read how this august body acted toward the Lord Jesus: "Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death." Matt. 26:59. Now let us contrast this conduct with the divine instructions of the law: "If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; then both the men between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you." Deut. 19:16-19. The divine record shows that those rulers and priests who were to make "diligent inquisition" to be sure that no man was convicted on the basis of false testimony became the actual leaders in seeking perjured witnesses. The whole transaction against Jesus was a conspiracy from the beginning. It shows us the reprehensible character of fallen man; he is not only estranged from his God, but wants it that way.

The most despicable thing that one man can do to another is to spit in his face, but this was deliberately done more than once to the blessed, meek, and lowly Jesus of Nazareth. When the High Priest (God's representative among the people) asked the assembled Jews what they thought of Jesus, they "answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in His face" (Matt. 26:66, 67). But the High Priest had prepared the crowd for this blasphemous verdict by putting Him under official oath to tell the whole truth about whether or not He were the Christ, and by rending his own official robes in mock shock, as though he were standing up for the truth.

It was not only the hostility of the Jewish people which vented itself in spitting on the Son of God, but the soldiers of the Roman government dared to display their utter contempt for Jesus. "And they spit upon Him, and took the reed (that symbol of mock royalty), and smote Him on the head." Chap. 27:30. Could human degradation sink lower? And all this was (done to the Son of God! And what thief dying for his crimes would stoop to rail on one who was being crucified beside him? Only a degenerate heart of hatred toward God could do such a thing, but it was done. We can praise God that the other thief condemned himself and justified Jesus as one who had done nothing amiss, thus giving the lie to religious greatness.

We do not have time to go into the details of this shocking scene. Let us turn to the Lord's attitude toward His persecutors. "And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:33, 34. O what grace beyond

measure! Here the blessed Son of God intercedes for His murderers, as in Isa. 53:12 we read that He "made intercession for the transgressors." If He had not done this in that cruel hour on the cross, there would have been no forgiveness for the Jewish people according to their law. For there was no escape for the murderer who plotted and lay in wait for his victim. No one but the One who came in grace and in goodness to the lost-His enemies- could treat such a heinous crime as one of manslaughter and not one of deliberate murder. In thus praying, the blessed Lord made their crime a sin of ignorance. They thus became eligible to the city, or cities, of refuge. O the marvelous grace of the Son of God which thus laid open a means of escape!

Before the Lord went to the cross, He commanded that after His resurrection the gospel was to be preached by the disciples, beginning at Jerusalem. When the day of Pentecost came, this was done; and Peter preached boldly, telling them of repentance and a way of escape. In substance, he was flinging open the gates of the city of refuge. 3000 believed, repented, and entered the city of refuge that day.

Later on the Apostle Paul included himself with those who entered the city of refuge, when he said, "We... who have fled for refuge" (Heb. 6:18).

By believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior, they escaped the wrath that hung over the nation. They had said, "His blood be on us, and on our children," but the Lord's intercession opened the way of escape. Each Jewish person who accepts Christ as his Savior thus flees to that place of refuge. The Church of the living God is the place of safety, of refuge.

And how long must each one remain therein? This is a very singular provision: "And he shall abide in it [that city] unto the death of the high priest, which was anointed with the holy oil.... But after the death of the high priest the slayer shall return into the land of his possession." Numb. 35:25, 28. This is a strange stipulation-not for one year or ten years, or for any specified term. While the high priest remains in the holy place and functions as the high priest, the one who fled for refuge must remain in the city of his refuge. So the Lord Jesus is our great High Priest who is in the very presence of God for us. And during the time of His office on high, the Jewish people are safe in the Church. The day is coming when the Lord will call His Church home, and then He will come out to exercise His office as Priest and King (Zech. 6:13); then Israel will return to their possession. They will pass through the great day of atonement in a very real way, and be cleansed from their sins. They will say, "This is our God; we have waited for Him." Isa. 25:9.

Well may we praise God for His gracious provision for guilty Jews, and now for guilty Gentiles as well. There is one more item concerning the death of the Lord Jesus which should be noticed. God took special care lest the land wherein He dwelt should become defiled by blood. In Deuteronomy 21 we read of God's provision for a case where "one be found slain in the land,... lying in the field, and it be not known who hath slain him: then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain: and it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man, even the elders of that city shall take a heifer, which hath not been wrought with, and which hath not drawn in the yoke; and the elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley, which is neither eared nor sown, and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley.... And all the elders of that city, that are next unto the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer," etc. This was a test to ascertain which city was to be held responsible for the murder of a man who was found slain. Great care was to be taken in such a

case. Now let us read John 19:19, 20. With so many seeking to absolve themselves of the heinous crime of crucifying the Lord of glory, the law from Deuteronomy comes into force in a remarkable way. The distance from the dead man to the nearest city was to be measured, and that city was held responsible. Now read this: "And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was NIGH TO THE CITY: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin." Now God has noted for us that the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to Jerusalem. God has left us in no uncertainty as to this city. People need not work so hard to exonerate themselves; God has already measured it for us.

When Pilate questioned Jesus and said that His own nation had delivered Him unto him, the Lord gave a concise and powerful answer. "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin." John 19:11. There was no extenuation of Pilate's guilt, who said he had the power to release Jesus. There were some who clamored for His death who had augmented their guilt. Let Gentiles and Jews take heed to these words. All mankind stands condemned for rejecting Christ Jesus, but there are measures of guilt. Those who had the Old Testament scriptures, and yet cried out for His death, had the greater guilt. They chose Barabbas, a murderer, to Jesus; they also chose Caesar to Jesus, saying, "We have no king but Caesar"; but God had decreed that they should not set up a king over them who was not of Israel. We did not invent these matters - "Thy word is true from the beginning." Psalm 119:160. All mankind stands condemned-some more and some less. Reader, where do you stand?

Another striking bit of evidence, both of the purity and innocence of Christ and the blood-guiltiness which lay on the people, is found when Judas who betrayed Him returned to the chief priests and elders in the temple with the thirty pieces of silver, saying, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." The priests and elders in cold-blooded indifference said, "What is that to us? see thou to that." (Matt. 27:3, 4.) Judas then cast the silver down in the temple and went and hanged himself. Then again religious scruples came into action, and they would not put the silver into the temple coffers, but in fulfillment of Zech. 11:13 bought the potter's field to bury strangers in. And that field was called in truth, "Aceldama," or "the field of blood." O solemn fact! This world is guilty of shedding "the innocent blood," and guilty enough to commemorate the fact by the word "Aceldama." Is not this an appropriate name (Acts 1:19)?

Lectures on Colossians

W.K. Translation of chapter 1

(1) Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will, and Timothy the brother, (2) to the saints in Colosse and faithful brethren in Christ. Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

(3) We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, continually praying for you, (4) having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which ye have unto all the saints, (5) on account of the hope that is laid up for you in the heavens, of which ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, (6) which is come unto you, even as in all the world it is producing fruit and growing, even as also among you, from the day that ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth; (7) even as ye learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-bondman, who is for you a faithful servant of Christ, (8) that has also manifested to us your love in [the] Spirit.

(9) On this account we also, from the day that we heard, do not cease praying for you, and asking that ye might be filled with the full knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (10) to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, in every good work bearing fruit, and increasing in the full knowledge of God, (11) in all power empowered according to the might of his glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; (12) giving thanks to the Father that qualified us for sharing the inheritance of the saints in light; (13) who delivered us from the authority of darkness and translated [us] into the kingdom of the Son of his love: in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins; who is [the] image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation; (16) for by him was created the universe, the things in the heavens and those on the earth, the seen and the unseen, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities. The universe has been created through him and for him. (17) He is before all things, and the universe in him subsisteth. (18) And he is the head of the body, the assembly; who is [the] beginning, firstborn from among the dead, that he might be in all things pre-eminent: (19) for in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell; (20) and by him to reconcile the universe unto him, having made peace by the blood of his cross-by him, whether the things on the earth or those in the heavens. (21) And you [who] once were alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, (22) yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy, and unblamable, and irreproachable before him, (23) if indeed ye abide in the faith grounded and firm, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel (which ye heard, that was preached in the whole creation under the heaven), of which I, Paul, became servant; (24) who now rejoice in sufferings for you, and fill up what is wanting of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body, which is the assembly, (25) of which I became servant, according to the stewardship of God that was given me for you, to complete the word of God, (26) the mystery that was hidden from ages and from generations, but now hath been manifested to his saints; (27) to whom God wished to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (28) whom we preach, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ, (29) whereunto also I toil in conflict according to his working that worketh in me in power.

Chapter 1

It is hardly possible for the most careless reader to overlook the kindred truth set forth in this epistle and in that to the Ephesians. Union with Christ, the Head of His body the Church, has a place here beyond all other scriptures; for though 1 Corinthians may present the same doctrine (chap. 12), it is evident that there is a question of the assembly of God on earth, in which the Holy Ghost is actively at work through the members, distributing to each as He will, much more than of the saints viewed in Christ above, as in Ephesians, or of Christ viewed in them below, as in Colossians.

Nevertheless, distinctions of great moment and full of interest characterize these two epistles, the chief of which lies in this, that, as in Ephesians we have the privileges of the body of Christ, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, so in Colossians we have the glories of the Head, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This difference, like others, was due, in the wisdom of the Spirit, to the moral condition of those addressed. In the former case the Apostle launches out into the counsels of God, who has blessed the saints with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; in the latter case there was a measure of departure into philosophy and Jewish traditions, not an abandonment of Christ, of course, but such an admixture of these foreign ingredients as threatened fatal results in the Apostle's eyes, unless their souls were brought back to Christ, and to Christ alone, in all the rights of His Person and work. Thus the epistle to the Colossians, in consequence of their state, does not admit of the vast scope and development of divine purposes and glory for the saints seen in and united to Christ; whereas in writing to the Ephesians there was then nothing in them to arrest or narrow the outgoing of the Apostle's heart, as the Spirit led him to apprehend with all the saints the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. Here it is largely a question of exhortation, of recovering their souls, of grave warning. Hence the human element is more prominent here. Writing to the Ephesians the Apostle associates none with himself in the address; yet was Ephesus the capital of proconsular Asia and well known to his fellow laborers and associated by a thousand tender ties with himself and others. The assembly at Colosse as such was among those that had never seen his face in the flesh. This makes it the more marked when he joins Timothy with himself in their case.

"Paul, apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will, and Timothy the brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse: grace to you and peace from God our Father." vv. 1, 2. For himself, he was not unauthorized, nor was his title human. He was an apostle, not of the Church, but of Christ Jesus by divine will; and Timothy stands with him simply as "the brother." Again, the assembly at Colosse is characterized not only as "saints and faithful," as the Ephesians were, but as "faithful brethren." It is evident that here again, while all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, this term "brethren" brings out their relations to one another, as the others suppose God's grace and their faith if not fidelity. His own apostolic place is named with quiet dignity and with evident appropriateness for all that follows.

It has been well observed that the Apostle quite omits anything answering to the magnificent introduction with which he begins his Ephesian epistle (chap. 1:3-14). There was a check on his spirit; he felt the danger that threatened the Colossians. How could he then at once break forth into an unhindered strain of blessing? The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and deals with hearts and

consciences. Still, if that high tone of worship could not find a place here with propriety, there is immediate thanksgiving. "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ always when praying for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and love which ye have toward all the saints, on account of the hope that is laid up for you in the heavens, of which ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel that is present with you, even as also in all the world it is bearing fruit and growing even as also among you, from the day when ye heard and knew the grace of God in truth: even as ye learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow-bondman, who is a servant of Christ, faithful for you, that also declared to us your love in the Spirit." vv. 7, 8.

The Apostle had heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus that was in the Ephesians, and their love toward all the saints, which drew out his heart in thanksgiving and prayer. He knew them personally and well, having labored with deep blessing in their midst; but it was sweet to hear of the working of the Spirit among them. So of the Colossians, though not known thus, he had similar tidings, for which he could thank God always in his prayers for them.

But is not the difference striking between the two as exemplified in his manner of presenting the hope? In Ephesians it is the hope of God's calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. What can be more profound or boundless? Here he could scarcely say less. Their hope was laid up, it was safe, it was "in the heavens," not (spite of philosophy or of ascetic ordinances) on the earth. Of all these they had to beware, whatever their looks and promises. Of their proper hope he would remind them, recalling them to the heavens where Christ is, the true and only deliverance from all the workings of mind in divine things and from earthly religiousness.

This heavenly hope, blessed as it is, was nothing new to them; they had heard it before in the word of the truth of the gospel. What the Apostle taught would not weaken or undermine, but confirm that which they had heard in the good news which converted them originally, or (as he here styles it, to give it all possible weight in presence of their straining after novelties) "in the word of the truth of the gospel." It was not intellectual groping, but "the word" definitely sent to them, God's revelation; it was not dabbling in legal forms, but "the truth," the truth of the gospel. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The gospel came to them, yea, was there present with them, no more changing than He does who is its sum and substance. Real truth, even when new, never sets aside the old, but on the contrary supplies missing links, deepens the foundations and enlarges the sphere. Had their philosophy, had their novel restrictions (chap. 2) increased their sense of the value of the gospel? Had these things exalted Christ? There is no doubt what the effect of Paul's teaching would be either in general or in this epistle very especially.

Further, the gospel being thus the display of God's goodness in Christ, not the measure of human duty nor a system of religious shadows, its theater according to God's intentions is not a single land or family, but "all the world"; and its operation is not condemning and killing, but producing fruit and growing, even as among the saints at Colosse. Was there this fruit bearing, and expansion too, since they had taken up their newfangled notions and legal ways? The gospel is both productive of fruit and has propagative energy. This addition of its growth (*kai auxanomenon*) is lost to the common text, having been omitted in inferior copies. That it is genuine cannot be fairly questioned. Certainly both traits were known from the day they heard and really knew the grace of God in truth. And this gives the blessed Apostle opportunity, as was his wont, to

strengthen the hands of one who was Christ's minister and faithful on their behalf, "Epaphras, our beloved fellow bondman," as he is here affectionately called. The speculative views, the Judaistic forms, had, no doubt, their exponents, who would seek to ingratiate themselves at a faithful laborer's expense. We can readily conceive that the word thus commending Epaphras was needed at Colosse.

In the last portion we saw how the Apostle could speak of the effects of the gospel from the day they had heard it and knew the grace of God in truth. Grace is not like the law. The ten words are chiefly negative. The law, for the most part, deals with what is evil and condemns it; but the gospel reveals Christ as a quickening power, and a strengthening and fruit-producing power. Being a principle of life, it expands and grows as well as produces fruit, as the Apostle describes it, "and bringeth forth fruit [and increaseth] since the day ye heard it," etc.

But now he says, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it [heard of this living witness to the power of the gospel], do not cease to pray for you." This is a beautiful expression of the Apostle's love which, spite of fear which he justly entertained about the tendencies of these Colossian saints, still only drew him out in prayer for them the more. "And to desire (or ask) that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will." They had shown rather the reverse of this; they had proved a void in their hearts, which they had in vain sought by legal ordinances and philosophy to fill up. Nothing but an intelligent and growing acquaintance with Christ can satisfy the renewed heart. The very mercy that delivers a soul becomes a danger unless Christ Himself be the maintained habitual object. Alas! the freedom which the gospel brings may be used to take things easily, and, more or less, retain or gain the world; but where this is the case, it is seldom a soul possesses any large measure of spiritual enjoyment, and it is never accompanied by solid peace. The soul becomes thus unsettled and uncertain. These oscillations may go on for a certain time, until God carry on the work more deeply in the heart. The Colossians were in some such state; they had not steadily advanced to a fuller knowledge of God's will; consequently Satan found means to trouble them. They had seen the first precious display of grace; it was real but not deep; for knowing the grace of God in truth is not the same thing as being filled with the knowledge or full knowledge of His will.

The law never gives that in the least degree; it is a righteous interdict upon man's will. Thus there is only one of the commandments - I mean the law about the sabbath day - which has not distinctly this character. Negation never can form a Christian's ways. We want the bracing of the man morally to all that is good. How is this to be effected? As there is in Christ the communication of life, so also from Him comes the filling with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. The believer is not treated by God as a horse or a mule which have no understanding, but as an intelligent and loving being who is brought into fellowship with God. He would not be a delivered man if his own will ruled him; but this is the very reverse of being filled with the knowledge of God's will, and therefore it is that the Apostle prays for them that they may be.

In Ephesians, though we read in wonderful terms about God's will (chap. 1), the Apostle did not as here require to ask the knowledge of it for them. There was an apprehension of heart in them that did not need that the Apostle should thus pray for them. He does desire for them both a deeper knowledge of their standing, and a richer enjoyment of Christ within, that they might be filled with

the fullness of God - "strengthened with might by his Spirit." But to be filled with the knowledge of His will, as we have it here, evidently has to do with practical walk, "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord." In other words, in the Colossians there is an important practical bearing upon the walk; it is more the forming of the child; it is the strengthening and guiding of one that can but feebly walk, to help it along. In Ephesians, it is the communication of the God and Father of Christ to His children, who are now no longer babes, but full-grown men. Hence, there we have the family relations, feelings, estates, interests, responsibilities, and very fully. The Colossians had been misled by the thoughts of teachers who were themselves far astray. Though the saints there were earnest, still there was something that blinded their eyes. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." They must have been governed by their own thoughts, else they would surely have rejected these false notions. It is a simple truth, but very important to observe, that what is presented as God's will necessarily forms the mind, and consequently the walk, of a Christian man. If I am misled as to the mind or objects of God, the effect will be most fatal practically; and the more earnest, the farther one goes astray. But the Apostle had prayed for the Colossians, and still continued, "that they might be filled with this full knowledge of him." I do not the least doubt that in this passage there is a contrast with the walk of one who, however well-disposed, is under law. The more the Christian knows about God's will, which is gracious as well as holy, happiness grows and strength too; whereas law works so as to produce misery and convince of utter weakness. No doubt, if there were a deep sense of the presence of God, it would make but little difference with whom we might be, worldly men or children of God. Of course there would be a difference in our bearing to them according to their relation to God or ignorance of Him; but as a fact, we are always deeply influenced by the company which we keep; we affect and are affected by those we are thrown with. Therefore, it is evident that when Christ was a revealed Person before the soul, and just in proportion as the believer realized his right relationship to Him, so would his walk be. If I know my place as bound to Him and Himself as my Head and Bridegroom, having Him as the object of my heart, it is clear a totally different walk will be the result. The measure and character of the walk among the children of God is formed by the measure of our acquaintance with Christ, where the flesh is sufficiently judged to enjoy it.

Lectures on Colossians

But mark again that all through, until we come a little farther down, the Apostle does not touch upon the matters in which they had been faulty. In the middle of chapter 2 he tells them plainly wherein they were to blame. This is very important for us to observe; because, if our aim be really the good and deliverance and help of souls, we should see what God's way is of meeting souls and enabling them to escape the snare. And this we best learn by observing and cleaving to the guidance of the Holy Ghost as shown us in such scriptures as these. It is a rebuke to one's own too frequent bearing toward others, when we think of the marvelous grace and the slowness of the Apostle in coming to what people call the point_ I have no doubt there is much to learn in this; and so much was it the case, that from the beginning of this epistle we might almost think these Colossians were in a very delightful condition. The Apostle is most careful to approach gradually that which pained him and must pain them. He is sapping and mining, as it were, to take the citadel; but it is slow work, though sure.

There is another expression here that is well worthy of our notice: "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." It is not worthy of the gospel, neither is it worthy of our calling, etc.

These are not the form of the exhortation here. The Ephesians were sufficiently clear of this evil influence and could be instructed freely in the calling of God to which they were called; and therefore he says there "that they might walk worthy of the vocation," etc. But he says to the Colossians, "worthy of the Lord." It would not be so easy for them to get rid of the effects of occupation with philosophy and ordinances. The Ephesians had been kept quite clear of this error, and therefore they are exhorted to walk worthy of what they knew to be their place.

As the Lord Jesus is pointed to here, so "unto all pleasing" is the measure; it is not as pleasing us or others, but pleasing Him. Now this is wholly different from the law, which just asked so much and no more. The ways of grace were to be unlimited, "worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Therefore he adds immediately, "being fruitful in every good work." It is all positive and not merely negative like the requirements of the law. "Increasing by the full knowledge of him" here appears to be the thought. It refers to the means of Christian growth. I think the "wisdom and spiritual understanding" means a perception of what is good and wise in God's sight, apart from its being His express command. I might do a thing simply because another wished it, and of course this is quite right where there is due authority. For instance, my father may bid me do such or such a thing, and I may do it without knowing why; but here it is my Father who at the same time shows me the importance of it. Thus "wisdom" sees the beauty and propriety of any given thing, and "spiritual understanding" takes the right application. One seizes the cause; the other is occupied with the effect. In this then the gospel differed from the law. Whether a person entered into the meaning of the law or not, he obeyed simply because God ordered. This does not rise to the nature of the Christian's obedience, which enjoys the unfolding of the mind of God in Christ, so that one not only sees His authority, but also its admirably perfect character and its gracious effects. It is quite right that a subject, a servant, a minor, should learn to obey, if it were only for the sake of obedience. But this is not the Christian principle. The obedience of a Christian is not the blind leading the blind, nor is it the seeing leading the blind, but rather the seeing leading the seeing. But there is very much more in this. It is not merely that people are quickened and bear fruit; but, besides that, they grow either by or into a deeper knowledge of God Himself. That deepening acquaintance with God, which goes along with the knowledge of His will, is a very important thing in the path of obedience. One knows God better, one enters into His character better, one learns Himself intimately. Another thing which is of great importance is, that there is not only the growing knowledge, but the being strengthened with all might according to the power of His glory; for this is the idea-it is not "his glorious power," but the power of His glory. It supposes that the glory of Christ has a most decided effect, as the way in which strength is formed or communicated.

If I look at Christ here on the earth, I see Him in weakness and shame and rejection, but in the deepest grace withal, and nowhere so much as on the cross; we cannot do without it, we would not if we could (indeed Christ everywhere is unspeakably precious and absolutely necessary for us); yet for the Christian the place of strength is to look at Christ risen and glorified. No doubt this thought of Christ as one down here in this world is what draws out the affections, even as the cross meets the need of the conscience; but neither gives strength in itself, neither is intended of God to give all that we want. Hence while those who know Christ at all will surely find in Him life and blessing, yet they are never strong where His earthly path is all that occupies their hearts. What then supplies our need as to this? Such should weigh what is said in 2 Corinthians 3: "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." This gives practical power. So here the question of power connects itself with His glory. If sympathy be in question, it is always connected with His life down here; for instance, in Hebrews, though Christ is spoken of at the right hand of God, etc., yet it is as One who was once tempted in all points like us, sin excepted, and hence touched with a feeling of our infirmities. This is most comforting as to the power of sympathy. Eternal life and strength are two very different things. The only idea with many is following Christ as an example. Of course it is admirable; but what is to give power? I must be in relationship with God first, a possessor of eternal life, and then power is wanted. I am not in the position till I know redemption through the blood of Christ, and power is only found in Christ risen and glorified. The spring of power is not in looking at what He was down here, but having the consciousness of the glory that is in Him, the power of that filling my own heart, and making the certainty of being with Him. I shall thus not shrink from the rejection that was Christ's portion down here, being strengthened... "unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." It is an evil world that we are passing through; but we have this wonderful secret: we have the consciousness of better blessing we possess in Christ. Therefore, let me observe, it should be the very opposite of a man going through trial with his head bowed down. Let it be according to the power of His glory with joyfulness, "giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

This is a present meetness. Sharing the portion of the saints in light is a most wonderful favor; but the Apostle does not hesitate to predicate it of these Colossians whom he was going to rebuke with all solemnity in the next chapter. Still he says the Father has qualified us for sharing the portion of the saints in light. It is purposely put "in light" to show how absolute is the effect of God's work in Christ. It is not simply the inheritance, because that would not of itself present the idea of unsparing holiness, as light does. Again, the portion of the saints in light is not upon the earth or in the heavens merely, but in the light where God dwells as such. Wondrous place for us! Our Father has made us meet for this. The effect of law is always to put God at a distance. Therefore here the Father is put forward.

There are many persons who only look at God as the Creator and the Judge. Although they admit life in Christ, yet are they not at home with the Father. They make of Christ what the Papists make of the virgin Mary. It is all false. This was what made the necessity of bringing the Father especially forward. In Ephesians it was not necessary to do so; they were intelligent in the truth. Here, although the great object is to make Christ, the unqualified glory of Christ, to be that which shuts out ordinances, etc., yet the Apostle brings in the Father, showing that the Father was acting in His love. The combination of perfect love and our being made meet for light now is a wonderful truth. As to the light, the Christian is always in the light; but he may not always walk according to it. A Christian, if he sins, sins in the light; and this is what gives it such a daring character. He may be in a dark state himself practically; still, he is always in the light. And it is precisely this which makes a Christian's sin to be so very serious. He is doing it in the presence of perfect love and in the presence of perfect light. There is therefore no excuse for it.

This blessing depends upon two things: first, upon the effect of the blood of Christ in completely atoning for our sins; and next, upon the fact that we have the life of Christ communicated to us, which life is capable of communing with God in the light. Both these gifts of grace are absolutely true of every Christian. He has the blood of Christ cleansing him as much as he ever can have,

and he has life in Christ communicated to his soul as much as ever can be. That which follows in after experience as regards this (for I speak not of service, etc., but of growth in intelligence) is simply having a deeper estimate of what Christ's blood has done and what He Himself is, who has shown us such infinite favor and done so much for us.

Our Father has done more, as the Apostle shows further how we are thus qualified: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." It is not merely a question of wicked works, but of the power of darkness; how could we, then, be delivered from Satan? He says they were delivered and, more than that, "translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love." It is all perfectly done. The deliverance from the enemy of God is complete, and so is the translation into the kingdom of the Son of His love. "In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." "Through his blood" has been inserted in the vulgar text and followed in our version, but it really belongs to Ephesians. I do not doubt the copyists put it in here because it was there. There is greater fullness in Ephesians than in Colossians. Hence the former shows us how we can be so blessed, spite of our sins entering into the statement of the account there. But here it is just summing up the blessing, "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God."

The object evidently is not so much to dwell upon the work of Christ as to bring out His personal glory. Christ is never said to be the likeness of the invisible God, because it might imply that He was not really God. This would be fatally false; for He is God (and without it God's glory and redemption are vain), but yet He is the image of the invisible God, because He is the only Person of the Godhead that has declared Him (see John 1:18). The Holy Ghost does not manifest God. He does manifest His power, but not Himself; but Christ is "the image of the invisible God." He has presented God in full perfection; He is the truth objectively. He who has seen Him has seen the Father. He was always the Word, the One who made God manifest. The word "image," as has been remarked, is continually used in Scripture for representation. Such is the first thought. Christ is the image of the invisible God.

The next glory is that He is the first-born of all creation. This seems obviously contrasted with His being the image of the invisible God. Christ as truly became a man as He was and is God. He was made flesh. He is never, nor could be, said to be made God. He partook of flesh and blood in time, but from everlasting He is God. Having shown that He was the image of the invisible God, the Apostle then speaks of Him as the first-born of all creation. How could this be? Adam was the prototype; we might have thought he was first. But here, as elsewhere (Psalm 89:28), the title of first-born is taken in the sense of dignity rather than of mere priority in time.

Adam was the first man, but was not nor could be the firstborn. How could Christ, so late in His birth here below, be said to be the first-born? The truth is, if Christ became a man and entered the ranks of creation, He could not be anything else. He is the Son and Heir. Just so we are now by grace said to be the Church "of the firstborn," although there were saints before the Church. It is a question of rank, not of date. Christ is truly first-born of all creation; He never took the creature place until He became a man, and then must needs be the first-born. Even if He had been the last-born literally, He must still be the first-born; for it has nothing to do with the epoch of His advent, but with His intrinsic dignity. All others were but the children of the fallen man Adam, and could in no sense be the first-born. He was as truly man as they, but with a wholly peculiar glory. What makes it most manifest is, that He is here declared to be first-born of all creation, "for by Him

were all things created." This makes the ground perfectly plain. He was first-born of all creation, because He who entered the sphere of human creaturehood was the Creator, and therefore must necessarily be the first-born. This is the plain and sure meaning of the passage, in the strongest way confirming the deity of Christ, instead of weakening it in the least, as some have conceived through strange misunderstanding. Hence these have changed the rendering to "born before all creation." It is unnatural to take it so, spite of some ancients and moderns. But indeed there is no need for a change. God's Word is wiser than men. There is no scripture which assumes His dignity more than this.

First, then, He is said to be the image of the invisible God. Then we have His human place, in which He was first-born; because, being God, it could not be otherwise. In Hebrews, He is said to be constituted heir of all things, as the Son of God. But here it is said, "all things were created in virtue of him"; it is not merely "by" Him, but in virtue of His own divine power.

"For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him." All this reaches to things of which we know little, or even beyond our ken. As we had before what was in virtue of His power, so now it is by Him, because Christ was both one who acted in His own divine right, and also one who acted instrumentally for God the Father's glory. All things were created by Him. The word "created" is different; in one case it is a past action, but in the other it is the present effect of what is past, the first expressing the power that made to exist, the second rather the present result of it. "And he is before all things," etc. Not merely was He before all things, but before all (God only, of course, excepted). Nor was it merely that all things were, but they were created for His pleasure. "And by [or, in virtue of] him all things consist." In virtue of Him gives a clearer and more intimate idea. The object here is to take away all vagueness in exalting Christ.

But, again, "He is the head of the body, the Church, who is the beginning the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." We shall find a reason for this in what follows. It is interesting to see that there are two very distinct first-borns: first-born of all creation, because He is the Creator; and first-born from the dead, as a new, plain and weighty matter of fact. Thus Christ is not only the Head of creation as man, but He is first-born from the dead as risen. It is in connection with this that He is Head of the Church. He was not in this relationship upon earth; He was not so simply as taking humanity. Incarnation is an entirely distinct truth from His headship of the Church, which involves the further truth of union. It is evident that His headship of the body, the Church, is introduced by His being risen from the dead, and by the place given to Him in heaven.

Lectures on Colossians

But Colossians does not at once begin with the heavenly place of Christ. Ephesians presents Him plainly as risen and seated as Head. Here it is more general, and does not speak of His being in heaven; He is "the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence." Many confound union with incarnation; but union is not His taking flesh and blood here below, but our being made members of His body, now that He is risen and glorified. There could have been no union with Him until death and resurrection, and the Holy Ghost was given to unite us with Him in that risen condition. Then and not before we have the body, the assembly. He

had a human body, of course; but the mystical body is formed by the Holy Ghost sent down after He rose from the dead. The one, as woman-born, was connected with the earth; the other is with heaven.

With the pre-eminence of Christ in all things, two great considerations stand before us. First, all fullness was pleased to dwell in Him. It was not a partial nor ever so full manifestation of God; this might have been in any man; but here all fullness was pleased in Him to dwell. This is the truth of Christ's Person, the glory of the incarnate Lord. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, the kingdom of God is come unto you." "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." Yet we know it was always by the power of the Holy Ghost that everything was done and said. So truly was all the fullness pleased to dwell in Him.

We observed in an earlier verse that it was because of His being a divine person that He could be said to be the first-born of all creation. It was founded upon the fact that He was God who created all and sustains all. But here there is more. In Him all fullness was pleased to dwell. It was not alone a question of acting, but of dwelling, whether He acted or not. Thus it is a very precise and rich statement indeed.

But again (v. 20), there is another unfolding of the truth which sets forth His glory, another reason assigned for His indisputable pre-eminence. By Him, the Christ, is reconciliation effected. All fullness of the Godhead was pleased in Him to dwell and by Him to reconcile all things unto God. There is a peculiar phraseology in the passage which may have led the English translators to put in "Father" in verse 19. If the conjecture be correct, they did it not so much because of this verse as of the following, the 20th-"to reconcile... unto himself." They could not make out how it could be unto Him unless it were the Father; but I think the context is purposely so framed, because it is intended to show us, unless I am greatly mistaken, that all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ, not one person of that divine fullness acting to the exclusion of the rest. They all had one counsel, not barely similar counsels, as so many creatures might, but one and the same. Hence the object is not to contrast one person with another, but to state that all the fullness was pleased in Him to dwell. It is put in this general form purposely. Then the Spirit of God glides with a scarce perceptible transition from His being the God-man to the work God has done by Him; so you cannot separate clearly the two thoughts, as far as the construction goes in (ELS AVTON). Afterward, as before, the Person of Christ is distinct and prominent.

But man was utterly gone, hostile, dead. No moral glory even of the Godhead in Christ could win him back. A deeper work was needed. "Having made peace by the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself." All creation was ruined in the fall; and here we have the vast plan of God first sketched before us, the reconciliation of all things, not of men but of things. It was the good pleasure of the Godhead to reconcile all things unto God. Even the Word made flesh, even all the fullness dwelling in Him, failed to reach the desperate case. There was rebellion, there was war. Peace must be made-it could only be made by the blood of Christ's cross. In a word, reconciliation is not the fruit of the incarnation, most blessed as it is; for it was altogether powerless, as far as that is concerned. It brings before us grace and truth in Christ-God Himself in the most precious display of holy love. Nothing is in itself more important than for a person who has found Christ to delight in and dwell upon Him and His moral ways here below. Everything was in exquisite harmony in Him; matchless grace shone out wherever He moved. All was perfect, and

yet would it all have been fruitless; for man was as the barren sand.

Therefore we have another and wholly distinct step-"by him to reconcile all things unto himself." All the fullness dwelling in Him was insufficient; it brought God to man, not man to God. All the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him, and not as a mere passing thing. This was quite independent of the anointing in due time by the Holy Ghost. It was the continual delight of the whole Godhead to dwell in Him as man. But so far gone was man that this could not deliver him; sin cannot be thus got over. Even God Himself coming down to earth in Christ's Person, His unselfish goodness, His unwearied patient love, not anything found in Christ nor all together, could dispel sin or righteously recover the sinner. Therefore it became manifestly a question of reconciliation "through the blood of his cross."

All things then are to be reconciled, as we see; peace has been made "by the blood of his cross." It is sweet and assuring to think that all has been done to secure the gathering of all things round Christ. It is merely now a question of the time suited in God's wisdom for the manifestation of Christ at the head of all. As far as the efficacious work is concerned, nothing more is to be done. Meanwhile God is calling in the saints who are to share all along with Christ. As it is said in Romans 8, all creation groaneth, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. They are the first fruits. All was subjected to vanity by sin; but now He who came down, God manifest in the flesh, has taken upon Himself the burden of sin, and has made peace by the blood of His cross. Thus He has done all that is needed for God and man. Morally all is done, the price is paid, the work is accepted; so that here too we may say "all things are ready." God would be now justified in purging from the face of creation every trace of misery and decay; if He waits, it is but to save more souls. His long-suffering is salvation. The darkness and the weakness will disappear when our Lord comes with His saints. For the world, His appearing with them in glory is the critical time. The revelation of Christ and the Church from heaven is not the epoch of the rapture, which comes first. The revelation is the manifestation of the Bridegroom and the bride then glorified before the world.

Thus having brought in the universal reconciliation of created things, the Apostle turns to that with which it was so intimately connected: "and you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." I do not doubt there is an intended contrast. The reconciliation of all things is not yet accomplished. The foundation for all is laid, but it is not applied. But meanwhile it is applied to us who believe. Us who were in this fearful condition, "now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death." Again, observe, the body of His flesh, the incarnation in itself did not, could not avail; no, nor all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him bodily. For guilty man it must be "through death." It was not through Christ's birth or living energy, but "through death"-not by His doing, divinely blessed as it all was, but by His suffering. "The blood of his cross" brings in much more the idea of a price paid for peace. His "death" seems to be more suitable as the ground of our reconciliation. At any rate "in the body of his flesh through death" contradicts the notion that incarnation was the means of reconciliation. This brings in moral considerations and shows the most solemn vindication of God, the righteous basis for our remission and peace and clearance from all charge and consequence of sin.

"To present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight." Blessed as the death of Christ is, so that God Himself can find no flaw in us or charge against us, which is the meaning

here-so perfectly efficacious is this death of Christ in our favor, yet still it supposes our holding fast: "if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." Now I take that word "if" decidedly as a condition and nothing else.

It is quite different from chapter 3, "If ye then be risen with Christ," etc. It is the same word, but there should always be a regard to the context. Here, I believe, there is a condition, implied, whereas chapter 3 simply reasons and exhorts from an allowed fact. This would not make sense in chapter 1.

Unless under specially modifying circumstances, every man, almost every person before conversion, is naturally disposed to be an Arminian (that is, to build on his own righteousness); but when he finds himself undone, yet justified by faith of God's pure grace in Christ, there is often a tendency to rebound violently over to the opposite extreme. When he becomes more matured in the truth, it is no longer a question of party views, but of that which is infinitely larger, even of God's mind as revealed in His Word. The unconditional parts should be taken in all their absoluteness, and the conditional should be pressed in all their force. The Apostle does not bring this in as a condition of our justification. There grace justifies the ungodly; a condition cannot enter. It would be a denial of grace. For all that, there are unquestionable conditions; but in what? God does not let us certainly know who they are among those who profess the name of Jesus that really believe in Him. Some there were even in those early days who followed the truth for a season and then gave it up. Others gradually slighted the pure gospel for philosophy and ordinances, or at least were disposed to add them to it. Hence the Apostle says, "If ye continue in the faith." There he warns those born of God that they should continue in the faith; but along with this, other things have to be borne in mind. May not real children of God waver and even slip for a season into error? Now I cannot say of any who abandon the faith that they are holy and blameless in the sight of God. One may have a hope from previous facts perhaps; but as long as a soul is thus led of the enemy away from fundamental truth, I cannot, I ought not, to speak too confidently of him as of God. It would be a trifling with such unbelief and increasing the danger to his soul by making light of it. Therefore the Apostle says, "If ye continue." A similar principle applies to him who lives under a cloud of unjudged sin.

So in 1 Corinthians 5 we see that a man guilty of gross sin and therefore put away is to be treated as a "wicked person," although the Holy Ghost in the same chapter speaks of the aim that his spirit might be saved, etc. And the second epistle proves that, spite of all, he was a true believer and on his repentance to be restored to fellowship. The Holy Ghost of course knows perfectly, but we can only judge what God permits to be brought plainly before our eyes. This is of practical value to our souls, for it is often difficult to behave rightly to a person out of communion. We are apt to think too slightly of such cases, and what is the effect of thus treating them? They drag on outside. There is feeble power within of restoration. The sin is superficially judged. If we feel it much, we desire earnestly to get the person back. It ought to be a pain, a deep grief, whenever souls are put away from the Lord's table. Our desire would then be continually to know they judged themselves and see them restored.

It is not, If ye continue in faith, but "in the faith." When Paul speaks about the common faith, he means the thing believed. So when he speaks about the "one faith," he does not refer to the reality of our faith, but to the objective truth received. Real believers or not, if they forsook the faith, how

could they be owned as such? Modern times have greatly thrown people upon what is inward or subjective; whereas "the faith" is the revelation that is offered to faith, outside the man. It is a great mercy that in these last days, to truth, the truth in the Person of Christ, great prominence has been given. One cannot absolutely pronounce on an individual's faith; but we can judge of the faith he owns, and tell whether what he professes is the truth or not. Love would assume, if a man professes the faith and there is nothing clean contrary to it in his words and ways, that it is real faith. A person may be sincere in what is wrong, or insincere in what is right; but the truth is an unbending standard. If one judged on the ground of an individual's heart, one could never speak at all; for of that who can pronounce but God? If one acts on the ground of the faith, the moment a man goes against the truth, giving up what he professed, we are bound to judge it, leaving the question of his heart's faith in God's hands.

The Apostle urges also, "and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." The Colossian saints were in danger of slipping away; for they were striving to make themselves holier by asceticism or other efforts, not by the application of Christ to judge themselves. But no, says the Apostle; it is in the body of His flesh through death that ye are presented holy and unblamable, if ye continue in the faith, etc., and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, etc. What is "the hope of the gospel"? It is in a heavenly Christ who died for us, giving us the assurance of being with. Himself there. The hope of Israel (one can hardly say of the law) was the earth; this "hope of the gospel" is above. The Colossians were most unwittingly but practically losing sight of their heavenly hope, because the thought of adding to Christ philosophy or ordinances tends to deprive one of Christ. He calls it the gospel which they had heard; he would not admit of any other. It was that which had been "preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister." How the Apostle puts forward that which some then, as now, would make cheap—the being a minister of the gospel! He does not regard what would exalt himself in the eyes of the would-be professionalists, but what gives glory to God and His grace in Christ. There is a stress accordingly upon "I" here.

I should judge that there was a slight put upon the gospel by some of those who were exercising an evil influence at Colosse. They may have thought it good in its place as awakening the unconverted; but what had Christians to do with it? The Apostle insists not only on the dignity but also on the depths of the gospel. No doubt, a Christian does not need it in the same way as the unconverted; for he is the one who has found rest, has remission of sins, justification, sonship, etc., while the other has no real link with God. A Christian, therefore, does not listen to the gospel as if it were an unknown sound, or as if he had not certainly received it. But he rejoices in it still, and admires with increasing fervor the matchless display of God's grace therein. The Apostle therefore takes particular pains to say that he, Paul, was made a minister of the gospel. He did not consider it a thing merged in his apostleship, but emphatically declares himself a minister, not only of the Church, but of the glad tidings to every creature under heaven. It was evident then that if any at Colosse had been induced to regard that message as a thing too elementary for the saints to occupy themselves with, the Apostle did not sympathize with such feelings. He served and gloried in the gospel.

Lectures on Colossians

It is wrong, of course, to put myself on the same ground as the unconverted person, as if I needed it; but it is also depriving myself of much if I do not delight in it, for its own sake, so to speak, as the vindication of God Himself. No other part of the truth brings out such a display of grace and divine righteousness as the gospel. As far as the testimony to souls is concerned, it may be more what relates to their need as lost sinners; but for Christians it is of no small importance to have the heart engaged with its active grace, and the mind filled with its vast scope, and the conscience invigorated by the truth which proclaims how perfectly the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. It is impossible to see how the gospel vindicates God until a soul has peace with Him. This is practically important. A person that barely knows God's mercy in Christ, has relief, has the remedy for sin; but such a remedy does not always bring in the sight of God fully vindicated. It is more the idea of the scapegoat, than of the goat that was killed. In the gospel we see not only the resource of our sins, but God's truth and majesty and love and whole character glorified. It is not only a question of evil judged and sins forgiven, but a testimony to His rich grace in Christ.

But the Apostle adds here, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church; whereof I am made a minister." vv. 24, 25. It appears that the two ministries, the connection of them, and the assertion of the Apostle's relation to both, are intimated. As to the gospel, he says, "Whereof I, Paul, am made a minister." So also it is here; but, inasmuch as this was a more intimate thing, it is added, "According to the dispensation of God," etc. The gospel of which he was made the minister leads him at once to speak of his sufferings for them, not exactly the sufferings of the gospel, but his sufferings for them. Next, he speaks of filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ, etc., for His body's sake, which is the Church. No doubt there was that which pertained exclusively to the Savior in substitution for us. But in all other respects Christ did not suffer, however perfectly, so as to shut out others, His saints, from fellowship with Him. His sufferings were absolutely perfect, as the witness of righteousness, as man upon earth and the witness of grace as on God's part. But there was far more than testimony in the cross when made sin for us, and all that God was as judging it fell on Him there. Righteousness and grace were the occasion of His sufferings in life here below; the holy judgment of sin was that which characterized His sufferings upon the cross, that God might be able righteously to show His grace to us who believe without any question of judgment remaining.

Again, the Apostle rejoices in his sufferings, instead of thinking them hard or shrinking from them. What a contrast with Peter in the close of Matthew 16! Christ did not monopolize them, as it were; He left some for others. The sufferings spoken of here are mainly sufferings of love for the Church, for the saints of God; but they also include what the Apostle suffered as being a witness for Christ in this world. They were real external sufferings from enemies, as he says, "in my flesh." He does not make it merely a question of his spirit; although, if this had not gone along with the trials, there would have been no value in the suffering. But he did not take it easily even as to his body. Some at Colosse, we know from the end of Colossians 2, were contending for ascetic practice 'in mortification of the body, which, the Apostle lets them know, is quite compatible with thorough puffing up of the flesh. But, as for him, he would fill up the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake. Paul was pre-eminently a minister of the Church, in a sense in which others were not. No doubt, the mystery was revealed by the Spirit unto the holy apostles and prophets. But God had entrusted it to Paul to complete His Word.

There are two great parts in this hid but now manifest mystery (v. 26). The first is that Christ should be set in heaven above all principalities and powers, and have the entire universe given to Him, as Head over the inheritance on the footing of redemption - Himself exalted as Head over all things heavenly and earthly, and the Church united to Him as His body, He being thus given as Head to the Church over all things. Then the other side of the mystery is Christ in the saints here below, and in such a sort as to bring in the Gentiles with the utmost freedom. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles [or nations], which is Christ in you the hope of glory." v. 27. The hope of glory is the hope of all the glory that flows out of His heavenly place as now at God's right hand.

In Ephesians the Apostle dwells more upon the first of these aspects, in Colossians on the second. Hence the point here is not our being in Christ as Head over all, but Christ in us, the hope of all. But it is in contrast in both cases with Jewish things. The Messiah's reigning on earth over Israel, with the nations rejoicing also, is a true expectation gathered from the Old Testament prophets. In Colossians it is Christ now in us, but the glory not yet come. Christ in us is the hope of the glory that is coming by-and-by when we shall be glorified and appear with Christ. This was a state of things entirely foreign to Jewish anticipations. Christ in heaven and the saints not yet with Him there, but waiting to be with Him, and meanwhile Christ in them the hope of glory, but of a glory not yet come. There was nothing like this in the older oracles. Then they could not have expected that Christ would be in heaven and a people be one with Him there, still less that Christ should be in them, Gentiles or not, here.

It is well to weigh the expression, "to complete the word of God" (v. 25). It is not the mere idea of writing a book; for James and Peter and John had done this, and yet they could not be said "to complete the word of God." It was not only bringing out truths already revealed, but adding a certain portion that was unrevealed. Even Revelation did not do this in the same sense. We have there a fuller development of what had been previously referred to, a giving further revelations as to prophecy, but all that was not completing the Word of God. It does not mean that Paul was the last of inspired writers; for if he had written before the others of the New Testament, it would still have been true that he completed the Word of God.

Christ is said to be in us here, not dwelling in our hearts by faith, but actually the hope of glory. The hope of glory is contrasted with the Jews having Christ to reign over them in Palestine, bringing in manifested glory. The Apostle speaks of saints as now down here, but Christ in them the hope of the glory they will have with Him by-and-by above. It is Christ's life in us in its full risen character of display. The epistle to the Colossians never rises above it.

The Holy Ghost, it has been noticed, is hardly spoken of in this epistle. In their then state the introduction of Him would not have been good for them; they would have used the Holy Ghost apart from Christ, as something to draw the eye away from Christ. A religion completely of forms makes much of the Holy Ghost, but it puts the Holy Ghost in the clergy as dispensers of blessing, and thus Christ is dishonored. Again, there are Christians who have no forms at all and who consequently make much of the Holy Ghost but apart from Christ. There was much of the old legal feeling that had come in at Colosse; therefore the Apostle presses upon them the truth of the riches of the glory of this mystery being among the Gentiles. God did not reveal this mystery when the Church was at Jerusalem; indeed it was only fully brought out among the Gentiles. That is, the

full heavenly character of it is only properly known when the Gentiles are in the foreground. Hence Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, is the very one who especially handles it. The full gospel is not mere forgiveness, but deliverance, liberty, and union with Christ above in Spirit.

"Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Perfect in Christ means full grown. A man may be very happy, may enjoy the pardon of his sins, etc.; but without the unfolding of this heavenly secret (that is, Christ in the saints and the heavenly glory connected with it), he can hardly be said to be full grown in Christ. This "every man" is very striking here; the repeated individualizing is the more beautiful in connection with the body. The two truths are singularly characteristic of Christianity, which unites the more opposite things in a way that nothing else does. In the Millennium, individuals will not have such an important place as now; nor will there be "the body" on earth. Now "he that hath an ear" comes in as well as "what the Spirit saith unto the churches"; there is the richest place of blessing given both to the individual and the Church, the body of Christ; and both are brought out in the fullness. The human way, on the contrary, is that if what is public and corporate be much pressed, the individual suffers; so also vice versa.

Christianity makes every individual of eternal value to God, and also shows the Church's place wherein you find the large feeling of desire and self-sacrifice and seeking the good of the whole. Paul who brings in the Church so prominently, says pointedly, "every man." "Warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "Whereunto" has reference to the need. "I also labor striving according to his working which worketh in me mightily." Strong words are used here, to show what it cost him. It all supposes great difficulty, and the need of a power entirely beyond himself. It proves the necessity of Christ working in it all. It was not only for those who had seen his face, but for others, too, as we see from chapter 2:1. What is to be noted is this: while the Apostle loved those whom he had seen, there was no such thing as oversight or insensibility as to those whom he had never seen. It was for the Church he felt, for the saints as such, whether known or unknown; and more than this, he had a keen conflict for them because of their difficulties.

Lectures on Colossians

W.K. Translation of chapter 2

(1) For I wish you to know how great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in flesh; (2) that their hearts may be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding unto full knowledge of the mystery of God, (3) in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (4) And this I say that no one may beguile you by persuasive speech. (5) For if even in the flesh I am absent, yet I am with you in the spirit, rejoicing and seeing your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. (6) As therefore ye received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, in him walk, (7) rooted and built up in him, and confirmed in the faith, even as ye were taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

(8) See that there shall be no one that leadeth you a prey through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. (9) For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; (10) and ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and authority; (11) in whom also ye were circumcised with

circumcision not wrought by hand, in the putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of the Christ; (12) buried with him in baptism, in which ye were also raised with [him] through faith in the working of God that raised him out of the dead. (13) And you, being dead in offenses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he quickened you together with him, having forgiven us all the offenses, (14) having blotted out the handwriting in ordinances [that was] against us, which was contrary to us; and he has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to his cross; (15) having stripped the principalities and the authorities, he made show openly, triumphing over them in it. (16) Let none therefore judge you in eating and in drinking, or in respect of feast or new moon or sabbaths, (17) which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ. (18) Let no one defraud you of your prize, doing his will in humility and worship of the angels, intruding into things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh, (19) and not holding fast the head, from whom all the body, ministered to and knit together by the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God.

(20) If ye died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as alive in [the] world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances? (21) Handle not, neither taste, nor even touch (22) (which are all for destruction in the using), according to the injunctions and trainings of men; (23) which have a reputation indeed of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and unsparingness of [the] body, not in any honor to satisfying of the flesh.

Chapter 2

Now he commences showing them their danger, but he first wished them to know what a combat he had for them, and for them also at Laodicea, and as many as had not then seen his face in the flesh (v. 1). "That their hearts might be comforted." They were not happy now; they were oppressed; they were getting clouded in their thoughts, and losing the clearness of view they had, "being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, in which mystery [for that is the point] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." vv. 2, 3. There were hindrances to their apprehension of this mystery. His great desire was, nevertheless, that they should understand it well. A person may be a Christian, seeing the grace of God in Christ, and yet be comparatively poor in his thoughts and very feeble in his apprehension of the counsels and ways of God. He may never have been led into this fullness of the understanding of this mystery. Without this it is impossible to have all these treasures. "In which [mystery] are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." This brings us into another atmosphere, as it were. Failure in apprehension shows a moral hindrance. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

To some minds there may be difficulty in the strong language on the one hand, in which the Apostle speaks of the Colossians' faith and order; and on the other, in the solemn warnings with which the epistle abounds. It might seem hard at first sight to reconcile the steadfastness of their faith in Christ with the warning we have seen given them-"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled." All we have to do is to believe both. What it really proves is, that no blessed order or steadfastness can guarantee a soul that admits wrong thoughts and corrupt principles that shroud, weaken, or lower the glory of Christ. Thus, the seeming incongruity makes the danger more apparent and striking. The fact of their order and the steadfastness of the faith in Christ that had characterized them (v. 5) were in themselves no effectual bulwark against the evil that menaced

them. The Apostle felt, and lets them know, that, though they were so blessed, yet by admitting the enticing words of others, their souls would be injured and undermined. No soul, no matter what the blessing in time past or present, can afford to trifle with that which upsets the Person or glory of Christ. The Colossians had been remarkably favored, and the Apostle rejoiced in beholding their order and steadfast faith in Christ; still in the very verse before, he cautions them "lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (v. 4).

What he presses upon them is, that as they had received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, they should walk in Him (v. 6), abiding as they had begun. Speculation, covered over with plausible language, was what they had to guard against. Therefore, though absent in the flesh, the Apostle says he was with them in spirit, joying and beholding their order, etc. For this very reason they were to be warned of what would mar the Savior's glory in their testimony. The finest fruit is most easily injured. They would thus practically lose Christ. He does not the least call in question their real blessing thus far. On the contrary, he reminds them of it, and tells them to walk in Christ, "rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught"; not downcast because of perils, but "abounding therein with thanksgiving" (v. 7). It is very close work, the object being to exclude the persuasive speech of false men that, if received, would steal them away imperceptibly from Christ.

When we are at rest in Christ before God, we can enter in and behold the manifestation of Himself in Christ, after the most blessed sort. It is very important to see Christ not only in His work of reconciliation, but as revealing the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." The Holy Ghost does exalt Christ, no doubt, but then the Son is never exalted, so to speak, at the expense of the Father, any more than the Father can accept honor where the Son is degraded.

The important thing for Christians is to be true to what they believe and confess, or rather to what God has revealed for their faith and confession. Whatever takes us away from the grace and truth which came by Christ, always tends to subvert even Christ Himself. The Colossians had been heretofore happy and really steadfast in their faith in Christ; but they were now allowing doctrines among them which, if not rooted out, would infallibly lead them away from Christ. Here lay their danger. It is astonishing how eagerly and easily Christians are apt to admit something new. The Apostle in this case refers to philosophical speculations, which seem to have been brought in at Colosse, as well as Jewish elements, if indeed they were not combined.

It was not enough for them to have Christ; they were to walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, assured in the faith, and not caught by these novel dreams, whether of an intellectual or a religious kind. It was thus an early error, that philosophy might be united to Christianity in order to make divine revelation more palatable to earnest, thoughtful minds. It had been all very well, they thought, to preach Christ at first simply; but now that it was no longer a question of a few lowly Galileans, why not address themselves to the great and wise of the earth, sick as many were of heathenism, and repelled by cold Judaism? And, if so, why not meet them as much as possible on their own ground? Why not engraft into Christianity some of the common sense of Aristotle, or, still better, the lofty aspirings of Plato, or yet more readily such high and noble sentiments as Philo represents in his Biblical essays?

Philosophy is one great bane of Christianity now as in these early days. The whole scheme of God's truth and ways is blotted out or has no room left for it in the teaching of philosophy. They overlook creation and the fall. They defy conscience, which man acquired by the fall. They ignore sin and God's judgment of sin. So also God's grace is unknown and the atonement its fruit. Rationalists would reduce divine truth to a mere set of inferences that people draw. But truth is never a conclusion. The moment I draw a conclusion, I am on the ground of science. Thus logic is a natural science, the handmaid, one may say of all others, which submits facts to it; but what has this to do with submitting to the truth of God? Revelation may pronounce on things as they are in man, as it also gives us things as they are from God; it does not merely show us that such or such a thing must be, which is the province of human reasoning; the truth reveals to us that a thing is. A poor soul might be perplexed to understand what must be; but no one that hears the testimony can avoid receiving or rejecting, if God declares that a given thing or person is. Hence the vast importance of faith.

Lectures on Colossians

The Colossians were beginning to let in two snares - a reasoning mind, and certain ascetic mortifications of the body. The one was in connection with philosophy, the other had its root in Judaism. These were the two great errors then slipping in, of whose real character and source they were not aware. The Apostle warns them (v. 8), though he had just told them he rejoiced in their faith and order. How sad in them to slip! But this is not all. He as good as says, Take care of what you are doing, of letting go what has produced such fruits, for the fair promises some are holding out to you. They tell you these new thoughts and ways can be held along with Christ; but let me say that you are embracing and taking up that which will frustrate, sooner or later, the truth which you now profess. The effect invariably is, that those who are not really born of God receive these inner dreams and outer forms instead of Christianity, while true believers are seriously damaged, and lose their delight in Christ and their testimony for Him. The one error suits the speculative, the other would meet those of a more practical turn of mind. No wonder, therefore, he exhorts them to be "rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." This last word is much to be weighed. I suppose their thanksgivings were beginning to wane, for such is the immediate effect of other objects intruding into the place of Christ.

"See lest there shall be any one that leads you as his prey through philosophy and vain deceit according to the tradition of men, according to the rudiments of the world, and not according to Christ." The earth gives clouds and not light. Man promises and undertakes much, but he can really give nothing but the blinding deceits of the master he is enslaved to. There is the deepest possible necessity for these warnings.

Speculation about the origin of things, or about the eternity of matter, for instance, in which the Orientals, Gnostics, etc., delighted, might not have seemed directly dangerous. People are ready enough to say, Our philosophy is one thing, our religion another. They might reason then, as since, that the world must have been made out of something always in existence. This may sound plausible to some minds, but it has a great flaw for the believer; it makes nothing of God and gives His Word the lie. Matter becomes the great circumstance before the mind, and God is made like man - a mere active mind, a manufacturing power.

How grandly the scripture of the Galilean fisherman rebukes all such dreamers! "All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made." How aptly the error had been already met in chapter 1:16! "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." The idea of the eternity of matter brings in from the first something outside God, independent and antagonistic; for this was the further deduction from the actual state of the world. Hence they reasoned of the two first principles, the one good, the other evil. This was the very error which was so much followed out in and interwoven into heathen philosophy, especially in the east, as indeed to this day. It is evident that the principle as to the eternity of matter, once admitted, leads the way to an abyss of falsehood and moral evil; and he would soonest fall into these inward or outward excesses who reasons most from his false starting point. Faith repudiates philosophy, not only as a rival but as an ally; it rests only on God's Word; it accepts that Word as absolute and exclusive. Therefore had the Apostle the best reason for warning them against philosophy and vain deceit, "according to the rudiments of the world and not according to Christ." They savor of, as they spring from, man as he is, not Christ; they suit the world, not heaven, nor those who belong to it, even while they are upon the earth. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (v. 9).

What gives a more wonderful view of Christ than this truth which the simplest believer knows, or ought to know, however little able to explain it? There is nothing like it. There alone we have the truth. We know God now; and how? Not by reasoning, as if thus we could search and find Him out. We know Him in Christ as a living Person who lived once bodily in this world, who still has His body above the world. We know from God, from His Word, that in the Person of Christ "dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," not merely in His spirit, but really in Him bodily, though He be now glorified. He had a real, true body from the incarnation; but He had all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in Him thus.

Nor is this all. The Apostle adds, "Ye are complete in Him" (v. 10); so you do not want philosophy even if it contained anything good, still less since it is positively bad. What we want is to enjoy Christ better and to walk more according to Him-not to glean other things from man as if they could enrich Christ, whereas they do but corrupt the truth. Man fallen is away from God, and under the power of the devil. This is the fact that makes these human notions so false and ruinous. Philosophical principles spring from death and can only produce death. In all heathenism (and perhaps one might say as much of Christendom) there is nothing more deadly than its philosophy. It is only less deceitful than the world's religion. It sounds reasonable, and a man gets charmed with the beauty or boldness of thoughts, imaginations, and language. Faith destroys both superstition and infidelity by the truth of God, and this by the revelation of Christ. The fullness of the Godhead never dwelt in the Father or in the Holy Ghost, but only in Christ. He was the only One of whom this wonderful reality could be affirmed. The whole fullness in Him dwelt and dwells still. "The Father that dwelleth in me [said He here below], he doeth the works." Again, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils," etc. Here we have not only the Son, but in and by Him the three Persons of the Godhead active in grace in this evil world. And faith receives what Scripture says of the unseen and eternal; faith acts on God's revealed mind as to the present. Unbelieving man refuses what is above himself and draws inferences from what he knows or does not know; but God will destroy both him and them. It is not only that all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in

Christ, but we are (not that fullness, but) filled full in Him. We may be and are said to be the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1), but never, of course, of the Godhead.

Hence we "are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body [of the sins] of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." vv. 10, 11. This is expressly in contrast with the external ordinance of circumcision. It should be "putting off the body of the flesh," not the body "of the sins" of the flesh. The true reading makes it a more complete thing; it is not a question of sins, but rather of sin in the nature. "Sins" would hardly be in keeping with the scope of the passage or phrase. It does not refer to the literal act of circumcising, but to Christ's death. When we believe in Christ, we have all the value of His death made true of us. This is here called circumcision not made by hands, in contrast with the ancient ordinance. The meaning and spiritual thought of circumcision is the mortification of human nature, man as he is being treated as a dead thing. It is Christ's death that gives us this privilege. We are brought into association with His death and have all its value in parting with our own ruined condition, "the body of the flesh," when we receive Him by faith. This circumcision supersedes all others, which in no way stripped off our evil state as man in the flesh.

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through the faith of the operation of God who raised him out of the dead." This brings in not so much Christ's personal glory, as His work. The first chapter gives us chiefly His personal glory; and even though it spoke of His work, it was the reconciliation of all things, and of the saints withal, meanwhile, before the glory is revealed. Chapter 2 presses His work upon the saints. I have no doubt the wisdom of the Holy Ghost is shown in this; we have first Himself and His work in general, then the specific value and effect of His work for us and on us. There His headship is doubly unfolded with precision; here the fact of His being the Head of all principality and authority, is just alluded to, giving emphasis to our completeness in Him.

The reference to circumcision is clearly bound up with Christ's death, etc.-not the legal act to which He submitted, nor a question of His Person, but of His work applied to us. This is entirely confirmed by the statement of our being buried with Him in baptism, in which, says he, ye have also been raised with Him. The great point is the linking us to Christ. By Him alone the work was done; but when we believe in Him, we are brought into its efficacy and acquire by grace a common position with Him. It is not merely that it was by virtue of Him, but in Him this great work was wrought, whereby we have a place in and with Him. The initiatory institution of Christianity sets forth this immense distinctive blessing of the Christian. We owned in baptism that we died in Christ's death out of the condition in which we naturally lived; and now we are raised with Him by faith of the operation of God who raised Him out of the dead. We are thus entered on a new state (not, of course, our bodies yet, but our souls). The practical application of both death and resurrection with Christ, we shall soon see in the hands of the Apostle.

Much as the Spirit of God brings out the quickening power of Christ in this epistle, He never pursues the ultimate or highest consequences of the work of Christ. Quickened or raised up by Him, or rather raised together with Him, is the utmost we find here; hence there He stops. Again in chapter 3, although He says, "Seek those things that are above," He does not say we are there, but, on the contrary, looks at the saints as being on earth, while seeking the things that are above. Thus, this epistle never goes so far as the Ephesians; it nowhere says we are seated in heavenly

places. As we have seen and as is clear, the current of the communications of grace was interrupted; there was a hindrance before the Apostle. The Holy Ghost cannot freely show the saints the things of Christ, where He has to show them their own things. He turns aside to occupy Himself with the truth practically, and apply it to them, which is never the sign of souls being thoroughly bright; for there ought not to be such a need for arresting the flow of grace and truth. In Ephesians, on the contrary, the work of Christ is carried out to all its fullest consequences; the healthy state of the saint is unfolded, and exhortations follow proportionately high.

Coming Apostasy and World Confusion: the Editor's Column

Every week, every day, we move closer to that blessed moment when the Lord will come and call His own to meet Him in the air; and so shall we be "forever with the Lord." We recently called attention to the infidelity that is taking over Sunday Schools as exemplified by the modern trends in some Canadian churches. Now our attention is called to the strides that are being made in the "Lutheran Church in America" which has recently introduced "the most modern and most comprehensive Christian education program in the nation's history." It has been nine years in the making, at a cost of more than \$5,000,000. For some Lutheran conservatives, the new program is painfully modern in tone. Some of the same language used about the Canadian program is used in this. Everything today must be geared to "modern" methods and ideas, while the simple, perfect Word of God is bypassed.

The new teaching methods inform leaders that the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) have considerable discrepancies in their accounts of the resurrection of Christ. So this is higher learning, and great erudition, to be able to find fault with the infallible Scriptures, of which it is said in truth, "Thy word is true from the beginning." Psalm 119:160. Mankind is willing to believe human sophistry, and reject the unerring and faithful Word of God. We need to remember that if the plain facts of the resurrection are not the truth of God, then our salvation is not sure; and we who believe in Christ have believed in vain. "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins," and "we [Paul and the other inspired apostles] are found false witnesses" (1 Cor. 15:17, 15). Either Christianity is true in toto, or it is the greatest hoax ever perpetrated; but we believe God, and find no difficulty in labeling these others "false witnesses." "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Rom. 3:4.

The whole trend in the modern curriculum for every teaching age is to falsify the truth of God and set up that which leads on to the great delusion which is soon to come upon Christendom when "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie;... who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:11, 12.) God is going to allow men to believe the devil's lie because they will not believe the truth. Christendom is faced with the coming rank and despicable apostasy—a giving up of the truth for a lie. The new scheme substitutes a central theme of inter-faith working together. Jewish feasts are to be explained to scholars while they are taught what is being prepared now, that the Jewish people are not responsible for the death of Christ. As we have recently explained, all the world is guilty of rejecting Christ, and Protestantism with Catholicism is seeking to exonerate the Jews of particular guilt. The Lord—He who cannot lie—said to Pilate, "He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin"—not the only sin, but the greater one. Christendom is filling up the measure of its wickedness. When God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, He said then, the "iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16). It is a principle with God to allow mankind to fill up his sin before He executes judgment. And Christendom is fast filling up her sins now.

The Lutheran new departure is also explaining to students the present Vatican Council, and what ecumenicity means. And the latest adventure toward the great confederacy was in the Vatican Council very recently when, in St. Peter's Basilica, Martin Luther, who led the Reformation, was commended publicly for having spoken favorably of Mary as leading men to God through herself. All religion-Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic - will soon find common ground in "RELIGION" while anything but the Christ of God will be acknowledged. There is strong agitation at present in Rome to call Mary "Mediatrice of All Graces." And this, notwithstanding the Word of God which solemnly affirms, "There is one God, and ONE mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." 1 Tim. 2:5. All others are false, for there is only ONE way, and one means of grace.

At the same time there was a historic meeting in Nottingham, England, to explore what means were at hand to unite Christendom in the near future. "The younger delegates - nearly 100 under 35-coaxed their colleagues to pass a resolution agreeing to unite in 'one church renewed in mission... not later than Easter Sunday, 1980.' "

The present avalanche of efforts to unite all Christendom under one banner-yea, with Paganism thrown in for good measure - reminds us of God's word to Isaiah: "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces.... Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak the word, and it shall not stand: for God is with us. For the LORD spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.... And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." (Isa. 8:9-15.) All the uniting of religions will only make for a bigger bundle of tares to be burned in the fire (see. Matt. 13:30).

The word of God to Isaiah regarding Israel's adventurous attempts to build up what had fallen down fits the present state of Christendom: "Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria,... that say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build them with hewn stones." (Isa. 9:9, 10.) This is the spirit of the present time, when whatever men devise in their hearts to do is usually accomplished. The bricks fell down, but they said, We will not only rebuild, but we will do it better; we will build with hewn stones. Christendom's history is a sad history of failure and declension; yet now it speaks of reunion, confederation, and greatness, but all will be broken to pieces.

All the modernism and infidelity that will be put into the mortar of the new building will only hasten its complete collapse. For "God is not mocked," and "The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect." Psalm 33:10. The trend now is to get rid of God. Religion may survive according to their theory, but God is to be cast out. Infidelity and atheism are in the ascendancy, even in the profession of Christianity; but its doom is sealed.

1 In a recent editorial we commented on the frailty of man and the constant probability of changes of great men. Men in high places are no more secure against the incursion of death than those in low places; in fact, sometimes it seems the reverse is true. We mentioned a number of prominent world figures who in the natural sequence of things would be supplanted by others in a short space of time. One name we mentioned was that of the communist boss in Italy, Palmiro Togliatti,

who headed the most powerful Communist party in Western Europe. But the ink was scarcely dry before he was gone and another had to be chosen to take his place-Luigi Longo, 64. Newsweek quoted an observer of Togliatti's funeral to the effect that " 'Mussolini would have been envious.' It was, indeed, the biggest non-Christian procession in Rome since Fascist days. Half a million solemn-faced people marched with waving red banners past Catholic churches which had closed their doors in mute protest."

Thus we see anti-religious forces showing their hand, while Roman religion continues to surge forward. These two forces will eventually come into collision when the "beast" of the revived Roman Empire will attain international acclaim, while the woman of Rome will still hold sway. We call your attention to an article by Mr. C. H. Brown, entitled, "Toward the Man and Toward the Woman," which is still obtainable through our publishing office. The man will represent the deification of man, backed by an atheistic program, when the new Roman power is exerted. But Scripture informs us that the "beast" will hate the woman and burn her with fire (see Rev. 17:16-18). This will be the final conflict between religion and the forces of atheism. It is true that as of yet many Communists of Italy are still loyal to the church, but we go by the Word of God. Atheism is on the march in the world, and a conflict is certain to come between the secular and the religious powers of the Western world.

Speaking of political unrest throughout the world, the two greatest Western powers are due for national elections in October and November. No matter which sides win, changes will take place; and all will further God's purposes. Men may strive and battle on both sides of the Atlantic, but God's "purposes will ripen fast" (Cowper). His will will stand, and He will do all His pleasure. How good for the Christian to be able to trust all in His all-wise and all-powerful hand, knowing that ere long we who know Christ shall be off for our heavenly land, leaving the scene of confusion, which will then fall into greater consternation, when men's hearts will fail them for fear, as they anticipate the calamity of coming events which are already casting dark shadows across the international landscape. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22:20.

The Cross: Separates From the World

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

I would say a few words on the entire end of self in THE CROSS - the nothingness to which it reduces us. How little do we know practically of this. Let us look at Jesus, and then learn how very little our souls have realized its power in thus setting ourselves aside.

We see in Him one who had all human righteousness, and one too in whom dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"; yet what path did He take? What was THE CROSS to Him? To what did it reduce Him? The entire setting aside of all this human righteousness, of all this divine power. The perfect strength of His love was proved, not only in that He "pleased not Himself" - though "in the form of God," and thinking it "not robbery to be equal with God," that He emptied Himself, and "being found in fashion as a man," humbled Himself to take the place where our disobedience put us - but that in this place of love He was content to be utterly rejected! to be reduced to nothing, that love might shine out!

The flesh in us is subtle, very subtle: if we show love we expect that it will be felt; but if otherwise - if, when we have rendered a kindness, we get no return, not even a kind word - our hearts grow faint and cold in the exercise of love. Do we know what it is when our hearts have gone forth in love to meet with that which we read of in Corinthians, "Though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved," to find that the only consequence of humiliation is to become thereby less respected, more humbled still?

Thus it was with Jesus; full of patience and tenderness, He exposed Himself to the power and malice of Satan. But what did He find in us when doing this work of love? Man took occasion, by His very lowliness, to treat Him with the utmost scorn. He was a "reproach of men, and despised of the people." They kept Him in on every side: "Dogs have compassed Me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed Me: they pierced My hands and My feet." "Many bulls have compassed Me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset Me round. They gaped upon Me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion." He looked for comforters, but found none. One of those with whom He had taken "sweet counsel" lifted up his heel against Him; and even that disciple who had been most forward to declare his adhesion - "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended" - denied Him with oaths and curses.

There was no outlet to His grief, no comfort from man; and here we see the meaning of that word, "Be not far from Me; O My God!" Cast out by the scorn of those whom He came to in love, pressed upon, closed in by those whom He came to save, His soul turned to God: "My God, be not far from Me!" But God had hid His face from Him: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He now found the darkness and wrath that came upon Him to the uttermost; there was no response on any side; the deep hatred of man around, and from above darkness also; everything was set aside but the power of love. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters,

where the floods overflow Me." The waves and the billows went over Him; all was lost in the waves but love; it was that which sustained Him; love was greater than all; and it was set on us.

When we see what He, as emptied, was, we come to the depth of love. If He emptied 'Himself of everything else, there was still the fullness of love, for He is God, and "God is love." We, dear brethren, have found the fullness of love in Jesus, and that shall be our everlasting portion - we shall know, shall taste this love forever.

When Jesus was going about here, it was as "doing good"; He could not restrain His power, though ever so lowly and humbled, when good was to be done; He was obliged to show it. Thus in the life of Jesus, in His actings here, there was something which the natural heart must own, must approve; we like to have our diseases cured; and when they saw the dead raised, they could rejoice in having their deceased friends brought to life again; but in the cross there was no putting forth of this power, there was no miracle -nothing but weakness and degradation - He was "crucified through weakness." Trial from man, temptation from Satan, desertion from God - there was nothing to be seen but love - the depth, the fullness, the riches of that love which will be our happy, blessed portion forever.

The natural heart is every one of us hates the power of the cross. We want something for the eye to rest upon; we seek a little honor here; the cross stains all the pride of human glory, and therefore we like it not. Let us test ourselves, beloved. Are we really content to take the cross in this its power, and to say, "I want nothing else?" "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!" May our souls rest in this blessed confidence - Jesus is our everlasting portion. To dwell in Him is to dwell in God, and "God is love." Many Christians are cherishing those things which keep them from knowing the full power of this love in their hearts. We cannot enjoy love and pride together. Whatever nourishes self, no matter what - honor, talents, learning, wealth, friends, respectability - anything, everything which the natural man delights in - nourishes pride in us, renders Christ less precious, and the enjoyment of His love less full.

The Lord give us to know what it is to be crucified to the world. Let us, beloved brethren, bless God for everything that puts down self.

Devotedness

The present condition of things around is bewildering and embarrassing in the extreme. It is a day of poverty and weakness. Boasting or assumption ill becomes those who have but "a little strength." One has said, "If I look within, I am miserable; if I look around, I am confounded; but if I look up, all is bright and beautiful." Is it then not worse than useless to waste the moments that are passing in looking whence nothing can come but disappointment and vexation?

But someone may say, "That is a beautiful theory, but have we no responsibilities in the directions expressed in the words 'within' and 'around'?" And is it not a matter of importance that these should be answered? The reply is, Yes. And they are best sustained and met by setting the "mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth" (J.N.D. Trans.); that is, occupation with Christ, where He is, is the way to the possession of that which nothing can cloud, dim, or take away; and when it is so, these responsibilities I have spoken of are fulfilled according to the thoughts and mind of Christ - a matter of primary importance to a true heart.

He that has Christ before him as the One to be pleased, as the One whose interests are to be consulted, is the very one who will do the best for all under Christ, according to His mind and His thoughts; and this, let it be observed, is not each one, according to his own thoughts or judgment, doing what he thinks will suit Christ, but first learning from nearness to and intimacy with the Lord, what He would desire, and then going forth, undaunted by either difficulties or dangers, to accomplish that desire.

It is clear that before the desires of a person can command me, the person himself must stand out before me as an object. The desire of one whom I neither know nor value, I should not care to make myself acquainted with; not so of one I value and love; how much more of One who has eclipsed and superseded everything else in my heart, and has no rival there! And this, I should say in starting, characterizes devotedness. The one who is devoted is abstracted from all else by an object which has so completely engrossed the affection, and occupied the heart, that all thought of self-interest, or any other interest, is buried in the one who is his object. For example, look at Mary in John 20. What does she care for all else but Christ? Nothing. The early dawn, while it was yet dark, found her on her way to the only spot on earth that now had an interest for her - the tomb of Jesus. And when she came to find Him not there, how inconsolably does she tell her tale of sorrow to Peter and John! "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid Him." And what a contrast their ways to hers! Each satisfies himself of the accuracy of her report, and then they return to the circle of their interests on earth-"their own home." Oh, what a picture! Not so Mary - she return home? - without Him she has no home, nothing. She has a true heart - very ignorant, no doubt - ignorant, too, where she ought not to be-yet, for all that, she is devoted. See how she lingers about that empty tomb! Is she not there, like another, Ruth, saying, "Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried"?

But there is even more than this; for, if she is inconsolable without Him, and weeps as if her heart would break, see how she never calculates or measures for a moment. Poor, weak, feeble woman

as she is in body, such is her love, that if she only knew where He was, she is prepared to come and take Him away. Him, Him, Him! is the sum of her thoughts; difficulties or hindrances she thinks not of. What a picture! Prudence ever calculates; devotedness never! But there is even more, and a striking characteristic too of one who is devoted. For when she finds Him-alive, too, as He was, and not dead-the love that was inconsolable without Him, is prepared now that she has seen Him, to do whatever He desires, though she never sees Him again (vv. 1618). It is a beautiful picture of its kind, presenting these two marked features of a devoted heart: first, and above all, the Object Himself, and all else as nothing compared with Him; second, and next to Himself, His wishes-His desires.

Let us look at another instance; is not John (John 1) a man devoted to an object? "Came... to bear witness of that Light"; in himself, what was he? Not (what many would be nowadays) something because of Christ. John is nothing. What is a voice crying in the wilderness? The people come out from Jerusalem, Judea, and the region round about Jordan, to one who has himself found an Object in Christ that has abstracted him from all else, and made him a stranger and a lonely man in the midst of a crowd; and not only this, but whose own soul so dwells in delight and satisfaction in this One Himself that, looking upon Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

But perfect and admirable as all this is in its way, it is not the brightest scene in the devotedness of John; for we find in chapter 3 that he takes occasion, by the question which had arisen between some of his disciples and the Jews, to let out what the governing Object of his heart was. What was he? He was but a voice, but he was the friend of the Bridegroom; it was the Bridegroom he wanted to hear; it was His voice that delighted John; yet not this only, but so satisfying was this blessed Bridegroom, Him who is not only above all, but Him who has all things given Him by the Father who loved Him, that self fades away, is dead. And that which announces it, proclaims most blessedly the superiority of Christ. "He must increase, but I must decrease." John seems to me here like another Queen of Sheba. Such tidings of the fame of Solomon reached her in her own land, that she was determined to see it for herself. Great as was the report which created longings and yearnings in her heart, it was as nothing to the reality; namely, Solomon's wisdom, the house that he had built, the meat of his table, the attendance of his ministers, his ascent by which he went up to the house of the Lord, which when she had seen with her eyes, there was no more spirit in her; the magnificence of this sight paled all else before her. Yet great as was the effect thus produced in her, it is a glory of a higher order that commands John here. He stands, as it were, on another mount of transfiguration, and sees no man save "Jesus only." And as that one Object abstracts him away from all besides, do you not in those words, "He must increase, but I must decrease," hear old Simeon joyfully say, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,... for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."?

So far we have looked only at the power of an object which possesses and occupies; and we have looked at it too in illustrations which, however remarkable and striking in themselves, are feeble to give any idea of the reality of Christ as an object-even the incident related in this history of David. With what power does that Blessed One in glory occupy my heart when I am in the consciousness of being with Himself, where He is, as well as in the consciousness of how completely He was for me here. Just think, He gave Himself, allowed the shroud of judgment which encircled me to be wrapped around Himself. In His death, closed volume 1 of my history; and in Himself, risen from the dead and in glory, opened volume 2. How the greatness and magnificence of it passes all

conception! He, that Blessed One, who is in the bosom of the Father, came down here on earth to tell out the secrets of that bosom. He it was who became the Deliverer in the hour of our extremity and hopelessness, in the day of our dismay and despair, when we were absolutely intolerable to ourselves, when we had lost all self-respect, because we could not do what was right, and the dark garment of helplessness enveloped us in its folds like Jonah in the depths of the sea; when the floods compassed us about; the waters compassed us about; the depth closed us round about; the weeds were wrapp'd about our heads; we went down to the bottom of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about us forever; our night was setting in, and we were rapidly settling down in the darkness of death. Such was our condition when He entered the scene. He, the perfect, spotless Lamb of God, was born into the world He had made; was refused His own place among His own people (Israel), and in His own creation; glorified His Father, where He had been dishonored and despised; and, finally, bore the judgment which rested on all; vindicated and established the righteousness of God by closing forever in His death the history of the man that offended against God, and at the same time yielded up His own life, in all its personal excellency; was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, and in Himself, so risen and in glory, became the Head of the new creation. And not only this, but by the Holy Ghost sent down, in answer to the glory of His Person and work, we who believe are now united to Him where He is.

The second characteristic of a devoted heart is, that it makes itself acquainted with the desires of its object, and then unflinchingly sets itself to accomplish them. If Christ be my Object, I seek to know His mind, His desires; and learning them, I allow nothing to stand in the way of my fulfilling them. And this is a solemn subject at this present moment, when it is remembered that there are multitudes of saints who act as if there were no expressed mind or desire of Christ, and multitudes besides, from whom better things might be expected, who defiantly ask for a command, which indicates, to say the very least of it, a distance from the heart of Christ, and an absence of that waiting on Him, that tarries not for a command, but seeks earnestly His mind, and makes haste to accomplish that desire at all cost. It is not meant by this that there are no New Testament precepts, but we mean to point out that low, wretched condition which satisfies itself with an indifference to the heart yearnings or desires of Christ, by pleading the absence of a command.

The history in our passage furnishes abundant illustrations of what I seek to convey. David was in the cave of Adullam, rejected and disowned at this time, the conqueror of Goliath and deliverer of Israel though he was. There were a few, and only a few, who cared so much for David that they would link their destiny with his, and that at a moment when, to sight at least, all was as dark as dark could be. How did they expect this? Why, where he was, there would they be. "And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam." David is the one they are thinking of; they want to be near him. Near him, did I say? - they want to be with him. They refuse all else but that which connects them with him. If they are to be sharers with him in his triumphs and honors by-and-by, they will be partakers of his reproach and shame now. That which links them to it is the joy of their hearts - they will be with him - and while all around outside is dark, they within will company with him, and pass the hours of their vigil in waiting on the desires of his heart. They are in the place to know his wishes. Had they not been in the cave with David, they never would have heard his longing for water from the well of Bethlehem; and they never would have been in Adullam if David had not himself eclipsed all else in their affections.

Then, see how they set themselves to meet the desires of David - how they were undaunted by the dangers and difficulties in the way-how they were carried by their devotedness to David over all the hindrances, and allowed nothing to stand in the way of their carrying out his desires. And so we read, "And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David." 2 Sam. 23:16. They did not calculate or hesitate. When David's desire was once known, the only thing thought of was meeting it. There might have been objectors; there might have been some who would say, "To what purpose is this waste?" It mattered not to them; to fulfill David's desire was their only thought. I feel as if the application of all this were self-evident; and yet when one looks around and asks, "Where do I see it?" one is confounded; and more so as too many, if not most saints, are mere benefactors of men. The desires of Christ they neither know nor seek to know; they are not where they could know them; they are thinking of man and his good, not of Christ and His glory. Do you reply, "But can you separate them?" I answer, "No," provided you seek what suits Christ. He who consults what is due to Christ is the only one who really benefits man according to God's mind. To human eyes it may be otherwise, but in the thoughts of God, the one who is true, faithful, and devoted to Christ, is the one who is most used to help, as well as most helpful to man.

To sum up then: true devotedness consists in knowing Christ as the Object that eclipses all others-in finding that it is Himself alone that satisfies my heart, so that the circle of His interests and desires becomes the circle of mine-where He is, there I must be. And being where He is-that is, near enough to Him to know His desires and mind-I set myself to accomplish them; and in so doing, I take no account of difficulties, dangers and hindrances, even as David's mighty men, who undismayed, broke through the hosts of the Philistines, that they might meet the desires of their captain.

The one who is devoted is carried in a love that rises superior to everything in its way, and breaks through every host that stands to hinder or oppose. The Lord give His people in these last days so to know and love His blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave up His own precious life to put aside and end before God the history of that which grieved His love, that entire devotedness to Him may be the character of those who know Himself, and have tasted of His love.

Difficulties: Divine Grace

If we could only look upon a difficult crisis as an occasion of bringing out, on our behalf, the sufficiency of divine grace, it would enable us to preserve the balance of our souls, and to glorify God, even in the deepest waters.

Diligence Rewarded

This is an age of increased facilities and reduced costs. We run where our fathers walked, and fly where they drove. The aim of modern invention is to make everything easy, and to give the largest returns for the smallest outlay. All this unfits us for the deep spiritual exercises still met with in the path of faith. Modern thought has yet to discover a short cut to piety. Some people may read a chapter of the Bible in five minutes, and think there is little in it, since they get nothing out. Not so, my friend; God does not make Himself cheap like that. "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Pro. 13:4.

Ecclesiastes

It is a common and a correct thought that the book of Ecclesiastes is a writing, under the Holy Ghost, upon the vanity of all things "under the sun."

This is so, most surely. Solomon was lifted up that he might be able, from his position and resources, to inspect and test the vanity of all human conditions. All that either business or pleasure could provide for him, all that wealth, or station, or learning commanded was within his reach and at his disposal. And he challenged it all to say what it was worth.

He went through all the conditions of human life which carried with them a single promise to contribute anything to him. His search was complete. His inspection and testing left nothing improved. And each and all were equally vain and unsatisfying. No one thing relieved the disappointment which another had produced. His journey was a wearying and vexatious pursuit of what was ever and equally eluding him. From everything the sense of vanity pressed on his spirit; there was nothing to relieve or deliver him of all that was done or that was found "under the sun."

The principle business of this book of Ecclesiastes is to tell us this. And a valuable as well as serious lesson it is. Well if we learn it, and the better for us the better we learn it.

We should not, however, fully honor the wisdom of God in this book, if we said that this was its only business. It is not so. It teaches us principally, it is true, the general vanity of all the scene around us; but it likewise lets us know that there is one outlet, one relief from the oppressive sense of the common, universal emptiness; and that is found in the service of God. This is its second lesson.

I may here call to mind how the Apostle teaches us, that there is but one outlet from the scene or condition of condemnation. He tells us that we are "shut up" to the faith of Jesus. Law and works and all other provisions fail and prove themselves vain, for all of us are concluded under sin; and there is no escape from such condition of death, but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ now revealed unto us (Gal. 3).

This book of Ecclesiastes reminds me of that. For in it I see one way, but one only, open to us as an escape from the condition and from the sense of a universal vanity. We are "shut up" to it. In these thoughts we know this analogy. Faith in Jesus, says the Apostle, is the one only outlet from a state of condemnation; the living to Jesus, says the book of Ecclesiastes, is the one only outlet from a state of vanity. And we may well rejoice in the simplicity of such relief from such heavy and grievous conditions.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Chap. 11:1.

Here there is found something solid, something abiding, something which does not partake of the common universal vanity. The serving of Christ has the value of eternity in it. The bread cast on the waters is found after many days, or at a future hour.

Just the lesson which all the New Testament reads to us. For there we learn that there are bags which wax not old, and that it is service to Christ which fills them for us - that there is such a thing as being "rich toward God," and such a treasure as "faileth not," no thief approaching it, no moth corrupting it. And there also we learn, according to the whole bearing of this book of Ecclesiastes, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Happy, serious, simple lesson! The highest attainments or richest prosperity in things under the sun are all vanity, while the smallest service to the Lord, even the giving of a cup of cold water in His name, has the value of eternity in it.

Ecumenical Winds: Back to Rome

Strong ecumenical winds have been blowing in Christendom for the past few years. There is an eagerness for solidarity among the professions of Christianity. Allied with this desire for union is an increase in ritualism; and this is not an unusual development, for when faith in Christ is at a low ebb, ritualism, or any outward form and ceremony which lacks inward reality, steps into the vacuum. Something to be seen or touched becomes quite real in the absence of vital connection with Christ.

The brazen serpent was ordained of God in the day when the Israelites sinned and were dying from serpents' bites. It was a type of Christ lifted up on the cross for sin; but when that piece of brass had served its day, then the Israelites worshiped it until Hezekiah broke it in pieces (2 Kings 18:4).

Another thing is growing apace today, and that is atheism. It is on the increase in this land where the coinage of the realm says, "In God we trust." The rights of atheists are zealously guarded lest they inadvertently become captive audiences and hear a portion from the Word of God or a prayer to God.

When Pope John XXIII was installed in the Roman Church, he was hailed as a broadminded man who was much interested in seeing Christendom united. Instead of speaking of Protestants as heretics, as had been common for many centuries, he began to refer to them as "our separated brethren." There was, however, a long-entrenched body of ecclesiastics surrounding the Pope, known as the Curia. They were generally old men, mostly Italians by birth, who guarded the canon law and all church functions as though they were the Curia's private preserve. These men opposed any opening or lifting of the airtight embargo on any accommodation to Protestants, or to the Orthodox churches of the East, which would make any rapprochement easier for non-Catholics. But John XXIII soon let it be known that he was Pope, and accordingly called for the Vatican Council in 1962. Before the second session of this Council could convene, Pope John died; and Pope Paul VI succeeded him.

Paul's succession was also hailed by the great leaders of Protestant ecumenicalism, for he promised to continue the work of John, and called for the second session of the Council to meet in 1963. Despite the kind words of Paul VI and the stronger assurances from Protestant leaders that John began the work which Paul would complete, the results of the second session of Vatican II were a disappointment to ecumenicalists both inside and outside of Rome. Paul was not John, and his leadership flagged; the end of the second session had very little to show for its efforts. It seems evident that the Curia won the day, and some Roman leaders have even expressed doubt that a third session will ever be held.

Of the 17 agenda topics at the second session of the Council, only two were acted on. One of them was for parts of the mass to be said in the vernacular of the people instead of in Latin. This change was authorized. Another on Roman censorship was largely side-stepped, although it was

acted on after a fashion.

John was a gregarious man who liked people, and he was undoubtedly the most popular Pope within memory - some have gone so far as to say "ever." But Paul's background was entirely different; he spent years in the machinery of the Church and is an organization man. He will try to accomplish his wishes through suasion in the ordinary channels. What will be the outcome of this cannot be foreseen. But to us, one thing seems apparent: the Protestant and Orthodox road back to Rome will not be as easy as was anticipated two years ago. That these other groups are bent on going to Rome in the end, is more clearly evident. In the end, however, it will be they who do the going, not Rome; and they will go on Rome's terms. All the bright prospects of an easy trek back may as well be forgotten. The early prospects of an easy ingress have, however, whetted the appetite of many leaders on both sides of the ecclesiastical fence, but especially so for the Protestant leaders of the Councils of Churches. A remark from *The Wall Street Journal*, October 6, 1962 stresses the feeling of urgency in union thus: "Confronted with a reign of Atheism from East Berlin all the way to Shanghai, what believer in God would fail to see the powerful response that Christian unity would make?" Many religious leaders in this often-called "post Christian era" feel that survival depends on unity, although such reasonings leave God out of consideration. This comment also overlooks the ever-increasing hold that infidelity, agnosticism, and atheism are having in places heretofore noted for their adherence to Christianity.

The second session of the Vatican Council was scarcely over when Pope Paul announced his pilgrimage to the Middle-east. This would take the minds of those who were disappointed at the Council's lack of accomplishments off of such disappointment. It also focused attention on the Pope who would be at the center of the pilgrimage. This pilgrimage gave Pope Paul an opportunity to visit shrines in Palestine and Jordan, and to emphasize the fact that Christianity and Mohammedanism have their roots in Judaism, and so to plead for peace in all places.

Doubtless, Pope Paul was preoccupied with the Greek Orthodox Church in his pilgrimage. This large body is closely akin to the Roman Church in history, doctrine, canonical law, and in varied aspects of Christianity. In the early days of Christianity, bishops were merely overseers. They were numerous in the local assemblies. They helped to guide local assemblies and individuals. They were not gifts like teachers and evangelists, but may have had an aptitude to teach the Scriptures. But the idea of a bishop over a see, or diocese, is unscriptural. The authority and high rank of bishops came in at a later date. Then there was a long struggle as to whether or not the bishop at Rome was superior to the others who wangled such titles in other places. At one time the bishops at Alexandria and Constantinople ranked equally with the one at Rome. It was the pretension that the bishop of Rome was Christ's vice-gerent on earth that caused much trouble.

Even today the Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras is only in charge of his own see, while Orthodoxy has a number of other Patriarchs on equal standing with him. He cannot speak for the whole Eastern Orthodoxy as the Pope does for Romanism. He is spoken of as "the first among equals." How Romanism and Orthodoxy can ever join hands is not clear, for Romanism would insist on general recognition of the Pope as head of and superior to all others, and not merely as preeminent among equals. But Athenagoras is bent on taking Orthodoxy back to Rome. We will quote a few lines from a *Newsweek* issued in January: "Though he is 'first among equals.' Athenagoras is but one of five Orthodox Patriarchs. Nevertheless, the 900-year-old history of

relations between Rome and Constantinople clearly has entered a new era. The next step? 'Rome,' said Athenagoras. 'We are going to Rome.' "

The Pope aided the feeling of ecumenical good will, for he took opportunity to call for unity, and spoke of the ancient churches of the East; but for all his slanted remarks toward the Orthodox churches, he let slip (perhaps with forethought) remarks about the Roman Christ and called Roman Catholicism "the one church of Christ." The Pontiff also must have had a carefully laid plan to emphasize some of the points on which Orthodox churches and Rome have divergent views. He took occasion to stop at the tiny Galilean church called "The Primacy of Peter," where according to Roman tradition the Lord Jesus stood when He said to Peter, "Feed My sheep"; they claim that He thus indicated that Peter was the head of the apostles. This was clever usage of a spot to remind all that Peter was foremost, and that here was Peter's successor. This is helping to prepare the Orthodox for bowing to the Pope as supreme. The Orthodox claim descent from the Apostle Andrew. (We are well aware of the shallowness of these claims and counterclaims, and both groups have little place for the Apostle Paul from whom the doctrine of true Christianity came as inspired utterances.)

Orthodoxy never acknowledged Rome's claims for Mary - the Immaculate Conception (so-called) - her bodily assumption into heaven (absolutely without a word of Scriptural support) - but the Pontiff made remarks at Nazareth about their devotion to Mary. He referred to her as "Mary most holy," and said, "We offer our homage to her who is full of grace, the immaculate, ever virginal Mother of Christ, the Mother therefore of God, and our Mother, whose body and soul were taken up into heaven, our most blessed queen, the model of the church, and the source of our hope... an example of human perfection in whom the world may securely place its trust." New York Times, Jan. 6, 1964, p. 12. This is serious heresy, bordering on blasphemy; and it is truly derogatory to the supreme glory of Christ. He only was perfect in manhood. He only went back to heaven - to the Father. He only is the One whom we or the world may trust. Mary is not a queen on earth or in heaven. This reminds us of the earthly people who worshiped "the queen of heaven" to their ruin. Mary was only mother of the humanity of Christ, and is in no sense "the Mother of God." She was a sinner, and not "immaculate." She said so herself when she said, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." She needed a Savior, and the Lord Jesus was that for her. It is flagrant and arrant folly to offer devotion to her. How the heart of man likes to worship someone other than God. The Apostle John had to be rebuked by an angel for an attempt to worship him. John was told, "Worship God." Now it is true that "all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father," but to the Father and the Son only are worship to be given.

When Christianity came into conflict with pagan idolatry in the early years, little progress was made by ecclesiastical pretension until worldly minded, and self-seeking churchmen devised a way to introduce Mary as a female goddess into pagan worship. All pagans had female deities, and the stratagem worked very successfully.

The Council of Ephesus in the year 431 was the first to authorize the false expression, "Mother of God." The worship of Mary soon swept what was left of pagan Europe. Within a few years eight of Europe's finest idol temples which had been consecrated to various female deities, were changed to temples to Mary: the temple of Minerva at Syracuse; the temples of Venus and of Saturn at Messina; the temple of Erycin a on Mount Eryx; the temple of Phalaris at Agrigentum; the temple

of Vulcan near Mount Etna; the Pantheon at Cantania - also the temple of Ceres in the same town; and the Sepulcher of Stesichore. Thus Christ was overwhelmed by the Roman Church of that day, by the use of heathenism.

What has not been done in the name of Christianity? Even the epochs of the heathen feasts were often retained, only the names changed. It may be interesting to note that the statue of Peter at Rome was formerly a statue of Jupiter Olympius. A thunderbolt was withdrawn from it, and keys put in its place. And favored Protestantism is being made ready to go back into Rome's embrace.

It seems that Rome's present plan is to talk reunion part of the time, and at other times to speak of all coming "back to the Father's house of Rome." Paul VI spoke of only a few theological points separating Orthodoxy and Rome. But by proposing an easy way back, and then backing away and speaking of Rome's never-to-be-changed doctrines, the appetite is whetted for reunion, while at the same time Protestants and Orthodox are being prepared for what they must accept.

It seems evident that Paul VI is a trusted son of the church, who would like to unite Christendom under his banner, but he himself acts like a stalwart of Roman theology who will be firm in seeing that all will come to Rome. But it also seems that if the present effort toward getting the Orthodox bodies to return is successful, then it would only be a matter of time until the Church of England and other Protestant bodies would join in a race to see who could get into Babylon first. It just needs a starter.

Ecumenical Winds: Back to Rome

With modernism running rampant through Protestant bodies, and true faith in God largely discarded, there will soon be nothing left to stand for. If religion is without God and without Christ (save in name), everything vital is gone. But for many people, any religion will do. Cain had his religion, although his religious works were "evil" (1 John 3:12). The pagans had lots of religion; millions did obeisance to it, and died in their sins.

Christendom is running down a steep place to destruction, as did the demon-possessed swine (Mark 5:13). But "God is not mocked" (Gal. 6:7). Christendom is giving up the love of the truth, that they might be saved, and God in His righteous government is going to allow Satan to deceive them with a lie. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth [hindereth] will let [hinder] 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.

The warm embrace and the kiss of love between Pope Paul and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras may seem to many a prelude to a new and greater day for Christendom, but we believe it is a forerunner of the great apostasy. Christendom will in the end be a great caldron. At present, according to God's sure word, it is a "great house" with vessels to dishonor mixed together with vessels for God's glory.

The call of God is now distinct and sounds like a clarion. "If a man therefore separate himself from these [the vessels to dishonor] ['in separating himself from them' (J.N.D. Trans.)] he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the master's use." God calls every true child of His to walk in absolute separation from the abounding of evil. No excuse such as, "I can do more good there," will be a satisfactory reply to the One who has called us to separation. (Read 2 Tim. 2.) And as the great mixture of Babylon the Great is about to appear on the horizon, He calls, "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Rev. 18:4.

There is at work within the Roman Church an effort to make their laity conscious of a desire for return of Protestants and other groups to the Roman enclosure. This was exhibited in recent years, and again this year in January, when the parishioners were called upon to pray for such union. The plea went out under the name of the "Chair of Unity Octave," dated January 12, 1964. It was prefaced by reference to Pope John's example and Pope Paul's encouragement. For eight days Catholics were to join in prayer for

"The union of all Christians in the one true faith and in the Church.

"The return of separated Eastern Christians to Communion with the Holy See.

"The reconciliation of Anglicans with the Holy See. "The reconciliation of European Protestants with the Holy See.

"That American Christians become one in union with the chair of Peter.

"The restoration of lapsed Catholics to the sacramental life of the Church.

"That the Jewish people come into their inheritance in Jesus Christ.

"The missionary extension of Christ's kingdom throughout the world."

Many Protestants laud these steps as a good omen and can agree with Patriarch Athenagoras that "The ice has been broken," and, "Soon a new era will begin in the history of

Christendom." - Time, Jan. 10, 1964. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, the head man of the lately formed United Presbyterian Church, and a leader in the National Council of Churches, said after Pope Paul announced his pilgrimage: "This is an illustration of changes both great and small within the Roman Catholic Church." - U.S. News & World Report, Dec. 16, 1963.

It will be noted from the call to prayer of the Chair of Unity Octave that these calls for prayers are for return to the one Church, the one true faith, the See of Peter, the Holy See, etc. This also shows Rome's specific primary interest in the Eastern Orthodox bodies which are more closely akin to Rome. The Church of England also rates high in their interest. The high church of that body is not far removed from Rome's ways. Also the Protestant groups in Europe are more ecumenical-minded than Protestants in other parts of the world. There has been increasing rapport between the contestants in that area, amounting to a big step toward Protestant return to Rome.

The Lord Jesus said to some in the day when He was on earth, "How is it that ye do not discern this time?" (Luke 12:56). How does it happen that with luke-warmness being the general state of

Christians, and the great profession being marked by only "a form of godliness," while its power is denied and rejected, and while infidelity, atheism, and materialism stalk the land, how is it that so many Christians are blind to the imminence of the end of this age? Any day the Lord may call true believers home, and then unprepared, unsaved profession will rush headlong into the grand climax of Babylon the Great. That will be followed by the overthrow of even the semblance of Christianity; and then the basest forms of idolatry will take over.

When the Lord was here, the unclean spirit of idolatry had gone out of Israel (Matt. 12:43); they were not then idolaters. Later Paganism was outwardly cleansed of open idolatry (Luke 11:24). But in the end of this age the unclean spirit of idolatry will return, and the latter end will be worse than the former in both apostate Israel (Matt. 12:45) and apostate Christendom (Luke 11:26). These evils are on the way, and are already casting long shadows across the landscape.

One of the prayers which Catholics were called on to make during the month of January connected with the Chair of Unity Octave was that the Jewish people might come into their inheritance in Jesus Christ. Of late there has been considerable preoccupation with the Jewish people by the Catholics. The effort is under the direction of Augustin Cardinal Bea, who also heads the efforts for the return of "separated brethren" to the Roman Fold. One of the "schemata" of Vatican Council II was to pave the way for better relations with Jews. This is one of the agenda topics which was not acted on. The Protestant National Council of Churches is also interested in such a movement and is using material prepared by Jewish organizations in some council church material. It is claimed that some religious activities and sayings concerning the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus promote, if not create, anti-semitism. At this point we aver that teaching the truth as it is found in the Scriptures will not produce any anti-semitism, but the very reverse of it.

Perhaps the growing trend for religious fraternity can be best expressed by an excerpt from the Los Angeles B'nai B'rith Messenger, March 20, 1964, titled, "Stronger Interfaith Action Is The Trend": "An enormous new shift in inter-religious relationships is under way across the United States, according to Rabbi Balfour Brickner, director of the Commission on Interfaith Activities of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations." Further down he said, "Pope John XXIII 'opened many symbolic windows-and doors-and this brought in the Catholic Church, which until then felt it had to stay outside inter-religious relationships.' " This, he said, "has galvanized Catholics, Protestants and Jews to meet together."

Some remarks in the Chicago Maroon from the University of Chicago, under date of February 14, 1964, add a little more to the sweeping trends. Dr. Howard Schomer, President of the Chicago Theological Seminary, said that "As a result of the recent series of conversations between the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, Christianity is entering into one of the greatest chapters in the whole of church history." The religious doctor who thus appraised the present situation is a man who should be able to form an opinion of what he sees. He was a Delegate-Observer at the last session of the Vatican Council. He also participated in three sessions of the Protestant World Council of Churches. To human observation, Christendom is on the verge of something great, and so it will be proclaimed when it is realized. But God's word in Revelation 17 and 18 gives its fallen, debased, and corrupt character before Him who does not judge as man does. After the true believers have been taken from this world to be with Christ, the great ecumenical body will boast of its greatness, grandeur, wealth, and power, only to be spewed out of Christ's mouth as

something most hateful and noxious to Him.

Fellow believers, let us read the Word of God diligently and so keep a clear perspective of what Christendom is before God and where it is going in the end. Beware of being caught by the "smooth words and fair speeches" of the great crop of false prophets abroad in the world. We may be like the prophet of old of whom the king said, "I hate him for he always prophesies evil of me." May we by faith be able to sing with the poet:

"Should we to gain the world's applause,

Or to escape its harmless frown,

Refuse to countenance Thy cause,

And make Thy people's lot our own,

What shame would fill us in that day,

When Thou Thy glory wilt display.

"No, let the world cast out our name,

And vile account us if it will;

If to confess our Lord be shame,

Oh, then would we be viler still;

For Thee, O Lord, we all resign,

Content that Thou dost call us Thine."

Pope John XXIII took an unusual step before he died, and ordered two words stricken from Catholic remarks about Jews; the two words were "perfidious Jews." It is hard to see what those words added or detracted from the message in Catholic churches, but they were a source of constant irritation to the Jews. These two groups, slowly to be sure, are moving closer to rapprochement. Liberal Protestantism is also moving in the same direction. Many Protestant publications are eloquently advocating better common understanding between them and the Jews, and some of the challenges we have seen link Christian and Jewish celebrations together would in our judgment be rejected by many Jews; for instance, the six-pointed "Star of David" is not to be compared with the cross, nor are Thanksgiving day and the Jewish feast of Succoth the same.

Many of the charges against Christians and true Christianity are unwisely made. To refer to Jews as "killers of God" is foreign to any scriptural expression or thought. To cite the travesty of Christ's death in the Passion Play of Oberammergau as a picture of true Christianity is untrue and unfaithful to the faithful Word. No warrant for such parody is found within the covers of divine inspiration. Much that passes for Christianity is but an imposture.

A proposal by a Rabbi, under the title line of "A NEW LOOK AT JESUS," in the March issue of Eternity Magazine, may indicate Reformed Judaism's willingness to examine Jesus as a Jew and a teacher; but the same old intractable rejection of Him who came according to their own prophet as "meek and lowly" and "riding on an ass," is as unequivocally true today as before. It may be

correct, as the Rabbi says, "Reform Judaism has broadened its relations with organized Christianity." But he also says: "Needless to say, Jews never can and never will accept Jesus as the Messiah or as the Son of God." That this is a true account of a major portion of Judaism today can scarcely be denied, but their own prophets have plainly foretold that they will yet do this very thing. Zechariah describes the soul-searching that the Jews will pass through with great sorrow of heart and true repentance when Jesus does return for their deliverance. They are still "beloved for the fathers' sakes"; and a remnant of them will be brought to own their guilt and say in truth, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the LORD [Jehovah]; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isa. 25:9. But for the present, "blindness in part [not in whole] is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." Rom. 11:25.

Failure in the First Man

We know how all that has been from time to time entrusted to man has in man's hand failed-Adam in Eden, or in the fair untainted creation-Noah in the new world-Israel in Canaan -the house of David on the throne-the house of Levi in the sanctuary-the Gentile with the sword and the power, as an earthly god-the candlestick-all have proved untrue. But all purposes in these, all divine expectations in each and all of these, will be answered and realized by Christ. The earth will bloom again. Israel, and David, and Levi, people, king, and priest, will all be in their several places and services in the days of Messiah. Government in the world will be in righteousness, and the Church be presented in full beauty, a glorious, spotless Church.

All this will be so, as in the hand of the great Repairer of all breaches. But more than this. At the beginning, the Lord God prepared a sabbath. Adam profaned it. In due time Jehovah prepared another sabbath in Canaan and in Solomon. Israel and the house of David profaned it. But now, blessed to tell it, Christ has prepared a sabbath for God. "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do," said He, addressing the Father. And God has entered this sabbath. He rests in the finished work of the Lord Jesus; and He will rest in it forever.

Wondrous and precious mystery! Man, the first man, Adam, profaned the sabbath which God had hallowed-man, the second Man, Christ, has perfected and prepared a sabbath for the Lord God, and He will enjoy it forever.

Feasts of the Lord

Leviticus 23

The feasts of the Lord were the gathering of the people around Himself.

In the Old Testament God was teaching His people the letters, we may say; now, He is teaching us to put them together; and put them together however you please, they always spell "Christ."

The first feast is the Lord's Passover. In order to understand the Passover we need to read Exodus 12.

The children of Israel were in bondage in Egypt. They were the people descended from Abraham, and heirs of the covenant. But they are in Egypt, sunken to as low a level as the Egyptians themselves, and deserving the judgment of God for their sins as much as the Egyptians, when God heard their cry of oppression. He came down to deliver them, and one plague after another plague was sent upon the land of Egypt to show the power of God, and that the Egyptians had to do with God, until the last plague, the tenth; and that was the death of the first-born.

God told the people to take a lamb on the tenth day of the first month. They were to keep it up until the fourteenth day of the first month and kill the lamb at even. Then they were to take the blood, and dip hyssop in the blood, and sprinkle the side-posts of their doors, and the lintel overhead; and they were to stay inside of the house that night. God's word was pledged for it, that where the blood was upon the door, He would pass over them; and the plagues should not be on them to destroy them when He judged the land of Egypt. That was called the Lord's Passover. He passed over the children of Israel that night wherever the blood was sprinkled on the door-posts; but where it was not found on the door-posts, there was death. The first-born of all in Egypt, from the king on the throne to the beggar on the dunghill, man and beast, the first-born was slain, except where the blood was. And, of course, the significance of that is, that for us - Christ being our Passover - we were in the sphere of judgment, and deserving the judgment, and having been sheltered by the blood of Christ, judgment never can touch us.

This event took place in the land of Egypt, but was to be celebrated every year, at that period, as a memorial feast. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover." It is a very serious feast, this - a very solemn one. Where an account of it is given in Deuteronomy, there is not a word about rejoicing.

There are three principal feasts in Deuteronomy 16: the Passover, or unleavened bread, which is in connection with it; Pentecost, or Feast of Weeks; and the Feast of Tabernacles. There is rejoicing in connection with the Feast of Weeks, and there is rejoicing greatly in connection with the Feast of Tabernacles, but not one word of rejoicing in the Feast of Unleavened Bread, or the Passover. They are connected here. "In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover, and on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread. In the first day ye shall have a holy

convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein."

Just notice what is said in Deuteronomy 16:1-9. Not one word of joy or rejoicing. And it is more to be marked because when you read the next verse, which takes up the Feast of Weeks, that is, Pentecost, you will find for instance in verse 11, "Thou shalt rejoice," etc. There is a beautiful principle furnished us with regard to the Feast of Weeks. Not only, "Thou shalt rejoice," but everyone around us is to rejoice too. God's way never teaches selfishness, but enlarges the heart toward every needy one. The widow, fatherless, Levites, all were to be brought in, servants and everybody, in this rejoicing.

Verse 13 - "Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days"; "and thou shalt rejoice in thy feast"; and then again in verse 15 - "Therefore thou shalt surely rejoice." When you come to the Feast of Tabernacles, it will be all rejoicing.

The Feast of the Passover brings before us the awful solemn truth of God's righteous claims upon His creatures on account of their sins being answered for, but answered by the death of Christ, the blood of Christ our Passover. What comes next here is Pentecost; but in Leviticus 23 there is something before this.

Pentecost carries us on to the consequences of Christ's death - His work - the giving of the Holy Ghost; that, of course, brings joy to the heart; and there is rejoicing in the Feast of Weeks. This is peculiar to this present time, and the gathering out of the Church. You cannot tell what month this was. It was to be fifty days from the time they waved the sheaf of first fruits. But the moment the Church is completed, God begins again to reckon time; and on the fifteenth day of the seventh month began the Feast of Tabernacles. That will be commemorative of all the wanderings of God's people when strangers and pilgrims, but cannot be celebrated until their pilgrimage is all over, and they are settled and established in full blessing in accordance with the purpose of God. And so it will be all rejoicing. It will be what we call the Millennium.

The Passover does not carry us beyond the death of Christ, does it? Not even to the resurrection? Lev. 23:10 - "When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest: and he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it," etc. It could not be waved before the Lord any other day but the morrow after the sabbath. The priest takes it in his hand and passes it before the Lord as he says, "to be accepted for you." "And ye shall offer that day" certain offerings spoken of.

If we let the light of 1 Corinthians 15 shine back here, it just illuminates this whole statement. Verse 20 - "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." There is the anti-type. "The firstfruits of them that slept." You see, casting the seed into the ground, it dies, and springs up, and bears its fruit; and that is a new crop. When the harvest was ready, the reapers reaped the first sheaf. Suppose it was Wednesday they reaped it. They kept that sheaf until the morrow after the sabbath. What day would that be? The first day of the week. If they reaped it on Friday, they kept it until the first day of the week; and then the priest was to wave it, because it was a type of the resurrection of Christ, that was to take place on the first day of the week - the morrow after the sabbath - and that was given by God to His people nearly 1500 years before Christ died, but was there ever present to God's mind. How establishing that is to the soul!

You see what we have in the Word of God. As the Lord said, "The Scripture cannot be broken." Men will break their heads on it, but the Scripture cannot be broken; and here you find it actually carried out to the very letter. So we get Christ's death in the Passover. Christ risen on the first day of the week - the morrow after the sabbath - in the wave sheaf, explained in Corinthians: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Everyone, that is, each believer in Him, is a part of that harvest; and every one of us through grace, comes in as a part of that crop of which Christ is the first fruits.

Then it is the more to be noticed, because in the offerings that accompany this wave sheaf, you look in vain to find a sin offering. You can find a burnt offering, and you can find meat offering and drink offering, but no sin offering; for there was no sin in Him. He needed no sin offering, and that shows all the more strikingly how carefully the Spirit of God guards the truth of His holy Person. No sin offering is connected with this wave sheaf.

"And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf a he lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt offering unto the LORD. And the meat offering thereof shall be two tenth deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD for a sweet savor: and the drink offering thereof shall be of wine, the fourth part of a hin. And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the selfsame day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings."

It would have been a sin for them to have touched or eaten anything of that crop until the wave sheaf had been presented to the Lord. God must have His part first.

It is important in looking into these passages, particularly for the young, that we see that none but God could have given such an account. Who else could have done that? It shows what a wonderful thing we have in the Word of God. He could see beforehand 1500 years. Moses did not understand it, and nobody could understand it until its accomplishment, and the light shines back and fills it with illumination. Then we see whose mind it was that dictated Leviticus, and whose mind it was that dictated Corinthians. That explains Leviticus, though written 1500 years earlier. It was one Mind running through the whole.

Feasts of the Lord

Leviticus 23-Part 2

In Luke 6 the Pharisees thought it an awful sin for the disciples to pluck the corn and eat of it on the sabbath. But the Spirit of God guards this by telling us it was the second sabbath after the first. The first having past, on the morrow after the first the wave sheaf had been waved before the Lord; and on the second after the first, it was no harm for them to take the corn. But had they taken it on the first, it would have been a sin. For them to take of the fruit of the soil before God had His share would have been sin, because it would have been ignoring His rights. The Pharisees were following the tradition of the elders.

In connection with the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there seems to be no space. It was the next day. What lesson are we to learn from that? From 1 Corinthians 5, the Church is looked at as keeping the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the reason given is, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the

leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." "Leaven" typifies what is evil-what puffs up, makes light and corrupts. It is always evil everywhere spoken of in Scripture, and is to be excluded. The Christian who is under the shelter of the blood of Christ is to pass his whole life on earth with leaven put away. Among the Jews there is a great searching of the house just before the Passover. Everything has to be purged out for fear a little leaven will be found in their dwelling. They have it in the letter. The teaching is that as leaven typifies evil, the Christian is to put away evil. The Church is to exclude all evil and thus keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. There is no space between the Passover Feast and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, so that it is the whole of the life from the time we are under the shelter of the blood of Christ, until our week is ended or completed. Seven is a perfect number-completeness in spiritual things-therefore in the whole period of our sojourn on earth; and it is the holiness that becomes the people of God that is set forth by the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Leaven is always evil, but there are a great many kinds in Scripture connected with bad conduct and immorality. Fornication in Corinthians is called leaven, and in Galatians false teaching, teaching which characterizes Christendom and Catholicism. You will find they nearly all have some gospel, but it is mixed with leaven-false teaching. The Lord warned His disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. They were wrong in supposing it was because they had taken no bread. When He reproves them they understand He spake of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. There is danger of Christians getting occupied with a certain class of leaven, and it is important to see we have different classes in Scripture.

What lesson are we to learn from the woman introducing leaven into the meal? I do not like that woman at all, because she was hiding it. It was not a straightforward course. She hid the leaven in the three measures of meal, and she hid it there until the whole was leavened. There is not a woman in this company who, if she made bread, would do that. As soon as it became a little leavened, she would put it in the oven to stop its working. The three measures of meal is the children's food; and think of that wicked woman hiding leaven in it, until what ought to be food is poison-corrupted! To eat of it would bring on sickness and perhaps death. Woman, too, is taken in Scripture in that way, as a picture of a system. You get a woman very prominent in connection with the false church. That is what is meant in Matthew 13. That evil system has grown up and finds its fullest expression in Romanism that has put leaven into the food of God's children. The Church of Rome will tell you it is by Christ's death you are to be saved. That is truth. But how am I to get it? They will say it is dependent upon the sacraments and the priests. That puts something between me and God, and puts me at a distance; and there is where the leaven is put into the truth and the truth spoiled. It makes my faith to be in the priest and what he does, instead of in Christ, and what He has done.

Why does it say three measures? Because He wants to give us a picture expressive of what Christ is, I think.

Would it refer to death, burial, and resurrection, do you think? I do not know about that. I would be far more inclined to connect it with the fact that God has revealed Himself as a man in Christ; but when the full revelation of God comes out, He is three Persons in One God. Look at Genesis 18. "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat

of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him," etc. What did he say? "My Lords"? No. "My Lord." There were three men. "If now I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from Thy servant: let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts," etc. "And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal," etc. Here three measures of meal is used again. It is to be made into cakes to be set before these wondrous visitors. There is a good deal more to be set before them, but I mention this because the expression "three measures of meal" is used here. "And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." That is a beautiful picture, is it not? Precious! Now we think it was God appearing to Abraham in this way, in manhood, but it is three; and Abraham addresses them as though they were one. It is all the more striking, when we look at chapter 19 and see the contrast. Lot is a picture of the worldly Christian. When He visited Sodom-when He visited Lot-it was not as three men, but as two angels. Lot sat, not in the door of his tent, but in the gate. "And Lot seeing them rose up to meet them;... and he said, Behold now, my lords." Notice he addresses them in the plural. "Turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night."

Of all Lot's feast there is not one single thing worth mentioning, except that unleavened bread. Abraham had three measures of meal made into cakes, and a calf, tender and good, and butter and milk; but poor Lot had a most elaborate spread. He was in the city where he could get whatever he wanted, but there is not a thing mentioned but the unleavened bread. And that he had to make-it was not ready. There was no tree there either. Of course the tree makes us think of Peter's words, "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." And it is under the tree that God and man meet, as it were.

As to the figure three, wouldn't you say it was a complete number also? There was the case of Peter. The Lord put the question three times, "Lovest thou Me?" (complete restoration). Also, the Lord prayed three times in the garden. The third time He said, "It is enough."

Using the leaven as a type until the whole three measures of meal were leavened, we get the whole truth corrupted. Thy word is truth. The whole Word of God has been corrupted.

I think what more characterizes the teachings of Protestantism is not the corruption of the truth, but the renouncement of it, while in Romanism you have the corruption of it.

In Lev. 23:1, I know Christ is my passover, and the value of His death; then in resurrection as the triumphant One; and thus present Him to God, "to be accepted for you."

That line of things is so needful for the Christian, because so many seem to stop at the death of Christ; they say, Yes, I know He died for my sins. But the wave sheaf is for me too -Christ in resurrection.

In verse 17, why were the two wave loaves to be taken with leaven? We need to go back a little. First, the wave sheaf of the crop had been waved before the Lord on the morrow after the sabbath. We do not know how long after the whole crop is gathered in until some is turned into food. Verse 15- "Ye shall count it unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the

sheaf of the wave offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete." In Jas. 1:18 we read, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures." Christ is the first fruits of them that slept. Now, we-a kind of first fruits-are typified by these two loaves that are baked with leaven, because, you see, there was no evil in Him; but in us there is evil, and will be as long as we are here in the body. You will find with these two wave loaves there is a sin offering which covers the evil, as it were, before God. Verse 18- All that is just like we have in connection with the wave sheaf. But now we get something that is not there. "Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin offering," etc. When you come to the actual fulfillment of that, counting from the very day that Christ rose, the morrow after the sabbath, seven weeks, till the morrow after the seventh sabbath, it brings you up to the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Christ. For the fiftieth day look at Acts 2:1, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come." The meaning of Pentecost is fifty days, and it is just this: fifty days after Christ rose, the Holy Ghost came down into the world to take "out of your habitations" two wave loaves for the Lord. Is that not most wonderful? To the very day of the coming of the Holy Ghost, it was all foreshadowed fifteen hundred years. After He was risen from the dead during the forty days, He told them to tarry in Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high-not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise. It would not be many days hence. It would be ten days- not many, though. That brings you right up to the fiftieth day; and on that day, Acts 2 gives us an account of the Holy Ghost's descent. He forms the saints into one body, and afterward the Gentiles are brought in. I suppose it is the Jew and Gentile that is set forth in the two wave loaves.

Notice what we get in verse 22: "And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harvest," etc. When the Lord comes to take us up, the corners will be left, because there will be a remnant that will be taken up later. Put to death in two different companies during Daniel's seventieth week, they will complete the gathering out of those that are left. See Rev. 6:9-11; 11:7-12.

What follows that is an entire change. You will notice we have the first month mentioned. There is not another month mentioned till we come to the 7th, and what is between is the growing, harvest and reaping, and all connected with the heavenly people, till they are completed and out of the scene.

Now on the first day of the seventh month there was to be a blowing of trumpets, and that is typical of what will happen after the Lord has taken us up. There will be a blowing of trumpets that will gather Israel back to their land; and then, after they are brought back, the next thing is, on the tenth day of the seventh month they are to have what is called the great day of atonement. They are to do no work, not merely no servile work, but no manner of work. It is a day of atonement, and they are to afflict their souls. That will be the work of God's grace in the hearts of Israel, bringing them to see their wickedness in having put Christ to death. "And one shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends." It is beautiful in Zechariah-we have the full accomplishment of that day of atonement.

On the fifteenth day of the seventh month is the Feast of Tabernacles. Their troubles all over, they are dwelling in tents commemorative of their troubles. Surely, they are to rejoice before the Lord;

and everything that hath breath will praise God in that day. It is pictured in Psalms too, as well as in the Prophets, because their dwelling in tents is typical of the Millennium when all nations on the earth will come up to Jerusalem and keep the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also set forth in the prophecy of Zechariah. It reaches on from the very beginning through all the dealings of God with us until His rest is reached in the end-the sabbath of eternity, and no work there-no manner of work.

Is it not plain from Scripture that when the Lord comes and takes up His people, for those who have heard the truth, there is no more hope?

No question about that. It makes it so solemn for those who hear the truth now, because if they do not submit to it, it is because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie.

The door will be closed upon those who have had an opportunity, but multitudes of heathen will have the gospel of the kingdom preached to them; and on receiving it they will be blessed on earth - not for heaven - during the time of Christ's reign when there will be peace and prosperity. Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, and earth shall keep her jubilee under the reign of Christ.

The Fit Man

"And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness." Lev. 16:21.

The passage of God's Word here quoted tells us of the gracious way in which He met the needs of the people in their wanderings through the wilderness.

There was on the one hand, the Holy God in all His divine purity, and on the other, men and women like ourselves, sinful and sinners; and although God had made abundant provision for His people, and appointed the offerings they were to bring when they knew and owned their sin, there must still have been many sins committed which had been forgotten; and consequently no offering had been brought for them.

But in His eyes, with whom we have to do, these were sins as much as any others, and must be put out of His sight; accordingly, He provides for them in the verse at the head of this article.

Three distinct words are used, so as to take in every sin committed by Israel during the year: "All the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins."

God directs that all these shall be confessed over the head of the scapegoat, and then it is to be sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness, bearing away on its head all these iniquities, transgressions, and sins, to a land not inhabited, out of the sight of the people. This striking type we find wonderfully answered to in the New Testament by Christ Himself, of whom it is written: "And 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." Heb. 9:27, 28. And again: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Pet. 2:24.

And we know from the narrative of the gospel that God turned his face away from the sin-bearer; for although He was Himself absolutely sinless, He was made sin; and God could not look upon sin.

But there is no divine tranquility for the Israelites as long as that goat walks about in the camp with all these sins on its head. They must be put out of sight.

So now we get the "fit man," or, as the margin gives it, "the man of opportunity." Any man picked out at random would not do; it must be one who could be trusted not to lose sight of the goat until it was in a place "not inhabited," and from whence it could not return into the camp of Israel with the people's sins on its head.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God's "fit man," God's "man of opportunity"; for in Gal. 4:4 we read, "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under

the law, to redeem them that were under the law." "Made of a woman," to meet your need and mine as children of Adam; "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons"; "fit" because He alone, as the sinless One, could bear my sins; and the "man of opportunity," because He came in "the fullness of time."

Yes, all your iniquities and all your transgressions in all your sins must go; and God in His grace has provided One who is "fit" to take them away into a place not inhabited, and return without them.

He too is the "man of opportunity"; and how blessed for us, for however "fit" He might have been, He would have been of no avail for us if the "opportunity" had passed before He came; so too He might have presented Himself with the opportunity, but unless He had been the "fit man" He would have been of no use.

Take, for example, the Israelites when face to face with the Philistines (1 Sam. 17). There were many men of valor among them - a Saul, an Eliab, an Abner, all mighty men - and here was the opportunity; but they lacked the fitness to meet the giant on his own ground; only God's "fit man" could do that; but God did provide the "fit man," the "man of opportunity," in the person of David.

The Lord is "fit" for two things - to be a Savior for those who receive Him (John 1:12), and also to be the Judge of those who do not (Acts 17:31). It will either be to know Him as God's "fit man" for salvation, or as God's ordained Man for judgment. But if any let the opportunity pass, if they refuse the "fit man" provided by God, there is no other that can deliver them.

Frankincense

Lev. 2:2

The perfectness of Christ in all His path was that He never did anything to be seen of men; it all went entirely up to God. The savor of it was sweet to the priests, but it all was addressed to God. Serving man, the Holy Ghost was in all His ways; but all the effect of the grace thus was in Him, was in His own mind, always toward God; even if for man, it was to God. And so with us; nothing should come in, as motive, except what is to God.

We see in Eph. 4:32 and 5:1, 2, the grace toward man, and the perfectness of man toward God as the object. "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children" (J.N.D. Trans.). In all our service as following Christ here, we get these two principles: our affections toward God and our Father, and the operation of His love in our hearts toward those in need. The more wretched the object of service in the latter case, the truer the love, and the more simply the motive is to God. We may love down and love up; and the more wretched and unworthy the persons are for whom I lay myself out for blessing, the more grace there is in it. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." But while that is true, yet, as to my state of heart, the higher the object, the more elevated the affection. With Christ it was perfect. How can a poor creature like me be an imitator of God? Was not Christ an example, God, seen in a man? And are we to "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God"? He gave Himself for us, but to God; it was God's grace toward poor wretched sinners.

If we look at ourselves, we shall soon see how motives get mixed up, and things come in, even where there is right truehearted purpose; and that is where we have to watch. In Christ all was perfect; all, every bit of it, as to spring and motive, was for God's glory in this world - no thought of men, as to pleasing them, but that singleness of eye which looked to God alone, though full of kindness to man - loving down in that sense, but ever looking up, and with His God and Father before His eye, which made Him perfect in everything. He was of course perfect, could not be anything else.

Now, it is not that the priests could not smell the sweet savor, but it was not offered to them; it was all burned to God. As regards His own path, not a feeling that was not entirely to God; for us, but to God. It was that which was perfectly acceptable to God.

"The last days" are more definite and distinct than the "latter times" - "perilous," because of the form of godliness.

Fresh Grace Is Desired for Every Step

The leaves of a tree this year are not the same as they were last year; new foliage comes with each succeeding year; the climate, the circumstances are never the same as in the former year. So it is with us as Christians. The Lord's purpose is not to teach us habits, which a continued sameness of circumstance would produce, but the resources of life, and that through a variety and constant change of circumstances. If the circumstances were the same this year as they were last, the grace which carried one through last year would do for this; but when the circumstances are entirely new and diverse, then the grace must be entirely new and different in its order, to be suitable. Hence the manna was to be gathered every morning before the exigencies of the day occurred, before there was any demand; and that which was gathered was adequate for every demand which could accrue. What a wonderful way to begin the day-with fresh manna, prepared for every fresh and unexpected demand!

Our strength in Christ is not to be measured by the way in which we met any former trial, but by the way we meet the present one, though the remembrance of a former victory may encourage me as to a present difficulty, as the remembrance of killing the lion and the bear encouraged David when he was about to encounter Goliath. As there is progress, the trials or tryings become greater, but the strength is also greater; and if the strength be greater than the tryings, there is not increased suffering or anxiety, but there is the increased sense of the resources that are in Christ.

A tall tree gets more of the storms, but then it is better able to resist and hold its ground than a young one would be if exposed to the same shaking. If you have got over a two-foot fence, prepare for a three-foot one, and so on. The tests are greater as we advance. There is often, as we see in young horses, more suffering in taking the first fence than in any succeeding one, if he be kept well in practice. Sometimes one balks and sulks and will not -take the fences, and then there is loss; the sense of Christ's power is practically lost to the soul, and there is no use or gain in remembering how I rose above circumstances on a former occasion; indeed, if I do recall this, it only convicts me of being -worse mounted now than I was then; and this in a Christian means that he is not as simply dependent on Christ now as he was at a former time. The saints' motto is, "Now or never"-a saint or nothing. This schooling in the new life is most interesting. I have to meet new and unexpected fences or hindrances every day, and, according as my heart is restful in Christ, I am able to meet them in His strength; and thus I go from strength to strength, till I appear before God in Zion. No rest till I get there. May you come forth fresh every morning like the sun, rejoicing as a strong man to run the race set before you!

Full Revelation

"The dispensation of God" was given to Paul to "complete the word of God" (Col. 1:25; J.N.D. Trans.). Creation, providence, law, government, the kingdom, incarnation, atonement, every subject had been unfolded in the Word of God, except one. When it was revealed through Paul, the full circle of revelation was completed; this was the mystery of Christ and the Church. First, that Christ should, as man, be set in the heavenlies, having all dominion, by redemption (personally He had it as God), as Head over all things in heaven and earth, to the Church, His body, united to Him by the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. Second, that He was "in you"-Gentiles-the "hope of glory." This was a new thing. When Christ came, He was the "minister of the circumcision [the Jew] for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom. 15:8).

Abraham was the vessel of the promises of God; they were repeated to the fathers, Isaac and Jacob; Israel took the promises on the ground of law and man's responsibility, and forfeited them totally; then Christ came, in whom were all the promises of God, yea and amen. He came to establish the promises, as heir of them all, to the people to whose fathers they had been made; that is, the Jews. He was rejected, and instead of becoming the "crown of glory... unto the residue of His people" (Isa. 28:5), the heir of glory goes on high; and the poor Gentile believer, who had no promises, comes in on the footing of pure mercy, not promise, as we read, "that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Rom. 15:9); he gets a place in Christ on high, united to Him who is the heir of all the glory; and not only are we in Him, but He is in us-not the "crown of glory," but "the hope of glory." "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Gideon and His Three Hundred Men

The Scriptures show us plainly that God has pleased in His infinite wisdom, at different times and in various ways, to test His people, so as to keep them in the safe path of dependence and obedience, for His glory and their blessing.

It has been in proving them, at one time by trials and difficulties, and at another by the very mercies needful for them. This was so with Israel of old, and it is so more or less with God's people today. There is a case illustrating this in Gideon's day recorded for our learning in the 7th chapter of the book of Judges. As to Gideon's army, it there tells us of those who were ready; of those who returned; of those who remained; of those retained and of the rest. It is instructive to see what God tells us of these five classes. The whole army of 32,000 were in a sense ready to go forward to fight their enemies; but when tested, 22,000 returned as fearful and afraid.

There remained 10,000 men of courage, but when further tested there were only 300 retained whom God could trust; and the rest were sent back to their tents. It is written, "The LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, they shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place. So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent, and retained those three hundred men." Judg. 7:4-8.

How solemn that, out of such a large number as 10,000, God could only retain for His use 300 men as trustworthy and proof against being drawn aside by partaking too bountifully of their commonest, everyday, needful mercies! Such evidently was their moral state! We see in those retained 300 men the secret of dependence and obedience. Wisdom too was shown. "He divided the three hundred men into three companies." They acted corporately - "The three hundred blew the trumpets." They acted individually too-"They stood every man in his place." They all had one object - "Look on me, and do likewise." They were all of one mind - "As I do, so shall ye do." All spake the same thing -"Say, The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon." All had self-abnegation-They "brake the pitchers." Faith was in exercise, and the victory was the Lord's, who had already given assurance of certain victory, which was as real to faith before the battle as it was after it. More knowledge of God's Word, great human intelligence in the truth, long years of honored service, much experience and the like, good as they may be in themselves, are utterly powerless to sustain and preserve God's people for Himself in this day - a day surely of ease and abounding mercies.

Nothing short of dependence upon Himself and obedience to His Word will suffice. Our blessed Lord was the only perfect exemplification of this, and it is very remarkable to see how successfully He met every temptation of Satan with quotations from the book of Deuteronomy, which as we know contains special instruction for the saints' walk; and He left us an example that we should walk in His steps. Moreover, we have many examples in God's Word showing how blessed it is to be characterized by dependence and obedience, and how solemnly disastrous it is to be found in an opposite path. The foe, knowing our tendencies, and well acquainted with our weakest points, directs his attacks accordingly. What would answer his purpose with one saint would probably have no power whatever with another. May the Lord in His rich grace keep us in this respect like Gideon's three hundred lappers, for His glory!

Glad Tidings and Joy

"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10, 11.

INCARNATION. There is in Christ a foundation laid for greater intimacy with God than Adam was at first capable of. He, indeed, was the son of God; yet he was kept at a further distance, and treated with more state and majesty from God than now the reconciled soul is. For though he was the son of God by creation, yet the Son of God was not then the Son of man by incarnation; and at this door comes in the believer's sweetest intimacy with God. God doth descend His throne, exchange His majestic robes of glory for man's frail flesh; He leaves His palace to live for a time in His creature's humble cottage, and there not only familiarly converses with him but, which is stranger, ministers to him; yea, which is more than all these, He surrenders Himself up to endure all manner of indignities from His sorry creature's hand.

And when this coarse entertainment is done, back He goes to heaven, not to complain to His Father how He had been abused here below, and raise heaven's power against those who had so ill-treated Him, but to make ready heaven's palace for the reception of those who had thus abused Him, and now will accept of His grace.

And lest these yet left on earth should fear that His majesty in heaven's glory would make some alteration with their affairs in His heart - to give them therefore a constant demonstration that He would be the same in the height of His honor that He was in the depth of His abasement - He goes back in the same clothes, as it were, to wear them on the throne in all His glory.

God Hath Spoken: Remarks on Inspiration

The first recorded question in the Scriptures is an infidel one. It fell from the lips of Satan. Listened to by our first mother, it became the parent doubt of all doubts. Satan hissed his wicked suggestion into Eve's ear, "Yea, hath God said...?"

And from that day to this Satan has been casting doubt upon God's Word. The more exalted and learned the man, the more the devil delights in enlisting him on the side of doubt.

Satan is cunning beyond all doubt, transforming himself into "an angel of light," and his ministers into the "ministers of righteousness"; so it is not a matter of surprise if we find falsehood entrenched in high places, having as its exponents men who occupy prominent positions in the religious world.

A young man was about to leave one town and go to another. He waited upon his minister to say good-bye. On leaving, he presented him with the covers of a Bible, inside of which were a few mutilated leaves.

"What do you mean by this?" asked the minister.

The young man replied in words somewhat like these: "I sat under your ministry for three years. When you told us a certain passage or book in the Bible was not inspired, I cut that portion out when I returned home. This is all that remains to me at the end of three years; and now that I am leaving your church, I wish to present you with the remnant that is left. It is of no use to me."

And so the young man went out from the study of that minister without a Bible - to fight the battle of life; and unless the grace of God intervened, to enter eternity unilluminated by the only light that God had given, and which had been snatched out of his hands by the destructive ministry of one who had taken the place of a preacher of the gospel.

There is no safe middle ground to be taken in regard to the vital question of the inspiration of the original Scriptures. Either the whole Book is God-inspired or it is not. Who is to tell us which part is inspired and which is not? If doubt is cast upon one portion, how do I know that the passage that brought me the knowledge of salvation is inspired? All is uncertainty.

If I did not believe the Bible from cover to cover, I would throw it in the fire, for it professes to come from God. If it does not, it is worthy of the flames. People may admire its classical English, the majestic language of Isaiah, the poetic imagery of the Psalms, its commanding influence over the minds, the laws, the language of the civilized world; but if it is not what it professes to be, all this only makes it the more dangerous.

But, thank God, it is the Word of God to me. It has discovered my need, revealed the secrets of my innermost being, brought me to the knowledge of the One who knows me thoroughly, even God - aye, the knowledge of Himself as love and light in the gift of His blessed Son to die for me, thus relieving my conscience and satisfying my heart with Himself, and giving me a place in His own

presence-and not to me only, but to untold thousands of different ages and races, of different temperaments and environments. All this is a miracle beyond cavil, and makes the maanderings of infidelity like the waves that break threateningly upon the Bass Rock, only to fall back from whence they came. The rock of Holy Scripture is impregnable.

The external evidences of inspiration may be useful and irrefutable, but the internal evidences are the most powerful and convincing. Only the converted man, as taught by the Holy Spirit, can appreciate or understand the internal evidences. This is a principle of the last importance to recognize.

For instance, the infidel can only see in the book of Leviticus a lot of minute and dry instructions as to the Jewish ritual. The Christian reads in them the most wonderful types of Christ, His people, the character and ways of God, in what is but dry minutia to the infidel, food and refreshment to his soul. And he finds too that the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews is animated by the same Spirit as the writer of the book of Leviticus. One part of Scripture confirms another. All is one harmonious whole.

Therefore it must not distress the young Christian if he fails to impress the mind of the unconverted with the beauties of Scripture. The Scriptures need no apology, but stand forth in all their native simplicity and grandeur as God's revelation.

The Bible is unique, alone, incomparable. It is God-given, God-breathed, speaking with authority. The best and grandest of other books is manmade, imperfect and human, speaking with no more authority than its author is capable of. But with the Bible everything is different. Moses may have been the scribe, but GOD is the Author of the Pentateuch. Human instruments may have been used as intelligent pens, but God Himself is the Penman, and the result is - THE BIBLE.

And when objections are looked into, you will always find they only prove that the objectors have neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hearts to understand God's revelation.

God's Order

We should not, when in a wrong position, stop to inquire, as we so often do, Where can I find anything better? God's order is, "Cease to do evil"; and when we have acted upon that holy precept, we are furnished with another; namely, "Learn to do well." If we expect to "learn" how "to do well" before we "cease to do evil," we are entirely mistaken. "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from [among] the dead." And what then? "Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. 5:14.)

My beloved reader, if you are doing what you know to be wrong., or if you are identified in any way with what you own to be contrary to Scripture, hearken to the word of the Lord, "Cease to do evil"; and, be assured, when you have yielded obedience to this word, you will not long be left in ignorance as to your path. It is sheer unbelief that leads us to say, I cannot cease to do evil, until I find something better. The Lord grant us a single eye and a docile spirit.

Happiness of Faith

Christians might avoid much trouble and inconvenience if they would only believe what they profess - that God is able to make them happy without anything else. They imagine that if such a dear friend would die, or such and such blessings be removed, they should be miserable; whereas God can make them a thousand times happier without them. To mention my own case - God has been depriving me of one blessing after another, but as everyone was removed, He has come in and filled up its place; and now, when I am a cripple and not able to move, I am happier than ever I was in my life before, or ever expected to be; and if I had believed this twenty years ago, I might have been spared much anxiety.

Hearts Full of Christ

Where are our hearts; Oh, where are they? Are they occupied with this world, or are we quietly passing on to heaven, taken up with that which love cannot lose sight of - a living Christ in heaven?

What wealth have you if you have not got Christ? If Christ is the Object before you, will all the things that fret you take Christ from you? All the things you long for, will they give you more of Christ?

Our springs, all the way from beginning to end, are in Christ; you cannot find anything apart from Christ. It will not do to stand on any ground apart from an ascended Christ. He who spake as never man spake, is the One whose word is to stand throughout eternity.

Hebrews and Ephesians: the Difference Between Them

The relation in which Christ is presented to His people as "the Apostle and High Priest of our profession" in Hebrews, and Christ as Lord and Head of His body, the Church, of which we are the members, in the Ephesians, might of itself explain what the difference is, and determine it. There are, however, other considerations of interest to which the Scriptures guide us.

We are looked at in the Hebrews as a collective number of persons, on their way into the rest that remains, and therefore pilgrims and strangers, in virtue of our heavenly calling. Another and a very important point is, that the "time of need" measures the provision made for our supply by "the throne of grace," to which we are exhorted to come boldly, in order to "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Moreover, we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but One who is able to succor them that are tempted, for "He Himself hath suffered being tempted." It is evident from such provisions as these, and others of a similar character, that the people are not contemplated as in Canaan, or in the rest, but on their way to it; "we which have believed do enter into rest"; and again, "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest." Further, "the heirs of promise" are encouraged to lay hold on the hope set before them, "within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus," etc.

In brief, we see in all these instances that Christ is separated off from His people- a High Priest passed into the heavens, and He alone "set down" on the right hand of the Majesty on high-though there on behalf of His people, but a people as yet on the earth, with a heavenly calling, and on their way to the rest. So as to "the forerunner"- He is within the veil, but alone, though He has entered there for us; and "unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time," etc. What can be plainer than that the character and provisions made by God, in the Hebrews, to suit Himself in the holiest, and a people whom He has called into His rest, recognize distance, and infirmities, and a time of need. In short, the necessities of a people on their way are met by the resources of the heavens above their heads, and ministered by the great High Priest of their profession.

In the Ephesians, we are viewed as members of Christ's body - of His flesh and of His bones-which He nourishes and cherishes. Besides this, the power which wrought in Christ to place Him where He is, at the right hand of God, is likewise to usward who believe-God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This epistle is just the opposite of the Hebrews; for there, as we saw, the Lord was alone, and set down as a Priest, or entered in alone as a forerunner (and very precious these relations of Christ are to us). But here in the Ephesians He is not alone, for we are in

Him, as the members of His body, seated in Him in the heavenlies, because He is the Head of the Church-not in an office, which priesthood is, but as Head of His body-not as a forerunner. But we are quickened together and raised up together and seated.

Moreover, our infirmities are not the question, but a direct and different ministration from the Lord, in love to the members. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

There is no corporate body in the Hebrews, but a collective number of people, with a pilgrimage and the rest of God in view, whereas in the Ephesians there is nothing of this kind, but a "unity"-a habitation of God through the Spirit" - and "a body" upon the earth - not units, tens, hundreds, and thousands (numerically considered) like the children of Israel, who were "six hundred thousand, and a thousand seven hundred and thirty," when numbered on the plains of Moab, before their entrance into Canaan - on their way into rest-but "one new man."

The saints of God in this dispensation stand in the relation to God of a people on earth, "begotten... again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away," etc., of which Peter's epistles give the description. Till we enter into this inheritance by our own resurrection, or translation, we are addressed as "pilgrims and strangers," and exhorted to pass the time of our "sojourning here in fear," calling upon the Father, etc.

But the saints of God have another relation to Christ, as "the beginning, the firstborn from the dead," and Head of the body, the Church - and in which relation we are not on our way, but seated in the heavenly places in Christ; for as members of Christ, and of His body, we should be denying our relation to both, if we do not allow that we are seated, as our Head, and in our Head. A Christian can therefore say in His Church relation that he is quickened, raised up, and seated in the heavenlies in Christ-because he is a member of His body-whereas, if viewed in another relation (as in the Hebrews) he is one of the holy brethren, and a partaker of the heavenly calling-moreover called to consider Christ, not as Head of the body, but in an office, as the Apostle and High Priest of his profession-who appears in the presence of God for us, and lives to make intercession for us. Does the Lord do this for the Church, the body, of which He is the Head? On the contrary, one of the prayers in the Ephesians is, that the members may "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." How different this love to the intercession of the great High Priest - though that is the fruit of grace too.

A Christian is therefore one of the holy brethren, with a heavenly calling, on his way into the rest that remains, with a promise of entering in, but in the meanwhile obtaining mercy, and finding from the throne of grace in the heavens, the help that is suited for the time of need, or the pilgrimage journey. A Christian is also "joined to the Lord," and "one Spirit"; and as such he is "baptized [with all his fellow members] into one body" by one Spirit; and made to drink into one Spirit"-and this body is Christ. To introduce a "calling," or a "pilgrimage," or "intercession," where all is vital, and existing in the unity of a body, would be to disturb these relations with Christ, and put all into distance again, and reduce the body to mere units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. A Christian, as a Churchman, is already raised up, and seated in heavenly places.

I trust these remarks will make plain the difference between the "heavenly calling" of the Hebrews, and "seated in heavenly places" in the Ephesians. I trust also that we shall be able to hold our duplex character of "holy brethren," on our way to the rest, and laboring to enter in -yet quietly take our places, as knowing no distance, nor difference in this respect, between Christ as Head of the body, and ourselves as of His flesh, and of His bones, seated with Him in the heavenlies. It is thus

we are contemplated and addressed in these two epistles, and faith accepts it in communion with the Father and the Son, through the Holy Ghost.

Hezekiah and Paul

Hezekiah

"In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech Thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before Thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in Thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore." 2 Kings 20:1-3.

Paul

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. . . . Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Phil. 1 :20, 21, 23 ; 2 Cor. 5 :8.

Hezekiah's House

"And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and showed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armor, and all that was found in his treasures." 2 Kings 20:13.

Paul's House

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." Acts 28:30, 31.

How Do We Know?

Ask a simple believer how he knows that the Bible is the Word of God. He will tell you that he has felt its power. Has not the Holy Ghost given you to feel the power of the Word of God? If God cannot make me know that it is He who speaks to me in His Word, who else can? Were we merely to believe in the divine inspiration of the Scriptures on human testimony - be that testimony ever so powerful - it would not be faith at all. I believe what God says because He says it, not because of any human authority. If all the fathers that ever wrote, all the doctors that ever taught, all the councils that ever sat, all the angels in heaven, and all the saints upon earth were to agree in declaring that the Bible is the Word of God, and that we were to believe on their testimony, it would not be divinely given faith. And on the other hand, were all to agree in declaring that the Bible is not the Word of God, it should not for a moment shake our confidence in that peerless revelation.

I Am With You

Haggai 1 and 2

It is commonly held at present that, so far as the Church on earth is concerned, we are in the wreck and ruin of things. But if so, is that to imply that the collective thing is impracticable and impossible? Far be the thought. There is a collective witness still, though it be of remnant kind or character. We see a witness of this even in the early days of the Church in the address to Thyatira, where a remnant is specially singled out by the Lord. "But to you I say, the rest who are in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine," and so on (J.N.D. Trans.). Nor was this a new thing in Scripture. When the Lord Jesus was born into the world there was found in the midst of prevailing confusion in that day, a faithful few in Jerusalem, such as Simeon, Anna, and others. So also at the close of Old Testament times there was a like residue, which the Spirit of God notices in the book of Malachi: "Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another."

But in the days of Haggai a remnant is very fully brought before us. Released captives from Babylon had come back to Jerusalem, but only a fragment of the chosen people of God. They were a despised generation and the taunt of their adversaries, whose boast it was that a fox could break down the wall they were building, a people with no outward or visible clothing of authority to inspire respect from those outside themselves. Even the outward unity of the nation was broken, for the ten tribes were gone! The temple, the ark of the covenant, and the Shechinah glory - all were gone! So none of those imposing witnesses were there to accredit these people in the eyes of others. But were they left without hope, or help, or divine resource? According to the prophet Haggai they were not.

Allow me to recall a few of the facts, as well as the way in which a ministry of grace wrought on behalf of this remnant.

After they had returned from Babylon, as recorded by Ezra, they had laid the foundation of the temple, and that in the midst of praise and thanksgiving. And here I would pause for a moment to notice something deeply instructive. Before they began the work of the temple they erected the altar of the God of Israel on which to offer their burnt offerings. That is to say, worship came first, taking precedence over work. Such was the order then, however much departed from today. The Lord Himself came first before their hearts, and they then devoted themselves to His work. Man's order is the reverse, because he attaches so much weight to his own actings.

But to resume. In course of time the adversaries oppose the building of the temple, and finally the work is stopped. The people then seek their own things, attending to their own houses, and neglecting the house of the Lord. At this time the ministry of Haggai intervenes. He reminds them of their self-seeking and ease, pointing out as the result of this how little they were obtaining from their toil for temporal things, and urging them to consider their ways.

Four things are recorded which are deeply significant.

The first is the important principle of obedience. They were instructed as follows: "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord." And they act upon this - may I not say? - according "to the obedience of faith." For we are told they "obeyed the voice of the LORD their God."

The second followed their obedience. Nothing short of the presence of the Lord. "I am with you, saith the LORD." A plain and precious pledge, and one prized by true believers in every age. As an instance of this, see Moses in Exodus 33. Does he want to go up to the land without the Lord? He would rather not go at all than do so on a condition such as that. So he can say to the Lord, "If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." A choice and welcome utterance of the renewed nature!

To the company in Haggai's day, what an encouragement this pledge must have been. It was not merely a promise that the grace and goodness of God would be with them. The pledge, we know, carried that; for "I AM" was with them. All which is included in that great, holy, and excellent name was to be with them as their all-sufficient resource.

The third thing is work. "The LORD stirred up the spirit" of the people, and they "did work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God." There was in point of fact a general awakening or, as we should say now, a revival.

Fourth, there was an exhortation to "be strong," and "work." And who does not covet strength, and what right minded Christian is there who does not wish to work for the Lord? But let us notice on what the exhortation is based. "For I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." So here there was a threefold portion - the Lord's presence, His Spirit remaining among them, and the infallible, faithful word of God spoken a thousand years or so before. Therefore these obedient workmen had every reason to be sustained and cheered in heart.

All this is surely suggestive at the present time. There is a remnant now, which is also a witness of ruin, and in itself without inherent strength. It may be, as of old, the taunt of adversaries. But the "I AM" of Haggai's day who pledged His presence then is Jesus now, and the same who said when here, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." The same Lord Jesus spoke these words when parting from His own, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Then as regards the Holy Spirit, He has spoken the well-known words, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." And besides, there is the priceless treasure of the whole canon of Scripture which we have in our hands; so now there is much to encourage the hearts of believers.

But one word more. The remnant in Haggai's day was pointed forward. "The Desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts." Their hearts were directed to the coming of Christ, and the glory which is to fill His earthly house.

And are we behind them in this respect? We happily know we are not. The "blessed hope" today is the coming again of Him who loves us, and has given Himself for us. Nor do we fall short of the privilege of casting glances forward to coming glory as we listen, say, to such wondrous words as those spoken to the Holy Father, "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them."

But a practical word in conclusion. "Go up to the mountain, and bring wood" is uttered in many, though varied, forms in Scripture. There is wood still on the mountain top for workmen, and it is for them to go up there, and bring it down to build into the house. Uninstructed effort may busy itself with material got, not on the mount, but on the plain, or other unauthorized place. But why this waste for want of attention to instructions? And these are amply supplied in Scripture. What is needed so much now is truehearted obedience to them. May the words written by Haggai so long ago be suggestive now, "All the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God," bearing in mind as well that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning."

Infidelity in Sunday Schools: the Editor's Column

A copy of The Winnipeg Tribune for July 11, 1964, was recently sent to us for our review of a great change in Sunday School teaching in the United Church of Canada. If this were an isolated incident in religious circles, we might forbear to comment; but as it is indicative of the general tenor of infidelity which is sweeping across Christendom, it calls for sounding an alarm.

Well may we exclaim, "If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?" Psalm 11:3. When the Apostle Jude set about to write to the saints about their "common salvation," it was necessary instead for him to write to them to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 1, 3). Since the foundations of faith in Christ, faith in the unerring Word of God, are under attack in the supposed citadels of faith, halfway measures would not do. The enemy was inside of the profession, and nothing less than earnest contention would meet the dreadful challenge. To acquiesce under such conditions is treason against the Lord.

The new Sunday School curriculum will shortly be put into effect. It is the product of six years of development at a cost of \$1,000,000. There seems to be no shortage of money or lack of human effort to undermine the faith of children. These are often sent to Sunday Schools for the purpose of bringing them up in the truths of the Word of God, but what shall we say when on examination the materials used and the words planned by men of no faith are found to be used to indoctrinate the dear children with the very essence of unbelief. Money, often supplied by Christians, is misappropriated to the devil's artifice as they are taught, in their more impressionable years, the enemy's falsehoods which (contrary to being current and modern) are as ancient as deceitful lies uttered of old in the Garden of Eden, and by which he seduced and deceived our first parents.

The Winnipeg Tribune comments that the "Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec" is jointly publishing this new curriculum with the United Church. And thus the seeds of infidelity are spread. Nor does the scheme stop with the mere publishing of the Sunday School material, but the ground is being well prepared as other books are being published for teachers and members for the purpose of conditioning them to the coming changes. In common parlance of the day, the professing church members are being "brainwashed" to prepare the ground for ready acceptance of the noxious weeds. And an abundant crop of infidelity will be the certain result as Christendom plunges down the hill into the great apostasy. Scripture forewarns us that in the end God will allow men to be deceived because they did not wish the truth. And He says that in the end the apostate church will be damned. Judgment is the certain and final result of the current avalanche.

O the horror of blind leaders of the blind saying that Noah never saw an ark, that the divine account of David's overcoming Goliath is untrue, or, to use their words, that it is merely "a tall tale." This amounts to saying that it is an exaggerated falsehood in the name of the God of truth. Howbeit, David is a beautiful type of Christ who came down and met the giant foe and overcame him. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2:14.

The new lie perpetuates the modern rejection of the Word of God by saying that the first 11 chapters of Genesis are not facts but only myth by which certain things are taught. The whole Word of God stands or falls together. It is either absolute truth, or the worst falsehood ever concocted, for it claims to be TRUTH. And all Scripture bears witness to itself by constant re-affirmation of itself. Go from Genesis to Revelation, and the closest examination will show that it is all in perfect harmony. All who contend otherwise do but demonstrate their ill will and enmity against God. The truth is that it searches the conscience, and for that reason men have a will to discredit it.

Take the early records of genealogy and compare them with the records of Chronicles, of Ezra, of Matthew, and Luke. Let any man seek to prove them to be false, and his antagonism is but demonstrated.

Time after time the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, restated the early records as facts. "From the beginning it was not so"; "He which made them at the beginning"; and so on. The same thread that links Genesis together is found at the end- the Book of Revelation. If God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain, what will He not do to him who challenges His Word? The Lord Jesus said, "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." John 12:48. The very word which man tries in vain to set aside will yet judge the man who attempts it. "Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven." Psalm 119:89.

We do not call attention to the shocking modern infidelity found in the professing religion of a neighboring land, as though it were not prevalent elsewhere. We know better. The infidelity of the day is to be found in all segments of Christendom. We are reminded of our Lord's parable of the woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. The leaven of infidelity has been so long at work in the meal that the whole lump of Christian profession has become permeated with the corrupt and corrupting element. We are receiving the same kind of poisonous literature from various sources with shocking regularity. It is quite common now to relegate the first 11 chapters of Genesis to the realm of myth and allegory, and then by clever play on words it is explained as a good thing. But Webster's Dictionary says that a myth is "a person or thing existing only in imagination." Whose imagination, if it can be found in the Word of God? This carries shocking implications.

God's record of Satan as the old serpent in Genesis (in Eden) is precise and understandable. Then in Revelation God makes his identity precise and unmistakable: "the great dragon,... that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." But modern Sunday School literature says: "In ancient Near-Eastern literary style, a serpent is introduced into the record. Where the serpent originated or what the serpent is to represent is not made clear." In another place the same paper suggests that "in the light of recent discoveries yielding a long, lost Canaanite literature, it may be that the poet is simply adopting a well-known literary phrase of his day from the religious literature of neighboring cultures, and investing it with the essence of his Hebrew faith." This seems like the work of "the old serpent." The sublime Word of the living God is cleverly transposed into the work of mere man, and divine inspiration is discarded for literary absurdities of heathen neighbors.

Another statement from this E.U.B. Adult Leader is: "To us moderns these anthropomorphic representations of God in the Old Testament may seem strange and even crude, but it was not so to the ancient Hebrews." What tremendous progress modern man has made when parts of His

Holy Word now seem strange and even crude to him. We read: "For He knoweth vain men: He seeth wickedness also; will He not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Job 11:11, 12.

So-called Christian lands are heading for the overthrow of Christianity and the adoption of atheism-blatant and arrogant. But men will reap the reward of their error which is meet.

These modernist Sunday School papers and manuals are connected with the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. We have frequently found such expressions in such papers which tend to bring all things down to a common level by making a comparison of the Old Testament scriptures with lore told around a campfire at night. Thus the miraculous and divine are obliterated. And "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" is rejected. The accounts of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus are said to be stories which were handed down from person to person until at length these were written down. This we utterly reject as the source of the divine records of the coming of the Son of God into the world.

We also noted instructions to teachers to "try to avoid confusing God and Jesus in their [children's] minds." Just who is Jesus? Will they draw a distinction and make of Him only a man? There are instances in the New Testament where Jesus and God are by divine design intermingled so as to be almost indistinguishable. But men would differentiate.

We have also read warnings that young children should not be told of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus in their early lives. Is the death-the saving death of the Lord Jesus-to be reserved until more mature life? Many dear children have heard of the Savior's love and death for them, and happily received Him in their early days. In fact, the vast majority of people who are saved by His precious blood have been saved in early life. Tell the story of man's lost condition to children; then tell them of the Savior and His death to save them. Tell them early and often. Tell them there is danger in delay, and tell them that the loving Savior invites them-"Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." He took them up in His arms and blessed them when He was here; He pleads with them today to "come."

We also reject a strange statement: "coming to know God is a life-long quest." How long did it take the Philippian jailer to come to Christ and to know God? The answer is clear -the elapsed time was short, and it need not be otherwise today.

Jacob's Lessons

Jacob's history is written for our admonition; but we ought to learn the lesson more quickly, and more deeply too, because we know the risen One and our union with Him. Our very axiom is, "The flesh profiteth nothing."

What a blessed testimony does Jacob bear to the faithfulness of God: "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day." When Jacob walked by sight, he did not so clearly see God feeding him and caring for him; but "leaning upon the top of his staff," he retraces all God's ways by faith.

If any one character could have set aside the faithfulness of God, it is that of Jacob. It was marked by low cunning and crookedness of policy from the outset with regard to his brother Esau. But this did not at all interfere with God's fidelity to him. Looking back, he sees and, I doubt not, sees with joy the failure of all his scheming and policy. Jacob is absorbed in one single thought; namely, the grace and faithfulness of the God with whom he has to do. He was never saved from a single danger by his own policy; but Jacob can pass over all his own failures in the overwhelming thought of God's grace toward him.

The Early Chapters of John's Gospel

In John, first chapter, there are two things which I have on my mind - life and light.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." The light shone in the world, and the darkness could not comprehend it. The blind do not profit by light. There was need of the work of the Holy Spirit to open the eyes.

In the second chapter, we have an intimation of relationship with Israel; then comes the cleansing of the temple, making everything ready for the kingdom, which indeed was nigh; but where was the man ready for the kingdom?

A remarkable scene is presented to us - Jerusalem at the Passover - man at his best religiously. Many believed in His name when they saw His miracles. On the best occasion, in the place of culture, among the people with most privileges, some persons did their best, and even believed in His name; but the Lord could not accept them. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." This ax cuts down all natural piety and religiousness. There is not a man fit for the kingdom, without new life which is then opener to us in the rest of this Gospel.

In the fourth chapter, the life is seen as a well of water in the believer.

In the fifth chapter, the life is described as past death and judgment.

In the sixth chapter, we have the food which nourishes that life.

In the seventh chapter, the life is as "rivers of living water."

In the eighth chapter, it is the other side; that is, the light which is brought forward. The subject is the woman taken in adultery. The scribes and Pharisees were surely the best the Jewish system would produce. But under their apparent zeal for the guarding of morality was the deeper sin of enmity against God. "This they said, tempting Him."

He stooped down and wrote upon the ground, with that very finger which had written upon the tables of stone, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Children of God, beware of hypocrisy. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Yes, but they are in the presence of the Light now, and were self condemned. The Lord, who alone had the right to cast a stone, had come to save, not to judge. They could not bear the light on their religious selves. They are all gone now. The youngest was the last to go, but they all got away at last from Jesus, because of that sinful self.

When the Lord looked up, they had all gone. But had the woman gone? What an excellent opportunity for her to escape! But she did not avail herself of it, for there was love which detained her when the light exposed her. She had no reputation to maintain.

"Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?"

"No man, Lord."

"Go, and sin no more." There is no sanction of the sin, but love to the sinner.

The next passage clearly refers to the scene which has just passed. "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world."

In the ninth chapter, we have the poor blind man. The Lord was passing by to escape stoning; and as He passed He saw the poor blind man. He was the Light of the world; but here was a man with his eyes closed, and Christ put clay on his eyes, thus making him at first apparently even more blind than before. In the clay we have a picture of the Son of man in incarnation (John 6:40). The blind man now heard His word. It is to the sent One he is directed. He washes and receives his sight. Why were his eyes opened? That he might see the Lord and believe on Him.

Meantime there is a tremendous commotion over the cure of the blind man, because it was on the sabbath day. The man is questioned, but the light has got into him and is working in him and bringing out a clearer and clearer acknowledgment of the Lord, until his testimony is so strong that he is cast out. Here is the difference from chapter 8, where it is getting into the light. Here it is the light getting into the man.

Jesus, when He had found him (He is after him), said, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

The man, full of confidence and gratitude, answers, "Who is He, Lord?"

"Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee" - place of fullest privilege.

At once the man is down at His feet.

Now mark, chapter 10 explains what has just gone before. The Jewish system is the fold. Jesus is the true Shepherd. He comes in by the door; He is rejected by the leaders of the nation, but He calls His own sheep by name out of it all. In verse 16, He looks right on to you and me - the other sheep.

Now there is one flock, and one Shepherd. We are not in an enclosure, but that Blessed One is in view as we follow Him through this scene. Are we following as one flock, one Shepherd?

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them."

Verses 14 and 15 should be read together - "am known of Mine as the Father knoweth Me," and I know the Father.

John's Vision of the Throne of God

It has often been pointed out that the 19th verse of the first chapter of Revelation divides this wondrous prophecy into three parts. The first is in chapter 1, the second in chapters 2 and 3, and the third from chapter 4 on. Now the third clause of this verse should be more correctly translated, "the things which shall be after these." And with this, the first verse of chapter 4 strikingly accords: "After this I looked, and, behold,... things which must be hereafter" (or after these).

Chapter 3 closes the history of the Church on earth. Chapter 4 commences with the things which John saw in heaven. The voice of chapter 1 now invites him, saying, "Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter [or, after these]. And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone." And any reader of these lines who would go beyond a mere mental apprehension of these things, and appreciate them spiritually, must needs be in the Spirit also. Spiritual things are spiritually understood.

The throne which John saw is the throne of the Lord God Almighty (v. 8), surrounded with the beasts (or living creatures) described in verse 8, set in heaven in view of the establishment of His kingdom, the overthrow of the power, etc., of His enemies, and the execution of His will in the heavens and the earth. A rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald, may be taken as a manifest token of His unchanging faithfulness and the certainty of His promises for all who trust therein.

And round about the throne were twenty-four seats (or thrones). And upon them John saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold (v. 4). This is full of interest and instruction. These twenty-four thrones are all occupied. Doubtless these twenty-four elders set forth the heavenly saints in their glorified bodies seated at perfect rest on high in the presence of the unnamed One on His throne.

They probably include all the saints, both of the Old and New Testaments, up to the coming of Christ for His people, when all His own will be raised or changed, and taken to meet Him. This wonderful event, which closes the history of the heavenly saints on earth, must have taken place between chapters 3 and 4, although it is not here described. Other scriptures give us the detail of it (1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15-18).

Now we are distinctly taught by our Lord that believers shall never come into judgment (John 5:24). It is exceedingly precious therefore to notice in this wondrous vision that ere a single word is employed which would express judgment, or even a single symbol of it described, the whole of the saints of God are viewed as a glorious, robed, and crowned company, in perfect rest in His presence. The Lord will give grace and glory, which is as true for the heavenly saints as for Israel in the future; and the crowning act of grace is to put the whole of the saints in glory around the throne of Him who is the source of it, ere it changes its character.

It is not here the blessed home circle of the Father's house, where the saints as sons shall dwell in light and love in the presence of the Father and the Son, but the saints viewed as a kingdom of priests crowned in righteousness, seated at rest in the presence of God on His throne, set up in relation to His kingdom, previous to beholding the Lamb in the midst thereof, and taking up the administration of the kingdom in the age to come in association with Him.

Then, and not till then, follows the description of lightnings, thunders, etc., rising from the throne, and of the beasts (or living creatures). That which characterizes these latter is very striking. They are covered with eyes, denoting intense perception of all that is going on in connection with the throne of God, both toward Him and toward creation. They appear in the vision like the four heads of creation - like a lion, a calf, with the face as a man, and as a flying eagle - and apparently denote chiefly the majesty, patience, wisdom, and rapidity with which the administration of the throne of God is carried out. Some of the characteristics of both the cherubim and the seraphim (see Eze. 1; Isa. 6) are found in them; and as angels are not mentioned in the chapter, it is believed that the action of God's throne in relation to creation up to this moment is angelic in character. Day and night these holy beings cry unceasingly, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come, etc. (Rev. 4:8). And the elders falling down and casting their crowns before the throne ascribe worthiness, etc. to Him whose glory shines in all that He has created.

In chapter 5 a wondrous scene displays itself before our eyes. Space will not permit us to enter into all the details. But the chief feature is the cry of a strong angel, Who is worthy to open and loose the seals of the book (or roll) which overflows with the counsels, mysteries, and judgments of God, and which is in the right hand of Him who is seated on the throne? No one in the whole creation is able to do so, which causes the prophet to weep. But one of the elders, who are seen to be cognizant of all that is taking place (even now the saints have the mind of Christ), said to him, Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

And John beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts (or living creatures), and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne (vv. 6 and 7). Though his attention was called to the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, as the One who had prevailed, it was the same One as a Lamb, the true Seed of David, John beheld. For it was as the holy unblemished Lamb of God's providing, that He had prevailed. In the future He will roar as the Lion, when He takes the prey; but it is as the meek and unresisting Lamb that He prevailed, having been slain at Calvary. Hence, John beholds Him in ascension life and glory in the midst of the throne. There stands the once slain One, bearing in His holy Person the tokens of His passion and death, the wounds which He received in the house of His friends. And He has seven horns and seven eyes, denoting the perfection of power and authority, wisdom, and intelligence.

"And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne." v. 7. This act leads to a remarkable movement among the surrounding elders, the heavenly saints. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, now grouped together, fall down together before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials (or bowls) full of odors, which are the

prayers of saints (v. 8). They prostrate themselves in worship before the Lamb, and the prayers of saints suffering on earth between the rapture and the manifestation of Christ are the incense which they from golden bowls offer as priests unto Him. Moreover, they sing a new song, a song as yet unheard in that blessed heavenly scene, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." vv. 9, 10. Or, as it should be more correctly rendered (see New Testament, J.N.D. Trans.), "Redeemed to God... and made them... and they shall reign over the earth." Their presence there in glorified bodies, at home and at liberty before the throne of the Lord God Almighty, and before the Lamb shows clearly that they are already in the enjoyment of the results of Christ's wondrous redemption work. Hence, they are free from themselves to be occupied with the Lamb, and to celebrate His glory in song, the mighty work He has accomplished, and its virtue on behalf of others, a company blessed on earth, after the translation, etc., by divine power of the heavenly saints (1 Thess. 4:15-18). These are the subjects of a fresh dealing of God in mercy, and they also shall share the glories of Christ's reign over the earth. The wondrous new song, commencing with the words, "Thou art worthy," is the blest response of all the redeemed in glory to the angel's loud cry, "Who is worthy to open the book?" etc.

The innumerable company of angels standing around in an outer circle hear the blest strains from these millions of hearts and lips, represented by the elders, etc.; and they cannot keep silence. Not a voice refuses to add its note to the universal joy. With loud voice they say, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." The saints in holy intimacy can sing, "Thou art worthy," etc. From the lips of angels such language would be unbecoming. As His blessed ministering servants, they say, "Worthy is the Lamb," etc., and they ascribe to Him all that men refused Him on earth. They own Him worthy to receive power, who in the eyes of men was powerless; riches, who was the poor and needy man on earth; wisdom, who was crucified and whose death is folly to the wise after the flesh; strength, who was crucified through weakness; honor, upon whom every mark of dishonor was heaped; glory, who suffered a death of shame; and blessings, who was cursed for sin and for us on the tree.

Last, the strain of praise is taken up by every creature in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them. All creation joins in one, saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." v. 13.

And the four living creatures said, "Amen." And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshiped Him that liveth forever and ever.

This is the glorious scene in which every believer will shortly take part. At any moment the heavenly summons may be heard, and the whole of His redeemed ones be caught up to join in the new and heavenly song. May our hearts be anticipating it now in the Spirit's power, and looking with joy for its full accomplishment on high.

Laborers in the Vineyard

It is essential to observe that this parable relates to service, for the laborers are sent into the vineyard. There is also no doubt that it sprang out of Peter's question: "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" In reply the Lord graciously told His disciples that they should have a special place in the kingdom - should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel - and, moreover, that everyone who had forsaken anything for His name's sake should be abundantly recompensed. He then added the significant warning, that many who were first should be last, and the last first. And this He proceeded to explain in the parable: "For," He says, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which went out early in the morning, to hire laborers into his vineyard."

We have, in the next place, a description of the several laborers, with the different hours at which they were hired. But, in fact, there are but two classes - those who agreed upon the amount they were to receive, and those who left themselves in the hands of the master to give what he deemed right. The former, we apprehend, being the "first," and the latter the "last" of chapter 19:30. The former too represent, we doubt not, the spirit of Peter, as expressed in his question, "What shall we have therefore?" The Lord thus brings before us the right and wrong spirit of service - the latter finding its motive in expected reward, whereas the former draws the spring of its activity from the will of the master, and is content to leave every other question to the grace which has called. The one thinks of the value of the labor rendered, the other of the master for whom the service is done. Those who agreed for their penny were, in a word, legal servants, whereas those who left themselves to the one who had called them were under the power of grace. To the first, the labor was a means of recompense; to the last, it was a privilege, and hence they prize it in and for itself, knowing something of the grace that has bestowed it. All this is brought out when the steward settles with the laborers. In obedience to his lord he begins with the last, and everyone received a penny. This excited the anger of the first; for if the last had a penny, surely they were entitled to more. The answer was that they had received what they bargained for, that the master had a right to do what he would with his own, and that their eye was not to be evil because he was good.

The exhibition of grace, with all its sovereign rights, only excited the envy of the natural heart. Hence the enmity of the Jew when the gospel was proclaimed to the Gentile; and thus, though the "first," he also became the "last." So with these laborers. Those who went to labor last in the vineyard left the master's presence satisfied with his goodness, and so became "first"; while those who were first in their labors left his presence with murmurs in their hearts and on their lips, strangers still to grace. Hence the conclusion: So the last shall be first (referring to chapter 19:30), and the first last; for many be called (as all these laborers had been), but few chosen.

Legalism Is Not Humility

How can I know God's heart? Is it by looking to my own heart? No; but by learning it in the gift of His Son. The God we have to say to is the God who has given His Son for sinners; and if we do not know this, we do not know Him at all. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Do not be saying to God, "make me as one of Thy hired servants"; all true service must result from the knowledge of Himself. Do not be putting the estimate of your own hearts on God's goodness. Our wretched hearts have a tendency to turn back to legalism and call it humility. The only real humility and strength and blessing is to forget self in the presence and blessedness of God.

Loins Girded and Lights Burning

"Christ is all, and in all." Who can be this except God? "All" excludes everything else. In getting Christ we get eternal blessedness, and life, and knowledge of the Father - all that will make heaven blessed. The object on which we look gives perfect rest to the conscience and heart. The One in whom the Father delights, I know has given Himself for me, and has satisfied not only the Father's love, but God's righteousness. I start with the consciousness of being perfectly loved and perfectly cleansed. My relationship and standing with God are not founded on anything that I am, but on what Christ has done. The law put life at the end of the course; Christianity puts it at the beginning. The Christian has redemption behind him; and he is walking through the wilderness, waiting and watching for Him who is the object of his heart - for Him who gave not merely something for him, but Himself- who kept back nothing.

The distinct character of the Christian is that of one in a state of expectation. "Like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately."

The state of the soul is the first thing; it must precede service. It is, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning." Before we serve, our own state is in question - not the service but the quality of the service depends on it. Christ, the revelation of Christ, must be applied to everything; it is a dirty world, and you must have your heart rightly tucked up as you go through it - "your loins girded." There must be these two things: the heart in order (kept so by the Word of God), and no will of our own. The instant we are not in the consciousness of God's presence, self comes up - will is there. But, if we are in earnest, running to attain, we are glad of the removal of every hindrance to our running. Try your heart by this. Do you think a man running a race which he cared to win would weight himself by keeping even gold upon him? I judge everything by one object; Christ being my object, I judge all by Him, and I say, If this hinders me in running after - in apprehending - Christ, let it go.

Then, when you have got your heart in order, comes the full and unqualified confession of Christ before men: "Your lights burning." If the heart be not first right within, profession is useless; but where it is true, let us have it out. There is always a shrinking from confession when there is not power within.

A Christian is one whose affections are fixed upon Christ, and who is waiting for Him. If He has bought us with a price, it is that we may be as men that wait for their Lord. Everyone should be able to see that you are a man waiting for Christ. If we were so, it would cut up by the roots ninety-nine out of a hundred of the things people so live for down here.

Can the world say of all of us, as of the Thessalonians of old, These are a people who have given up every idol to wait for God's Son from heaven? The world ought to think so. It is, Blessed are those servants whom He finds not only waiting but watching for Him.

There was not one act for self in all Christ's life; He was always at the service of everyone. It is difficult for us to believe in the love of Christ, we are so selfish. Love likes to serve, selfishness to be served. Christ was love; He delighted to serve; He took upon Him the form of a servant; He took it as a man, and He never gives it up; even in that day, "He will come forth and serve them." He says, You shall never make Me give up this delight of Myself - to serve you.

First we have, "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching"; and then we get, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" - serving in the place where his Lord has set him. Where their affections are watching, they get Christ's affections in return, serving them in heaven; where they are doing, they get the ruling all that He has. Where we serve, we rule; where we watch, we sit at the table, and He serves us.

Christ shows His perfect love. If I love a person a little, I give him a little - a small thing. If I love him much, I give him more; but if I love him perfectly - which of course I cannot do- I give him everything I have. But more; when the world gives anything, it has to part with what it gives; but He says, "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." He brings us into the enjoyment of everything that He has.

But at the same time He came "to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?" The cross brought in what man will never accept; he will not have the reproach of it. They despised and rejected Him even before the cross; the fire was "already kindled." But that thing which tests the heart of man, and exposes it, sets free the heart of God. When He was baptized with that baptism, it opened the floodgates of God's love.

Verse 53 is a quotation from the prophet, describing the most horrible state of things. And this the cross will do; take care that your own will does not do it. But the state of man is such that when God gives His Son, this is the effect of it.

The Lord of Glory

All along the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth, He manifested the Godhead in the perfection of humanity; yet His divine glory was hidden, except to faith, from which "He could not be hid." There was the eternal Son in human form - full - full of grace and truth. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As though the Father said to us, I have found My pleasure in Him, and now I set Him before you to find your pleasure in Him. The Object heaven could look down upon is the Object we can look up to. Here is the meeting point for God and man. In Him there is for man true fellowship with God.

The great discovery for the soul of man is, "God was in Christ," "God was manifest in the flesh." His unclothed excellence it was not possible for man to see, to look upon; but yet, to faith, the Lord walked here as the bright shining sun, illuminating all around, and the path before. As He passed among men, the question raised was, Who had eyes to see Him? I do not believe that His glory would ever dazzle or put the believing soul at a distance from Him; but to be at ease in the presence of His glory - of His Person - we must know the grace of His heart. We may walk about in the joy and comfort of the light which He sheds upon us, often not regarding the source from which it comes. If we would contemplate the source, we must stop and look upon Him. "Behold the Lamb of God"! "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."

The Lord was always the perfect servant; and as the perfect servant He was the lover of the saints - the people of His God. "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." How intimate He was with those who knew Him; He calls them by their names; He called Philip by his name. "He calleth His own sheep by name." What nearness and what beauty in being exercised with the tenderness of the mind of Christ! "We have the mind of Christ." But what discoveries are there for our souls to make in the display of His grace and His affections! Nothing can compensate the soul for a lack of a personal knowledge of Christ. I speak of the secret which the soul of every saint should possess - the secret of personal communion.

The journey through this world is as a journey through a long, dark path, with glorious light above you and before you. Christ is that light. You want a lamp for your feet and a light for your path. The Word which speaks of Christ is that light. Christ in glory is the end to be obtained. As we pass along a dark and narrow passage, with a light at the far end, we get more light every step of the way we go. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

His word is, "I go to prepare a place for you." He is our forerunner.

The Lord's Approval

All that has been for the Lord or from the Lord among His saints shall be owned in His day. All grace in them, all love, all service, all suffering for Him or for righteousness, all forms and measures of these and kindred things, shall be accepted and honored. But so, I add, all learning of His mind shall have its acceptance with Him, and its own proper joy in that day. It may be but small in comparison, but it will have its measure. Servants, lovers, imitators, martyrs, shall be accepted then, but so shall disciples. I claim a place in that day when "every man shall have praise of God," for those who, in the midst of human mistakes and misjudgments, have learned and prized and held to the thoughts and principles of the divine wisdom, of the mind of God in the progress of His dispensations.

Mine Eye Seeth Thee

The book of Job is in a certain sense a detailed commentary on the scene in Jacob's history where the man wrestled with him (Gen. 32). Throughout the first 31 chapters, Job grapples with his friends, and maintains his point against all their arguments; but in chapter 32, God, by the instrumentality of Elihu, begins to wrestle with him; and in chapter 38, He comes down upon him directly with all the majesty of His power, overwhelms him by the display of His greatness and glory, and elicits from him the well-known words, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Chap. 42:5, 6. This was really touching the hollow of his thigh. And mark the expression, "Mine eye seeth Thee." He does not say, "I see myself" merely; no; but "Thee." Nothing but a view of what God is can really lead to repentance and self-loathing.

Thus it will be with the people of Israel, whose history is very analogous with that of Job. When they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, they will mourn; and then there will be full restoration and blessing. Their latter end, like Job's, will be better than their beginning. They will learn the full meaning of that word, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help." Hos. 13:9.

Momentous Changes: the Editor's Column

The moment has not yet come when men's hearts will fail them for fear as they anticipate the things that are coming on the earth. But that dread moment approaches; and while people in this land boast of luxury, comforts, and peace, they know not at what moment all may be changed. This world has experienced many sudden and dramatic changes, but there is scarcely any recent 48-hour period which has brought forth as many great changes as the week of October 11-17. They were astonishing, especially from the standpoint that they may affect the future of the world for a long while to come.

The one man who has left his indelible mark on the world for the last decade had fallen into such disfavor at home that he-the world's strong man-could be fired in disgrace. That man who brought many low before him-a man honored, feared, held in contempt, depending on where in the world one may have lived-proved to be but a man after all, whom other men could degrade and belittle. Premier Nikita Khrushchev was fired without apology, and stripped of the honor which had been his. What is this but the same scene all over. The world favor is short-lived, and many men live to see it vanish before their eyes. O man, whoever you are, who seeks the plaudits of this world, how soon the tide changes! The people who once adored Mussolini finally treated him with scorn and derision. The world is a fickle place, and all its honor soon vanishes. Pilate would crucify Jesus to placate a mob, and to curry favor with Caesar; but shortly thereafter Caesar banished him.

Now what will happen in Russia? We know not; but if past history is a teacher, it indicates that those who replaced Khrushchev will soon start a palace struggle for power. Stalin did; Khrushchev did it in his rise to power, and there is little likelihood that the two men who assumed Khrushchev's double role as Premier and party head will be able to work together as a team. One or the other, or perhaps still another, will eventually feel strong enough to eliminate all rivals. But until a single unchallenged head emerges, much of world diplomacy will be stymied. There are two reasons for that; namely, until one gathers the power to himself, he will not be able to make international commitments; and until he does, other world leaders will not wish to sit at the bargaining table with him.

For all of Mr. Khrushchev's bluster and egocentric proclivities, it seems evident, according to highly placed men in the Kremlin, that they considered his administration a failure. But what seems strange is that the two men who divided his responsibilities between them were brought up with him and shared whatever he had of success or failure. If there were failure, it will be up to them to correct the wrong, or sooner or later share the same fate. The ideological rift between Russia and Red China was probably the one thing more than any other which led to his downfall, for it divided world communism into two camps.

Another major development of that week, which is related to the first, is the sudden announcement, following Mr. Khrushchev's downfall, that China had become one of the world powers possessing the capabilities of producing nuclear weapons. This is the great prestige builder, and many small nations are going to be much impressed by it. It may swing the balance

between some nations' alignment with China or not. But for world peace, this latest member of the nuclear club may pose the most frightening. As of now, China has exploded one low-yield device; but she has proved her capacity to do more.

China got her start on the way to nuclear armaments from Mr. Khrushchev, but in all probability he later regretted these overtures and feared the time when China would be such a power. She would then pose as a threat to Russia, especially in world importance, because she could act with more reckless abandon. And while China has not a stock of bombs, or means of delivering them, yet a power possessing any can effectively use them in international blackmail; unless the threat is discounted, risk of a nuclear holocaust is run, with its frightening results. In days of banditry, only one small gun was necessary to control greater foes.

Napoleon referred to China as a sleeping giant, and many have been the warriors and statesmen who wished that she would not wake up; but today she is wide awake and conscious of her almost unlimited manpower. Give China a supply of "A" bombs and, with her zeal for world conquest, she could acquire world domination.

But this is not what we learn from the Holy Scriptures which describe coming events in this world. While China may become a scourge on other nations, it is not destined to exercise dominion over the rest of the world. The great world behemoth to arise will be the revived Roman Empire-the Western world centered about Rome-but there will doubtless be compelling problems that will force the federation of Western powers under one head, referred to as the beast who comes up out of the sea in Revelation 13. There will yet be great assemblages of powerful armies, and, according to the Prophet Joel, the nations will "prepare war," and "the mighty men" will awaken. This world is headed for carnage on an unprecedented scale. It once rejected and cast out the "Prince of Peace." When He does return, it will not be to bring peace, but judgment. God has said to the Messiah, "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. He will first clear this world by unsparing judgments when He rises "to shake terribly the earth" (Isa. 2:19). All creation will then be brought under His righteous sway, but first all nations shall weep and mourn because of Him.

The present ominous happenings, which may well cause men of the earth to shudder, are no cause of alarm to the Christian. "He that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about." Psalm 32:10. And we who believe also live in the daily expectation that any moment we will hear the Lord's commanding shout which will summon all the redeemed, both from the earth and from the grave, to be with Him in the Father's house in glory. Our rest is not here. Our home is not here. Then why should we be disturbed at sudden changes which take place, or even at their disquieting possibilities. We look for the "Lord Jesus Christ as Savior" (Phil. 3:20; J.N.D. Trans.). He will come to bring salvation, not then to our souls, for we have that now, but a full and complete salvation that includes our bodies.

Another eventful happening of that same week was the displacement of the ruling Conservative party in Britain by the Labor party. This was just as ordered and allowed of God as was the removal of President Kennedy almost a year ago. The means for this governmental change was a national election, but from whatever outward cause, the source is in Himself. "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Dan. 2:21)... "and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35). The change in the British government brings other faces forward and a

change in one land has effects on all lands as world complexities increase.

At one time China was referred to as the "yellow peril"; but today the whole of the non-Caucasian world is drawing closer together, and problems and perils increase.

As we now approach the end of 1964, we can look back and say that it has been an eventful year. Many changes took place under His direction who orders all things after the counsel of His own will. It will not be long before 1965 will dawn. What will it bring? There is not one reason why this may not be the time when the Lord will take His own beyond this world and its strife and sorrow to rest in the cloudless sunshine of His blessed presence. What a prospect!

When God, for Israel's sin of idolatry, gave them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, He allowed some of the people to remain in the land with Zedekiah to rule over them, until Zedekiah broke a pledge he had given to Nebuchadnezzar in the name of Jehovah to be subject to him. Then God said, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it... until He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him." There has never been such a king; but Christ, God's King, will yet come and subdue all His enemies, and He will reign for God. But overturning has been the order of the "times of the Gentiles" in which we live. Do we want our rest here, or can we sing:

"Jesus, we wait for Thee,

With Thee to have our part;

What can full joy and blessing be

But being where Thou art?" ?

The Mornings of Scripture

In the progress of Scripture, we have several infant seasons, as I may express myself, or mornings.

Creation was one - but that of course. That was the birthday of the works of God - the morning of time. And when the foundations, in that season, were laid, "the morning stars sang together," as we read in the book of Job.

The Exodus was another of these mornings. Israel, as a nation, was then born, or in its early infancy. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," the Lord says by the prophet Hosea. The year started afresh then, as though it were newborn. The month of the Exodus was made the beginning of months. Life from the dead, a resurrection morning, was celebrated in the song of Moses and the congregation on the banks of the Red Sea.

The birth of the Lord Jesus was another. That event rose upon the world like the light of morning. A very long and dreary night had preceded it. Israel was a captive, and in the dust. There were no signs. The voice of the last of the prophets had been silent for centuries. No Urim or Thummim, no ephod of the priest, was delivering oracles, or answers from God. No glory filled the temple. Nothing distinguished the city of peace, the favored seat of God on the earth, save now and again the angel stirring of the waters of Bethesda, when little expected and scarcely welcomed. But the birth of the Lord Jesus, like the morning, awakened the creation; and the lights of many other days broke forth together, to tell that the long dark night had at length given place to a very bright and cheerful morning. Heaven rejoiced, like the sons of God at the creation. Angels, once so well known in Israel, reappeared. The grace that had acted in infant, patriarchal days, again displayed itself. Promises to Abraham and to David, which anticipated the new birth of the people and of the kingdom, are cited and rehearsed. All this is seen on this great occasion, this fresh morning hour in the progress of the ways of God. And the child born in Bethlehem is welcomed by the seer of God as "the dayspring from on high," the sunrise or the morning (see Luke 1 and 2).

The resurrection of the Lord was another of these mornings. It came after the gloomiest night that ever brooded on the face of creation. But it was light, and light indeed. It was the pledge, the harbinger of an eternal day. It was the turning of the shadow of death into the morning. "It began to dawn toward the first day of the week," when this great mystery disclosed itself - as we read in Matthew 28.

The kingdom will be another of these mornings. It will be day after night, Christ's day after the night of sin and death, Christ's world after man's world. "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." 2 Sam. 23:3, 4. This is written of this coming kingdom.

The new heaven and the new earth will be another. It will be creation at its second birth. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth," says the prophet, "for the first heaven and the first earth

were passed away." It is called the dwelling place of righteousness, the scene where God will be "all in all."

Sweet is it to see morning after morning thus rising, as we pass down the ages which Scripture measures.

But we have another sight to see to. Man has been again and again turning God's morning into the shadow of death. Creation, which came forth from God so fair and full of joy, quickly was turned into a wilderness of thorns and thistles. The ground was cursed which, at its morning hour, had witnessed the joy of the Lord over it, and the blessing of the Lord on it. Israel, who sang their resurrection song on the banks of the Red Sea, became a captive in the dungeons of Babylon; and the land of the glory was left wasted and desolate under the foot of uncircumcised oppressors. The Sun that in the morning of Bethlehem rose on the world as the light of it, and on Israel as the pledge of a renewed day, set in the night of Calvary - for man was a sinner, and rejected. Him. The same blessed Jesus who rose a second time upon the world, and upon Israel as life from the dead, bringing light and life for eternity to us with Him, now has to see the waning, fading, evening shades of Christendom, which are soon to close in the midnight of Apocalyptic judgments. The kingdom which is to break forth as the light of "a morning without clouds," is to close in the great apostasy of Gog and Magog, in the judgment of death and hell, and all not written in the book of life, and in the fleeing away of the heavens and the earth from the face of Him who sits on the great white throne. The morning, however, of the new heaven and the new earth, God will maintain in its first beauty and freshness forever. There will be no evening shades of man's corruption and revolt, no night of judgment in the story of it. It shall be maintained as the one eternal day, the sun of which shall never go down.

What sights are these which pass in vision before us! The blessed God begins again and again to lay His foundations, as in the freshness of morning; and man again and again turns His morning into the shadow of death. But God cannot dwell in darkness. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; and, therefore, though man may not join Him in maintaining the light, but plunge the whole scene in darkness again and again, He Himself will make good His own glory and secure His own joy, and having at the beginning called forth light from darkness in the morning hour of the first creation, will hold in eternal beauty the morning of the second creation.

My Earnest Expectation

"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." Phil. 1:20-25.

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:17-21.

May I say just one word about this question of the body, in reference to the place that it was intended of God to fill, as the vessel for the display of Christ's power, at this present moment?

I would inquire, How far are we intelligently with God in the actings of His grace through our bodies now, and the place that they will have in the day when we shall have nothing to say to them, but they will be changed and made like unto His glorious body? He will show us in that day how He can change and fashion them; but in this day I think we do not give sufficient weight to the fact that it is in our body God intends that Christ should now be magnified. We constantly are prone to think that it is only in our minds, our souls, our affections, or what does not show outside, that Christ's power is to be seen; but that is not at all what we have here.

There is only one other place in the New Testament, as far as I know, where the word here used occurs, and that is in Rom. 8:19. "Earnest expectation." It means, literally, that the thing longed for keeps up expectation until the time is exhausted. The thought is, that but one distinct thing is before the soul, and after that I eagerly stretch out my neck. And what is that? That Christ - all that He is - excellency, fullness, blessedness - should come out in my body; not that it should come out in my spirit, but that this body and all that relates to it, and in connection with it, and every circumstance and scene that it belongs to, should be the platform on which Christ should be expressed, in life or death. As has been said, Stephen was the expression of the one, and Paul of the other, because Paul lived on here in this world after he had seen that blessed One in the glory; and everything here was distanced by that sight.

The body is that in which all the malignity of Satan has been displayed; it bears the marks of it. Where does all the sickness and weariness around us come from? It came in consequence of sin, and it is expressed in the body. In Mark 5 the Lord meets a man possessed of the devil; all the

malignity of Satan was expressed in his condition; but he is made an instance of the delivering power of Christ, and his body becomes the vessel for its display - wonderful deliverer! The result, then, of this deliverance on him was, that the One who had cleared everything out of the way now filled the whole scene with Himself, and therefore the effect on the man was that he wanted to be with Him. This desire is the simplest and first principle in a soul that has found distinct deliverance in the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to be with the One to whom I owe everything. The Apostle says, I have "a desire to depart, and to be with Christ." There was not a single thing now detaining him here. There is no doubt that he was once detained. Jerusalem detained him at one time, but it was not so now. If even the interests of Christ, and the things of Christ, come in to take the place that Christ Himself should have in the heart, we are not clear to go to Him. I believe many a saint is detained here by the things of Christ, rather than attracted to Himself.

I do not think the coming of the Lord tests us half as much as this: Am I ready to go to Him now at this moment? Of course it is a blessed hope, the looking forward to our being all called up together; but it is an immensely testing thing whether or not I am able to say, There is not a single thing that keeps me back here; I do desire to depart and be with Christ. We are really only qualified to stay when we are ready to depart. Then Christ is before me, and I am possessed by Christ.

It is a wonderful thought that just as that man had been possessed by Satan-the scene of his mischief and confusion being his poor body- so now he was possessed by Christ. All that Christ is comes out in my body, whether I live or die. There was the intelligent communion of the man's heart in it. I see he is a man who has got intelligence with the mind and thought of God in that which was once the vessel in which Satan displayed his malignity and dislike to Christ.

Ought not I to be exercised as to what my body is witnessing to? I do not think the saints are exercised enough as to this. Just as an illustration, before I pass on, I would mention what might be seen - a poor, weak, feeble creature, tossing to and fro on a bed of pain, and such a one saying, "What use am I? a trial to myself, a tax to others, no good to anybody." Why, that poor sufferer, with a body full of pain, with everything that would go to make him just the contrary of this by nature, may, by the power of Christ, be so in communion with Him, that his body, instead of being full of murmurings and discontent, is filled with peace and joy, controlled by His presence, and satisfied with Himself. And as you look you do not say, What a wonderful creature is there; but, What a Christ is that which can be shown out in such a poor, weak house of clay as this is.

Every break in the vessel only brings out in it the more the preciousness of the treasure that is inside; every crack and chink only lets it shine out the more brightly. Paul was not expecting to see the sun go down in ease and retirement; he was looking for martyrdom.

The Lord give us to see the place that our bodies have. As I have said, it is not our hearts, or minds, or feelings, that are in question; it is the earthly tabernacle, or tent, this body in which He is to be magnified.

And now one word on the third chapter. It is a wonderful thing, and a most sanctifying thing, too, the thought that God has got, in His own presence in glory, the pattern of what He is going to have all His people like. God is working with us morally in different ways, that no one but Christ should be seen in us even now. It is Christ that is filling His eyes and affections always. There is a day coming when He will take these very bodies - which have been the witnesses of Him in their

humiliation in this scene of the terrible hatred of Satan against Christ, and the witnesses, too, of the ruin of the first man- He will take them and transform them into the likeness of His own. Not only will He do that by-and-by, but meanwhile He would like to have you and me intelligently entering into His thought about it - our necks eagerly stretched out after one object - that we might be magnifying Him.

My Spikenard

If there be one thing more than another that one desires for oneself first of all, and for all the beloved children of God, it is that constancy of affection toward the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, our precious Savior, that is implied in the word "devotedness."

In accomplishing the mighty work of redemption that has glorified God and saved our souls, the blessed Lord has acquired a quite peculiar claim over His ransomed people; and we may say in truth, that He has endured the untold sufferings of Calvary, not merely that we might be delivered from going down to the pit, but that He Himself might become the commanding and supreme object of our renewed affections. This blessed and happy response will be rendered assuredly without hindrance in the eternal day that awaits us beyond this valley of the shadow of death; indeed in the Apocalypse, when the door of heaven is opened (chap. 4) and the whole scene is expanded before the gaze of the beloved Apostle, it is to present the fact that, in spite of the outside place afforded Him in the closing epoch of Christendom (Rev. 3:20), the Lamb is the supreme object of heavenly worship and delight.

But that which is specially grateful to His heart today, is that in the time of His "kingdom and patience," He should be to us the governing motive of our lives; and when our souls have learned somewhat of His worthiness and His glory, if our eyes but rest upon that face whence there shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God (2 Cor. 4), it is not difficult to count all things but loss. "The glory of that light" fills the vision of our souls, the eyes of our hearts, as it did that of Paul the Apostle. May God disclose this face more clearly to each one of us.

The voice of the King's beloved in the Song of Songs expresses this attachment to His Person, and joy in His presence, when, as brought into His chamber (chap. 1:4) and beholding Him at His table, her spikenard breathes forth her thanks and worship in grateful perfume (v. 12). She may have much to discover of her own dullness and unworthiness, but His faithful love triumphs in the end; and He becomes the chiefest among ten thousand (chap. 10), while she learns the wondrous secret, "I am my Beloved's, and his desire is toward me" (chap. 7:10). The Love that "many waters" could not quench, nor the "floods drown," has overcome every obstacle.

John 12 contains the well-known scene in the house of Bethany, where that heavenly stranger, soon to depart out of this world and go to the Father, reclines at table in the circle dearly loved of His heart. It was six days before the Passover, when the blood of that Lamb whom God had provided (Gen. 22:8; John 1:29)-that "precious blood" - should be shed, and the grave that had opened for Lazarus should close upon the Son of God. With what joy had those two devoted sisters received again their brother from the dead, and what feelings of thankfulness and gratitude would animate the reunited household, as their Lord and Master, who had borne and dissipated their sorrow, came into their midst to share their joy! It is not now the King at His own table, but the King in lowly guise, a stranger in the creation of His own hands, come down to be a Man of Sorrows, and to take a place in perfect grace at the table of those who had been in sorrow, that He might win the confidence of their hearts.

How blessedly fruitful in at least one case had been His stoop, the sequel proved; for there in the presence of the joy of Lazarus, the service of Martha, the interest of the disciples, the covetousness of Judas, one heart is moved in its deepest depths. To Mary the thought that overpowered all else within her was that the One she had learned to love and reverence was going to death. Of what value was even the tenderest tie of earth, or its most precious objects, if He, the Lord of all, the resurrection and the life, should find but a tomb. For her the hopes of earth closed forever in the death of Jesus, and she dedicates to Him, to those blessed feet, her very costly spikenard; for all lost its worth in the estimation of the heart that knew that Christ was to be numbered with the dead. To see how very far distant from her apprehension of the moment was the discernment of the others, one has only to read the selfish objection of Judas (into which, alas! the eleven fell also; compare Matt. 26:8), and the divine approbation and vindication of the Lord Himself. "Against the day of My burying hath she kept this," is the proof that if all should misinterpret the deed, Jesus understood it. No wonder that the whole house was filled with the spikenard's odor, for Mary had chosen "that good part," the self-effacement that could be willing that all she held as of value here below might descend with Him to the tomb.

Such is the beautiful "fruit in its season" that the love of Jesus produces in this barren world from hearts like our own. So is manifested that "first love" of the saint, which would go even to death (John 13:37) for the sake of his Lord and Master. Yet how we need to be sustained by His power in such a path of devotedness, else we leave our first love as did Ephesus (Rev. 2:4), or, like Peter, learn by sad and bitter experience that, except we are energized by a force more powerful than natural affection, our love will quickly cool, and we shall deeply dishonor Christ. But, thank God, He keeps the feet of His saints (1 Sam. 2:9; Pro. 2:8), and is able to keep us from falling (Jud 24). By His intercession on high, and the washing of our feet by the way, our gracious High Priest and Advocate able to sustain our renewed affections for His Person, and maintain the freshness and bloom of "first love."

In none of His saints is this power more manifested than in Paul the Apostle when from his Roman dungeon he writes to his beloved Philippians, being now "such a one as Paul the aged." Well-nigh thirty years had COME and gone since the "glory of that light" revealed a Savior to his soul-years full of unremitting toil and suffering, and "beside those things that are without,... the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28). Yet now, having arrived at the end of his course, he is separated from those individuals and assemblies so dearly loved; and the devoted servant learns about this season that all Asia had turned away from him, and even among those who had been a joy and refreshment to him, some were ashamed of his chain as "the prisoner of the Lord" (2 Tim. 1:15, 16; Eph. 4:1). Yet in his letter to the Philippians we find no vain repinings, no regrets. He has counted the cost, and in chapter 3 the aged man says, while recalling what he had done so long before (v. 7), "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

He goes over the list of what he took pride in—not bad things, but things that the flesh could glory in, made more attractive by this, that though they belonged to an economy that had passed away, they came from God Himself. He knows their value, he had felt their power, yet so had he learned Christ, that there is no flinching now in his soul. "Yea doubtless," he says, "and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things." v. 8. I seem to see him there, his box of spikenard (as it were) in his hands, devoting to that glorified Lord all that he held precious. All had descended with Him to the grave,

and the desire of his soul now is that he may "arrive at the resurrection from among the dead" (J.N.D. Trans.), a place with Christ in a deathless scene of glory. And if that prisoner could find in the offering sent through Epaphroditus "an odor of a sweet smell," we may say that for the heart of Christ that prison cell was "filled with the odor of the ointment."

May the Lord teach us what this devotedness is that dedicates all to Him as an intelligent service (Rom. 12:1.).

My Times Are in Thy Hands

The text above is from Psalm 31, in which the Spirit of Christ leads the soul into thorough confidence in the Lord, and that on the ground of righteousness. Mercy too being rejoiced in, and God known as a God of truth, everything is trusted with the Lord - "my spirit" (v. 5), "my times" (v. 15). Trials were there-fightings without and fears within - but the One who is trusted "hast known my soul in adversities"; and in the sense that all is in His hands, the one who trusts has the present assurance of the goodness that is laid up for the faithful; and the hopers in Jehovah are strengthened and encouraged (v. 24).

Passing on to Psalm 32, we have the blessedness of a forgiven sinner. Not only does the exercised soul turn to the Lord as to the only confidence in the midst of times and troubles, but in this psalm he learns to unburden his heart to Him in the confession of sin - the heart is emptied out to the Lord, and the burning fever within is assuaged by the forgiveness of transgressions and iniquity. Jehovah is known now as a hiding-place, instead of One to be hidden from. There is no fear where this is realized, that the rest in "the secret of His presence" (Psalm 31:20) can be disturbed from within or from without. Jehovah compasses him about with songs of deliverance, instructs and leads him intelligently, and, if necessary, with bit and bridle. Trusting in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about; and in true uprightness of heart there is gladness and shouting for joy.

Psalm 33 takes up this joy; for it is not joy in self, or in circumstances, but in the Lord (cf. Phil. 4); and for the first time in the Psalms we have "a new song." The saint had been compassed about with songs of deliverance by the Lord; but God Himself is now become the object of rejoicing and song. Not that this new song yet rises higher than the time scene of this earth, but the great thing in it is that Jehovah is known and praised.

Two special things are here celebrated - His words and His works (v. 4); His righteousness and His goodness, or mercy (v. 5). True, the scene around is full of the counsels of man-Psalm 2:2 tells us to what a height they rise-but the heart is not occupied with that, but with the Lord; His word is right, His works are truth. The heavens, the sea, the earth, bear witness. He has counsels too as to His own creation, as to that which when He spake it was done; when He commanded it stood fast. Shall not they be carried out? Faith rejoicing in the Lord can say that the counsel of the heathen shall be brought to naught, and the devices of the people be made of none effect; but "The counsel of the LORD standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations." It is this "forever" which we may see spoken of in Eccles. 3:14; and whatever may be the present apparent prosperity of the counsels of man, underlying it all we may be sure there is the work that God makes from beginning to end. In Matt. 13:24-30 we see the outward effect of the enemy's work; but in Mark 4:26-29 we have described this underlying work done by the Son of man. Seed is cast into the ground, "times" of sunshine and storm doubtless pass over it, and it is as if the sower should sleep and rise night and day; but the seed springs and grows, he knows not how; but eventually the fruit is brought forth, and the harvest comes. It is the work which God makes from

beginning to end.

The heart being thus assured that the counsel of the Lord stands forever, the Spirit of God passes on in verse 12 to the happiness of those whose God is this Jehovah- of being the people whom He has chosen. He had purposes about them. They were to be His inheritance for the earth (even as the Church learns what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints who are associated with Him who is in the heavens, and in whom everything is to be headed up, both in heaven and on earth). He took notice of all that was going on among men as He looked down from heaven; He saw the place of their confidence; but His eye was resting upon them that hope in His mercy. Not only do they know Him, but He knows them. (Cf. John 10:14; Gal. 4:9). They are the objects of His care, and learn, while He allows men for a time to use His creation according to their own counsels, to wait for the Lord as well as to trust in Him-their help and shield. Thus, while the heart rejoices in Him, trusting in His holy name, the patience of hope is produced in the soul. The "times" are running on, and they form the epoch between the declaration of the counsels of the Lord and their fulfillment, during which the counsels of men are sought to be established. These the Lord will eventually frustrate and bring to naught, so that the thoughts of His heart may stand to all generations. During these times, faith is tried-a trial much more precious than of gold that perishes - and the soul is exercised and chastened and taught to wait for the Lord. How blessed to know there is One who passed through them perfectly, who could say, as come to do the will of God, "I waited patiently for the LORD" (Psalm 40:1). In perfect patience He waited until from the depth of sorrows He was heard, and was brought up out of them with a new song in His mouth, even praise unto our God.

It is this One who speaks in Psalm 34. He is passing through the times in which He accomplished the will of God, and during which He attached to Himself those who, according to Psalm 16, were the excellent of the earth - the saints who, however feebly, were walking in the path of faith into which He in grace had entered, so that He might be with those in whom He had found His delight. "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." He it is who goes before the sheep when He leads them out. It is in the hearing of these companions - the humble who hear Him and are glad - that He thus speaks: "I will bless the LORD at all times: His praise shall continually be in My mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD." Prophets and kings had desired to hear such things (Luke 10:24) as the disciples listened to "at that time." When standing by, they heard Jesus say, in the hour of His rejection, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." It was at a time when city after city which had witnessed His mighty works refused to listen; and yet how perfectly does He praise, bearing witness to His Father, because it was "well-pleasing in His sight." What perfect bowing to His good pleasure! He knew the Father, whose good pleasure it was to carry out His ways by hiding these things from the wise and prudent-those who found their sphere in the present - and by revealing them to babes. Knowing thus the Father's mind, He invites the weary and heavy laden- those who found that in the present scene "all things are full of labor" - to come to Himself where they would find His rest as this meek and lowly One.

Those who thus found His company are the humble of Psalm 34, who hear Him and are glad. Personally, they are weak and feeble, and He knows it; and oft times on earth He had to say to them, "O ye of little faith." And yet what company was like His? It has such attraction that it made Thomas say to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." The attraction and

the affection were there, though the flesh was weak; for as they were in the way going up to Jerusalem, though Jesus went before them, "they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid" (Mark 10:32). He had to speak to them of the times of suffering and rejection that He must pass through ere the time of rest and glory could be reached. It was necessary for the very maintenance of that glory that it should be so; but they were dull of hearing, and "understood none of these things" (Luke 18:34). Still it was His path, because it was the Father's will; and if they would go after Him, they must take up the cross and follow.

We, as they, often fail to apprehend the holiness and righteousness, as well as the graciousness and mercy, of the ways of God. In His holy government, it is right that man should reap, even in the present, that which he sows. The history of Israel develops these ways of His holy government. For ages they had been sowing to the flesh and turning their backs to God, and they had to receive at His hand double for all their sins. Moreover, they were guilty of refusing the One who had come in grace to bear their griefs and carry their sorrows. Mercy was thus rejected when it came to them in God's Holy One (Psalm 89:19); and His lips, that spake such gracious words that all wondered, had to utter, "Woe unto thee... woe unto thee" (Matt. 11) and, while He wept, to foretell Jerusalem's coming desolation, because she knew not the time of her visitation. She would be trodden down of the Gentiles according to the Word of God, and Jesus Himself be delivered to them to be put to death, so completely did He enter into the sorrows and pathway of His people, whose sins obliged Jehovah to give the dearly beloved of His soul into the hands of her enemies.

It is not of atonement that we are now speaking, well as we know that it was accomplished in the death of Jesus on the cross, where He did the will of God in that body which was prepared for Him, but of the ways of wisdom, by which He so orders that man should prove himself to be both a transgressor and a rejecter of God Himself in grace, notwithstanding all His long-suffering and patience, and by which He also displays Himself in His own unchangeable nature and character, while He manifests that He has no compromise with evil even in His own people more than in the ungodly. With the latter, His longsuffering will finally give way to judgment; after all His dealings to exercise the conscience and attract the heart have been of no avail, judgment will at the last be full and final. By these same dealings the saints are taught to discern good and evil while they endure them as chastening for their profit, that they might be partakers of His holiness.

In Caleb and Joshua, we learn how the saints may have to pass through the times during which God thus displays His ways and vindicates His character; but they become the opportunity by which God is better known to them, and the power of faith increased by its exercise. Thus Joshua is taught to be strong and very courageous, so that he may lead the people at last into the land with cities walled up to heaven; and Caleb attains a power of faith by which he takes possession of the inheritance on which his feet had trodden with a vigor unabated by forty years of wandering. God was better known to each as the One who had delight in His people, as well as in the confidence and faithfulness of an individual saint.

While thus learning God, we taste His compassions; for He knows our frame, He remembers we are dust, and He gives strong consolation to those whose eyes rest on the forerunner who has gone before us as the leader and completer of faith. He entered into the pathway through these "times," and walked in it in the perfection of faith in His Father, and in obedience to His will even to death. We see in Zech. 13:5 how Messiah was brought by man into the same position in which he

was as a tiller of the ground-a servant-and also into the place of death in the house of His friends. Man was in those circumstances, and Jesus entered into them in grace, thus to become, in the perfection of His own walk in the midst of them, the sustainer of the hearts of those who were there. He could say to them, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls"-rest in being in company with Him, and learning to be of His spirit. To say, "I will bless the LORD at all times" would otherwise prove to be difficult; the words would tremble on our lips. But in company with Him, though realizing our own weakness, we hear them uttered by Him, and taste the marvelous grace which bids us join with Him in magnifying the Lord: "O magnify the LORD with Me, and let us exalt His name together." Thus have we the privilege of being in company, in spirit, with One who ever turned to His Father-of hearing Him say, "I thank Thee, Father," and for our encouragement in the needed exercises of these "times." "I sought the LORD, and He heard Me"; and again, "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard." Hearing such words, He directs our hearts to His own refuge; and thus "They" (His companions) "looked unto Him" (Jehovah, for us the Father) "and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed." We respond to His invitation, "O taste and see that the LORD is good," and learn the blessedness of trusting in Him; or, as Peter puts it, for those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, "Unto you therefore which, believe He is precious," or, "is the preciousness," of God's chief cornerstone.

The present government of God has thus its effect in producing the state of heart and spirit which the Lord can be nigh unto (v. 18). No sorrow can go further than He pleases, for "my times are in Thy hands." It was needful that every wave of sorrow should dash against the blessed Lord, all must roll over Him, that, as Captain of salvation, He might be made perfect through sufferings, but not one that was not needed for the accomplishing of all things. He whose Spirit in the prophets of old had written of these sufferings was now passing through them, and when all were accomplished that His Spirit had foretold, He could say, "It is finished" (John 19:28); and then not a bone of Him was broken (John 19:36). "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," yet personally He is kept. "He keepeth all His bones: not one of them is broken"; and through delivering mercy it will be testified

"Garments fresh, and foot unwearied

Tell how God has brought thee through."

Yes, the Lord is gracious. Israel will by these psalms learn in their times of sorrow the deep sympathy of the Spirit of Christ, and be sustained by the knowledge of unchanging love - "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jer. 31:3)-when Jehovah allures them again into the wilderness, and teaches them to sing there. How much more do we know that same eternal love, made known to us in the Son!

The Church too, as well as the individual, has her "times" of sorrow. Revelation 2 and 3 show us the "times" which pass over her, and it is well if, in the light of the searching eyes of the Son of man, any are awakened to know the times, and learn what Israel ought to do (1 Chron. 12:32). It is not to set up again that which has failed, but, in the sense of failure, to understand that these times also are "in Thy hands." Thus we can rest, holding fast that we have (through His grace) until He comes, in whom, as the faithful and true witness, all will yet be brought out in glory at His appearing, which in its own "times" He shall show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King

of kings, and Lord of lords.

It is on the ground of atonement that this blessed "forever" can take place. To that, as to all God's works, "nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." The smiting of Jehovah's fellow, and the hiding of God's face, when the holy soul of Jesus was made an offering for sin, form the basis of these ways of God, and of the work that He makes from beginning to end, until all issues in a new heaven and a new earth, where the former things are passed away, and God's "forever" takes the place of times and seasons.

The Name of the Lord

"Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. And I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it to you for a heritage: I am the LORD." Exod. 6:1-8.

In Exodus 6 the Lord publishes His name. It is a name suited to the then condition of Israel. They were groaning in Egypt. Taskmasters and brick kilns were oppressing them. The Lord lets them learn Him in characters of faithfulness, grace, and strength exactly suited to such a condition. He tells them that He remembered them, heard their sorrows, had His undertakings to their fathers before His thoughts, and was about to rise up for their deliverance. They were oppressed, and He was a redeemer - that was all - that was the name He was publishing, because that was the name they needed; that was the character which their circumstances needed to find in Him.

"And He said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee." Exod. 34:10.

The Lord published His name again. But it is a very different name, a name that has respect, not to strong enemies, but to disobedient, rebellious people - a name, therefore, full of pardoning grace, and not of delivering strength. For this was the new name which the then present condition of Israel needed. The people had now trouble themselves, and it was forgiveness they needed; before, Egypt troubled them, and it was strength and deliverance they needed.

Connected with forgiveness, they learn that God will correct or discipline them even to the third or fourth generation.

How wondrous these two publications of His name are! How fine a witness they bear to us that if we will but call upon Him, He will deal with us as our souls need. If others be against us, He will deliver; if we are faulty ourselves, He will correct but forgive.

The Need to Meditate

The soul is the dwelling-place of the truth of God. The ear and the mind are but the gate and the avenue; the soul is its home or dwelling-place.

The beauty and the joy of the truth may have unduly occupied the outpost, filled the avenues, and crowded the gates; but it is only in the soul that its reality can be known. And it is by meditation that the truth takes its journey from the gate along the avenue to its proper dwelling-place.

Nothing but Christ

We have an excellent touchstone by which to try all sorts of teaching and preaching. The most spiritual teaching will ever be characterized by a full and constant presentation of Christ. The Spirit cannot dwell on aught but Jesus. Of Him He delights to speak. He delights in setting forth His attractions and excellencies. Hence, when a man is ministering by the power of the Spirit of God, there will always be more of Christ than anything else in his ministry. There will be little room in such ministry for human logic and reasoning. Such things may do very well when a man desires to set forth himself; but the Spirit's sole object - be it well remembered by all who minister - will ever be to set forth Christ.

Obedience without Reasoning

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2, 3.

What does that mean? Ah, brethren, it means to obey without reasoning. Way back in the garden of Eden, to which the Apostle refers here, when Eve was tempted, the serpent got her to reasoning instead of obeying. She looked at that tree, and it looked pleasant to the eye. That was perfectly true. It was good for food, and that was perfectly true. It was a tree to be desired to make one wise; that had its truth in it too. But what did the serpent hide from Eve? That the act would be disobedience, and the fruit would be death. In other words, Eve began to reason instead of obeying.

Remember that the Word of God is given to us for the obedience of faith. That is said twice in the epistle to the Romans - in the first chapter, and in the last chapter.

The Offence of the Cross

John the Baptist, greatest of all the prophets, herald of the King, and preacher of the kingdom, was cast into prison by Herod; and his bold and faithful testimony was rudely stopped.

The effect of this sudden arrest seems for the moment to have shaken his faith as to the Messiahship of Jesus.

Accordingly he sends two of his disciples to ask Him if He were the actual Messiah, or if another were to be looked for. Does not such a question indicate a degree of uncertainty? No doubt it does; but then we must remember that there never was a true servant of God whose faith was not put to the test, or who was not in some way exercised as to the testimony he held. Indeed the higher the testimony the severer the test.

Nor did John escape. His testimony was high indeed; for he was the immediate forerunner of the Lord, and was sent to prepare His way. His preaching was distinct, his call for reformation loud, his life beautifully separate, and his faithfulness most brilliant. He lived in full expectation of the immediate establishment of the kingdom.

Yet he was imprisoned; he had to suffer; and he was apparently taken by surprise. Why should the herald of the King thus be silenced? Why should the announcement of the kingdom thus be arrested? In his difficulty he sends to Jesus, and receives from Him an answer to his question, as exquisite in its simplicity, complete in its explanation, and solemn in its import, as his shaken faith could have wished. "Go," said the Lord, "and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me." Matt. 11:4-6.

A beautiful answer indeed to the difficulties of His poor suffering witness. The Lord does not allude to His own personal glory, does not bid these two disciples carry back to their master statements of His deity or Messiahship. He merely draws their attention to public and well-known facts connected with His gracious ministry. He can call on a Bartimaeus to tell how he received sight; or a cripple, who had lain for years at the pool of Bethesda, wholly cured by one brief sentence; or a leper touched by His healing hand; or a deaf man whose long closed ears opened to His magic "Ephphatha"; or a Lazarus raised from the tomb; and on multitudes of the poor who had heard tidings of mercy. He can call on such witnesses to attest His mission, and confirm His claims. How effective! How conclusive! But, further, He does not fail to instruct John in the truth of the suffering path on which he had entered. "Blessed," He said, "is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

Offense was quite as much a part of His mission as the giving of life or health to the needy.

Was John offended by his imprisonment? He had now to learn that his truest honor as his Lord's forerunner lay in suffering for Him. A special blessing attaches to his sharing the sufferings of Christ - "Blessed is he"! Oh, how this word must have calmed the troubled mind of John! How it

would explain his situation as a prisoner, and add luster to his chain. In it the Lord predicted His own cross, and stamped the nature of all true Christian testimony.

It were an easy service had we only to preach the gospel to the poor, and witness the benevolent acts of a gracious Savior; but while this is our privilege, we are connected with One who was crucified. He esteems the cross His highest glory, and He values the heart that follows in the same path.

Paul broke in upon luxurious Corinth with the gospel; but his motto was, that he should know nothing among them but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. This steadied his soul, and kept him clear of Corinthian folly. He sought to know a crucified Christ.

And in the luxury -the religious luxury - of the day, how this searching 'truth is needed. The day of glory will come, but meanwhile we are called on to learn the offense of the cross. That offense has not yet ceased; and the cross is, on the one hand, as ever, the badge of man's enmity to God, as it is, on the other hand, at once the proof of God's love and of His judgment.

God tests everything by the cross of Christ. What savors most of it is dearest to Him, and the religion that refuses it is held in abomination by Him.

How much of this "offense" is to be found in the popularized Christianity of the day? Nay, the one effort seems to be to avoid the cross, both in its atoning and world-condemning characters. It is despised as of old; and therefore this popularization of the truth has brought about the most fearful anomaly possible. What could be a greater travesty of the Christianity of the apostles than the sad counterfeit we see around us? There is no resemblance between that which is presented to us in The Acts and the money-loving, pleasure seeking, world-hunting Christianity of today. Infidelity is largely the child of this abortion. It is, as a system, the negation of Christianity, and for the general decay we have to bear the shame. If then one testimony brighter than another could be rendered, it consists in not being off ended in Jesus.

Outward success in His work is deprived of the greater part of its glory if that be lacking. "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me" had its deep and significant meaning to the imprisoned John, just as much as the fact that the blind, the lame, the deaf, the leper, were cured or the dead raised. The offense of the cross was, and is, an integral and essential part of the one divine testimony.

Our Lord's Loving Request: Thoughts on the Lord's Supper

"This do in remembrance of Me." 1 Cor. 11:24.

We do not go to the gospels for our instruction and authority as to the Lord's supper; for about this the Lord has since then spoken to us from heaven, as was revealed to the Church by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. 11:23). True it is that in the gospels we find, after keeping the Passover, that our Lord took bread, gave thanks, brake, and gave to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body," etc.; and so far we may speak of it as the Lord's institution of His supper. But though it is more or less spoken of by the other evangelists, it is only Luke who records our Lord's special request - "This do in remembrance of Me" - and he names it only once.

Moreover, in the gospels, the hope connected with it, as set forth by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, was the kingdom - "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matt. 26:29); for the Lord was then looking to the restoration and blessing of the nation of Israel, ere He will know joy in the world, and then His people will share it with Him. When He was drawing nigh to the cross of Calvary, He said to His disciples, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me"; and truly it is the case that since He was taken down from the cross no worldling's eye has rested upon Him. His mission to the earth then closed; and joy on earth, in which He will participate, can only be when He takes to Himself His great power, and establishes the long looked for kingdom on earth in righteousness.

With Christ rejected by the world, and hated without a cause by His own nation, but raised by God from among the dead, and glorified as Man on His own right hand, an entirely new order begins. The world being now under sentence of judgment, the Jews dispersed in governmental displeasure because of their sins, the kingdom so often spoken of by prophets is in abeyance until He shall come whose right it is. Meanwhile, the Holy Ghost is received and shed forth by the exalted Savior, the veil having been rent from the top to the bottom; and the Forerunner having gone into heaven itself by His own blood, the Father's love, counsels, and ways are having their accomplishment in calling out a body and bride for the Son. In the interval we are taught to look for His coming again at any time to take us bodily and forever out of this scene to the Father's house and so be forever with the Lord.

It is not difficult then to see why, when Israel for a time is governmentally given up and a new order of blessing begun in connection with the Son of man being in the glory of God, instead of looking forward to the "kingdom," we are taught by the Lord from heaven to keep His supper "till He come."

As those who know we have redemption in Christ, and by His precious blood, it is surely the delight of our hearts to do what is pleasing in His sight, who said, "This do in remembrance of Me"; and observe that in this loving request we have something to do, as well as someone to remember. It is also the expression of one body. "This do," spoken to His disciples, implies an act

to be carried out with others. We may have sweet remembrances of the Savior's precious words and ways and suffering unto death for us when alone; but here it is something to be done. Our Lord took bread, gave thanks, brake, and gave them, saying, "Take, eat;... this do in remembrance of Me." After the same manner also He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." It is not true then that I can remember the Lord at home, when alone, in the same way as when gathered with others to His name to carry out His mind, in thus eating of the bread and drinking of the cup. There is, in carrying out this special request of our Lord, something to be done - "This do"; if I do not do it, I do not carry out His mind.

Then there is a Person to be remembered - not only what He has done, blessed as it always is to think of it, but Himself. We are to remember Him; not, as it is often said, to come together to remember His death, but to remember Him. And surely the difference is great in its effect on our souls, whether we are thinking of a work done for us or of the loving One who did it. No doubt when we are occupied with Him in eating the bread and drinking the cup, we cannot forget His death and the love that brought Him there for us - that love which many waters could not quench (S. of Sol. 8:7), nor all the power of man or Satan hinder. But while in doing this we remember Him, we also announce or show forth His death. This should be our occupation "till He come." "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." 1 Cor. 11:26. How soon He may come for us!

In our doing this, there is not only the discerning of the Lord's body, but the expression of the "one body" in our breaking and eating of the same loaf. We have our individual thoughts and exercises of faith and love in thus remembering Him; but here believers are gathered together; and because we are "many," we are collectively the expression of being one body in Christ. "For we being many are one bread" (or loaf), "for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. 10:17. It is important to see this as characterizing the Lord's table, as we are so instructed by the Apostle who was especially called to minister to the Church (Col. 1:25). We do not have such thoughts presented in the accounts given in the gospels of the institution of the supper, because Israel had not been formally given up, nor had the mystery of the Church been revealed; but when the truth of the assembly was revealed to Paul, and made known to others by the Spirit, then the fitting time came for teaching those who were members of the body of Christ, that in the act of doing this, in the remembrance of the Lord, there is the expression of our being one with all other believers - "one body."

Let us not fail to notice also that in the Evangelist's account of the Lord's supper, only apostles - men, and not women - partook of it; but when the Church is set up on earth, then all believers are addressed as to their great privilege in thus remembering the Lord "till He come." May we know more of the Lord's mind as to this, and of our accountability to Him who is in the midst of those gathered together to His name.

Paganism - Nehru - Hinduism: the Editor's Column

Once again the world was reminded of the brevity and uncertainty of human life, even in those who occupy the most important places of power and influence in the world, when Jawaharlal Nehru died on May 27th at the age of 74 years. He left an indelible mark on his populous India, for he helped chart its course through the maze of contradictions which beset its early years of independent nationhood. He was born in 1890, of rich Indian parents, and taken to England where the finest of things on earth were at his command. He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge, and thus was in easy access to the truth of Christianity in the early days of this century, before infidelity had well-nigh wrecked the true faith by the inroads of modern unbelief with its deadening influences in England. But on this young man, who was brought up in the highest caste of Hinduism with all its secular advantages, Christianity had little effect.

To the time of his death he professed to be an agnostic- one who claims he does not know about God and the future. Evidently the vagaries of Hinduism had no appeal for him. We quote a few lines from the work on religions by John Lewis, B.Sc., Ph.D., published by Doubleday & Company of Garden City, New York. He quotes Sir Charles Eliot thus: "Hinduism has not been made, but has grown. It is a jungle, not a building. It is a living example of a great national paganism such as might have existed in Europe if Christianity had not become the State religion of the Roman Empire, if these had remained an incongruous jumble of old local superstitions, Greek philosophy and oriental cults such as the worship of Sarapis or Mithras."... "The behavior of most of the gods, including Krishna, the avatar of Vishnu, would be condemned by Christian standards, but not by Hindu ones." The Hindu would shrink from disregard of the caste system as a sin, but would not so categorize "indecent, untruth [and] dishonesty." Dr. Lewis says that India is covered with Temples and Shrines, some of which are "filled with obscene carvings and pictures."

A little further light on the religion of India may be shed by some of their religious writings. Dr. Lewis says that the Bhagavadgita (a poem composed of 700 verses) "is indispensable for an understanding of Hinduism. It was revered by Gandhi and is enthroned in the hearts of Hindus as a worthy rival of the New Testament." This writer also says that "The story of [the god] Krishna is told in many colorful legends and his personality is undoubtedly central to Hindu religion, in spite of the fact that the later stories are shockingly licentious."

O the sorrowful fact that Satan, the god and prince of this world, keeps millions enslaved in wicked paganism and then has it passed off as "a worthy rival to the New Testament"! And we need not turn to the pagan world for such daring effrontery to God; for men of letters, men of the cloth, men of renown in Christendom, have been known to teach that all people worship God in their own way; and some of them are willing to mingle with paganism as if any routes would land people in the same paradise. What arrant folly! Licentious, pagan religion and the Word of Truth and Holiness, given a similar value!

Such is the ancient religion of Hinduism. And while India's great leader claimed to be an agnostic, he was cremated with all the mystic rites of a national paganism, according to their custom. And as

the flames rose about his body, a Brahman priest intoned a prayer: "In the name of Narasingh, god of half man and half lion, may the soul have peace! In the name of Vishnu, god of protection, may peace prevail! In the name of Shiva, god of destruction, may peace prevail! In the name of Agni, god of fire, we offer these cans of ghee [purified liquid butter] as a symbol, and may the soul have peace!" Then to the medley of pagan worship, and agnosticism, was added a touch of formal Christianity. The band played "Abide With Me," and "Lead Kindly Light."

A huge mound marks the spot where Nehru's illustrious predecessor, Mohandas K. Gandhi, was cremated 16 years ago. Both sites are near the banks of the Jumma River, a main tributary of the "sacred" Ganges River.

What is man who knows not his Creator? nor even his own coming or going? Surely apart from divine revelation, all the secrets of life and death, and of all that lies beyond the veil which hides the future, man knows nothing.

Christianity and God-given Judaism in its day buried their dead. God can raise the dead from the grave, from the depths of the sea, or from scattered ashes. But we quote the words of a man of God of a former year: "I look on the earth as a vast casket containing dust precious to God." G. V. W. Or, we can sing with the poet:

"Our earthen vessels break;
The world itself grows old;
But Christ our precious dust will take
And freshly mold:
He'll give these bodies vile
A fashion like His own:
He'll bid the whole creation smile,
And hush its groan."

Mary Bowley

According to the best translations of Phil. 3:21, He shall change these bodies of humiliation like unto His own body of glory. Strictly speaking, God's Word does not speak of the human body as vile, as many false religions do; but the body is for the Lord, and will yet be made like to His body of glory.

Nehru's fame may follow him to his pyre, but it cannot go any further. "His glory shall not descend after him." Psalm 49:17. But there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. The statesman Nehru will rise again and stand before the bar of God's just judgment. There the Lord Jesus who would be the Savior of all who receive Him will be the Judge of all who despise or reject Him. The lake of fire will be the judgment of all those who die in their sins.

And with all that Nehru did for the good of India, he may have left it largely leaderless. That great nation of about 480,000,000 people is still, after many years of enforced English leadership in an

ordered government, torn by internal strife and threatened by outside enemies. It is questionable whether there is another man of Nehru's stature to hold the pieces together. Its citizens speak 179 distinct languages and 544 dialects. There are many diverse ethnic groups of men, and a huge rigid caste system of over 300 castes and sub-castes. Moslem and Hindu extremists and all the varied other religions of the vast subcontinent add to its confusion and basic lack of cohesion. The Pakistan Moslem nation, formerly a part of India, makes for an uneasy partnership on one side; and they are divided with India over the problem of Kashmir, while the Red Chinese pose a constant threat on their north. "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked." Isa. 48:22. The world is at enmity with God; then how can there be peace on earth? Men cast out the "Prince of Peace," and "the way of peace have they not known."

When we stop to consider the brevity of life's span, and its uncertainty, we know not what shall be on the morrow. Before the ashes of Nehru had cooled, the power struggle began for the exalted post left vacant by his decease. The only man that could weld the diverse groups together into an agreeable selection was the short, ascetic Lal Bahadur Shastri. He was apparently free from any taint of corruption in a place where many are guilty. But within just eighteen days, the new leader was stricken by a heart attack and confined to his bed. Whether he will ever be able to assume the post of such gigantic proportions in seeking to bring order out of confusion, is problematic. Then, we have to remember that God is overruling all things, and He who sets up kings and removes kings will order all things according to the counsel of His own will.

As the new leader of India was stricken, his wife prayed for the health of her husband with prayers to Vishnu (the god of protection) and to Shiva (the god of destruction) for his recovery. Thus we see how the nation is steeped in Hinduism.

Without thinking of things which suddenly changed destinies of men and nations, we need only to remember that of all the world's leaders today, not one has a sure tenure of life or of office. President De Gaulle of France has recently had surgery, and for a time was not doing very well. The United States and Great Britain are to have elections, and changes in their important posts are likely. "His purposes will ripen fast,

Unfolding every hour"; but the Christian should rest in peace, knowing God's will be done. Even the mighty Premier Khrushchev is past 70, and frequently has been reported as not in good health. Mao-Tse-Tung of China will soon be 71. He Chi Minh of North Vietnam, Tito of Yugoslavia, Ulbricht in East Germany, Togliatti (communist boss in Italy) are all about the same ages.

And so we sometimes sing:

"Passing onward, quickly passing;

Yes, but whither, whither bound?

Is it to the many mansions,

Where eternal rest is found?...

"Passing onward, quickly passing,

Naught the wheels of time can stay!

Sweet the thought that some are going

To the realms of perfect day....

"Passing onward, quickly passing,

Many in the downward road:

Careless of their souls immortal,

Heeding not the call of God."

And yet men struggle for a little power, a little fame, a little glory in this poor, passing world.

How important it is to have the really great issue settled, to have peace with God through the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ on Calvary-and then to tread in peace our place down here while we wait for Him who thus loved us to come and take us to Himself in the glory of God. It is not only to have the future secured, but to joy in God and rejoice in Christ Jesus until He calls us soon to be with Himself beyond earth's unrest and insecurity.

Peace

"Peace unto you" (John 20:19, 21). All was finished. The battle was fought, the victory gained. The conqueror was in the midst of His disciples-the true David with the head of the Philistine in His hand. All possible ground of anxiety was forever removed. Peace was made, and established on a basis which could never be moved.

It was utterly impossible that any power of earth or hell could ever touch the foundation of that peace which a risen Savior was now breathing into the souls of His gathered disciples. He had made peace by the blood of His cross. He had met every foe. He had encountered the marshaled hosts of hell, and made a show of them openly. The full tide of Jehovah's righteous wrath against sin had rolled over Him. He had taken the sting from death, and spoiled the grave of its victory. In a word, the triumph was glorious and complete; and the blessed victor at once presents Himself to the eyes and to the hearts of His beloved people, and sounds in their ears the precious word "peace."

And then mark the significant action: "He showed unto them His hands and His side." He brings them into immediate contact with Himself. He reveals His Person to their souls, and shows them the unequivocal tokens of His cross and passion-the wondrous proofs of accomplished atonement. It is a risen Savior, bearing in His body the marks of that death through which He has passed for His people. This is the secret of peace.

Perfect Obedience

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily," etc. Luke 9:23. "When the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." In Isaiah, "I set My face like a flint." He was accomplishing His Father's will here, as in all His course. Redemption must be accomplished through the cross. He "learned... obedience by the things which He suffered." It was the same obedience as at the beginning, when He was coming among them with "Blessed are the poor," etc. - more painful, and of course He felt the difference; but still He goes in the same blessed spirit and earnestness.

Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, etc. He had found it His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him. There was joy to Him in this, but in the cup of wrath which He was going to drink there was no joy. He had met with scorn here, smiting there, rejection all through, but nothing like this cup; and therefore He cried, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from Me," etc. Christ proved His perfectness, for He felt what it was to be "made sin," etc. His holy nature shrank from it; yet there was the same quiet, steady, patient obedience, for "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem," as all through. He knows His Father's will and He does it. He sets His face there, where His Father's will is to be done, not looking to this side or to that, but there - Jerusalem.

Lectures on Philippians

Chapter 2:14-30

If the Apostle was not there, but in prison far away, God, he says, is there. It is God who worketh in you. That would give solemnity of feeling, but it would also infuse confidence. There would be fear and trembling in their hearts, feeling that it is a bitter, painful thing to compromise God in any way by want of jealous self-judgment in their walk - fear and trembling because of the seriousness of the conflict. They had to do with Satan in his efforts against them. But on the other hand, God was with them, working in them. It was not the idea of anxiety and dread lest they should break down and be lost, but because of the struggle in which they were engaged with the enemy, without the presence of an apostle to render them his invaluable succor.

But now he turns to those things in which they might be to blame and certainly about which they had to be on their guard. "Do all things without murmurings and disputings [or reasonings]: that ye may be blameless and harmless [simple, or sincere], irreproachable children of God, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world." He calls them to that which would be manifestly a blameless walk and spirit in the eyes of the crooked and perverse around them. But besides this, he looks for that which would direct in them, and show men clearly the way to be delivered from their wretchedness and sin; lights in the world, "holding forth the word of life"; and this with the motive to their affections, "that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, nor labored in vain."

But now he puts another consideration before them. What if he, Paul, should be called to die in the career of the gospel? Up to this point he had been communicating his mind and feelings to them with the thought that he was going to live; he had stated his own conviction that God meant him to continue a little longer here below for the good of the Church. But he suggests the supposition of his death. Granting that he might suffer unto death, what then? "But if also I be poured out upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." To him it was the very reverse of a pain or trouble, the thought of being thus a libation upon what he sweetly calls the sacrifice and service of their faith. Nay, more, he calls on them to share his feelings. "For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me." Thus the Apostle triumphs, turning not only his imprisonment into a question of joy, but also the anticipation, were it God's will, of his laying down his life in the work. He is even congratulating them upon the joyful news. How mighty and unselfish is the power of faith! He calls upon them that there should be this perfect reciprocity of joy through faith, that they might take it as a personal honor, and feel a common interest in his joy, as much as if it were for themselves. This is just what love does produce. As the Apostle identified himself with them, so they, in their measure, would identify themselves with him. May the Lord grant us to know it better through His grace.

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state." What a beautiful sample of the same self-denying love which the Apostle had pointed out in Christ and was seeking to form in the hearts of the Philippians! We

know what Timothy was to the Apostle, but though to lose him, especially then, might be the greatest privation to himself, still he says, "I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you."

Divine love thinks of the good of others, and grace had wrought this in the Apostle. It was to furnish nothing of its own. He desired to know their state that his own heart might be comforted. Is not this the mind which was also in Christ Jesus? The imprisoned Apostle sent Timotheus from himself to them in the hope of getting good tidings of these saints that were so dear to his heart. "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" - no one with such genuine affection and care, not merely for me, but for you. "For all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son the father, he hath served with me in the gospel." There was at once what was the common bond. The love of Christ filled both and made them both serve. They were doing the same thing. There was mutual confidence for the same reason; for Christ and stumbling blocks are incompatible. "Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly."

What then does he add? He could not come as yet himself; he was delaying Timothy till the result of his trial should be known, that the Philippians might have the latest intelligence about that which he was sure would be near to their hearts. But would he leave them without a word meanwhile? Far from it. He says, "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor." We see how love delights to share all things with others. He chooses terms which would link Epaphroditus with himself - "my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier." There was everything that could clothe him with honor and endear him to the saints, "but your messenger and he that ministered to my wants." He had all these insignia of honor in the cause of Christ. Nothing can be sweeter than this unfolding of affection; but it could only be, because the state of the Philippians had been thoroughly sound with God. We see nothing of this when he writes to the Galatians or Corinthians. So far from being sound in state, they were not even sound in the faith. The Galatians, we know, were letting slip justification; the consequence is, there is not an epistle so reserved and distant, as we may see in the marked absence of personal salutation. He wrote to them as a duty, as an urgent service springing from his love that desired their deliverance; but he had no kind of liberty in letting out his affections in the way we find here. God Himself led him to act thus differently.

"For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." I cannot conceive a more admirable picture of divine affections flowing out without hindrance to these saints. He descants upon what Timothy was to him, whom he hoped to send to them, and now upon Epaphroditus who had come from them as their messenger. His heart glows, and he opened out all his feelings about this link between himself and them. "He longed after you all and was full of heaviness," not because he was sick himself or was nigh unto death, but "because that ye had heard that he had been sick."

Such was the heart of Epaphroditus; such was Paul's to see and record it. Both were desirous that they should be relieved, by knowing how the Lord had shown Himself on their behalf. "But God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow."

See how the Apostle loves to trace the goodness of God, not merely toward the person who was the immediate object of God's dealings, but toward himself also. Scripture nowhere intimates such a thing in the mind of God as looking coldly upon the sickness or death of His children. Too often this is the case with us, as if it did not much matter, or it were a point of spirituality to be like a stone.

There is such a thing as the Spirit of God identifying Himself with human affections, as well as with divine ones. We find divine affections in chapter 1, and human affections here in chapter 2. The Holy Spirit has been pleased not only to bring down divine affections, so to speak, and put them into us, but also to animate the human affections of the saints. Christ Himself had them in His heart, for He was truly man. And now the Spirit of God gives another and higher value to these affections in the saints of God. This is as plain as it is important. The Holy Ghost mingles Himself, so to speak, with all. "I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful." The Apostle does not say, And that I may rejoice too. There is no unreality, nothing but transparent truthfulness here, as well as the most blessed love. It is "that ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful." He did feel the pang of parting with Epaphroditus, but he could rejoice that such a help went to them, because they would rejoice; and he himself would be the less sorrowful. It was his loss, but assuredly it would be their gain.

"Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation." Remark how careful he is to commend his fellow laborer to the esteem of the saints. Epaphroditus does not seem to have been a man of much outward mark. But men highly gifted ought to be tenacious on behalf of those of lesser gift. Certainly in the case of the Apostle, instead of being jealous as to others, there is the greatest desire to keep up their value in the eyes of the saints. "Hold such in reputation." Others might have feared for Epaphroditus or others like him, lest they might be puffed up. "Receive him," he says, "with all gladness, and hold such in reputation; because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." We do not find any great account of what he had done in preaching or teaching; but there was the earnest, unselfish service of love in this blessed man of God, and that was enough for the Apostle Paul and ought to be also for God's children.

The Lord grant that we may be thus quick to discern and thus hearty in our appreciation of what is of Christ in others, whoever they may be, cultivating not so much keenness of eye for that which is painful and inconsistent in the saints, as steady desire for whatever brings Christ before the soul, whatever gives the ring of true metal, whatever bears the stamp of the Spirit of God.

Lectures on Philippians

W.K. Translation of Chapter 3

(1) "For the rest, my brethren, rejoice in [the] Lord. To write these things to you [is] not irksome to me, but safe for you. (2) See to dogs, see to evil workers, see to the concision; (3) for we are the circumcision that worship God in Spirit and boast in Christ Jesus, and have no trust in flesh. (4) Though I have a trusting even in flesh; if any other seem to trust in flesh, I more: (5) in circumcision of eight days, of [the] race of Israel, of [the] tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, according to law a Pharisee, (6) according to zeal persecuting the church, according to righteousness that [is] in law blameless. (7) But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss on account of

Christ. (8) But moreover also I count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on whose account I lost all things and count them to be refuse that I may win Christ, (9) and be found in him, not having my righteousness that [is] of law, but that [which is] by faith of Christ, the righteousness of God on faith; (10) to know him, and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, (11) if by any means I may arrive at the resurrection that [is] from [the] dead. (12) Not that I already received [it] or am already perfected; but I pursue if I may also lay hold, for that also I have been laid hold of by Christ. (13) Brethren, I do not reckon myself to have laid hold; (14) but one thing -forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue goalward unto the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus. (15) As many therefore as [are] perfect, let us mind this. And if in anything ye are differently minded, this also will God reveal to you. (16) Nevertheless unto what we have attained, walk by the same [, mind the same]. (17) Be joint-imitators of me, brethren, and mark those so walking as ye have us for a pattern. (18) For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, the enemies of the cross of Christ, (19) whose end [is] destruction, whose God [is] the belly, and they glory in their shame, who mind the things of earth. (20) For our commonwealth has its being in [the] heavens, from whence also we await [as] Savior [the] Lord Jesus Christ, (21) who shall transform our body of humiliation, conformed to his body of glory according to the working of his ability also to subject all things to him."

The Apostle had touched on various sources of joy to himself and the saints he was addressing. It was with joy he made supplication for them all (chap. 1:4). It was with joy, and ever new joy, that he beheld his very bonds giving a fresh impulse to the preaching of Christ (chap. 1:18). So too he is assured of his continuance with them all for their progress and joy of faith, that their boasting might abound in Christ through him (chap. 1:25). Next, he called on them to fulfill his joy (chap. 2:2), not merely by the proof of their love to him, but by cultivating unity of mind and mutual love according to Christ, who, though the highest, made Himself the lowest in grace, and is now exalted to the pinnacle of glory. "Yea, and if I be offered (or, poured forth) on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all. For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me." Chap. 2:17, 18. So, again, the Apostle sends away his companion and solace, Epaphroditus, when recovered, to the Philippians, who were uneasy at the tidings of his dangerous sickness, "that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be less sorrowful." Chap. 2:28.

But there is a joy independent of all passing circumstances, and deeper than all others, because it is nearer to, yea, it is the one spring of all joy; it is to this the Apostle now calls them. "Finally [or, for the rest], my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." It is of the deepest moment that we, that all saints, should heed the call. It is due to Him, in whom we are exhorted to rejoice, that we should bear a true testimony in this respect. I say not a testimony worthy of Him, for none is, save that which God the Father has borne and bears, and that which the Holy Ghost renders in word and deed. Still, great as our shortcoming is, the Holy Ghost is in us to give a divine appreciation of the Lord. May we not then dishonor Him by gloomy thoughts, by unbelieving feelings, by ways that betoken fear, doubt, dissatisfaction, yearning after creature pleasure in one form or another; but may we be enabled by faith, heartily, simply, alone or with others, in public and in private, to "rejoice in the Lord."

It was thus with Paul and Silas when the foundation of the assembly at Philippi was laid at midnight in the prison, and the jailor and his house were gathered among the first fruits (Acts

16:25-34). Long labors had intervened, many years of reproach and suffering. The heart of the Apostle fresh as ever, though a prisoner at Rome, calls on the saints to "rejoice in the Lord." So he had taught when with them; so he had already urged in this letter, though now he presses it with greater distinctness as to its ground and spring. "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe." It was no trouble to him, for he loved them too well to mind it. It was safe for them, for Satan threatened otherwise. Joy in the Lord is the truest safeguard against the religious snares of the enemy. Where the truth is known, the grand thing is to have the affections kept on the right object, and withal in happy liberty. This is secured by rejoicing in the Lord, which supposes the heart at rest in His grace, and Himself known and beloved, the most attractive and precious object before us. Put Him at a distance, wrap Him in clouds and darkness, think of Him mainly as the inflexible Judge about to be revealed in flaming fire taking vengeance, mix all this up with your own associations and relationships to Him, and with your experience; and is it any wonder that, under such conditions, peace is unknown, and eternal life a question unsolved and insoluble till the day of death or judgment? In such a state "rejoice in the Lord" has no tangible place, no practical application, not even a distinct meaning; and the soul is exposed, but for divine mercy which by other means may hinder all, to sink lower and lower into the dregs and deceits of Judaizers.

Hence, says the Apostle, "beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision." v. 2. There is not only a warning to take heed, but accumulated and bitter scorn of these high-minded men. For, rejecting grace and not submitting to the righteousness of God, they were restlessly prowling about, themselves unclean, whatever their pretensions; their work mischievous, their boasted privileges not only null but despicable in the extreme. There were "the dogs" now, not Gentiles even, still less Christians, as such, but the Judaizers. Evil workmen were they, and not the circumcision, which they affected literally or in principle - they were but "the concision." "For we," the Apostle says with emphasis, "are the circumcision (whatever we might have been in the flesh, Jews or Gentiles - it mattered not), who worship God in the Spirit, [or, according to the best MSS, 'who worship by God's Spirit'], and boast in Christ Jesus, and trust not in flesh." v. 3.

It is a mistake to imagine that these adversaries of God's work advocated a return to mere Judaism. Such there were elsewhere, as in Hebrews, but they are treated as apostates. The class here in view consists rather of persons who professed Christianity, but sought to blend the law along with it, a system of evil which, far from being rare, is the commonest thing nowadays. Do you not hear of a fresh recourse to the cross, and fresh sprinkling of the blood to restore the soul? Are there not souls who take the place of God's children and Church, and yet confess themselves miserable sinners, crying for mercy - sheep of His pasture, yet tied and bound with the chain of their sins? Does not this return to Jewish experience, under tutors and governors, ignore Christianity and annul redemption and the Spirit of adoption? Are there not notions still of holy places and holy castes, holy feast days and fast days, and administration of sacraments among those baptized into Christ's death? The Word of God is read, Christ is more or less preached, but these unquestionable Jewish elements are mingled with what is Christian. Hence human forms of prayer, ordinances, etc., take the place of God's Spirit as the power of worship; law-fulfilling (though by Christ) is openly boasted as the door into heaven, and our only title of righteousness; and thus to be risen with Christ, to be not in flesh but in Spirit, is supposed to be a fanatical dream, instead of the only condition which the Holy Ghost now recognizes as properly Christian.

Next, in verses 4-6, the Apostle briefly exposes the entire baselessness of their claims in comparison of his own, if flesh availed in divine things. "Though I [again speaking emphatic. ally] have trust in flesh also; if another think to trust in flesh. I more: in circumcision of eight days, of the race of Israel, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, persecuting the Church; as to righteousness that is in the law. blameless." Thus, on grounds of the best earthly stock, due honor to ancient and divine ordinances, a high rank acquired in the school of tradition, an utter repudiation and hatred of new light in religion, and a life blameless according to the law. who could stand as firmly as Paul? "But," adds he, "what things were gain to me, these I counted loss on account of Christ. But so then I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord, on account of whom I suffered the loss of all, and count them to be dung [refuse], that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having my righteousness, which [is] of law, but that which is by faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God on my faith; to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, if by any means I may arrive at the resurrection which is from out of the dead." vv. 7-11.

What was it, then, which had wrought so deep, so permanent, and, as we know from Acts 9, so sudden a change? What poured contempt on every natural, on every religious advantage from his birth up to the day when, with credentials from the high priest, he neared Damascus? It was the heavenly vision which arrested him on the way; it was Christ seen in glory, yet one 'with those whom his infatuated zeal was persecuting to prison and death. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." Sure that He whose light shone on him brighter than the noonday sun was no other than the Lord God of Israel, the astonished Saul of Tarsus learns from His own mouth that He was the Crucified, whose disciples he would have up to this conscientiously exterminated. No wonder, then, that the converted, delivered Israelite, obedient to the heavenly vision, judges all things by this new and divine light. A new creature in Christ, for him old things had passed away, all things were become new; all things were of that God who reconciled to Himself by Jesus Christ. Hence the things that were to him gains, he counted loss on account of Christ; yea, all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge, as he says with such affection, "of Christ Jesus my Lord," on whose account he not only suffered the loss of all at first, but now to the last continued to count them refuse that he might gain Christ (or, have Him for gain). What was his boasted righteousness now? His one thought was to be found in Christ, not having any such righteousness of his own, which must be legal, but that which is by faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God grounded on faith; to know Christ and the power of His resurrection (not even Christ on this side the grave), and the fellowship of His sufferings. His eye was on Christ above, and if he added aught of Christ here, it was not in His deeds of power, nor His recognition of the ancient sheepfold, but in the moral glory of His sufferings. It was in that which proved the total alienation of man from God in his good things, not in his bad alone; in his religion, and not merely in his lusts and passions. His own experience was the witness of it. His confidence in the tradition of the elders, in Israel, in ti law even, was ruin and rebellion to God as He now reveals Himself in Him who died and rose and ascended. Nothing, consequently, has the trust of his soul or value in his eyes, but Christ; and even if he could have anything else that looked good, he would know none but Christ, and have nothing but Christ the sufferer, risen and in heaven, as his portion. Hence conformity to His death was now a jewel to be won, rather than an evil to be shunned. Let the path be ever so dangerous, come what might, all would be welcome, "if by any means I may arrive at the

resurrection from out of the dead." v. 11. This last is not an expression of fear or failure, but of a heart which so prized the blessing of being thus with Christ as to mind no suffering that might intervene.

Whatever the pathway might be, the Apostle intimated, as we have seen, that he must be there. Such was the value of the resurrection of the just in his eyes. Like the Israelite in Psalm 84 on his way to Jerusalem, the ways were in his heart. He loved the way of Jesus, of His sufferings, of the cross, and not merely the glory at the end. "Not as though I had already attained [literally, received, i.e., the prize], or am already perfected." It was not a question merely of the soul's happiness. "I would to God," he had said to king Agrippa, "that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." Who of all men was so happy as the Apostle Paul? Yet he warns us against supposing that he had yet obtained what he desired. There is no such thing as getting the prize till we are in the resurrection from among the dead. But he adds, "I follow after [or pursue], if also I may lay hold, for that also I am laid hold on by Christ." v. 12. He keeps his eye fixed upon Christ all the way through as well as at last. This was the strength of his triumphing over all the difficulties that lay between. No present experience, no actual joy detains his heart from God's end. The Apostle wanted to gain possession of Christ by and by; but also Christ had possession of himself already.

Lectures on Philippians

(Chapter 3:13-21)

"Brethren, I count not myself to have laid hold [whatever others might dream]; but one thing, forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue...." v. 13. The Apostle does not mean that one ought to overlook, or that he did overlook his past sins and failures. On the contrary, it is most evil to forget what Christ has suffered for our sakes, and also the manifold ways wherein we have dishonored God. This will not at all interfere with settled peace - rather the reverse. A man can rejoice so much the more in the Lord if he fully judge his failure. It is the tendency of a conscience not thoroughly happy to desire to escape from thinking of anything in which we have consciously turned aside to the grief of the Holy Ghost. It is a right thing to search ourselves through and through; it is right to ask God to search and try us, and to lead us in the way everlasting. Confidence in grace, so far from weakening the sense of our own shortcomings or covering over our failure, is the very spring that enables us to see and deal with the reality or things in the presence of God. Thus the Apostle speaks of "forgetting the things behind," not with reference to his failure, but rather to his points of progress, the steps or stages in which he had made advance in the knowledge of Christ. Instead of dwelling upon any attainment, as if it were something to be thought of (like the Pharisee comparing himself with his neighbor), here we have this blessed man forgetting all that might have fed self-complacency or been creditable to himself. His back was on the ground traversed. "Stretching out to 'the things before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." v. 14. This can only be in the resurrection state. Till then he was content to run. This was his one business. It was to live Christ, because Christ was his object.

But now follows another thing which we need to bear in mind 'We find different conditions and not at all the same degree of progress made by the children of God. What then is the grand principle to guide us? Let us suppose a company of believers gathered together, all of the same mind,

every one of them brought up to think exactly alike, from baptism with water to the coming and kingdom of Christ, their minds made up and consenting even about points of detail. Would this satisfy the heart? Would it give a just witness to the ways of God toward His children? I dare not think so. It is sweet where God brings souls by exercise of spiritual judgment under the guidance of the Holy Ghost to feel alike. But where sameness is the result of dinning one doctrine into people's heads, and by rules and regulations which squeeze minds into monotony, can anything be more miserable? The Apostle lays down the only divine rule for dealing with these cases. We have to do with a state of things where there exist all varieties of attainments. In heaven we shall know as we are known; but the question is how to bear ourselves about these things here. It is a natural desire that all should grow and rise to a certain height of the stature of Christ. But are we not apt to confound the point desired with our own idea of it? to desire that people should have our mind. This we have to guard against, and the true corrective is given here.

"As many, therefore, as be perfect, let us be thus minded." v. 15. He speaks of himself and others also, as being "perfect"; but there is no contradiction of what went before. When he had, in verse 12, disclaimed as yet the reception of the prize and being perfected, he meant that he was not yet out of the conflict in a resurrection condition. But when he here exhorts "as many as be perfect," he means those who are of full age in the faith, thoroughly grounded in the Christian position, entering into it by faith and spiritual intelligence. It means a Christian who is not a babe, but full grown; not, of course, a Christian who has thoroughly finished his course, for this is in resurrection, but one who has become a man in Christ. He shall not have grown up into the full likeness of Christ till He comes and transforms us like to His glory. But there is such a thing even here as growing into the full knowledge of the mind of God, and it is through having got Christ in glory before us now the personal object of our souls. But suppose there are others among the children of God still in difficulty and doubt, what then? Are we to make them adopt our feelings and judgment about things? Certainly not. It would be a positive loss, unless it were by the power of the Holy Ghost leading the saints into a fuller apprehension of Christ.

The reference here is not to such matters of faith or practice as preclude difference. We ought not to have a hesitation where the glory of the Lord is concerned. There can be no question about sin. It is taken for granted in the Bible that no difference of mind could be tolerated where Christ is at stake. All saints instinctively see the enormity of bringing in moral evil to the table of the Lord. The Holy Ghost counts upon our resenting affronts to God. Allegiance to Him commands the conscience and rouses the heart of every saint of God if properly stated. These things God reckons upon. Nor is it only the wise and intelligent who are able to judge things of the sort, but the babes also. The only cases that ought to be brought before the Church as such are those which every believer is able to judge. It is quite a mistake to drag habitually everything before the assembly; but where things come out of an evidently immoral or of a heretical character, there any saint rejects the poison, one as much as another. It is not the babes who have difficulties or who give trouble, as a general rule. How often clever, intelligent people do the mischief, while the simple-minded would feel the evil of such things at once! Here, on the contrary, the matters spoken of are such as some saints might feel, and not others. There might be practical or doctrinal questions, as the particular manner in which children ought to be brought up, or the style of living, furniture or house. There one must be content to point out the holy principles of God, not to assume hastily that our own measure is such that we ought to attempt to make every other adjust

his children or house by it. God is jealous that He should have the forming of His saints. A good example is precious, and we cannot be too careful as to the ways we allow. But having said this, it is for the children of God to examine themselves conscientiously by His Word. In such things we must be patient and look for the action of God by His own truth on the souls of His saints.

We may suggest what we can of the truth of God to influence the heart; but there is no absolute rule to be laid down by any on points like these. One has often known persons who began strongly with a certain idea which governed them, and with which they zealously sought to govern others. How long does it stand? In the very thing on which they have prided themselves, they are apt to break down. It is Christ whom God makes the standard of everything. All else fails. Why push so strongly and in haste? "If in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." There is no need then to be anxious. "Nevertheless whereto we have attained, walk by the same." v. 16. So far as we are occupied with Christ together and see His mind or will, it is of great importance that we should walk together.

But the Apostle goes farther; he refers to his own example and points out as a beacon the walk of some, once owned as brethren. Need I say that it was no fleshly thing in the Apostle thus to speak of himself? As a mere man, a person would be ashamed to talk about himself; it would be but a piece of vanity. The Apostle was so completely raised above the thoughts of men, he so thoroughly realized the power of God in Christ, that it just illustrated the energy of the Spirit in him. He was led of the Holy Ghost to speak thus. He calls upon them therefore to be imitators together of him, and to mark those that walk so as ye have us for an example (v. 17). "For many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly and glory in their shame, who mind earthly things." v. 18, 19. We are not even told whether these men had been put away from the Church of God. They are characterized as enemies of the cross of Christ, and yet they may not have been formally without. If so, what a deplorable state of things before the eyes of the Apostle! persons probably not guilty of such flagrant wickedness as to require excision, and yet the source of the deepest sorrow to the Apostle. They were going on carelessly, indifferently. How awful to view some within perhaps with less hope than others put away for flagrant sin! We all know how truly this is verified in the present state of Christendom. How many bear the name of Christ who by their ways show there is not the slightest breath of divine life in them! Professing to know God, in works they deny Him.

This drew out the tears of the Apostle even in the midst of his joy; but he turns it to a practical profit, calling on the saints to take heed. Let us watch against the beginnings of self-indulgence or allowing earthliness. "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven"; our real association is with Him who is there. Whatever we might have been as citizens of the earth, it is at an end now and forever. We belong to Christ on high. It is not merely that we are going there, but we belong to heaven now. Our commonwealth, our citizenship, is there; and therefore from thence also "we look for the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior." He has decided to have us in entire fellowship with the home to which we pertain, because it is His. He is coming from heaven; and, when He does, "he will change our body of humiliation so as to be conformed to the body of his glory according to the working whereby he is able also to subdue all things to himself." Then we shall be manifested what we now are in call, life, and desire. We are now heavenly, and then we shall be declared and proved to be so. We belong to heaven even while we are upon the earth; then it will be made plain

that we had no real link with the earth, but with Christ above.

The Lord grant that we may seek to bring this into everything with which we have to do, into the heart, the home, and the whole life. He has made us His friends, and may we be enabled, with a purged conscience and with a heart rejoicing in Himself, to look onward to that blessed moment when we shall prove Him true to all the hopes He has given us.

Lectures on Philippians

W. K. Translation of Chapter 4

So that, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand in [the] Lord, beloved.

Euodia I exhort, and Syntyche I exhort, to mind the same thing in [the] Lord; (3) yea, I beseech thee also, genuine yokefellow, help them, seeing that they shared my conflicts in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-laborers, whose names are in the book of life.

"(4) Rejoice in [the] Lord always: again I will say, rejoice. (5) Let your mildness be known to all men. The Lord [is] near. (6) Be anxious about nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (7) And the peace of God, that surpasseth every understanding, shall keep your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. (8) For the rest, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever noble, whatsoever just, whatsoever pure, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good report, if there [is] any virtue, and if any praise, these things consider. (9) Those things which ye also learned, and received, and heard, and saw in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.

"(10) But I rejoiced in [the] Lord greatly that now at length ye flourished again in thinking for my interest, while yet also ye did think but had no opportunity. (11) Not that I speak in regard to want; for I learned in the circumstances in which I am to find competence. (12) I know also to be abased, I know also to abound. In everything and in all things I am initiated both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to be in want. (13) In all things I am strong in him that empowereth me. (14) Nevertheless ye did well in sharing with my tribulation. (15) But ye also, O Philippians, know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I came out of Macedonia, no assembly communicated with me for an account of giving and receiving, unless ye alone; (16) for even in Thessalonica both once and twice ye sent for my need. (17) Not that I am seeking the gift, but I am seeking the fruit that aboundeth unto your account. (18) But I have all things and abound; I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God. (19) But my God will fully supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (20) Now to our God and Father [be] the glory unto the ages of the ages. Amen.

" (21) Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren that [are] with me salute you. (22) All the saints salute you, but especially those of the household of Caesar. (23) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit. Amen."

The main truth which was in the mind of the Apostle, and which the Lord was using him to lay upon the hearts of the Philippian saints, was now clearly expressed and enforced. The rest of the epistle, this last chapter, consists rather in the connected exhortations and practical use to which it was turned for present profit. Indeed it may have been noticed that, throughout, this epistle is eminently practical. Every whit of it has an immediate and important bearing upon the communion

and walk of the saint of God. Of course in a general way there is no truth which is not meant to deal with the heart and walk in some way or another; yet I do not hesitate to say that this epistle is remarkable for nothing more than for its being the personal experience of the Apostle himself seeking to raise the experience of the saints at Philippi to the same measure, yea, according to the standard of Christ Himself. Accordingly, having shown us Christ fully, both as an example here below and as a motive in heaven (the earthly example being specially given in chapter 2, and the heavenly motive in chapter 3) now comes the practical object to which it is applied.

"Therefore," says he, "my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." It is evident that the spiritual affections of the Apostle were deeply moved. Brotherly love was flowing out powerfully, and not the less because he had been occupied with Christ, with the deep feeling of what Christ had been and is, and with the joyous anticipation of that which the saints are destined to be when they see Him coming from heaven in the fullness of His grace and power, changing even their very bodies of humiliation that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Salvation being only then and there complete, he bids them "so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." And so much the more because it would appear that there were some among them who were at variance one with another.

Things were working there which separated in the way of affection, or at least, in the service of the Lord, those who had been engaged in it from earliest days. And this may be found where there is nothing at work of a scandalous character, because the very ardor and zeal of the servant of God may easily carry him, if there be not adequate occupation with Christ, into danger; even service ensnares and imperils where it becomes an object instead of Christ. It would appear that such was the case with some active saints at Philippi. "I beseech Euodia, and I beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord; yea, I entreat thee also true yokefellow, help them [i.e., these women just named], seeing that they contended with me in the gospel, with Clement also and the rest of my fellow-laborers whose names are in the book of life."

Now, it is plain that there are two things which the Apostle here presses. First is the great importance of having the same mind not only in the Lord but also in the work of the Lord. The danger is of having some aim or way of our own in that holy occupation. The Lord is assuredly jealous over those whom He employs, and He works continually to preserve each servant in the immediate sense of his own responsibility to Himself. No one need fear that this would interfere with mutual respect or hinder the outflow of divine affection linking together the various servants of God. Man would think so because he must judge from his own selfish heart. It is the flesh that seeks its own things; while the Spirit of Christ, whatever may be its holy judgment of evil, is never selfish. It is the grossest mistake to suppose that where the heart is brought to estimate all things according to God, you bring in an element of division between brethren; not this, but the indulgence of flesh opens the door to strife and schism.

Supposing a child of God who has gone astray, what is it that separates him from his brethren? Nothing but the evil that has been indulged in. The Holy Ghost acts in the man's soul; now he feels, confesses, and separates from that which is fleshly. At once the balance is restored and you are more united in love with that erring soul than, perhaps, you ever were before. Up to that time there may have been much which hindered fellowship. The irritability of spirit, the censoriousness, the vanity, the self-confidence broke out too often in the very service and worship of God - all this

had previously produced many an anxious feeling for spiritual minds, and this just because there was real love to his soul. The consequence was so far that which separated, not in outward walk, but in fellowship of heart; whereas the moment there was the genuine action of the Holy Spirit of God - sin having actually, perhaps, broken out because of nature not being judged and the separation having become complete - the moment the evil is dealt with even in the man's spirit, and he owns frankly that he has sinned against the Lord, your heart is knit to him and you have a confidence in him which may never have existed before.

The notion is false, therefore, that serious judgment of evil is what divides between brethren. On the contrary, it is evil (not separation from it) which sows discord or makes separation necessary among brethren. Gracious separation from evil knits the hearts of those who are true with the Lord. It is holiness in fact. Apart from sin there is the enjoyment of God Himself and of His good and acceptable will. In this world holiness implies the judgment of evil and separation from it in heart and practice, as far as we are concerned. The cross of the Lord Jesus Christ is that which gathers the children of God on the ground that all their evil has been judged there and separated from them forever by His death.

No matter how you look at it, in every case it is evil that divides, and it is the judgment of evil that unites hearts, in an evil world according to God. Any unity of the children of God would be a positive sin against Him if it were not founded upon separation from evil. Having referred to the broad and fundamental principle of separation from evil, which will be found to be eminently practical, we may turn now to see its application to the matter before us.

At Philippi there rose before the Apostle's heart godly persons there at work; but work is not always Christ and may be division. The tendency is not uncommon to disparage what another is found doing, and to exalt ourselves in what we know to be our own line of things. This tends to break up happy fellowship of heart; and, where there is anything of a spiritual atmosphere, these things are deeply felt. Among the Corinthians this was but a small thing compared with the grosser evils that were active in their midst; but at Philippi where the state was comparatively healthy and blessed, where also the spirit of obedience reigned as we know, the lack of harmony from whatever cause it may have sprung becomes of importance; and the variance therefore of these two sisters is pressed home by the Spirit of God, but not before ample comfort had been ministered, which would encourage their hearts to look to Christ.

How tender, and withal how personal, is the appeal to each of these Christian women! "I exhort Euodia and I exhort Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord." He begins with the Lord, not with the service, though the variance may have grown up in its course. He calls on them one by one (for one might hear if not the other) to be of the same mind in the Lord. Depend upon it that, where the Lord occupies us, differences soon dwindle. Having each the eye fixed upon the Lord, there is found a common object of attraction, and thus the enemy's hope of producing alienation is defeated at once.

He adds a request also to his true yokefellow. I suppose the reference is to Epaphroditus, of whom he had spoken with ardent affection in chapter 2. "Yoke" in Scripture is a badge of union or of subjection, as the case may be, in service. Thus, in 2 Corinthians 6, the believer is told not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers. Many narrow that scripture to the natural relationship of marriage. But though the marriage tie between believers and unbelievers is evidently not

according to God, yet I doubt that there is any particular allusion to it in that scripture. The object there of the Spirit of God is to take up the commixture of the believer with the unbeliever in the service and worship of God. The Apostle brings forward the temple of God as well as individual matters, and shows that we are not to have fellowship corporately any more than individually with unbelievers. I only refer to it now because it is often put aside from the consciences of the children of God through the mistaken habit of referring it to marriage; whereas, it is plain on the face of it that the direction the Holy Ghost gives would not strictly apply to marriage.

Bad as it is for a believer to marry an unbeliever, God does not even then say, Come out from the relationship; leave your wife; part from your husband. Apply it to its legitimate object (that is, fellowship with unbelievers in the things of God), and then you have a maxim of deep and urgent importance. I am not to unite with the world in any one thing that concerns the service and worship of God. This is the true meaning of being unequally yoked. "Come out and be separate" is then the special word that applies to any such unholy alliance.

This makes all plain, when men ask if we are not to do anything for the world. If there is sorrow and want, am I not to help sufferers? Surely if there be a peculiar duty to the household of faith, I am also bound to do good unto all men; but there is no yoking together with others outside Christ in this, and no communion. The worldly man gives because he is generous, or feels for the need of the person, or is expected to give. The child of God does it because it is the will of God. The one acts on the ground of nature, the other in faith. Even in the most ordinary necessary acts, as eating and drinking, I may and ought to do it all to God's glory.

Suppose a man drowning, or a house on fire, there is a claim of course on any man; but to use the help that a servant of God might render on such occasions, as a reason for joining the world with the saint in the service of God, is to deceive or be deceived - it may be, willingly. I have no hesitation in saying that to put an unbeliever on the ground of joining in prayers and hymns and taking the Lord's supper, to sanction his joining with you in such services, is as far as you can to damage if not destroy his soul. No believer would act thus without an object other than Christ. What the Holy Ghost seeks for the unregenerate soul is to convince him of his ruin; but, if yoked with you in God's work or temple, you are cheating him (or he you) into a false ground. You thus far treat him as an acceptable worshiper and make him think that he is doing God's service as truly, though perhaps not so well, as yourself. This is as contrary to holiness as to love, equally opposed to God's glory and man's good.

Were these godly, energetic women now apart in spirit? He not only exhorts each separately, but asks Epaphroditus as I suppose, the true yokefellow of the Apostle, to help them. For these women had shared the Apostle's sufferings in the gospel when it entered Philippi. It is not, "And entreat thee," as in the English version or the commonly received text; nor is it, "Yea and," etc. The best authorities omit "and" altogether, which was a corruption of "yea." For the Apostle is continuing in verse 3 the same thought as in verse 2, and is urging his dear and true yokefellow at Philippi to succor those previously named women (not others, as the ordinary rendering might convey), "the which" (haitines) or "since they" contended with him in the gospel. It is not said that they preached; there is no reference to public service here.

There is a great difference between preaching the gospel and sharing the contentions of the gospel. Even a man might have labored diligently and never have preached in his life; and there

might be some striving every day in the gospel as diligently, or more so even, than those who preached it every day. There is beautiful choice in the language of the Holy Ghost. We all ought to know that the New Testament puts the Christian woman in the place of exceeding blessedness, removing every thought that would give her an inferior place in Christ; but it puts her also at the same time in the background, wherever it is a case of public action. Here officially, so to speak, the man is called to be uncovered, the woman to be veiled. She is thus, as it were, put behind the man; whereas, when you speak of our privileges in Christ, there is neither male nor female. It is of importance to see where there is no difference and where there is.

The first epistle to the Corinthians is most plain that the head of the woman is the man; and as Christ is the glory of the man, so the man is the glory of the woman. We find there the administrative difference between the man and the woman. When you come to the heavenly privileges we have in Christ, all these distinctions disappear. There is no public action that I know in the world or in the Church allotted to the Christian woman. As to private dealing with souls, the case is different. In their father's house, the four daughters of Philip may have prophesied. They were evidently highly gifted women; for it is not said of them that they labored in the gospel, but that they prophesied—one of the highest forms of gift from Christ. At the same time the Holy Spirit, who tells us that a woman might and did prophesy as a fact, instructs us that it is forbidden to a woman to speak in the Church where prophesying properly had its course. But there a woman was forbidden to speak, not even allowed to ask a question, much less to give an answer. Yet as to the private scene, at home, even with an Apollos, a woman might fitly act; that is, if she acted under and with her husband. Priscilla might be of more spiritual weight than Aquila; but this very thing would lead her to be the more careful to take an unobtrusive lowly place. The yokefellow of the Apostle seems to have been somewhat timid of helping these women. The Apostle, accordingly, entreats him also as he had exhorted him. "Help those women in that they contended with me in the gospel." They were not putting themselves forward in an unseemly public sort, but they had shared the early trials of the gospel with the Apostle Paul.

At Corinth the women assumed much, and the Apostle manifests his sense of it by the reproachful demand, if the Word of God came out from them, or if it came to them only (1 Cor. 14:36). Thus, and not only thus, had they quite slipped aside from that which prevailed in the churches of the saints. No doubt they reasoned that, if women had gifts, why should they not exercise them in all places? But He who gives the gift is alone entitled to say when, how, and by whom it is to be exercised. At Philippi where there was an obedient spirit, there might have been too great reluctance to meddle with these otherwise estimable women who were estranged from each other. The Apostle bids Epaphroditus to render his help. "Help them who are such as contended with me in the gospel." He gives them special praise. They strove for and with him in the work. He joins himself with those persons whom his yokefellow may have been rather afraid of. He joins them also with Clement and other fellow laborers. What tenderness in touching the case! He encourages the fellowship in the service of the gospel not only with faithful men, but with women whose faithfulness was not forgotten because there were painful hindrances just now.

Lectures on Philippians

(Chapter 4:4-8)

But now, leaving the question of variance among them, he returns to his topic of exceeding joy. He had been encouraging one who had his sympathy and confidence to help these women. He now calls on all to rejoice in the Lord alway. If he touched on these sorrows, let them not suppose that he wanted to dampen their joy; on the contrary, "Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say rejoice." This, let me repeat, is an important thing practically. It is a total mistake when we allow difficulties or differences among the saints of God to hinder our perfect delight in the Lord. Do we desire the glory of Christ among those who are His? I must always maintain that glory in my own soul if I am to be a witness to Christ among others. Is the Lord's love affected or at least enfeebled by these passing circumstances? Is His glory less bright because some shades of self have betrayed themselves over the brow of His saints? Surely not. Thus he turns to the keynote of the epistle, that joy in the Lord of which he had been speaking as his own portion now, and by-and-by in chapters 1 and 2, and that to which they were called in chapter 3 and again in chapter 4.

Is it not a sorrow to think where Christians have got to in this respect - how this answer of heart to Christ has faded away from the hearts of so many; how even the assembling together to remember Christ in His supper does not always awaken fullness of joy, but often an uneasy feeling and most painful shrinking back from His table as if it concealed some hidden danger, some lion in the way, instead of Jesus my Savior and Lord, who loved me and gave Himself for me? What humiliation of spirit ought to be ours as we think of all that thus dishonors the name of Christ. But does God intend that even this should hinder our joy? In no wise. Let the ruined state of God's people be in Israel or in the Church, those who felt it most invariably enjoyed the greatest nearness to Himself and most of all entered into His own joy, while at the same time they mourned the more over the shortcomings of those bearing His name. The two things go together. Show me hearts which, though godly, are not happy; hearts over-occupied with the circumstances of the Church, constantly talking about the evil and low condition here and there; and you will never show me souls that deeply enjoy the Lord and His grace; whereas in the person who really enjoys the Lord and has the consciousness of what Christ and the Church of God are in Christ and should be in the power of the Spirit now, who therefore best estimates what Christendom has become, there will be the two things harmonized - the heart resting upon Christ, dwelling in His love; while, at the same time, man's weakness and Satan's malice in ruining all can be rightly judged. These two things we have to cultivate.

"Let your moderation [mildness] be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful [anxious] about nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." vv. 5, 6. To prayer is added thanksgiving, because the Lord is entitled to it. The heart should not forget what a God we are making our requests to. In the confidence of this let us thank Him, even when we are spreading our wants before Him. But he had said before this, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." Supposing there is someone who has seen us a little off our balance in standing upon our rights, real or imaginary, something which contradicted the gentleness of Christ, ought we not to feel humbled, and take an early opportunity to wipe off what may have given a false impression to that man's soul? God would have our readiness to yield, not resist, known, and this not sometimes or to some persons, but to all men. By moderation the Apostle means that spirit of meekness which can only be where the will is not allowed to work actively for that which we may desire. And what a reason why we need not be anxious to assert a claim, even when we are right! "The Lord is at hand." Where there is the happy feeling in the soul

that one is doing that which pleases God, there is generally the readiness of trust in the Lord that puts aside anxiety and leaves all in His hands. Besides, He is coming soon.

He will bring out everything that is according to Himself. He will bless every desire wherever there may have been a true testimony for Himself. He will give effect to it in that day. "The Lord is at hand." He is not come yet, but you can go to Him now and lay all your requests before Him, assured that He is near, that He is coming. And what is the result? "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." v. 7. When the heart commits to God all that would be a burden to it, the consequence is that His peace, the peace in which He moves and lives, guards us from the entrance of all that would harass. The sources of care are cast into the Lord's lap, and the peace of God Himself, which surpasses every understanding, becomes our protection.

Wherever we have grace to spread before God what would have tried us (had we thought of it and kept it before our spirits), there is infallibly His own peace as the answer of God to it. The affections are at rest, and the working of the mind that would otherwise forecast evil. Hence all is calmed down by the peace of God Himself.

Peace is viewed in more ways than one in Scripture. The peace of God here has nothing to do with the purging of conscience. It is a question of keeping heart and mind. Where conscience is yet burdened, there is but one way of finding peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Sins were there, and how was the moral nature and majesty of God to be vindicated about sin? Far from God, in all our ways at war with God, how could we have peace with Him? The only door, through which we, poor enemies, pass out of such a condition into peace with God, is by believing the testimony He has given of His Son. But this is "peace with God," not "the peace of God." If I endeavor to get comfort for my conscience by spreading out my need before God, there is never full rest of conscience. The only means entitled to give rest to the sin-stricken is faith in God's assurance that sins are blotted out by the blood, and sin has been perfectly judged in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. "By him all that believe are justified." If one's own state mingles for a single moment with this, it is a delusion on such a ground to reckon upon peace with God. But if I believe on Christ and what He has done, I can boldly say that Christ deserved that even my sins should be forgiven. Therefore I can add, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The value is not in the faith, but in our Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot get the blessing without believing, but it is an answer to the worth of Christ in God's sight.

But, besides this settled peace which we have through the work of Christ, there is the practical peace of God, which has nothing to do with the remission of sins (though assuming it as a settled thing for a foundation), but of the circumstances through which the believer passes day by day. Paul was in prison, when he wrote to the Philippians, unable to build up the churches or to labor in the gospel. He might have been cast down in spirit, but he never was more happy in his life. How is this? Because, instead of being anxious and troubled about the danger of the Church and the afflictions of individuals, about souls that were perishing, he looked at them in connection with God, instead of looking at them as connected with himself. If God was in peace about these things, why should not he too be? Thus the simple resource of spreading out all before God and casting it off himself into the bosom of his Father had for its effect that God's peace kept his heart and mind. Nor was it special to the Apostle. He puts it before the saints as that which ought to be

equally their portion. It is evident there is no room left for anxiety. God would not have His children burdened or troubled about circumstances. Till the Lord come, this is the blessed source of relief. God is here working, and His peace keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus, where we give Him His honor and our trust.

But even this is not all, for there are other things which claim or test us besides anxieties and cares. There is our ordinary Christian life; what can strengthen us in it? Here is the word, the apostolic counsel (v. 8), "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true." There may not be many bright spots, but there are some; am I not to think of them? This is what I am called upon to do-to be quick of discernment, seeing not what is bad but what is good. I may have to judge what is evil, but what God looks for is that the spirit should be occupied with the good. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest [rather, venerable, or noble], whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Our consciences can answer whether these are the things we are most apt to think about. If we are swift to hear not of these things but all that is painful, while slow to hear whatever is of God, the consequence is, instead of having the God of peace as our companion, we have ourselves and others hindered by evil thoughts and communications. For that which the soul wants is only what is good. We are not exhorted to be learned in the iniquity of world or church, but "wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil." God has given those whom He qualifies to judge evil-spiritual men who can take it up as a duty to Him, and with sorrow and love toward those concerned -but these God employs, among other purposes, for the sake of keeping His saints in general out of the need of such tasks. It is happy that we are not all called upon to search and pry into evil, seeing and hearing its details; but that, while the Lord may graciously interfere to guard us from being mistaken, our proper wisdom is growing in what is according to God.

Why, ordinarily, should a simple child of God occupy himself, for instance, with a bad book or a false teacher? It is enough for us if we have good ground to know that a thing is mischievous, and all we have then to do is to avoid it. If, on the contrary, I know of something good, it has a claim on love and respect; it is not only for myself but for others. We are never right if we shut up our hearts from the sympathy of Christ with the members of His body or the workings of His Spirit here below. If there were even a poor Roman Catholic priest, who knew and brought out the truth of God more plainly than others, let us not say, "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" but, come and see if anything come with adequate evidence of having God's stamp upon it. Let us not limit Him who is above all circumstances; even if there be that which is most distressing, let us thank God that His gracious power refuses to be bound by any limits of man. It is of great importance that we should have largeness of heart to think of all that is good, wherever it may be.

Lectures on Philippians

Chapter 4:9-23

"Those things which ye both learned, and received, and heard, and saw in me, do." v. 9. If ever there was a man with a large heart, it was the Apostle Paul. And yet no servant of God had a deeper view of evil, and a more intense abhorrence of it. Here the Spirit directs them by what they had seen in his own spirit and ways. It is not matter of doctrine but his practical life. This goes farther than supplanting anxiety by the safeguard of God's own peace; it is the practical power of

positive good. What is the effect upon the heart? "The God of peace shall be with you." "The God of peace" is far more than even "the peace of God." It is Himself the source; it is the enjoyment of His own blessed presence in this way. There is relief in having the "peace of God" as the guard of our hearts and minds; there is power in having "the God of peace" with us. Want we anything? Impossible. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at the last your care of me flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." They had shown love to the Apostle Paul at a previous time, as we find afterward (v. 15) where he contrasts "the beginning of the gospel" with "at the last."

The Philippians had been favored of God and had shown their love to the Apostle in their early days. He had not forgotten it. It would appear that he rarely received from the saints of God, perhaps because he met with but few even among them that could have been trusted. It would have wrought evil by reason of their want of spiritual feeling. They might have thought something of it, or the gospel might have suffered in their minds or with others through it. But the Philippians were sufficiently simple and spiritual, and we know what delicate feelings the power of the Spirit can produce. They, accordingly, had the privilege of ministering to his wants. This the Apostle alludes to, and with exceeding sweetness of feeling on his part. He felt that the word, "at the last," might be construed into a kind of reproach, as if they had forgotten him for a long time. He hastens to add therefore, "wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity" (v. 10). On the other hand, he guards them against supposing he wanted more from them. "Not that I speak in respect of want" (v. 11).

In the corrupt heart of man, the very expression of gratitude may be an oblique hint that further favors would not be amiss. The Apostle cuts off all thought of this by the words, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." This is not indigenous to human nature. Even Paul may not always have known it; he had learned it. "I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound." v. 12. His experience had known betimes what it was to be in absolute want, as he knew what it was to have want of nothing. "Everywhere and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer. I can do all things through him [the true reading] who strengtheneth me." A wonderful thing for a man in prison to say, one who apparently was in most abject circumstances, and in no small danger- unable to do anything, men would say. But faith speaks according to God, and the man who can do nothing in the judgment of his fellows, is the very one who could say he had strength for all things in Him that strengthened him (v. 13).

When the world comes into collision with a Christian, when it criminales, robs, and imprisons him, when the Christian is evidently as happy as before, the world cannot but feel it has come into contact with a power that is entirely above its own. Whenever it is not so, we have failed. What the world should find in us, under all circumstances, is the expression of Christ and His strength. It is not merely when the trial comes that we should go to the Lord and spread out our failure before Him; we ought to be with Him before it. If we wait for the trial, we shall not stand. In our Lord's case you will find that where there was victory in the power of faith, our Lord went through the suffering before it came. He went through it with God, yet no one felt trial as He. This therefore does not make the suffering less, but the contrary.

Take the garden of Gethsemane as an instance. What saint but our Lord ever sweated drops of blood in the prospect of death? Hence others may have entered into it in some little degree; and

the measure has always been the power of the Spirit of God giving them to feel what is contrary to God in this world; for in this world whoever loves most suffers most. But here was one who had suffered much, who knew rejection as few men ever knew it, who had found the world's enmity as it is the lot of not many to prove. And yet this man, under these circumstances, says he has strength for all things through Him who strengthened him. Be assured that a blessed strengthener is near everyone who leans upon Him. Paul does not speak here of apostolic privilege, but as a saint, a ground on which he can link himself with us, that we may learn to walk in the same path which he was treading himself. Having freely owned their love (in vv. 14-16), having shown that it was because he desired fruit that might abound to their account in verse 17, he closes all with this: "I have all and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." v. 18. And, marvelous to say, he is a giver himself. At any rate he counts upon One who would give everything that was needed in full supply. "But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." v. 19.

What language from a man who had just been in want, and whose want had been supplied by these saints! Now he turns round and says, "My God shall supply all your need." The God whose love and care and resources he had proved through all his Christian career-"my God," he says, "shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." He is supplying the saints now according to all the wealth of His resources even in glory in Christ. There the shadow of a want will be unknown, but God is acting according to the same riches now. Therefore the Apostle breaks forth in praise to God forthwith. "Now unto God and our Father be glory forever and ever, Amen." v. 20.

There is a notable change in phraseology. He says first, "My God shall supply all your need," and afterward, "our God and Father." When it is a question of experimental knowledge and confidence, he could not say "our God," because they might not have the same measure of acquaintance with His love as he had who had proved and learned so profoundly and variedly what God is. But when he ascribes unto the ages of ages glory to God the Father, he cannot but join them fully with himself. "Now unto our God and Father be glory," etc. His heart goes out to all believers. "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus." v. 21. What a joy for those in Philippi to hear of brethren in unexpected quarters! The Apostle had gone to Rome to be tried before Caesar. Now, it appears, there were those of the imperial household who sent special salutation through the Apostle to the Philippians. "The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." vv. 21, 22.

The heart gets wonderful relief in seeing the things that are lovely and of good report, and calculated to give our hearts confidence in the darkest day. Whatever the great trial of the present time (and never were there subtler snares or more imminent danger), there is no less grace in God, no less blessing to men in view of all. Let us not forget the word, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." v. 4. This epistle was not written as looking back upon the day of Pentecost, but for a time when the Apostle was cut off from helping the churches, and when the saints were warned that they must work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. But the trial is yet sharper for the spirit, if not bodily, for those who would walk with the Lord now. Let us not doubt His love, but be sure that God is above all circumstances. If God has cast our lot in these days, let us not doubt His goodness, but know that we may have as deep and even deeper

joy because the joy is less in saints, less in circumstances, and more exclusively in Christ.

It was sin that hindered the Church's blessedness in these ways and others; but since we have been called when and where we are now, may we eschew the unbelieving wish to exchange for any other. It is a question very simply of faith in God. He loves us and He cares for us. May our hearts answer to the perfections of His grace. While feeling the sorrow of the saints, of the gospel, of the Church more deeply, as all affects the glory of God, let us leave room in our hearts to count upon a known, tried God, who ever will be God, superior to all difficulties, foes, snares, and sorrows. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen." v. 23.

The Power of a Little Truth

"I desire to know the power of a little truth, rather, far rather, than to increase the stock of truths."

This, beloved, is surely a "desire" which it would be profitable for us all to have, and to know the accomplishment of in our experience.

There is a great danger, in these days of abundant information, of gathering mere geological specimens of truth, if I may so express it, and having a fine stock of them in our heads, instead of having them in our hearts, in the power of the unction from the Holy One, teaching us in such a way as to humble us and fill us with real knowledge of our blessed Lord Jesus.

O my soul! dost thou really know in the grace and power of the Holy Ghost the truths which thou hast learned?

Practical Righteousness

Nothing can be more dishonoring to the pure grace of the gospel than the supposition that a man may belong to God while his conduct and character exhibit not the fair traces of practical holiness. "Known unto God are all His works," no doubt; but He has given us in His holy Word those evidences by which we can discern those that belong to Him. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His." And, "Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2:19. We have no right to suppose that an evildoer belongs to God. The holy instincts of the divine nature are shocked by the mention of such a thing.

People sometimes express much difficulty in accounting for such and such evil practices on the part of those whom they cannot help regarding in the light of Christians. The Word of God settles the matter so clearly and so authoritatively as to leave no possible ground for any such difficulty - "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." 1 John 3:10. It is well to remember this, in this day of laxity and self-indulgence. There is a fearful amount of easy, uninfluential profession abroad, against which the genuine Christian is called upon to make a firm stand, and bear a severe testimony - a testimony resulting from the steady exhibition of "the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." Phil. 1:11. It is most deplorable to see so many going along the beaten path - the well-trodden highway of religious profession-and yet manifesting not a trace of love or holiness in their conduct. Christian reader, let us be faithful; let us rebuke, by a life of self-denial and genuine benevolence, the self-indulgence and culpable inactivity of evangelical, yet worldly, profession. May God grant unto all His truehearted people abundant grace for these things!

Prayer and Confession

As to the difference between prayer and confession, as respects the condition of the heart before God, and its moral sense of the hatefulnes of sin, it cannot possibly be over-estimated. It is a much easier thing to ask, in a general way, for the forgiveness of our sins than to confess those sins. Confession involves self-judgment; asking for forgiveness may not and, in itself, does not. This alone would be sufficient to point out the difference. Self-judgment is one of the most valuable and healthful exercises of the Christian life, and therefore anything which produces it must be highly esteemed by every earnest Christian.

President Johnson — Center of Prayer: the Editor's Column

On February 5, President Lyndon B. Johnson made some remarks at the "Presidential Prayer Breakfast" in Washington which call for some scrutiny. He suggested that International Christian Leadership which sponsored the prayer breakfast should undertake the mission of bringing together the faiths and religions of America to jointly build a "fitting memorial to the God who made us all," - this memorial to be "a center of prayer, open to all men of all faiths at all times." What utter confusion! - a place where Christian men and women would bow themselves down to the God of heaven "in the house of Rimmon" (2 Kings 5:18). There those who would address God as Allah and by other names could bow down in the ecumenical finality with rejectors of Christ; for there are many who name the name of God and utterly reject the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father. But the Lord said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." The broadminded, all-inclusive religion, however, would know no boundaries.

Nebuchadnezzar knew the value of a common religion, and he set about to enforce ecumenicalism in his day. Doubtless he borrowed the idea of the great image from the dream that God gave him in the previous chapter of Daniel, where he was displayed as the head of gold of Gentile supremacy. So he made a great golden image and brought together all the populace to inaugurate this new system of religion. Everything was done to work on the emotions, so that all might join in a concerted worship at the appointed moment. Rulers have long known the advantage of having no dissensions in religion, and for this reason many people have been persecuted for opposing a national religion; as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and countless thousands of others since have proved.

It may be contended that Russia and China have largely succeeded in eliminating religion, but this is a mistake. In a broad sense they have made a religion of atheism, secularism, and materialism. Their new god is the state, which is allpowerful, and to which everything and everyone must give allegiance. This form of religion is fast taking hold of this nation also - religion without the Christ of God.

The President further said, "In this capital city, we have monuments to Lincoln, to Jefferson, to Washington, and to many statesmen and soldiers. But at this seat of government, there must be a fitting memorial to God who made us all." And this is the city where the Supreme Court recently ruled against the most common and anemic of formal prayers in school. Why should anyone seek to present a false impression of this land as a God-fearing one? And think of a memorial to God when His handiwork is everywhere present, except to the willfully blind; for there are none so blind as those who will not see.

Furthermore, to speak of memorials to God reminds us of Peter's ill-advised comment on "the holy mount": "Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles [or tents]; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said." He was promptly rebuked from heaven, for God could not tolerate the placing of His beloved Son on the same level with Moses and Elijah. They were honored men, but MEN nevertheless. He was God, the Creator

and sustainer of all things. To even think of making a memorial to God as to one on equal footing with great men of the country is an affront to God. We do not say that the President realizes this, but it is true for all that. Let real Christians not lose their spiritual perspective in this day of abandoned faith.

According to Christianity Today, the first public endorsement of President Johnson's memorial plan came from Dr. Robert A. Cook, the president of the National Association of Evangelicals. Evangelist Billy Graham was also there and spoke of the need in the country for a spiritual awakening that will give the nation a moral fiber that we need. O that the nation would turn back to God with repentance toward Him and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. But the last days are upon us, and departure from God is characteristic of them; it is everywhere apparent. Memorials of God are as but the "form of godliness," while the power of it is rejected. Christianity Today (Feb. 28, 1964) quoted from a sign in an elementary school in Rochester, N.Y.: "The heavens declare the glory of nature," not of "God," as in divine revelation. This vital verse of Psalm 19 was written in this manner at the principal's request; it was on a classroom blackboard.

In the same article a student, in speaking of "Religion on the Campus," said, "Sir, there is none." He admitted that some students went to religious services and took courses in it; and some even belonged to religious clubs, but said that they had no deep sense of owing reverence to God. The professor admitted much of the truth of the student's remarks, but contended that in another sense religion was growing in American colleges. This man said it was "mainly a personal quest by young men for some reasonable guidelines for their own actions and clues to the meaning of history." Of what use is religion of this sort? Is it one whit better than the religion of Cain? God says of Cain's religion, that his works "were evil." Every attempt to find out God by the natural mind, or to worship God according to his own ideas apart from the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross, is worse than folly; it is EVIL. And the divine comment on all such is, "WOE UNTO THEM." God's just judgment against sin will be executed on all rejectors of Christ and His finished work. A clearer testimony to the characteristics of the last days when men talk religion, make memorials to it, and withal deny "the power thereof," is what we are now witnessing. But God is not mocked. God's judgment is soon to break over this world.

Previous Influence Colors Our Actions

I always find that the course we take up at a juncture is in keeping with the influence we have allowed to rule us previous to the demand for any distinct action. We may fully intend to act rightly, but our previous course may have so unfitted us for acting rightly, that at the critical moment, though with the best intentions, we have not the power to act in accordance with them.

Samson had never given up the intention of being a Nazarite and an adversary to the Philistines; but, having yielded to influence and opened his mind to his company, he had no power to act against them, because they belonged to the line of things to which he had yielded in secret, and consequently had accepted. I cannot accept, and immediately after refuse. "No man... having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better." Luke 5:39.

When I have accepted any influence for myself, I cannot act on that which surrounds me without first acting on myself; and that is judging myself. If this could be done, it would leave me without a conscience. I should be acting on the circle outside of me, while my own inner circle is untouched and skipped over. Hence, the armor in Ephesians 6 is defensive and personal first before it is aggressive. Samson's hair must begin to grow again before he gets any renewed strength against the Philistines. Where one's self, that is, the inner circle, is unjudged and unsubdued, one cannot expect to have power with another. I must take the beam out of my own eye, before I attempt to take the mote out of my brother's eye. I may, like Samson, honestly attempt to act as I have acted heretofore; there may be purpose and will to do so, but in the attempt I shall be confounded, and my weakness exposed.

A Purification for Sin: Ashes of the Red Heifer

In Leviticus 11 Scripture types teach us what must be chosen and loved, and what much be refused and abhorred, in order to maintain the life and walk which "the communion of the Holy Ghost" enjoins.

As a matter of fact, however, the child of God has often painfully to acknowledge that he does not practically maintain this communion. He has to deplore contracting defilement, if not to judge himself every now and then for positive disobedience. Thus communion is interrupted; for, though the Father loves us, He cannot walk with His children on any principle of uncleanness. Nor does the child of God desire it, for he hates sin wherever he finds it. It is then good to know that for defilement, however contracted, God has graciously made provision. In the New Testament we are told that "If any man" (that is, any child of God) "sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"; and the Lord Jesus is also blessedly set before us in John 13 as the washer of His servants' feet, to cleanse away the defilement they may have contracted.

In the Old Testament great principles of truth of a similar character are brought out - not only in the discipline of Jehovah's servants on account of failure, and for their restoration; but also details are given of the deep and varied exercises of soul which the elect remnant of Jews will pass through before they are turned away from their transgressions, thoroughly restored, and brought by divine grace into their promised liberty and blessing. Moreover, in early days, directions were largely given for detecting and removing uncleanness and defilement, whether it be through touching a dead bone, or by a man dying in a tent, or even if it be leprosy itself, either in the individual, his garment, or the house of any of those who belonged to the camp of Israel where Jehovah was dwelling.

We now turn to Numbers 19, because the ordinance of the red heifer shows not only that the allowance of defilement was strictly forbidden, but also that the gracious way of restoration, when defilement had been contracted, was according to the holiness of God. The subject is of all importance; not that it treats of restoration from flagrant transgressions, for it does not, but because it shows how small a matter is enough to check and hinder communion, and this sometimes from circumstances over which we have had no control, as a man dying in a tent, defiling all that were in it; and yet we find in every instance the exact way of restoration graciously provided. It reads lessons specially to us who are traveling on to our rest through a region of sin and death; for it treats of uncleanness and the purification of those who, belonging to God, were in their wilderness journey. This is why, perhaps, we have the ordinance of the red heifer in Numbers, which records Israel's way through the wilderness, and not in the book of Leviticus, which treats of grace and holiness, especially in regard to approaching God.

The ordinance of the red heifer stands alone. While other sacrifices are often brought before us, this is recorded in no other part of Israel's history; nor is there any account of its being repeated. The ashes of the burnt heifer were, or should have been, preserved all along the journey, because all was intended to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ once offered, and never to be repeated. The

efficacy of His sacrifice being everlasting, there was no need of repetition. It perfected forever. Hence we read, "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

The red heifer has the character of a sin offering. The "ashes" stand prominently in the chapter. They were laid up without the camp in a clean place, and "kept for the congregation of the children of Israel for a water of separation: it is a purification for sin." v. 9. This was the purifying power God provided. There was no other way of being freed from such defilement, and restored to the camp, than by being sprinkled with the ashes of the heifer. Even then it was only a ceremonial cleansing, called in Scripture that which "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh"; but we have deeply solemn lessons to learn from its typical import. May we hearken to the voice of God with attentive and anointed ears!

The heifer provided for this sacrifice must be red - a most rare and difficult thing to find in the world, among the thousands of cattle on its hills, one heifer answering completely to this description. It must also be without spot; neither should it be one with the least blemish, nor ever have been yoked with others as thus under the rule of man. All this was needful in order to be a fit type of Jesus the Son of God, who was emphatically "a lamb without blemish and without spot," and always set apart for God. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled"; and, instead of being yoked for men's purposes, He was "separate from sinners."

The heifer having been found in all respects fit for the sacrifice, was then slain, thus shadowing forth Him who not only "died for our sins," "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." The precious death of Jesus the Son of God was thus solemnly set forth, who "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." May we always think of it with adoring and worshiping hearts!

The sacrifice having been killed, one of the priests (not Aaron, the high priest, but Eleazer, his son) took the blood and sprinkled it "before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times," which is the place of communion; for the subject here is not justification, but communion. It was sprinkled seven times, not round about the altar, but before the tabernacle, to represent where we meet God, and to show the ground of communion perfectly established.

The rest of the blood, and every part of the heifer, including her skin and her dung - the whole sacrifice - was burnt. In the midst of the burning of the heifer, the priest cast in scarlet, cedar wood, and hyssop, because they set forth the royalty, incorruptibility, and lowliness of Jesus; and the whole was consumed under the fire, which represented divine judgment. The burning continued till all was reduced to ashes.

The ashes were gathered up by a clean man, and laid up without the camp in a clean place, to be kept for a purification for sin; for the ashes were mixed with running water. "They shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it," etc. vv. 17, 18. Observe, all was done without the camp - the killing of the heifer, the burning of the heifer, the laying up of the ashes, and the sprinkling of the unclean - for here it was that the defiled were; they were apart from the sanctuary of God; they were outside the camp, because of their uncleanness. "The LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Command the children of Israel, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: both

male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them: that they defile not their camps, IN THE MIDST WHEREOF I DWELL." Numb. 5:1-3.

It is important also to notice that all who were employed in the work of removing the defilement from others contracted uncleanness themselves. And do we ever deal with evil, or seek to set others right who have gone wrong, without ourselves contracting defilement? It is very serious, and yet most instructive.

As to this, we learn in this chapter: 1. That the priest who sprinkled the blood, and cast the things into the burning of the heifer, was unclean until the even, and had to wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water before he could come into the camp (v. 7). 2. The man who had burnt the heifer had to wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and was unclean until the even (v. 8). 3. The clean man who gathered up the ashes had also to wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even (v. 10). 4. The clean person who sprinkled the water of separation upon the unclean had also to wash his clothes; and he that touched the water of separation was unclean until even (v. 21). Surely nothing could more strikingly bring before us the solemnity of having to do with evil in others, and the need of those who are occupied in setting others right being themselves spiritual, and given to watchfulness and self-judgment, and being also in the spirit of meekness and fear, lest they themselves become defiled. Seeing then how difficult it is to have to do with uncleanness in anyone without becoming defiled ourselves, we do well to take heed to the apostolic injunction on this subject: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Gal. 6:1. How forcibly the ordinance of the red heifer reminds us that God would have the people among whom He was dwelling to be in that state, and to manifest that conduct suited to His own holy presence!

Nothing of death, no, not even the touch of a "dead body," or of "a bone of a man," could suit "the sanctuary of Jehovah"; for death in man witnessed of sin being connected with it - "By man came death," as well as sin, for death is the wages of sin. It could not possibly therefore be a light thing for any of those among whom Jehovah was dwelling to touch a dead body. We therefore read: "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days." v. 11. We saw in Leviticus 11, that for touching the carcass of an unclean beast the man was only unclean till even; but here, for touching the dead body of a man he was unclean seven days. The reason of the difference is obvious, for man is connected with sin as well as death. For his purification God graciously provided the water of separation, of which the defiled man should avail himself, and that not only because of his personal uncleanness excluding him from the camp, but because, by his having thus contracted uncleanness, he "defileth the tabernacle of the LORD." Refusing to purify himself was a most serious delinquency. "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him." Again it is said, "The man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he is unclean." vv. 13, 20. What a serious thing to be "cut off" by God!

Nothing can exceed the clear and decisive instruction of these verses; and nothing could more forcibly convey to us the need of practical holiness in order to walk with God, or show the impossibility of our continuing in the enjoyment of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, while careless and not self-judged. We are not our own. We are the children of God, and He is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. Sin is no trifle. Not only would He require us to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," but not even to touch the unclean thing; so that while we "cleave to that which is good," it equally becomes us to "abhor that which is evil." And when sensible of interrupted communion, we should at once give ourselves to self-examination, self-judgment, and the confession of our sins, in order not only to have the assurance from His own Word of forgiveness, but the consciousness of being thoroughly cleansed. To us, we know, all comes through the advocacy of Jesus Christ the righteous, and upon propitiation made, and is brought home to us by the action of the Holy Ghost applying the Word to wash away the defilement. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. Thus we are clean, and restored to this wondrous privilege of fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

But this action of restoration does not give us the idea of either a slight or a rapid process. We know that sometimes a considerable period of time is involved before those who have been conscious of uncleanness are fully restored. It is a point in this ordinance not to be overlooked. As we have seen, the man was unclean "seven days," during which the process of restoration was to be going on. Seven, in typical language, means that which is complete, from which we learn that a period, perfectly adequate, must pass, for certain experiences to be known, before he could be fully restored. This, in our case, as to time, may be short or long.

The Israelite who had been defiled must realize as facts:

That he is unclean, and therefore outside the camp.

That by his uncleanness he has defiled the sanctuary of the Lord. 3. That his heart bows under the sense of it, as one among whom God dwells. 4. That he has availed himself of the water of separation, and is cleansed. But more. We are told, "He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean." v. 12. Thus in the man's restoration there are two stages: 1. Up to the third day he is conscious day and night of what it is to be defiled, to teach us that God would have us to be clearly and thoroughly conscious of the gravity of it; then on the third day he is sprinkled with the water of purification for sin. 2. From the third to the seventh day he is conscious of having been sprinkled, but not able to come into the camp in the full sense of cleansing. Then he is sprinkled again, washes his clothes, and himself, and after that at even he is clean. "And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even." v. 19. The ashes having had running or living (not stagnant or impure) water put thereto in a vessel, shows us that the word testifying of Jesus who once suffered for our sins, and was made sin for us, when brought home to our souls by the power of the Holy Ghost, is the cleansing remedy for restoring us from defilement to communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

This is not, as many have wrongly supposed, a fresh application of the blood of Christ, because by that one offering we have been perfected forever; but it is the word which testifies of Jesus in His finished work of redemption applied with cleansing power to our consciences by the Holy Ghost. How often have we found that, after confession of our sins, and the belief too that He has been faithful and just to forgive, our souls have not been consciously and happily restored to communion; but when the word is brought to bear on our hearts and consciences by the Holy Ghost, giving us the sense of being really "cleansed from a 11 unrighteousness," then we realize that our communion is not only restored, but is often deeper and happier than before. We are restored then by the washing of water by the Word.

The same principles apply as to other forms of defilement, whether of a personal or of a congregational character. Personally we may be defiled by contact with the smallest amount of uncleanness - "a bone of a man" as much as "a dead body" - because with God it is not merely a question of the amount of evil, but of any evil; and the path of the faithful is to depart from iniquity. "A grave" is also defiling, because it is connected with sin and death. A man "slain with a sword in the open fields." being touched, also defiled. It may refer to our again returning to that which has been already judged and separated from. Observe, it is "one slain," reminding us of sin by man, and death by sin. But a man dying in a tent, and defiling. all in the tent, and all that came into it, shows how congregationally a little leaven leavens the whole lump; and how God will have us, as His assembly, exercised about being clean congregationally as well as individually. All who were in the tent were then to take the place of humiliation, confession, and to be cleansed by the water of purification, before they could resume their place as connected with the sanctuary of the Lord. Things exposed, which ought to be covered, are also unclean, as an "open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it" (v. 15). This mode of defiling must not be overlooked.

How important then it is to see that sin is a most serious matter, and that communion can only be maintained on principles that are suitable to the Father and the Son; nor is it possible that the Holy Ghost could lead us to walk in any other path. No doubt it entails such watchfulness and constant dependence that, walking carelessly, not to say with levity, is altogether out of the question. The smallest contact with uncleanness is defiling, and walking for a moment after the flesh is damaging. An impure thought may interrupt communion; hence we are admonished to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and to cast down imaginations [reasonings], and bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. But how wonderfully has divine grace provided for us, in the advocacy of the Lord Jesus, the ministry of the indwelling Spirit, and the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever! What lessons of holiness and grace all have to learn in the school of God! Our souls are astonished at the infinite wisdom of God to us-ward, as well as His power and grace, as we grow in the knowledge of His truth! Dreadful as it is, and so wholly unbecoming of those who are born of God to sin, that He says, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not"; yet, if we should sin, His gracious provision forbids our desponding, but encourages us to pour out our troubled hearts to Him in confession.

Thus the Holy Ghost directs us to Him in the glory, the washer of our feet; and while making us sensible of our uncleanness having interrupted communion, brings home with power the infinite virtue of what was done for us on Calvary, as revealed in Holy Scripture. Thus, as the defiled Israelites were sprinkled with "the ashes of the heifer," so the Holy Ghost brings to our hearts and consciences the eternal efficacy of the one offering of Christ; and as the one outside the camp

defiled by the dead had also to bathe his flesh and wash his clothes, so we prove, to our soul's comfort, what it is to have ourselves and our near surroundings brought under the cleansing action of the Word, and thus again to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5:25-27.

The Race and the Best

Our history is properly written in double columns - the one recounting the wilderness journey, and the other our heavenly progress. In the former we are learning dependence, in the latter it is possession. In the one I am learning Christ as the manna - how He sustains and succors me. His walk and steps on earth, all and each indicate to me how He will sustain me here. When He puts forth His own sheep, He goes before them. We are not called to any path here where Christ cannot sustain us, and He affords us the same grace which sustained Himself in our circumstances. He "set him on his own beast." The blessed Son of God has traversed the human pathway, depositing manna as small as coriander seed all along, and on every side, to meet the smallest as well as the greatest trials by the way. Never was our pathway trodden by such a One before. He has not only traversed it, but He has surmounted every difficulty therein, bequeathing to us the fragrance and power of His grace to conduct us along the same. Every rose has its manna on it, and every thorn too, so that we are preserved from the snare of the one and from the pain of the other. Hence, our journey here is called a race; we are sustained to run, and in dependence too, because there is nothing to rest in, so that as we grow in dependence, we run the better, but dependence is the great lesson of the wilderness.

The other side of our history is heavenly progress; it is with Christ Himself where He is. Your growth in power and joy is as you are occupied with Him. The first fruit is in heaven; the heir is there; and as I am consciously united to Him there, though not actually in possession, I enjoy Him who is the possessor; and hence the Spirit who unites me to Him is the earnest of the inheritance. There, there is no need, no thorn; it is all rest; it is not as He was in my path here, but as He is in Himself in His own peculiar blessedness that I learn Him. There it is rest-here it is a race. And I am to come forth from there as a strong man to run a race. There I know Him as my treasure better than the best thing here; and hence, though needing His succor all along the road here, yet I am giving up even the good things here, in order that I may freely and fully know Him as my gain-that I may win Christ.

In the race I am sustained by the manna; but as I enjoy Christ in heaven, the rose is eclipsed and the thorn is forgotten. If I drop the weight in order to run, I relinquish all that I have here; for where my treasure is, there will my heart be also. My need here calls out my dependence on Him; but His riches in glory give me independence here. As milestones mark the road, so do the wells of His mercy mark the stages here in the valley of the shadow of death. But we traverse it as those who know what it is to lie down in green pastures, and to be led by still waters. You are the racer and the rester. As the one, you are dependent on Him; as the other, you are independent of everything here, because so consciously enriched in and by Him. May you abound in both.

Reading the Word of God

The purpose in reading a book of the Bible may be widely different this month to what it was last. Let us take the epistle to the Philippians for instance. Then I may have read it in order to trace out the four aspects of Christ's sufficiency for His own. Today I may study it to see the relation in which the assembly stands to the gospel. Later on I may read it to find the motives for joy and rejoicing which were set before the Philippians; or again, taking it as a letter of acknowledging receipt of a delayed contribution, I read it with desire to enter into the mutual sympathies of the servant and the saints.

Receiving the Holy Ghost

Forgiveness of sins would be followed by the gift of the Holy Ghost, according to Acts 2:38. Such came to pass in Acts 10:43 and 44. The moment the words "remission of sins" passed Peter's lips, the Holy Ghost fell on those who heard. Acts 11:17 shows that it was the gift of the Holy Ghost, in contradistinction to the gifts or signs which then frequently accompanied it. He was given to believers - not to sinners to make them believers; "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

I am sure that if I have received remission of my sins by believing in Christ, I have, as a consequence, received the Holy Ghost. This being so, I need no further experience to know that I am united to Christ; for it is the Holy Ghost dwelling in me who effects this. The experience will follow the consciousness of relationship, and will be enjoyed in the cultivation of the things suited to it.

Put the thickness of a gold leaf between the body and the head, and it is a corpse; and such is the union with Christ and His Church, that it is as real as that subsisting between the human body and its head! This union is by the Spirit of God. He unites living members in one body to Christ.

Repentance

Repentance is a familiar word. Would that its true import were as well known! Yet, certain it is that unless the sinner repents he will inevitably perish eternally. This is as true as the words of Christ can make it: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:3. Tremendous fact! One's heart deeply sympathizes with many honest souls in their difficulties about repentance, and would help them a little from that word which, if received by simple faith, removes a host of difficulties.

In seeking to do so I would just refer to one of the books of the Word of God, and take up the case of one soul that experienced genuine repentance. We shall find it in Job 40 and 42. It will serve to bring out very clearly what repentance is-its order, and of what it is the blessed consequence. Job, as is well known to most who have read the Book of Job, was seeking to justify himself-to extol and hold fast his own righteousness. Take one or two passages. Chapter 27:6: "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." Again, "Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." Chap. 31:6. Here, undoubtedly, Job had not yet learned the great lesson; his heart was not yet humbled nor broken down. With him it was still "my righteousness" and "mine integrity." Himself was the great theme with him thus far. That will never do before God. The light of His presence must destroy all our pretensions to goodness and righteousness - our place before Him is prostration, low in His presence. Oh, how important for the sinner to know this! The unsullied light of that presence reveals to the conscience the true condition of things, as we shall see that it did in Job's case ere we close.

At the close of the controversy between Job and his friends, Job was still seeking to justify himself; and no answer was being found in the mouths of Job's opponents; Elihu's anger was kindled. We read, "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God." Chap. 32:1, 2. How solemnly true is this of man in general! An insubjection to God, and an exaltation and justification of self is what characterizes man in general. Job justified himself rather than God. He had not yet learned that all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags, and that he was vile before God. In chapters 38, 39, and 40, the Lord Himself answered Job; and this proved effectual in opening his eyes to see his true condition, which laid him low in the dust before Him. Here I would notice what produced this wonderful change in Job. From one who could speak of his own righteousness, he became prostrated in the presence of God, crying out because of his own personal vileness. It was the reception into his soul of that Word which made known the light of the nature of Him who spoke it - which made known to Job, in true and solemn character, the depravity of his own nature, and the rebellion of his own heart against God. It was not a preparatory work on the part of Job, but the result of the entrance of that word which gives light - the nature of God - and exhibits the darkness of man's nature.

God had taken Job in hand, and addressed him personally; and consequently all his self-righteousness fell to the ground. The stronghold of his legal heart was broken in upon and

demolished. The Word, quick and powerful, against which no legal fortress can stand, penetrated Job's heart, laying bare its secret springs, opening up to him the corrupt fountains of his nature, spreading its depravity before him.

This was undoubtedly that which produced his repentance. The Word of God received into the soul, ministering light, discovering all the darkness and sin which reigns there, in view of what God is, as the One who is essentially light. Hence there is a work of self-judgment effected, which prostrates the soul before God, and leads it to cast itself upon His mercy.

It is very blessed to notice this with Job: "Then Job answered the LORD, and said, Behold I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." Chap. 40:3-5. And again, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Chap. 42:5, 6. Here God's end was so far reached. Job had learned himself-he was humbled-the blessed fruit of the work of God in him. He was brought to repentance; that is, to form a correct judgment of himself in the light of God's presence, and His heart searching, soul -subduing word. God's truth had done its work with Job. He had received its unerring testimony, and the blessed result was "repentance toward God." He owns himself vile. He abhors himself, and repents in dust and ashes. What a moment for Job! His self-righteousness was gone, and the spirit of self-vindication, making way for that healthy and divinely wrought exercise of soul, in the light, under a sense of sin, called repentance. Blessed work of God! The deeper the better, most surely.

Now Job becomes a blessed subject of the fullness of God's bounty and grace. God, with an unsparing hand, heaps rich blessings upon him; and he is blessed. This is so with every soul that has repented - that divine work in the soul, which is never known apart from the quickening operations of God's blessed Spirit. The fullness of God's Christ is the blessed portion of such. All things are theirs in Christ.

Repentance then is no human preliminary; it is no preparatory work on the part of the sinner to conversion, but rather the result of the reception of the testimony of God - which is faith - and the quickening of the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost, which ever accompanies true faith.

It is the natural order of God's most blessed work with and in the soul of the sinner. The Word is applied and received. If this reception is real, it is life eternal to the soul, and, as a consequence, repentance is wrought-that holy recognition of the righteous judgment of God upon all pertaining to the old man in us, which ends in the renewed and delivered soul rising up and breathing the atmosphere of the new creation, where all things are of God. Many have put repentance before faith, as a human preparatory work, simply because souls have not been brought into peace immediately. Now, undoubtedly, peace may not be had before the work of repentance is wrought; and the deeper the work of the latter, the more profound will be the former. Yet in every case where the work is real, the hearty reception of the Word (I do not say the full testimony of God as to accomplished redemption) must come first. God's solemn testimony with respect to man's state, as in the case of Job, must be received; and when fully and simply received, it is life to the soul, which results in a perfect abhorrence of self, and the renunciation of all self-righteousness, and the confession of personal vileness. "Behold, I am vile," is the solemn consciousness of the soul.

Then peace with God is the result of knowing that Jesus "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification" - that the work is finished, and redemption an accomplished fact, and the Accomplisher Himself seated in brightest majesty at the right hand of the throne of God. Hence the need of preaching a full gospel; that is, the testimony that God has given with respect to man, and that which He has given of His Son - once in death, but now raised and glorified - which, when simply believed, is life and peace.

Responsibility and Privilege

In Titus 2 there is a very striking and forcible illustration of the above. May the Spirit of God drive them home to the conscience and heart of every one of us.

In verses 4 and 5 the aged women are exhorted to teach the young women; and I want you to notice what they are to teach them, and why.

What they are to teach them is how to behave in their everyday life - the life in the home and before their neighbors. It is summed up in a very few words. They are to be sober (not light and giddy), to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet or wise, keepers at home, and obedient to their own husbands. "Oh! that is what everybody knows," someone may exclaim. "There is not much in that!" No, these prosy everyday things are apt to be despised and overlooked simply because they are everyday things. But look at the second point: why these things are to be taught. "That the word of God be not blasphemed."

Did you know that such fearful consequences were wrapped up in these everyday things? Have you remembered that your neighbors and acquaintances know you are a professed follower of Jesus, and that when they see you coming short in these simple, practical, everyday matters, it causes them to reflect upon and speak against that "word" that you profess to obey? And thus through your carelessness in little things, God's doctrine is blasphemed. Oh! what a responsibility is ours! Just as upon the pillars of the court of the tabernacle were hung, in the sight of everybody, those spotless curtains of fine-twined linen, so upon us is hanging, in view of the world, the spotless character of pure and undefiled religion. And if we stain it, what then?

Oh! be faithful, believer, in every little detail of life; for everything counts.

So much for responsibility.

But there is another side in this chapter, and it is enough to make one leap for very joy receiving the gifts of grace, to know our glorious privilege.

In verses 9 and 10 we have again some exhortations concerning everyday life. This time it is to servants (bondmen); and they are urged to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things, not answering again, not appropriating their masters' goods to their own use, but to be faithful to them in all things. And the reason now given is, "That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Is not this a privilege? Think of being an ornament to the doctrine of our Savior! People often speak of ornaments in the Church, but they generally mean some talented and gifted person whose name is known everywhere. But God takes up the very humblest, even a bond slave, and shows how he, in the very commonest everyday actions, may be an ornament to His doctrine. Now is this not real encouragement? And it is not merely that he may be this or that. No! each one of us is either the first or the second. That is, we are all either causing the Savior's word to be blasphemed, or we are an ornament to it. Which is it?

Rest in Christ before Service for Him

There are two lines of exercise which must engage the heart of everyone true to Christ. The first is rest in Himself; the next, service for Him. The tendency is to put the second first, or rather to engage in it, in order to attain the first. And I believe that this is attended with the worst consequences. It is legality, unknown, and so cloaked that it is not easy to detect it. I do not deny that there is joy in bearing fruit, which is the true service (see John 15); but I think if you watch your own soul, you will agree with me that serving in order to be happier in Christ, tends to legality; and the work done is the source of the happiness, and not simply Christ Himself. In John 14 I learn what Christ is to me; and there is no service enjoined there beyond obedience, as the proof of love. If I love, I obey.

Mary Magdalene (John 20) is an example of one whose heart was so true to Christ, that apostles or angels could not divert her from Him; but as soon as she had seen Him, her heart was satisfied. His calling her by name was everything—a personal, individual link. What can surpass it! She was so controlled by Him of whom her heart was full, that she obeyed Him (v. 18), even at the sacrifice and loss of His own visible presence, because a truly loving one could do nothing else.

I think deep, personal joy in Christ is a very quiet and unexpressed thing. I believe where there is great fervor of expression, there is not much depth, though there may be real conviction. Where there is much demonstration, it is rather discovery, than home, personal enjoyment. Very little demonstration or rapture do we exhibit to our most beloved friends when we are at home with one another. When we meet after an absence, then there is rapture; but this is evidence that there has been an absence. Alas! we are often absent from our Lord; but surely the rapture felt at regaining His presence is lower than the restful enjoyment of His personal nearness. Let us then not make rapture everything, but rise from it to the deep rest and satisfaction of communion with Him. It is from this communion that service ought to flow, for it is only in it that I know my Master's mind. It is not the hardest working servant who in a household is the most confidential. A confidential servant is the highest servant. I am willing to clean shoes if no other work be allotted to me; but whatever my work may be, I should like my master to trust me with his mind.

The saint is never to think himself safe from the evil in the world. No doubt, by faith he is kept from the evil; but then he must not shut his eyes to the form which evil takes in his time, as if he were safe from it. The reverse is the fact; for any evil working in the world finds its way into the hearts of the saints in a refined, specious way. Sensationalism is one of the means by which Satan is blinding the minds of the people of the world in this day—be it the novel, the concert, or the stage—it is mental intoxication. Was there none of it at the revival meetings? Is there not a leaven of it now? And should not souls see that their rapture or delight is not that in which the flesh takes part, but on the contrary, that which ignores the flesh, because we are in the Spirit, where the flesh has no place?

The Ruin and the Remedy

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him." Luke 10:30-34.

Here man's ruin is fully depicted, and here we shall find the remedy is in divine perfection in every part. Where the ruin is sensibly felt, where the sinner is consciously awakened to his state, he feels he is painfully incapable to refuse any relief; and he feels he wants it. No state could be more deplorable. He needs relief, and yet he would refuse it if he could. If he were not so broken down, he would not accept it; so it is his very misery that makes him fit for grace. He has the wounds, and wounds only. He has nothing to commend him but his need.

And now he receives wine and oil into his wounds. Christ comes as the neighbor. Under the law, but not confining Himself to the limits of the law, He magnifies the law; and, while He meets man according to the measure of the law, He travels out beyond it into the depth and breadth of God's love. He not only pours oil and wine into his wounds - that is, cures him. This, of course, is the first thing; the man is cured. But were I to limit the remedy to this, while I admit much would have been done for the sinner, yet I should come very short of the remedy given me by God for him.

If I am sent to a suffering person with three or four distinct gifts which the mind of the donor (who is fully acquainted with the need of the sufferer) considers requisite, am I at liberty to give him only one, because that one gives great relief, and to withhold the others? Certainly not. I should err in a double way. I should not fulfill the commission entrusted to me, I should misrepresent the Boner, and I should deprive the needy one of the favors given me for him. The remedy reaches not only to the cure of the sinner, not only to an assured rescue from judgment, and unquestionable safety, but it meets him in his powerlessness, as we read, he sets him on "his own beast."

The ruin of the sinner is only partially relieved if he be only cured. It is undoubtedly most necessary, but it is not enough for a perfect remedy, which God in His grace supplies. The cured one is set upon a new power - the power of Christ; he is now to be borne along by the power of Christ, entirely in a new way, not according to man's power or ways. He has tasted of the bitter end of all of man, and as a cured one he enters upon a new course; a new life and a new ability are given him. He may very partially avail himself of it, but this new power is as much a part of the remedy as the cure is.

I must not limit it. The sinner should be impressed and convinced of the fullness and largeness of grace. Not only is a cure for the heart's misery sent through the work of Christ, but the life and power of Christ are also given to meet the powerlessness of his state. Otherwise, as we often see,

a soul may be assured of cure - of forgiveness of sins - and yet have no idea of the power or walk which should characterize him now as a cured one. This part of the remedy may never have been made known to him. The remedy is one whole, though divided into parts, and I am not at liberty to insist on part of it, namely, the cure, and be silent about the other parts of it.

Were I sent to minister medicine, money, and a home to any indigent person, should I consider I had properly executed my work because I had given the medicine? Surely I should, in such a case, have deprived the invalid of two very important items necessary for his state. No one with any integrity would excuse himself for so grievous a defalcation of service.

Now, in ministering to souls, there is not only the loss of the benefits of the remedy if any part be omitted or withheld, but there is a correspondent deficiency or lack of testimony to the grace of God in the life and ways of the convert. Suppose I tell a sinner that Christ, through His work, will cure his sin-distressed soul, and he receives this truth in faith, he is cured. But, if I say no more about the remedy, this cured soul seeks to drag on in his weak, powerless state, the only real improvement in him being that he has been relieved of the fear of judgment - the penalty of his sins. How differently such a one would feel were I to insist that the same One who had cured him would now confer upon him His own power. For his ruin would not be adequately relieved unless he were given new power.

And this power is not the power merely of restored health, such as might be the effect of the cure. It is an entirely new kind of power- a power unknown before - the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, which necessarily would lead him into His line of things, outside and apart from man, to walk here as Christ walked.

And this power is not only offered, it is conferred. Thus it is shown in this parable. The relieved sufferer is set on "his own beast," the figure of the power in which Christ walked here. He brings him to an inn and takes care of him. Then his miserable condition is entirely met-cured, carried, and cared for. If the ruin has been terrible, the remedy is most effectual in every point.

Every convert may not enjoy the greatness or perfection of the remedy; yet it is important to assure every perishing soul of the full nature and scope of the remedy, so that he may be convinced, at least, that there is no limitation on the part of God, though he has not faith to grasp it. There is a vast difference between the state of the soul of the one who, though converted, never heard of the fullness of the remedy as set forth in this parable, and the one who, though he has heard of it, has not sensibly entered into it. In the former there is no exercised conscience; there is no sense of failure, because not enjoying what has been conferred upon him; but there is a sense of lack continually - a feeling of wanting something to render him fully happy, for he does not know and has never heard of the fullness of God's remedy for him. And hence he turns to earthly mercies to fill his cup. But the one who has been taught the fullness of God's remedy, even though he does not enjoy it, is continually warned by his conscience of the greatness of the mercy vouchsafed to him. The one may not have, as far as his knowledge goes, the land from which he could produce all he requires, while the other knows he has the land, and that, if he would but till it, he would have all he needs.

How differently each must feel! The one craving and pining because he does not know what would fully satisfy his heart and relieve him of all the consequences of his ruin; the other, knowing it, and

as he uses the gift through Jesus Christ, appearing before men in a new and wonderful condition. Intensely happy, because not only cured of his wounds, but invested with the power of Christ; thus set in superiority to all that affects and overwhelms man here; and consciously, under the care of Christ while pursuing his pilgrimage through this dreary world, he is a beautiful testimony on the earth of what Christ has done - of God's remedy for man's ruin - so that everyone seeing him will greatly marvel and glorify God.

Samson's Riddle

"Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." Samson's riddle - God's riddle. (Judg. 14:14.)

This has been abundantly illustrated in the story of this world. May I not say it is the key of the whole of it. It figuratively shows us God and the enemy at their several work - the enemy doing his work as the strong and the eater, and God, in gracious, victorious power, forcing him to yield both meat and sweetness - constantly and ever bringing good out of evil, and building new systems of wonder and glory and joy out of the ruins Satan has wrought.

I am now, however, looking at this only as it is presented to us in the earliest chapters of Scripture-I mean Genesis 1 to 9.

Man in innocency is set in the garden of Eden; and there (as His whole creation) God is glorified and has His joy, while the creature is blest and happy.

But man loses this goodly estate. He forfeits his innocency under the temptation of the serpent, and with his innocency he loses everything.

This leads at once into a new scene. To be sure it does. But we have to ask, What do we see of man, and of the blessed God Himself there?

God makes a coat of skins for Adam, and puts it on Adam, and also another for Eve, and puts it on her.

I ask again, Was this a work more or less grateful to Him than His previous six days' work of creation? Let us consider it. At the work of creation the Lord God had materials before Him, and in beauty and in fruitfulness He was garnishing the heavens and furnishing the earth. But now He has Christ before Him, and He is occupied with that work of grace which had been the secret and counsel of His bosom in His own eternity, and which will be for wonder and joy and praise in another eternity.

And as to Adam, he, at the beginning, called his helpmeet "woman"; but now he calls her "Eve, because she was the mother of all living."

I ask again, In which of these names of his helpmeet did Adam find his chief joy?

I will let this give the answer - "He received her at the first as from himself, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh; but now he receives her as the mother (and to himself the witness) of that mysterious Seed who was to conduct a controversy with the great enemy who had lately ruined him, till He had overthrown and crushed him."

May I not now say, Can we doubt which of these was the spring of the richer joy to Adam? And besides this exultation in the spirit of Adam, there is the evidence of a like joy or exultation on the lips of Eve when she cries, "I have gotten a man from the Lord," on the birth of her firstborn. And

afterward there is a striking expression of intelligent, believing triumph in Abel when he offers the fat with the lamb upon his altar. And still further, as we do not see in Eden, saints are presented to us as calling on the name of the Lord, as walking with God, as dying to this life and this world, and as taken to heaven. And what is all this to the heart of man? Is this more or less than innocency and the garden? Is not heaven a brighter scene than Eden could have been, had it continued man's unsoiled inheritance forever? (Gen. 1-5).

I leave these contrasts, that they may tell us whether or not the eater was forced, in that earliest moment of our history, to yield meat, and the strong one sweetness.

We come, however, to another and a later field of observation, where again we find God Himself and His creature man, as well as the ruthless eater.

Wickedness ripens itself, heads itself up to its full form, and the flood, the judgment of God, overwhelms it. But an ark, for salvation through the judgment, is in grace prescribed by God, and in faith built by Noah. And when it is ready, all the creatures of the earth, according to God's election, I may say, come up to take their place in it. And then, in the due moment, when all are housed, Noah and his wife, his sons and their wives, and all these separated creatures of every sort, God Himself shuts them in, imparting His own strength and safety to His chosen, and making their condition as unassailable as His own throne could be.

Then, while in the ark, Noah had exercises of heart- exercises, I may say, in the Spirit. There was the opening of the window, and the mission of the raven and the dove, the taking in of the dove, and again sending her out, and again a second time taking her in with an olive leaf in her mouth; and then, the uncovering of the ark - all this having its various mystic meaning of bright and wondrous truth. And as the time comes for leaving the ark, everything goes forth just as fresh and abundant as when it went in thirteen months before - nothing wanting, however small and insignificant-nothing damaged, however tender and exposed - and all this, a second time, under the eye of Noah. What must all this have been to his spirit! What fresh and varied delight must all this have been to him, though the work of the eater had made this imprisonment in the day of the judgment of God necessary to him (Gen. 6-8).

And, after all this great parenthetic season, and the ark is left of all that it had carried through the judgment of God, and "the earth that now is," as Peter calls it, is trod by Noah and his ransomed host, we see his altar and his sacrifice, and God's acceptance of it. Noah takes the new world as in the name of Jesus. He enters it on the authority and by virtue of what Christ was to him. He reads his title to it in the blood of the Lamb of God, and offers his burnt offerings of praise accordingly. The ark had been Christ to him in the day of judgment, and the kingdom that follows shall be his only through Christ. What a freewill offering was this! And what was it to the God of his salvation? We may know something of that when we read, "And the LORD smelled a sweet savor; and the LORD said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." Gen. 8:21. Had there ever been such language in the divine bosom before? God had rested in the work of His creation with infinite delight, we know. He rested, as we read, and was refreshed. But now, the value of Christ for a doomed creation is before Him, put there in all the preciousness of the blood of atonement, by the faith of a sinner who was confessing to Him, in the mysterious language of His altar, that all his title to anything and to everything was to be found in the sacrifice of His own Lamb Before this, God had said, "It is not good that the man should be alone"; but now He says,

"in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake." Before this, He had seen that the work of His hand was good; but now He was smelling a sweet savor in the work of Christ.

Was not all this meat and sweetness again? The enemy had indeed approved himself an eater and a strong one, as afore he had in the garden- corrupting man outside Eden, as at the beginning he had corrupted him within it. But had not God again made him yield meat and sweetness? Were not divine delights in this scene of redemption of a higher character than they had been in the day of creation? Is not the value of Christ more to God than all the beauty and order that are displayed in the works of His hand? And is not His ransomed Noah in the ark a richer one than Adam His creature in the garden? He was receiving the gifts of grace and rendering the freehearted obedience of faith; he was learning the sufficiency of Christ for him, and experiencing the exercises of the Spirit in him. He saw himself not merely in a created but in a redeemed system.

It is a great sight to see - the eater has yielded meat, and the strong sweetness. And we are still in sight of this great mystery to the end of these chapters, after the new world has been gained, and "the earth that now is" has been formally taken and inherited. For there we see Noah seated in royal and priestly state. He is "blessed," as Adam was in his day, and told to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). The trail of the serpent is indeed over, and the whole scene and condition of things. Adam had the earth subdued to him; and the creatures of the forest, and of the field, and of the sea, and of the air, owned his lordship of them, taking names from him as it pleased him to give them, they in the acknowledgment, and he in the exercise, of sovereignty; while it is only in the dread and fear of Noah that the creatures of the earth now stand. It was no longer their homage rendered to man, but their sense of control by reason of the eminency of man. Here was the witness and the fruit of the work of the eater. But with this, Noah's table was more richly spread now than Adam's had been at first. The herb of the field nourished man then - the flesh of the beasts of the field shall now nourish him; for Adam's was the due food of an innocent one, Noah's is the food of a ransomed one. Adam enjoyed the life of an untainted creature - Noah the life of a blood-bought sinner. (The blood was not to be eaten with the flesh; the blood was reserved to make atonement [see Lev. 17]. Noah, therefore, fed on the witness of his redemption, just like Israel in the paschal night of Egypt. His feast was the feast of a blood-bought sinner.)

Here was the witnessing afresh how meat was forced out of the eater. It was a world around, wearing the scars and bruises of a deadly fight - it was a table within, which told of full, and sure, and glorious, and blood-sealed redemption.

But further. The Lord God makes a covenant with Noah, and with all the creatures around him, that He will secure the earth from a second flood. And in token of this, He hangs the bow in the cloud, up there as under His own eye, that He may look on it and thus remember His promise. What thoughts and words are these; and yet these are the words of the Spirit, telling us of the intimate ways of God with us, and our souls, and our circumstances! The cloud might threaten and swell itself with water; the bow should control it. The cloud might frown; the bow should smile. The Lord should be refreshed and glorified now in the counsels of His grace, as at the first He had been in the works of His hands. And the creation was set, not in infallible, but in sure conditions.

There had been no threatening cloud in the sky of Eden; but then, there was no shining bow riding in triumph upon it. The cloud was now the witness that the eater had done his work - a deadly work

- a work of forfeiture and ruin - but the bow was alike the witness that God had got meat and sweetness out of him (Gen. 9).

Wondrous riddle! beginning to show itself here at the very first. (It is said in chapter 6 that God repented that He had made man, that it grieved Him at His heart. But this does not affect this wondrous riddle, or touch the meaning of this little article. For that was the divine experience when the work of the eater was looked at in itself, and apart from the work of God as forcing meat and sweetness out of him.)

The fall or ruin of man has been accomplished through the subtlety of the eater, the strong man, the old serpent which is the devil and Satan; but in the midst of the ruins God Himself is gathering richer joy and brighter glory than He had known before; and as to His creature man, his communion with God is deeper and more blessed, his destinies more excellent and glorious, being either heavenly, like that of Enoch and the antediluvian saints, or in royal and priestly dignities, like that of Noah, in a redeemed and not merely a created system, with the sure tokens of God's unfailing guardianship before him.

Satisfied

Wherever we turn in the world, we find dissatisfaction. Sin has created a void in man's heart which nothing beneath the sun can fill. Tens of thousands are busy today in the pursuit of wealth and honor and fame; but where is there one among them who is satisfied? Solomon, the wisest and wealthiest of men, discovered that all was vanity and vexation of spirit (Eccles. 2:17). It is said of the great Grecian general, Alexander, that when he had conquered the whole known world, he wept, because there were no more worlds to conquer. And you may rest assured that if he had conquered a thousand worlds, the result would have been the same.

Where then is true and lasting satisfaction to be found? The answer is simple -in Christ. Yes, dear reader, in Christ, and in Christ alone. God has found perfect satisfaction in His Son, and also in His finished work as to the question of sin which shut the sinner out from Him. Having believed on Him, we are at peace with God, standing in His grace, reconciled to Him (Rom. 5:1-11). How rich indeed the portion!

Surely the believer may say, "The lines are fallen unto Me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." Psalm 16:6. It is beautifully shadowed forth in the blessing of Naphtali in Deut. 33:23, pronounced by Moses, the man of God, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the LORD." Surely if such is the language employed to convey the blessing of one of the tribes of Israel, an earthly people, how much more forcibly does it express the wondrous and marvelous blessing of the Christian! We stand in the unclouded sunshine of the full and free favor of our God, having access thereto by faith. This is one aspect of our portion in Christ. The soul that knows this will find perfect satisfaction. Like Naptali, he will be satisfied with favor, the favor of God; this grace (Rom. 5:2), characteristic of the present dealing of God, is the grace (1 Pet. 5:10-12). And true grace of the God of all he will be full with the blessing of the Lord.

"Satisfied with Thee, Lord Jesus,

I am blest;

Peace which passeth understanding,

On Thy breast.

No more doubting,

No more trembling,

Oh, what rest!

"Occupied with me, Lord Jesus,

In Thy grace;

All Thy ways and thoughts about me

Only trace

Deeper stories

Of the glories

Of Thy grace."

Blessed is the man that can take up the language of the Psalmist, saying, "How excellent is Thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures." Psalm 36:7, 8. And again, "My soul shall be satisfied as with narrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips." Psalm 63:5.

But how little sense many dear children of God have of the rich blessing which is their portion even now! Occupied with themselves, they measure oftentimes the grace of God by the fluctuations of their own souls, instead of taking God at His word, who dispenses His grace toward us according to His delight and satisfaction in the Son of His love, and has made us accepted in Him, the Beloved (Eph. 1:6). And not only so, but in the ages to come He will show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). How sad to see souls always occupied with their low condition, their shortcomings, their failures, their lack of love, etc, instead of rejoicing always in Christ Jesus, and delighting in the riches of God's grace!

It is quite right, of course, to judge ourselves and our ways; but no strength or liberty or joy can be found in self-occupation. Nothing but dissatisfaction can fill the mind, even of the believer, as long as he is occupied with anything or anybody but Christ. May the language then of your soul be, dear reader,

"Taken up with Thee, Lord Jesus,

I would be;

Finding joy and satisfaction All in Thee;

Thou the nearest,

And the dearest,

Unto me."

David, whose soul longings after God are so wonderfully expressed in many of his psalms, says, "As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." Psalm 17:15. With the light that he had, which was but little when compared with what has come from the lips of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, he longed for the moment when he should be like unto the Lord. Then, said he, "I shall be satisfied." Long ago he passed off this scene, and thousands more of the saints of God. Soon the morning without clouds shall have come, and the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with an assembling shout. Soon the trump of God shall awake His sleeping saints; and the whole of the redeemed, whether in the grave or alive on the earth, be caught up together to meet

Him, hereafter to appear with Him in glory. It is then that the Word of God tells us we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John 3:3). It is then that we shall be conformed to His image, every trace of mortality having been swallowed up, and our body of humiliation fashioned like unto His body of glory (Phil. 3:21). Then indeed shall we be satisfied, as we see Him face to face, in a way infinitely beyond all human thought. Already-such is God's wondrous grace - a portion is ours in Christ, which satisfies the soul that enjoys it; but this is to faith. At that day - Lord Jesus, come! - eternal satisfaction will be ours.

"Then Thy Church will be, Lord Jesus,

The display

Of Thy richest grace and kindness

In that day:

Marking pages,

Wondrous stages,

O'er earth's way."

But now, the Christian, satisfied with favor, and awaiting that glorious day when eternal satisfaction shall be his, is called to a path of faith and faithfulness. This necessarily brings trial and suffering, and sometimes privation in various ways, as in the early days of the Church of God. The Apostle Paul, who led the van in this blessed pathway, in following Christ, was exposed to the severest trials, and yet was enabled to say, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"; or, as it has been otherwise rendered, "As to me I have learned in those circumstances in which I am, to be satisfied in myself." Phil. 4:11; J.N.D. Trans.

How sad to see Christians, often in a path of ease compared with that of the apostles, dissatisfied with their surroundings, and chafed in spirit under their present circumstances, grasping after the uncertain riches and the temporary glories of this vain and fleeting world! The spring of this is in all our hearts alike; but God would have us occupied with His Son, having Him as our goal and prize, pressing on in the course of faith, and, like the Apostle, satisfied in himself. We fear that most of us are but poor scholars in this school; but Paul could say, "I have learned."

Fellow believer, are you in trial or privation? Forget not that the hand of God is over every circumstance - a Father's love tenderly watching over His child-the very hairs of your head being all numbered by Him (Luke 12:7). Nothing can occur to your hurt but what He knows. "Even so, Father," the words of our adorable Lord, in His infinitely deeper hour of sorrow, will prove to every heart that enters into them a true and lasting solace when drinking the bitterest cup.

Paul was satisfied in himself. Not with, but in himself. He was not occupied with things around to gather satisfaction from them; had he been so, he would still have experienced the utter vanity of all. No, his heart was captivated and enraptured with the Man in the glory, Jesus, the Son of God's love; and, satisfied with Him up there, he could joy in the midst of suffering, and be satisfied in himself in the midst of privation here. May we, dear reader, seek to learn this same lesson, that Christ may be glorified in us.

And now, last, how blessed to forget ourselves and to look on to a moment when our Lord Jesus Christ shall have the desire of His heart. In patience He is seated at the right hand of God. Soon He will claim His loved ones as His own; soon the Bridegroom shall claim His bride for heavenly glory, and He, who is also the King, deliver His chosen people Israel on the earth. Then shall be fulfilled the word of the prophet, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53). "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me," says the bride in the Canticles; and nothing short of having His blood-bought people with and like Him in the glory will satisfy His heart. "Christ... loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Eph. 5:25. She is the fruit of the travail of His soul. Wondrous destiny! The bride of Christ. Now to wait for Him in His patience and share His rejection-soon to be presented to Himself a glorious Church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing (Eph. 5:27), hereafter to be displayed in glory to this wondering world.

"Longing for the bride, Lord Jesus,

Of Thy heart,

To be with Thee in the glory,

Where Thou art.

Love so groundless,

Grace so boundless,

Wins my heart.

"When Thy blood-bought Church, Lord Jesus, Is complete;

When each soul is safely landed

At Thy feet;

What a story

In the glory

She'll repeat!"

Oh, that every Christian reader of these lines may be found thus satisfied in the midst of a dissatisfied world! Surely, being blessed according to the riches of His grace, and our every temporal need His special interest and care, a dissatisfied Christian is a sorry spectacle indeed. But His object is, that we should morally reflect Himself in this world, who trod every step of His pathway here a weary but satisfied Man.

Settling Down

The Hebrew believers were in danger of seeking to make themselves at ease and comfortable here. The first epistle to the Corinthians shows that they were not alone in this. It is a very natural snare to the heart of man, even to those who have found the Savior.

After there has been doubt and anxiety, the soul knowing what the judgment of God on sin is, and its own utter guilt and condemnation, when deliverance in the Lord Jesus is once found, there is often a danger of reaction. The soul is apt to settle down, thinking the campaign is over, because the great battle has been fought, and the victory is given through the Lord Jesus Christ. They flatter themselves that there can be no more trouble because the deep soul distress is past. It is sufficiently plain that these Hebrews were in some such state; and the Apostle not only reminds them how joyfully they took their early spoliation and sufferings, but here instructs them that they are not yet after the pattern of Israel settled in the land, but like Israel passing through the wilderness. Accordingly we find that the whole argument of the epistle supposes not the temple, but the tabernacle, from first to last, and thus hails from the camp, not from the throne or kingdom set up after the conquest of Canaan. Hence he says, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Chap. 4:1. We see at once that the Apostle is not speaking of believing in the Lord Jesus for present rest of conscience. Had this been the point before him, he would have boldly assured them that there was no need to fear.

If we speak of the blood of Christ, and then should exhort to fear, it would be the denial of Christianity. The gospel is the declaration of full remission, yea, of more than this, of justification, of reconciliation with God through the Lord Jesus. If forgiveness through Christ's blood were the question, he would rather call on them to vanquish every fear; for, as the Apostle John says, in discussing that point, "Perfect love casteth out fear" - not "perfect love" on our part (the law asked for that, and never could get it), but the perfect love of God, which is only revealed in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. What are we to be afraid of then? Not of the blood of Christ failing, not of losing the remission of sins through any change of mind on God's part, but of settling down in this world, and coming short of the true outlook of pilgrims and strangers on the way to a better land. To have rested in the wilderness would have been fatal to an Israelite; and so we have to remember that this is not our home, and that to settle down would be virtually to deny the rest of heaven.

Lectures on the Seven Churches

Each assembly has the Lord's estimate of it given. Each has words of caution, consolation, admonition, rebuke, warning, comfort, etc., fitting to its state, given.

Sin the Transgression of the Law: a Reader Inquires

QUESTION: Is "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4) a definition of sin?

ANSWER: As admirable as the King James Version of the Bible is in many respects, yet this translation is very faulty here. It gives a totally incorrect idea of what sin is. Furthermore, if this translation were true, it would be in flat contradiction to a verse in Romans 5: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam was given a specific law: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat." He broke that law; he transgressed the commandment, and death was his portion. But this 14th verse of Romans 5 informs us that death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had broken no law like Adam did. The ten commandments were not given until Moses's day. But men sinned, and death was their portion when there was no law. It is not merely that they died because their father Adam sinned, but because they were sinners by practice as well as by nature. Therefore we can see at once how very faulty the King James translation of 1 John 3:4 is.

It may be well to call attention here to the fact that this error has been perpetuated by a footnote in the C. I. Scofield reference Bible. Under Romans 3, the note says: "Sin is the transgression [*italics theirs*], an overstepping of the law, the divine boundary between good and evil." Luke 15:29 is cited as a proof text; it reads that the elder brother said to his father, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." Now this statement was a plain falsehood, and is a false idea of every Pharisee. The elder brother could say with another Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men," and be none the better for it; he added a lie to his many sins. The correct translation of 1 John 3:4 is: "SIN IS LAWLESSNESS" - man doing his own will and going his own way without regard to his Creator. The elder brother, even as he made protestations of innocence, was longing for the kid that he might make merry with his friends. His father was not in his thoughts, and so man lives today. God is not in his thoughts. The prodigal was enjoying the fatted calf with the father, and with those whom the father sat down at the table with him. The father said, "Let us eat, and be merry." The elder brother wanted a calf to make merry with his friends, apart from his father.

The Scofield note says of trespass that it is "the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority." Let us read a few verses from the book of Leviticus: "If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering: and he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest.... If a soul sin, and commit a trespass against the LORD, and lie unto his neighbor in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbor; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely; in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be, because he hath sinned, and is guilty,

that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering. And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flock with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD." Lev. 5:15; 6:2-7.

Here we learn that "trespass" is connected with a case wherein God is dishonored, even though it may be a mere man who was defrauded. Nor is it sufficient that a sacrifice be offered to God, but the wrong done to man was to be repaid, and that not only in full, but according to the estimation of the value by the priest, one-fifth more was to be added to the amount of recompense.

Now if we turn to the 69th Psalm, we have the Lord Himself prophetically speaking, "then I restored that which I took not away." This is another aspect of the sin offering. The trespass offering takes account of damage that accrues to one through another's sin. And if we consider how sin dishonored God, the reproach cast upon Him by man's sin, we see how the Lord not only suffered in the sinner's stead on the cross for his sins, but He glorified God in all the reproach and dishonor brought to Him by sin. The Lord Jesus Christ not only answered to God for man's sins, but He brought glory and honor to God, so that (speaking reverently) God's nature has been glorified, and the fifth part has been added thereto so that God is richer than if sin had never intruded on His fair creation. At the cross of Christ we see how God's holiness-intrinsic holiness-His righteousness, His grace, His love, and all His attributes meet. Truly He has been glorified!

"Iniquity" was often connected with sin in relation to the "holy things." Our Great High Priest bears the iniquity of our holy things (Exod. 28:38). How much of self and of pride and fleshly satisfaction enter into our worship which should be in spirit and in truth! Therefore we need the gracious office of our Great High Priest, which we have, according to Heb. 10:21.

Sympathies in the Psalms

God does not set David at once in the height of power, as He did in the case of Saul. He must make his way by grace and faith through all kinds of difficulties; and, although filled with the Holy Spirit, he must act in the presence of a power devoid of the Spirit, and which God had not yet set aside. He must be subject and be humbled; he must feel his entire dependence on God, that God is sufficient in all circumstances; and his faith must be developed by trial in which God is felt to be all. Beautiful type of One who, without sin, journeyed through far more painful circumstances! and not only a type, but at the same time a vessel prepared by God for the Holy Spirit who could fill him with sentiments which, while describing so touchingly the sufferings of Christ Himself and His sympathy with His people, exhibit to those who were to tread in weakness the same path as Himself, their resource in God. For one cannot doubt that the trials of David gave rise to the greater part of those beautiful psalms which, depicting the circumstances, the trials, and the complaints of the remnant of Israel in the last days, as well as of Christ Himself (who in spirit has identified Himself with them, and has undertaken their cause), have thus furnished so many other burdened souls with the expression and the relief of their sorrows; and although their interpretation of these psalms may have been incorrect, yet their hearts were not mistaken.

Three Songs and Their Teaching: Israel Sang - O Well - New Song

"I will sing unto the LORD, for He hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him." See Exod. 15:1-19.

This is the first time we read of singing in Scripture, and the mention of it is very significant. In bondage under Pharaoh, Israel groaned; but when delivered by the grace and power of Jehovah, Israel sang. There is no record of their singing in Egypt. But when sheltered by the blood and redeemed from the hand of the enemy, the people could sing with a loud voice the praises of the Lord. It was a great deliverance and a grand song in which they celebrate the glory of their Deliverer, the overthrow of their foes, the fear and dread that should overtake their enemies in the land of Canaan, the faithfulness of the Lord who would bring them in; and it closes with His sanctuary and everlasting reign.

As yet they knew nothing of the wilderness. Jehovah had brought them out of Egypt and had promised to bring them into the land of Canaan. Faith triumphed, and Israel sang:

"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O LORD, which Thy hands have established." v. 17.

Why should they not have always continued to sing? Why should they not have gone straight into the promised land? Alas! the people of God, full of triumph on the shores of the Red Sea, murmured at the very first difficulty that met them by the way. "They went three days in the wilderness, and found no water." v. 22. Then the triumphant notes died down, and the voice of praise gave place to murmuring and discontent.

"And so they murmured - murmured very often;

Their sullen hearts rebelled against the light.

And had not God been strong and very patient,

They never would have found their way aright."

Now, all these things are written for our admonition. The worldling has no true song for the Lord. The awakened sinner, under the hard bondage of Satan, groans for deliverance. It is the merry heart that sings. Sheltered by the precious blood of Christ, and redeemed by the power of God from the hand of the enemy, the believer is filled with praise which finds expression in song. Happy in the experience of grace and deliverance, he joys in the great Deliverer; and with a heart tuned by the Spirit he breaks forth in spiritual songs, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God!

But, alas! the history of Israel repeats itself in us. Is it not our privilege to continue to sing, and to enter at once into the promised land? May we not by faith and in the Spirit's power take possession of heavenly things? But how many of us do this?

Some of us remember the joy that filled us when we first tasted the great deliverance. Real and loud and oft-repeated were our songs of praise. But how long did it last? Must we not confess that a spirit of murmuring often filled our hearts, and the song of praise died upon our lips, or at most it has been but a formal utterance to please our own or other's ears, instead of the heart and the ear of God?

But, as Israel's journeyings drew to a close, they came to the place of "the well whereof the LORD spake unto Moses, Gather the people together, and I will give them water. Then Israel sang this song, Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it." Numb. 21:16, 17.

Thus, after nearly forty years' wandering and murmuring, they were again led out in song. As they gaze upon the springing water from the well dug by the princes and nobles with their staves, according to the direction of Moses the lawgiver, their hearts were filled once more with joy, and their mouths with song. Then Israel sang, "Spring up [ascend], O well; sing ye [answer] unto it." How pleasing must that note of praise have been in the ear and to the heart of Jehovah! Afresh the people set forth in triumph on the King's highway, and ere long they clean passed over Jordan into the land of promise.

Now the springing well at Beer is a striking figure of the Holy Ghost in the Christian, the well of living water which springs up unto everlasting life. Often in the course of our experience, after the joys of deliverance and first love have been known, we have been guilty of murmuring and wandering. But when our souls are restored and invigorated, and we rise superior to all here in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, our hearts break forth in songs of praise. God would have us to be always a happy people. He has done everything to make us so. He is not content that we should go on blundering, murmuring, and wandering with lukewarm hearts through the wilderness. No; He would have us, in the Spirit's power, with songs and in simple faith to take possession of the land. He brought Israel out in order to bring the m in. And He brought us out to bring us in also. May we be led from the heart to sing in the Spirit, "Ascend, O well; answer unto it." The Spirit came to us from an ascended Christ; and, as water finds its level, so does the ungrieved and unhindered Spirit lead our hearts to rise to Christ Himself in glory.

Now when Israel came into the land, from time to time in the course of their history, we read of the songs of different leaders, such as Deborah and David. No doubt many in Israel entered into the spirit of their leaders. It is also clear that they sang in connection with the temple service after the kingdom was established under Solomon. The psalmist too narrates that they hanged their harps on the willows in Babylon, for they could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land; and this shows what their custom was when at home. But, as far as we are aware, there is no record of any other song of the people on any special occasion, as by the Red Sea, or at the springing well, in connection with their being brought out of Egypt and into the land of Canaan.

But in Psalm 149:1 there is a third song which the people are invited to sing, upon which we would like to say a few words.

"Praise ye the LORD. Sing unto the LORD a new song, and His praise in the congregation of saints. Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: let the children of Zion be joyful in their King."

In this wonderful psalm we are carried on to the great day when Israel, no longer stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, will have the law of Jehovah written in their hearts, and be in full

possession of all His precious promises to them in Emmanuel's land. Then will they sing a new song, giving all the praise and glory to Jehovah. In that day Israel shall no longer, as now, have Lo-ammi (not My people) written upon them; but they shall be owned by Him, and blessed as His own. Israel shall then be the head, and not the tail. Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the world with fruit. Israel shall enjoy the inheritance to the end of time. Brought through grace to repentance, they shall own the true Messiah, Jesus, the Son of God; and He shall be their King and their God.

Here again we may learn precious things. Ere the Messiah shall return to deliver and bless His earthly people, He, even Jesus, the Lord Himself, shall descend from heaven and call us home. At any moment we may be caught up to meet Him (1 Thess. 4:15-18), and find ourselves among the happy throng of glorified saints, a kingly priesthood around the throne of God. And there, as we gaze upon the Lamb in the midst of the throne, we shall sing the new song: "Thou art worthy... for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood," etc. Rev. 5:9. This song shall find its echo in the ends of God's creation (vv. 11-14). And when He shall appear in glory to deliver Israel, to judge His foes, and take the kingdom manifestly and reign, we shall appear with Him in that same bright glory. Already it is our privilege, as taught of God, to begin on earth the song of praise which is His due, and which, in a sense, shall have no end.

Trial

There is not a trial or difficulty that Christ has not passed through before me, and found His resources in God the Father. He will supply the needed grace to my heart.

True Service

The really devoted servant will keep his eye not on his service, be it ever so great, but on the Master; and this will produce a spirit of worship. If I love my master according to the flesh, I shall not mind whether I am cleaning his shoes or driving his carriage; but if I am thinking more of myself than of him, I shall rather be a coachman than a shoeblick. So it is precisely in the service of the heavenly Master; if I am thinking only of Him, planting churches and making tents will be both alike to me.

We may see the same thing in angelic ministry. It matters not to an angel whether he be sent to destroy an army or to protect the person of some heir of salvation; it is the Master who entirely fills his vision. As someone has remarked, "If two angels were sent from heaven, one to rule an empire, and the other to sweep the streets, they would not dispute about their respective work." This is most true, and so it should be with us. The servant should ever be combined with the worshiper, and the works of our hands perfumed with the ardent breathings of our spirits. In other words, we should go forth to our work in the spirit of those memorable words, "I and the lad will go yonder and worship." This would effectually preserve us from that merely mechanical service into which we are so prone to drop- doing things for doing's sake, and being more occupied with our work than with our Master. All must flow from simple faith in God, and obedience to His Word.

Two or Three Witnesses

One settled principle of both the Old and New Testaments is the absolute necessity of having two or three witnesses against anyone who is being accused. In Numbers 35 we read: "Whoso killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die." v. 35. It was not merely that the testimony of one person was inadequate, but his testimony was unacceptable and not permitted.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian assembly that he would come again to them, and that he feared there were some there who had not repented of their bad deeds, he said, "This is the third time. I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established." 2 Cor. 13:1.

Then when Paul wrote to Timothy he exhorted him, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." 1 Tim. 5:19. Not merely were they not to accept it as suitable evidence, but they were not even to hear it -unless it were presented at the mouth of two or three witnesses. And this principle holds good in this day in the Church as much as in any previous day. No plausible excuse will justify departure from this unalterable principle. Man is not wiser than God who gave us this word. If I do not have witnesses to a charge, even though I may feel sure that it is true, I am to keep it to myself unless and until the Lord Himself brings it to light.

Usefulness

A question often arises about usefulness. Satan often beguiles by it. He may have suggested to John that he would be more useful if he were to compromise a little, and keep out of trouble for the sake of being free for his service to saints. Useful to whom? To God or to men? God may be able to show out more of His glory by laying men aside. The eyes of God rested on Paul a prisoner, seemingly useless (not even always allowed to write) as the field for the display of some of the greatest privileges of truth. The very point when your weakness seems to make you useless is often the very way in which God shows forth His glory. People think it strange that old Christians, useless ones, etc., should be left, and young active ones taken. Do you not be trying to settle God's house for Him; do not say, What a pity for John to get to Patmos. The Lord wanted him there to communicate something that might serve His people to the end of time.

A person may be in difficult circumstances, and you may have it in your power to get him out of them in the power of human nature. And you may do it, and find out that God would have had him in them, because then he would have borne testimony; and you ought not to have measured things by your love for him and your comfort, but by the light of God. We often act on a set of thoughts of which the cord is bound to our own humanity instead of God's glory.

The Wilderness — the Land

Deut. 8:1-9; 11:10-12; 26:1-11

You will find two very different experiences recorded in chapters 8 and 11 of this Book. Chapter 8 sets before us the wilderness and its lessons. If I think of it as the place where every Christian is, though it is true also he belongs to heaven (seated in heavenly places in Christ), yet looking at the wilderness as the scene through which we are passing, the object and purport of it are clearly discernible.

In heaven there will be no broken hearts, no trials, no hunger, no thirst; but here the blessed God finds a place to display His heart as equal to it all—that the difficulties, the trials and sorrows, through which His people pass, do but afford Him the occasion for showing how He can care for His own. The blessed God charged Himself with the clothes and feet of His people those forty years! How wonderful! It is the greatness of His love that enables Him to enter into it all—nothing too great and nothing too small for His care and interest. We on our side need the wilderness; it is a place in which dependence and subjection are put to the test. "Thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, and know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years."

Now this is the wilderness; it is connected with God's ways with His people. And as I have observed, it is here we learn dependence and subjection. It was all a sandy waste before them and behind them, and just the place for them to learn how to lean on Him—"That He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD."

It is wonderful, surely, how little we are cast on God; no matter how varied our circumstances are, there is one common point to be found in all our histories alike; namely, independence. It was independence in Adam in paradise, when he thought he could do better than. God had done for him.

There is not one solitary thing in this world that ministers to you as a child of God, as a new creature in Christ Jesus. You are to count on God, and none but God. The Lord Jesus Christ, as a man, was perfect in dependence and obedience. The first man in the garden of Eden, surrounded by all the tokens and marks of God's care, displayed his perfect independence; the second Man, in the wilderness, without any subsidy, is perfect in dependence. He recommended, morally, the history of the nation. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My Son out of Egypt." Hos. 11:1; see also Matt. 2:15. They were in the wilderness; He was in the wilderness; they broke down and failed everywhere—He was perfect in it all. Christ recovered everything for God, and

'secured every blessing for His own. Have we learned what it is, day by day and moment by moment, to live by every word of God? There is nothing but restlessness and unreality in all around us-no quiet, no repose.

What a path that of dependence is! What would straits and difficulties be to a man that walked in that road? What were they to Caleb and Joshua? They were bread for them, and they could not be less than bread for us. What a wonderful display! - the blessed God showing me He is above difficulties, and faith feeding upon them! The second lesson of the wilderness is subjection; how few of us know what it is! I do not mean resignation; resignation means that you endure it because you cannot help it-subjection, that you fall in with the will of God as the delight of your heart.

The wilderness is the scene where the will may be constantly crossed; and that is just the place to elicit the subjection of your heart. See its perfection in the second Man (Matt. 11); "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." And this, observe, was in a moment when all had failed to meet His longing, loving heart. John doubted His being the Messiah; Israel refused Him; and the cities which had witnessed His mightiest works repented not. What a wonderful thing for the heart to find its rest in the fact that God has had His way! It is not that I cannot help it, but my joy and satisfaction when the will of God triumphs at my cost. If not so, when our desires are interrupted, our pathway broken in upon (it may be in good things, that were only the energy of the natural will), how disappointed with ourselves (and shall I say it?) how almost disappointed with God; heartbroken oneself; and with the dreadful sensation of being disappointed with God! Oh, to be glad that God would have His own way, even if it breaks in upon cherished hopes and prospects; but nothing will impart this to us save implicit obedience and subjection, and a faith that will trust Him in the dark.

"As for God, His way is perfect." Psalm 18:30. "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known." Psalm 77:19. Not a single affection of His heart is kept back or unexpressed; read them in the light of the sorrows of the heart of Jesus, and you will find how it will cheer you passing through the valley of the shadow of death. "Thou leadest Thy people like a flock." Psalm 77:20. Who is it that leads His sheep, keeps them in His hand, and watches over them day by day? There is but One, and His name is one.

The Lord give us to draw the reason of His ways with us from the knowledge of His heart; then His will shall be our delight.

The end of chapter 8 describes the land as it is in itself; it is a region of plenty and satisfied desire. "A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass."

But in chapter 11 the land is described in its contrast. In Egypt there is trouble connected with the best of things; they had trouble to procure the fertilizing streams of the Nile; Canaan, on the contrary, drank water of the rain of heaven, and the eyes of God were always on it, from the beginning to the end of the year.

The very best thing you possess in this world has trouble connected with it; who can tell when we may lose it? The sweeping desolations of death may come in upon it, and "increased happiness

does but widen the target at which death shoots his arrows." I may die to them or they may die to me; here we are in the presence of death; there we shall be in the presence of Christ.

The only place that can command or detain the eye of God now, is the spot where that blessed One is, and there I go to remember my sorrow no more; by faith I am now introduced into it, and share His joy. I love to think He cares for me in the wilderness; still I love to think He says, You shall know another place the exact contrast to it. Now what is to engage us in this place of rest and satisfaction? This we have in chapter 26. "When thou art come in... and possessest it, and dwellest therein." Every Christian has come in, but then it is another thing to take practical possession, or make it our own; and to dwell, is to make it our home. Are you rather a visitor to earth upon His business, and a dweller in that home? A stranger here-at home there? In Christendom the effort is to be what they are not. No one can work themselves up to be heavenly. I am to walk here in the sense of what I am in Christ. Do you dwell there? Have you possessed it? Can you say, Thank God, He has brought me in, given me possession, and I now dwell there; and the spot I possess is the very place where the beloved One of God is crowned?

Thus we have looked at the wilderness and the land, the objects and purports of each. May our hearts largely profit by the lessons of both, while we have deeper and larger apprehensions by the Holy Ghost of our present place on high in Christ before God, as well as one with Him in glory, for His name's sake. Amen.

The World's Condition

Plato yearned after some superhuman being to come and enlighten and raise up the fallen race. But when the Father sent the Son, and (wondrous condescension!) in the reality of man while most truly God, hatred of good came out as it never did nor could before; and they rejected Him alike in His words and His works. It mattered not that these all were light and love, as He was. But they, brought God in Christ's Person the Holy and the True; and man would have none of Him - neither religious man, nor philosophical, nor political - Jew, Greek, Roman, despised and abhorred Him. As it was written beforehand, they hated Him without a cause, even those that had His law; they hated both the Son and the Father.

This is the world, and the great standing proof is the cross of Christ. Hence, our Lord, looking on to it, declared His own not to be of the world, as He is not - not merely that they ought not to be, but that they are not. And the epistles follow this up, when the Holy Spirit was given, with the utmost care for corresponding ways. Nor is there anything in which Christendom is more false and guilty than in seeking and courting it, and congratulating itself on possessing its countenance and its good things, if it has them, or in coveting them when it has not

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