

YOUNG CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE (6 VOLUMES) - VOLUME 1

by Various

Volume 1 of a six-volume Young Christian periodical, providing age-appropriate Bible teaching, stories, and encouragement for young believers growing in their faith and knowledge of Scripture.

100 Chapters

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Vol 01 - A Heart for Christ

A Heart for Christ Read Matthew 26:1-75. In this solemn chapter, we have a great many hearts revealed. The heart of the chief priests, the heart of the elders, the heart of the scribes, the heart of Peter, the heart of Judas. But there is one heart in particular unlike all the others, and that is the heart of the woman who brought the alabaster box of very precious ointment, to anoint the body of Jesus. This woman had a heart for Christ. She may have been a very great sinner—a very ignorant sinner, but her eyes had been opened to see a beauty in Jesus which led her to judge that nothing was too costly to be spent on Him. In a word, she had a heart for Christ.

Passing over the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes, let us look for a moment at the heart of this woman in contrast with the heart of Judas and the heart of Peter.

1. Judas was a covetous man. He loved money. A very common love in every age. He had preached the gospel. He had walked in company with the Lord Jesus, during the days of His public ministry. He had heard His words, seen His ways, experienced His kindness. But, alas! though an apostle, though a companion of Jesus, though a preacher of the gospel, he had no heart for Christ. He had a heart for money. His heart was ever moved by the thought of gain. When money was in question, he was all alive. The deepest depths of his being were stirred by money. "The bag" was his nearest and dearest object. Satan knew this. He knew the special lust of Judas. He was fully aware of the price at which he could be bought. He understood his man, how to tempt him, and how to use him. Solemn thought. Be it observed, also, that the very position of Judas made him all the more fit for Satan. His acquaintance with the ways of Christ made him a fit person to betray Him into the hands of His enemies. Head knowledge of sacred things, if the heart be not touched renders a man more awfully callous, profane, and wicked. The chief priests and scribes in Matthew 2:1-23 had a head knowledge of the letter of the Scripture, but no heart for Christ. They could at once hand down the prophetic roll and find the place where it was written, "Thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel." (Matthew 2:6.) All this was very well, very true, and very beautiful; but, then, they had no heart for this "Governor"—no eyes to see Him—they did not want Him. They had Scripture at their fingers' ends. They would have felt ashamed, no doubt, had they not been able to answer Herod's question. It would have been a disgrace to men in their position to exhibit ignorance; but they had no heart for Christ, and hence they laid their scriptural knowledge at the feet of an ungodly king, who was about to use it, if he could, for the purpose of slaying the true Heir to the throne. So much for head-knowledge without heart-love.

It is not, however, that we would make little of scriptural knowledge. Far from it. The true knowledge of Scripture must lead the heart to Jesus. But there is such a thing as knowing the letter of Scripture so as to be able to repeat chapter after chapter, verse after verse, yea, so as to be a sort of walking concordance, and, all the while, the heart be cold and callous toward Christ. This knowledge will only throw one more into the hands of Satan, as in the case of the chief priests and scribes. Herod would not have applied to ignorant men for information. The devil never takes

up ignorant men, or stupid men, to act against the truth of God. No; he finds fitter agents to do his work. The learned, the intellectual, the deep-thinking, provided only they have no heart for Christ, will answer him well, at all times. What was it saved "the wise men from the east?" Why could not Herod-why could not Satan-enlist them into his service? Oh! reader, mark the reply. They had a heart for Christ. Blessed safeguard! Doubtless, they were ignorant of Scripture-they would have made but a poor hand of searching for a passage in the prophets; but they were looking for Jesus, earnestly, honestly, diligently looking for Jesus. Wherefore, Herod would fain have made use of them if he could; but they were not to be used by him. They found their way to Jesus. They did not know much about the prophet who had spoken of the "Governor;" but they found their way to the "Governor" Himself. They found Him in the Person of the babe in the manger at Bethlehem; and instead of being tools in the hands of Herod, they were worshipers at the feet of Jesus.

Now, it is not that we would commend ignorance of Scripture. By no means. People are sure to err greatly who know not the Scriptures. It was to the praise of Timothy that the apostle could say to him, "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation;" but then he adds, "through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 3:15.) The true knowledge of Scripture will always conduct us to the feet of Jesus; but mere head knowledge of Scripture, without heart-love for Christ, will only render us the more effective agents in the hands of Satan.

Thus, in the case of the hard-hearted, money-loving Judas, he had knowledge, without a spark of affection for Christ, and his very familiarity with that blessed One made him a suitable instrument for the devil. His nearness to Jesus enabled him to be a traitor. The devil knew that thirty pieces of silver could purchase his service in the horrible work of betraying his Master.

Reader, think of this! Here was an apostle-a preacher of the gospel-a high professor; yet, underneath the croak of profession, lay "a heart exercised in covetous practices"-a heart which had a wide place for "thirty pieces of silver" but not a corner for Jesus. What a case! what a picture! what a warning! Oh! all ye heartless professors, think of Judas! think of his course! think of his character! think of his end! He preached the gospel, but he never knew it, never believed it, never felt it. He had painted sunbeams on canvas, but he had never felt their influence. He had plenty of heart for money, but no heart for Christ. As "the son of perdition" "he hanged himself" and "went to his own place." Professing Christians, beware of head-knowledge, lip-profession, official piety, mechanical religion-beware of these things, and seek to have a heart for Christ.

(To be continued)

Vol 01 - A Heart for Christ

A Heart for Christ

2. In Peter we have another warning, though of a different kind. He really loved Jesus, but he feared the cross. He shrank from confessing His name in the midst of the enemy's ranks. He boasted of what he would do, when he should have been self-emptying. He was fast asleep, when he ought to have been on his knees. Instead of praying he was sleeping; and, then, instead of being still, he was drawing his sword. "He followed Jesus afar off," and then "warmed himself at the high priest's fire." Finally, he cursed and swore that he did not know his gracious Master. All this was terrible! Who could suppose that the Peter of Matthew 16:16, is the Peter of Matthew 26:1-75? Yet so it is. Man, in his best estate, is but like a sere autumn leaf. There is none abiding. The highest position, the loudest profession, may all end in following Jesus afar off, and of basely denying His name.

It is very probable, yea, almost certain, that Peter would have spurned the thought of selling Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, and yet he was afraid to confess Him before a servant maid. He might not have betrayed Him to his enemies, but he denied Him before them. He may not have loved money; but he failed to manifest a heart for Christ.

Christian reader, remember Peter's fall, and beware of self-confidence. Cultivate a prayerful spirit. Keep close to Jesus. Keep away from the influence of this world's favor. "Keep thyself pure." Beware of dropping into a sleepy, torpid condition of soul. Be earnest and watchful. Be occupied with Christ. This is the true safe-guard. Do not be satisfied with the mere avoidance of open sin. Do not rest in mere blamelessness of conduct and character. Cherish lively warm affections toward Christ. One who "follows Jesus afar off" may deny Him before long. Let us think of this. Let us profit by the case of Peter. He himself afterward tells us to "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; whom resist, steadfast in the faith." (1 Peter 5:8-9.) These are weighty words, coming as they do from the Holy Ghost, through the pen of one who had suffered so much from lack of "vigilance."

Blessed be the grace that could say to Peter, before his fall, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Mark, He does not say, "I have prayed for thee that thou mayest not fall." No; but "that thy faith fail not" when thou hast fallen. Precious, matchless grace! This was Peter's resource. He was a debtor to grace, from first to last. As a lost sinner, he was a debtor to "the precious blood of Christ;" and as a stumbling Saint, he was a debtor to the all-prevailing advocacy of Christ. Thus it was with Peter. The advocacy of Christ was the basis of his happy restoration. Of this advocacy Judas knew nothing. It is only those who are washed in the blood that partake of the advocacy. Judas knew nothing of either. Hence "he went and hanged himself;" whereas Peter went forth, as a converted or restored soul, to "strengthen his brethren." There is no one so fit to strengthen his brethren as one who has himself experienced the restoring grace of Christ. Peter was able to stand before the congregation of Israel, and say, "Ye denied the Holy One and the Just," the very thing he had done himself. This shows how entirely his conscience was purged by the blood, and

his heart restored by the advocacy of Christ.

3. And now, one word as to the woman with the alabaster box. She stands forth in bright and beautiful contrast with all. While the chief priests, elders, and scribes were plotting against Christ, "in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas," she was anointing His body, "in the house of Simon the leper." While Judas was planning to go to the chief priests to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, she was pouring the precious contents of her alabaster box upon His Person. Touching contrast! She was wholly absorbed with her object, and her object was Christ. Those who knew not His worth and beauty might pronounce her sacrifice a waste. Those who could sell Him for thirty pieces of silver might talk of "giving to the poor;" but she heeded them not. Their surmisings and murmurings were nothing to her. She had found her all in Christ. They might murmur, but she could worship and adore. Jesus was more to her than all the poor in the world. She felt that nothing was "waste" that was spent on Him. He might only be worth thirty pieces of silver to one who had a heart for money. He was worth ten thousand worlds to her, because she had a heart for Christ. Happy woman! May we imitate thee! May we ever find our place at the feet of Jesus, loving, adoring, admiring, and worshiping His blessed Person. May we spend and be spent in His service, even though heartless professors should deem our service a foolish "waste." The time is rapidly approaching when we shall not repent of anything done for His name's sake; yea, if there could be room for a single regret, it will be that we so faintly and feebly served His cause in the world. If, on "the morning without clouds," a single blush could mantle the cheek, it will be that we did not, when down here, dedicate ourselves more undividedly to His service.

Reader, let, us ponder these things. And may the Lord grant us a heart for Christ!

(Continued and To be continued.)

Chapter 3

Vol 01 - A Word on Cleaving to the Lord: Addressed to Young Converts

A Word on Cleaving to the Lord: Addressed to Young Converts

Vol 01 - A Word on Cleaving to the Lord: Addressed to Young Converts

A Word on Cleaving to the Lord: Addressed to Young Converts

He exhorted them that they should cleave to the Lord. Depend on Him. Some are allowed to have a long season of joy on first believing, but God knows our hearts, and how soon we should be depending on our joy, and not on Christ. He is our object: joy is not our object. Do not let your joy lead you to forget the source of it, and then it need never, wane. This joy is right and beautiful in its place; I am not saying a word against it-God forbid. But I warn you against resting in it. Do not lean on it for strength. There is danger of joy, however genuine, making you forget how dependent you are every moment. Depend upon Him: cleave to Him with purpose of heart. Do not be content with being happy (may you continue so!), but with Paul; forgetting the things which are behind press on, &c. (Php 3:1-21.) I have seen many Christians so full of joy that they thought there was no such thing as sin left. It is true, sin no longer remains on you; but the flesh is in you to the end. The old stock is there, and you will find that, if you are not watchful, if divine life is not cherished and cultivated in your hearts by looking at Christ and feeding on Him, it will be putting forth its buds; if it does, they must be nipped off as they appear. No good fruit comes off the old stock. It is the new that bears fruit unto God. But though the flesh is in you, do not be thinking of this, but think of Christ-cleave to Him; and may your souls be maintained its this truth, that Christ is your life-aye, that Christ is so your life that Christ must die (the thought of which is blasphemy) before you can perish. And as He is your life, so is He the object of that life. "The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20.) As you grow in this knowledge of Him, a joy grows deeper than that of first conversion. I have known Christ, more or less, between thirty and forty years, and I can say that I have ten thousand times more joy now than I had at first. It is a deeper, calmer joy. The water rushing down from a hill is beautiful to look at, and makes most noise; but you will find the water that runs in the plain is deeper, calmer, more fruitful.

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

Observe again, it is to the Lord they were to cleave; not to duty, or law, or ordinances (though these are good in their places), but to the Lord. He knew how treacherous the heart was, and how soon it would put anything in His place. You will have to learn what is in your heart. Abide with God, and you will learn your heart With Him, and under His grace; else you will have to learn it with the devil through His successful temptations. But God is faithful, and if you have been getting away from Him; and other things have been coming in and forming a crust round your heart, and you want to get back again, God says, What is this crust? I must have you deal with it, and get rid of it. Remember, Christ bought you with His own blood, that you should be His, and not the world's. The denial of this fact is an artifice of the devil. Do not let the devil come in between you and God's grace. However careless you may have been, however far you may have got away from Him, return to Him; doubt not His joy in having you back; count upon His love; look at the sin which led you away with horror, but do not wrong Him by distrusting His love, any more than you would an affectionate husband or wife, by throwing a doubt on their love if you had been for a moment ungracious. Hate yourself, but remember how He has loved you, and will love you until the end. Mistrust not His work: mistrust not His love. God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18.) All is of God.

I would have you carry away in your minds three things which by grace are given you. 1st, cleaving to the Lord; 2nd, perfect forgiveness; 3rd, a purged conscience. To illustrate this last, take the case of Peter. He denied His Lord-denied Him to a servant-maid; but the Lord had turned and looked on him, and he had gone out and wept bitterly. A few weeks after this (Acts 3:1-26.), he could say that they were a lost and ruined people, because "they denied the Holy One and the Just;" the very thing he had done himself; in a worse way, too, for he had been with Him as His friend for three years. But his conscience was purged; he knew he was forgiven; and now he could turn round, and fearlessly charge others with the very thing he had done himself.

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

(Continued)

Vol 01 - All for Christ

All for Christ "Now, girls, I have good news for you!" The speaker was a showy girl, dressed in the height of fashion. She was just entering a room where sat several young ladies, her cousins, pursuing various household employments.

"What is it, Ada?" cried one and another.

"You'll never believe it; Lizzie Ashbrook has professed religion," was the half serious, half laughing reply.

"Lizzie Ashbrook?" the girls repeated the name more or less in surprise.

"Lizzie Ashbrook!" said the elder cousin, Julia, seriously; "why, she was forever making sport of the subject." "And such a fashionable girl; why, she would hardly look at a person who was poorly dressed," remarked another.

"Her father, an infidel, too, what will he say?" "I heard that he turned her out of the house," said Ada. There was a long silence. "Well," it was abruptly spoken by the youngest of the family, "we shall see now if there is any reality in religion that Christians talk about. I don't believe there is one single person in any branch of her family who is religious. She will have unusual trials to undergo; I wouldn't be in her place."

"Trials; pshaw; there's no such thing as persecution in these days: it would be a rare thing to see a martyr." This was lightly spoken by Ada, who had been Lizzie's nearest friend, and who felt an unnatural bitterness springing up in her heart towards the young girl, whom she knew could no longer enjoy her companionship as of yore. Martyrs are not rare even in these days: aye, and martyrs to religious persecutions, as we shall see. The cousins made an early call on Lizzie, who received them with her accustomed grace, and a sweeter smile than usual yet she was pale, and though there was a purer expression on her beautiful face, yet she appeared like one wearied a little with some struggle, in which she was the sufferer. Although she did not speak directly of the new peace she had found, her visitors could see clearly and distinctly the wondrous change in dress, in manners, and even in countenance.

Lizzie was engaged for marriage to a thorough man of the world. George Philips loved his wine, his parties, the race-course, the theater, the convivial and free and easy club. The Sunday was his day of pleasure, and many a time had Lizzie graced his elegant equipage, radiant in beauty, on that day, as they swept along. He had a dashing exterior, was intellectual-a wit, courted, caressed, admired everywhere. His brow darkened as he heard the news. "What! the girl of his choice, the woman he would place at the head of his brilliant household becoming a canting Christian. Nonsense, he didn't believe it; he would see for himself. He didn't furnish his parlor for prayer meetings; he wanted no long-faced ministers, elders, ex-sisters of mercy to visit his wife, not he. It was a ridiculous hoax; it must have originated in the club-room. What! the daughter of Henry Ashbrook, the freest of free-thinkers? Ha! a capital joke- a very clever joke, nothing more."

He called upon her not very long after the visit before mentioned. His cold eye scanned her from head to foot-but how gently-how sweetly she met him; surely the voice that was melting music before was still sweeter in its tones now. All the winning grace was there, all the high bred ease; the merry smile dimpled her cheek, but there was something, a subtle something that thrilled him from head to foot with apprehension, because it was unlike her usual self. What could it be? At length, lightly, laughingly, he referred to the report he had heard. For one moment, the frame trembled, the lips refused to speak-but this passed, and something like a flash crossed her beautiful face-it lighted the eye anew, it touched the cheek with a deeper crimson as she replied, "George, please don't treat it as a jest, for truly, thank God, I have become a Christian. Oh George!" - her clasped hands were laid upon one of his,- "I have only just begun to live! If you knew-" The proud man sprang to his feet, almost throwing her hand from him in his impatient movement, and not daring to trust his voice, for an oath was uppermost, he walked swiftly backward and forward for a moment, then he came and stood before her. His forehead was purpled with the vein that passion swelled, his face white, and his voice unsteady, as he exclaimed, "Do you mean to say that you will really cast your lot among these people, that for them you will give up all-all?"

"I will give up all for Christ;" the words were very soft and low, and not spoken without reflection. For one moment he locked his lips together, till they looked like steel in their rigidity; then he said, in a full, passionate voice, "Lizzie, -Miss Ashbrook, if these are your sentiments, these your intentions, we must go different ways." This was very cruel-it was a terrible test: for that young girl, as it were, placed her soul in his keeping. Before a higher, a purer love was born in her heart, she had made up her human love-an absolute idolatry-and the thought of leaving him, even now, caused her cheek to grow ashen, and her eyes dim. As he saw this his manner changed to entreaty. He placed before her the position he would give her; lured by every argument that could appeal to her womanly heart. He could adapt his voice, his language, his very looks with the most adroit cunning to the subject and object of his discussion. More than once the gentle spirit of the young Christian felt as if she must give way-that only help direct from the fountain of life could sustain her firmness to resist to the end of the interview. At last it was a final, "All this will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me." There could be no compromise,-it was "Christ or me". And standing there, clothed with the mantle of a new heavenly faith, with its light shining in her heart and playing on her pale features, she said, with a firmness worthy of the martyrs of old, "Christ."

Though his soul was filled with rage so that he could have gnashed his teeth, the slight figure standing there in its pure white robes-the eye that cast an earnest, upward glance, the brow that seemed to have grown white with spirit light-the attitude, so self-possessed, yet so modest-so quiet, yet so eloquent, filled him with a strange admiring awe. But the hostility towards religion was so strong in his heart that it bore down all his tenderness, almost crushed his love, and he parted from her for the first time coldly, and like a stranger. The engagement was broken off, but who can tell the struggle it cost; this was but the first trial; then came another, while yet the blow lay heavy on her heart. Her father had never been very loving towards her. He was proud of her; she was the brightest gem of his splendid home. She was beautiful, and gratified his vanity; she was intellectual, and he heard praises lavished upon her mind with a miser's greedy ear, for she was his-a part of himself; she belonged to him. He called her into his study, and required a minute

account of the whole matter. He had heard rumors, he said-had seen a surprising and not an agreeable change in her; she had grown mopish, quiet-what was the cause? It was a great trial, with that stern, unbelieving face, full of hard lines, opposite, to stand and testify for Christ. But He who has promised was with her, and she told the story calmly, resolutely, kindly.

"And do you intend to be baptized?"

"Yes, Sir," a gleam of hope entered her heart, she did not expect his approval, but she could not think he might refuse to sanction this important step.

"You know your Aunt Eunice has long wanted you to become an inmate of her home." "Yes Sir," the gentle voice faltered.

"Well, you can go now. Unless you give up this absurd idea, and trample it under your feet, I do not wish you to remain with me. Be as you were before and you shall want no luxury, no affection; follow this miserable notion, and henceforth I am only your father in name." And still, though her heart was broken, she said as she had said before, "Christ."

She did forsake all for Him, but her step became slow, her form wasted, her eye hollow, her cheek sunken. The struggle had been too much for a frame unable to cope with any overwhelming sorrow.

Swiftly she went down into the valley, but it was not dark to her. Too late, the man who had so sorely tempted her, knelt by the side of her bed and implored her forgiveness. Too late! no not too late for his own salvation, for in that hour his eyes were opened to the sinfulness of his life, and by her dying pillow, he promised solemnly to yield himself to God. Her father, too, proud infidel though he was, looked on his wasted child, triumphing over death, with wonder and with awe. Such a dying scene is the privilege of but few to witness. She had given up all for Christ and in the last hour, the Spirit of God seemed to fill her. And like one, who but the other day, in the vigor of youthful buoyancy, moved calmly and trustingly down the one step betwixt earth and heaven, she said, with a smile inexpressibly sweet, "sing." And they sang, "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me." At its close they heard one word the last it was, "Christ."

Vol 01 - Always Abounding

Always Abounding Is your father-the doctor-at home?" I asked a child.

"No, he's away."

"Where do you think I could find him?"

"Well," (with a considering air) "you've got to look for some place where people are sick, or hurt, or something like that. I don't know where he is, but HE'S HELPING SOME WHERE." And I turned away with this little sermon in my heart. "Let us not be weary in well doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto ALL men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Galatians 6:9-10.

Vol 01 - Always Confident

Always Confident Since God for us delivered up His Son, And laid on Him the weight of all our guilt; And by His resurrection made us one; In Him accepted, and upon Him built,- We're always confident! though Satan tries To weaken confidence by many snares; But God, who cleanses, clothes, and justifies, Has also glorified His chosen heirs.

Yea, Always Confident! no racking doubt, No groundless terror shall possess our hearts;

We know the One who knows no casting out, And 'tis Himself this confidence imparts!

We're always confident, the Lord will stem, Fears, sins, and sorrows, fast as they arise; And faith, triumphant, asks, "Who shall condemn, When God accepts, and clothes; and justifies?"

Oh! timid Christian, let no terrors dim The wondrous glories of Christ's finished work!

We're made the righteousness of God in Him! With such assurance terror cannot lurk.

Soon shall we rise to meet Him in the air, (For sovereign grace has fitted us for this,) Clothed in His comeliness, and with Him share You blessed home of unimagined bliss. A little longer, and the tear-dimmed eye Shall on the glory of our Jesus gaze; And hearts now broken, throb with holy joy; And tongues now murmuring, celebrate His praise.

Vol 01 - Back Yards

Back Yards In traveling to town I often pass along a line of railway that runs for some distance just on a level with the roofs of the houses. Many and various are the views which are presented to the eye in rapid succession. At times we run along the back of a long line of houses which face into a street parallel with the railroad. Every variety of domestic life is revealed to our gaze, and often every variety of dirt and disorder. The most amazing contrasts, however, are seen when we cut across a number of streets running at right angles to the railway. At one moment we are looking down into a quiet deserted street, that looks very neat and tidy. In the windows of the houses white blinds are drawn half-way down, while on the ground floor a basket of flowers, or a plant in a glass case, fills up the remaining space. The door steps are beautifully white, the brass knobs well polished. Everything looks very orderly to the eye. But in a moment the scene changes. And what a change! No vestige of tidiness' or cleanliness seems to be left. Crowds of small back yards, covered with broken bricks and other rubbish, encumbered with unsightly outbuildings, and generally clothes drying. On every side are heaps of rubbish, broken palings, rotting timber, and other lumber, while here and there matters are made still worse by some trade being carried on to an old tumble down shed or workshop. Surely we have suddenly got into another district. A scene like this cannot have any connection with the street we have just passed with its air of quiet respectability. Such would be our thoughts if our eyes did not assure us that these were but the backs of the very houses which faced the street. What, then, is the reason for such a contrast? Simply that the one is intended to be seen, the latter is not. Those who built them did not know, or if they knew, did not care to think, that a railway would pass over the ground, and, from crowded trains, thousands of eyes would peer behind the scenes and judge of the inhabitants far more by the back yard than the front door.

What a lesson lies here for us? We all have front doors, kept smart and clean. None can be quieter, more upright, and more devout than many of us when man's eye is upon us. The part of our lives that is intended to be seen is very good, and leaves but little to be desired, it may be. But do we really think, have we ever fully grasped the fact, that the All Seeing Eye, which is silently judging our lives far above us all, sees the backs of our lives as clearly as the front, and judges us far more by the state of the back yard than the front door? Once we really grasp the fact, "Thou God seest me," how worse than foolish does it seem to have any difference between the two. Of course if we are content to live for human approval, we may get it. For man can only walk along the street and see the clean doorsteps and the flowers; but if we are living before God, all such external show is worse than useless. He must have reality. Perhaps these lines may be read by some who have been seeking to keep up a fair religious appearance, while all the time they are going on with secret, sinful, or ungodly lives. We have heard of servants who have not been ashamed to listen devoutly to family prayers, and very shortly afterward appropriate what was not their own, heedless of God's all-seeing eye. We have also heard of young men who were not ashamed to deceive their Christian parents and relatives while indulging in secret and ungodly pleasures; of girls who would return from a meeting with every appearance of interest, only to rush

off to the hidden novel, where the real interest lay all the time; of business men, most regular in their various subscriptions, but often very shady and shaky in their business transactions; of Sunday-school teachers, who were anything but examples to their class when they thought themselves off duty; of office girls and clerks, most regular in their attendance at the Bible class or prayer meeting, and yet very unsteady after hours when under no restraining eye.

These are a few of the forms of "back yards" that are almost as common as the literal ones we have spoken of.

All such living is vain and sinful. Let us make up our mind whom we will serve, for we cannot serve two masters, or God and Mammon. Let us cease to spend all our care in polishing up the front of the house, and quietly review the hidden part of our lives. Such hypocrisy as we have described, is strangely like the whited sepulcher of old, all fair without, within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. "We are," says the apostle, "made manifest to God." He did not wait for the coming judgment seat which will reveal in its true light every hidden transaction of our lives, but he saw that the back view of his life was the same as the front.

Dear reader, it may be, if you are honest, that you will have to take a lower place in the circle of your religious friends, but let it at least be your true place, and seek to raise it, not by attending to the front door, but to that part which is not seen by man, thus "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1.) "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13.

Vol 01 - Christian Giving

Christian Giving My Dear Brother:-Since you ask how the subject of Christian giving is presented in Scripture, I will try to give something of how the matter has been brought before my own mind in reading the Scriptures. The subject I believe, is one, the importance of which, very many of the people of God, but little appreciate, though it holds a large place in the word of God, both in Old Testament and New.

While very many seem to have little or no exercise about giving, it is a comfort to know that there are not a few faithful, self-denying givers, who are blessed of God in their own souls, and who are a blessing to others. These in their measure are imitators of God, the great Giver, who spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, and who can be counted on, with Him also freely to give us all things (Romans 8:32). It is well known by those who have observed these things, that these liberal givers, as a rule, are enriched in their own souls, proving the truth of Proverbs 11:25, "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." And it is just as noteworthy, that a Christian who gives not, is dried up in his spiritual affections, and, although he may have abundance of earthly treasure, suffers from what Scripture calls "leanness of soul."

Christ, though He was rich, became poor for our sakes, that we through His poverty might be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). How many of us, for His sake, and the sake of those He loves, have become poor? Hebrews 10:34 shows that the Hebrew saints took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing that in heaven they had a better and an enduring substance.

They became poor for Christ's sake. The apostle Paul also suffered the loss of all things, counting them but dung, that he might win Christ: The history of God's people furnishes a multitude of cases, where everything has been given up for Christ, or devoted to Him. Not a few in our own day could be mentioned who have devoted their all to Christ, and used all in serving Him and His. Have such been the losers? Surely not, but much the gainers. Has not a loving Father's care been over them? Most certainly. "Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Luke 12:30-31). The following Old Testament scriptures, as well as many others, might be weighed with much profit in connection with this subject Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:20-32; Deuteronomy 12:19; Deuteronomy 14:27-29; Deuteronomy 15:1-15; Deuteronomy 18:1-8.

It will be seen from these scriptures that the Levites, the widows, the fatherless and the poor, all came in for consideration in connection with the liberality of God's people. The Levites are largely noticed. They had no inheritance with their brethren in Israel. The Lord was their portion, and for them He exacted from the other tribes a tenth of all their increase. This tithe was devoted to the Lord. "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord." "And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." These tithes were first devoted to the Lord, and then given to the Levites. "And behold I have given the children of Levi all

the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they shall serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

We find also that the Levites were to offer to the Lord a tithe of what they received. "Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them. When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe.”

All this is instructive. The Levite was to be cared for, and not forgotten. Stress is laid upon this again and again. "Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth." The people were the Lord's people, and the objects of His love and care; and they enjoyed the service of the Levites, and were not to forsake them. The Lord gave the increase of the land, and of the flocks and herds, and He exacted a tenth, which was to be devoted to Him as holy. This tenth was to be given to the Levite as his inheritance; and he also was to have the privilege of presenting an offering to the Lord—a tenth of the tenth which he received. The application of this principle is simple. Those called of the Lord to devote themselves to His service in spiritual things are not to be forgotten. "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Corinthians 9:11). In Nehemiah's day, after the captives returned from Babylon, self-interest took the place of what was due to the Lord, and the Levites were neglected. "And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them; for the Levites and the singers that did the work were fled every one to his field." (Nehemiah 13:10). A little later still, in Malachi's day, one of the grievous charges the Lord brought against them was in regard to these tithes. "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Solemn charge. Yet even then, cursed as they were through their self-seeking and forgetfulness of God, He stood ready to bless them, if only they would bring in the tithes. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now, herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Malachi 3:8-10).

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Christian Giving

Christian Giving In considering what is said in the New Testament, it is well to note the difference in the order of blessing known to Israel, and that known to Christianity. Christianity connects itself with the rejection, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven of the Messiah. While our faithful God and Father supplies His people now with creature-mercies, it is in a scene out of which His Son has been cast, and where He does not allow us to settle down with the thought of finding our blessing where His Son found only a cross and a grave. Our blessings now are in Christ, and where He is. They are spiritual and heavenly. In keeping with this, and having in view His own rejection in Israel and in the world, the Lord said to His disciples, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also." (Luke 12:33-34).

How blessedly this was carried out in the beginning of the Acts when all hearts were still fresh in the love of Christ! "All that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."(Acts 2:44-45) "Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:34-35)

There was no bondage in this. It was not a legal exaction. It was the freewill offering of hearts touched by the love of Christ, and energized by the power of the Holy Ghost. With Ananias it was not this, but the ambition, perhaps, not to be behind the others; and it is in connection with his case we are distinctly told there was no bondage. "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power?" (Acts 5:4)

It may be said, it is not practical in this day to do as they did then. It was certainly very practical then, and why not now under similar circumstances? Why should we not act on this principle? True we have not apostles at whose feet we can lay our offerings; but we are not told in Acts 2:45, that they laid them at the apostles' feet, but simply that they "parted them to all, as every man had need." No doubt there was a special call at that time on account of the many thousands detained at Jerusalem by the wonderful work of God. But why should we not hold all our possessions as subject to the Lord's disposal, and to be used for Him, as He may guide? We ourselves are the Lord's, bought with a price, and all we have is His, held by us as stewards, to be used for Him and His glory. Is not this practical? How the very suggestion that it is not, shows where the heart is, and how little faith to trust Him we have!

1 Corinthians 9:14 tells us the Lord has "ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." This is the same principle as the tithes given to the Levites. Indeed the context refers to this. The apostle did not use this right for himself, though he did receive from assemblies; but he gives it as that which the Lord ordained as a general rule. And, of course, this lays upon the saints at large the responsibility to care for those devoted to the gospel. There is no question of salary, or hire; but there is the question of caring for such. The servant who devotes himself to gospel

service, or service in spiritual things, leaves himself in the Lord's hands for his support, waits upon Him, counts upon Him. But the Lord has laid upon the saints the responsibility to think of these, and to minister to them of their substance, as the Lord enables and leads. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things." (Galatians 6:6). "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16). As to the general responsibility of Christian giving, its importance may be seen from the fact that two entire chapters in 2 Corinthians are devoted to it,-2 Corinthians 8:1-24; 2 Corinthians 9:1-15 -, to say nothing of many other passages bearing on the subject. The occasion of the lengthy discussion in these two chapters, was the raising of a collection among the Gentile assemblies for the saints in Judea, in a time of general dearth (Acts 11:28-30). When we examine these New Testament scriptures, although we see the same general responsibility to give, we see also a marked difference from many of those in the Old Testament. There it was law-legal exaction-all bound to give according to a fixed rule. Here it is grace: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9) And so in writing to the Corinthians, the apostle says, "Therefore, as ye abound in everything, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also." (2 Corinthians 8:7) He calls it "grace" because it is the fruit of grace in the heart. And being grace, it connects itself with "a willing mind." "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." (2 Corinthians 8:12) It is not here a legal ten percent, as under the law, that he must pay, but according to his willingness and ability. There is a deliberate weighing of the matter. What can I devote to the Lord? How much am I able to spare? How much ought I to give to this purpose, or that? "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Under the law the tithes were exacted whether a man was willing, or unwilling, gave cheerfully or grudgingly. But here God counts on the hearts He has touched with His grace, and expects them to give willingly and cheerfully, leaving it to the love He has put into these hearts to say how much shall be given. Nothing else suits Him now. He loves a cheerful giver, and unless we give thus, He does not want our giving. But let us here take heed, for the deceitfulness of our wretched flesh is ever ready to take advantage of His grace. If we would enjoy abundant blessing in our giving, we must sow plenty of seed, for it is written, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Corinthians 9:6) How many are dried up in their souls, because they sow "sparingly!" God Himself supplies the seed, and He delights to have us sow bountifully, and He is able also to "minister bread for your food," and to "multiply your seed sown," and to "increase the fruits of your righteousness." Why, then, should we give grudgingly? Why not give cheerfully and bountifully, counting on all grace from Him?

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Another point of great importance comes out in 1 Corinthians 16:2. It is connected with the same special occasion, but it gives us a general principle on which to act in view of giving. "Upon the first day of the week, let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him." Here it is providing a store, out of which can be given as the occasions arise. It is like the tithes first devoted to the Lord, but in view of being given to the Levites. Our devoted money is thus laid aside in store, and from this we can draw to give to the poor, or for the spread of the truth in books and tracts, or to give to a servant of the Lord to help on the work.

If the saints generally acted on this principle, in faithfulness to God, I am sure the matter of giving would be greatly simplified, and there would be abundance in the treasuries for the various needs. A dear brother (now with the Lord) once told me he had a bag which he called "the Lord's bag," in which he placed what he habitually laid aside, and he said it was never empty. There was always something in it from which to draw in time of need.

If the saints would thus faithfully lay aside on the first day of the week, as the Lord prospers them, how many precious stores of money there would be to meet the many calls to give! How many poor and needy and tried ones would be made to rejoice through the bounties of God's people! How many servants of the Lord, ready to faint under pressure, would take fresh courage, and go on with thankful hearts! And would not the Lord be honored? Would not fresh blessing be the result—the windows of heaven be opened? Who can doubt it?

It is to be feared that very many feel but little or no responsibility in this matter. Why should this be so? Mark the word is, "Let everyone of you lay by." It is not law but it is responsibility under grace. It is the privilege also of the one who receives—even the poor—to lay by of what is ministered to them, just as in the case of the Levites. With one it may be little, with another more, according to the ability; but are any altogether exempted? If I am poor, and devote a little to the Lord out of my "deep poverty" (2 Corinthians 8:2), shall I be the poorer for it? Will He allow me to suffer want because of my devotedness and faithfulness to Him? Such is not His way. He loves the cheerful giver, and honors those who honor Him. The wise man has also said, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst forth with new wine." (Proverbs 3:9). Does the assembly give as such? I believe so, and believe it to be a happy thing to do so, when it is done in the unity of the Spirit. It seems clear that the writing of the epistle to the Philippians was on the occasion of their having sent an offering to the apostle Paul by the hand of Epaphroditus. They had also sent once and again unto his necessity. (Php 2:25; Php 4:10-18) The apostle would not receive from the assembly at Corinth, but it does not follow that he might not have received from individuals there. But while he would not receive from that assembly, he did from others. "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service." (2 Corinthians 11:8).

"The box?" Well, it seems to me, it is only a convenience for receiving the offerings of the saints when they are assembled together.

What part has it at the Lord's table? I do not see that it has any special connection with the table at all, except this: it is at the table we gather for worship; there we have the tokens of Jesus' dying love; there we remember Him, and think of His love; there we offer worship; and there at the same table it is fitting that we present as an offering to Him what we put in the box. Hebrews 13:16, shows that our communicating is a part of the worship, "for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." The placing of the box on the table, or otherwise, is, in my judgment, a matter of little importance. It is well to be as simple as possible about such things. If we get occupied with these little side questions, we are in danger of losing sight of the great question; namely, the duty and privilege of giving. Let it be in assembly, or let it be individually; let the box be on the table, or otherwise, the great thing is to attend to the giving-to DO it, and not forget, nor neglect, to do it.

Let every one have a box, or bag, at home, and habitually lay by a portion out of all that comes in, and do it cheerfully, and with a liberal heart, as unto the Lord, assured that it is well pleasing to the Lord, and remembering how He has said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35).

Let us not suppose, either, that because a tenth is not exacted, it does not matter whether we give that much, or not. A tenth was Jacob's measure, and a tenth was the portion for the Levites, but an Israelite under the law had to give much more than that to meet its requirements. And why should not a Christian give as liberally? Grace does not exact it, but if the heart is living in the sunshine of Christ's love, will it not yield up its stores more bountifully than under law? Where the Israelite was faithful in his giving, the Lord blessed him in his basket and in his store. And while the Christian's blessing is of another order, the Lord will honor such as are faithful in this responsibility. May the Lord stir us all up to give, according to the grace we have received, our hearts aglow with the love of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us, and in whose presence and glory we shall soon have our part, leaving behind us all that is of earth and all that we have failed to devote to Him, and finding, as treasure above, all that has been given as unto Him.

Yours affectionately in Him, * * *

(Continued)

Vol 01 - Correspondence

Correspondence

IF any of our young readers have any difficulties on any portion of scripture, or questions in connection with the Christian path, we will be glad to hear from them, and will answer to the best of our ability, either privately or through the paper, and we hope it will be for our mutual blessing.

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Correspondence

Question 1. Please give a short outline of the 10th chapter of Matt. Are our Lord's words to His disciples applicable today, and where and to whom? When and where did the disciples fulfill the mission, the Lord in this chapter sends them to? Especially what is the meaning of verses 34, 35 and 36. W. H.

Answer. Matthew 10:1-42. The mission here is to Israel only, (see 6th verse.) It is bearing testimony to Christ's being here on earth, giving power to His messengers to work miracles, and working them Himself is proving who He was. The latter part of the chapter is testimony of His coming as Son of man in judgment. This mission went on while Israel were in their own land, but is now suspended. It will be renewed after the Church, which is now being gathered, is completed. Israel will be again in their cities and this mission will go on till the Son of Man will come. (Verse 23.)

"From verse 16 we have more general reflections on their mission, looked at as a whole in the midst of Israel on to the end. Evidently it goes beyond their then present mission, and supposes the coming of the Holy Ghost. The mission by which the Church is called, as such, is a distinct thing. This applies only to Israel, they were forbidden to go to the Gentiles. This necessarily closed with the destruction of Jerusalem, but it is to be renewed at the end, till the Son of Man be come." J. N. D. The teaching of the chapter, therefore, while remembering its primary application, would present practical truths for our use at the present moment, also Verses 34, 35, 36, are samples of this, for in that time and this time, Christ is rejected. We are to suffer with and for Christ. Often our nearest by natural ties are opposed to the Lord, and if we please Him we cannot please them. Ephesians 5:22-33; Ephesians 6:1-9 and Colossians 3:18-25; Colossians 4:1, teach us how to be in subjection to the Lord in all our relationships in this life. Giving Him the first place and doing it all in obedience to Him. (See also Matthew 10:37. Luke 14:26)

{SH}Ques. 2

Please explain Matthew 26:29. What is meant by, "Until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom"? N.C.

Ans. "New," is in a "new way." "In My Father's Kingdom," means the heavenly glory to which they were going, in contrast with a place in the kingdom on earth.

"He then points out that it is a Savior slain who is to be remembered. It is no longer a question of the living Messiah: all that was over. It was no longer the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. Christ, and Christ slain, began an entirely new order of things. Of Him they were now to think-of Him slain on earth. He then draws their attention to the blood of the new covenant, adding that which extends it to others besides the Jews, without naming them-"It is shed for many."

Moreover, this blood is not, as at Sinai, only to confirm the covenant, for fidelity to which they were responsible; it was shed for the remission of sins. So that the Lord's supper presents the remembrance of Jesus slain, who, by dying, has broken with the past; has laid the foundation of the new covenant; obtained the remission of sins; and opened the door to the Gentiles. It is only in His death that the supper presents Him to us. His blood is apart from His body; He is dead. It is neither Christ living on the earth, nor Christ glorified in heaven. He is separate from His people, as to their joys on earth; but they are to expect Him as the companion of the happiness He has secured for them-for He condescends to be so-in better days: 'I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new (in a new way) with you in my Father's Kingdom.'" Synopsis Matthew pgs. 181, 182.

{SH/}Ques. 3 In how many places in the New Testament is it mentioned that the disciples met together to break bread on the First day of the week? G. E.

Ans. Only once. Acts 20:7. Only once is the gathering together called the Lord's Table, 1 Corinthians 10:21. Once is the breaking of bread called the Lord's supper, 1 Corinthians 11:20. Once is the First day of the week called the Lord's day, Revelation 1:10. God speaks and the attentive heart at once receives and responds. At the beginning of the Church's history, we find that the disciples broke bread daily in their houses, Acts 2:46, and they had all things common. When the Church was scattered by persecution, this became impossible, so each was to have his own purse, 1 Corinthians 16:2. And Acts 20:7, indicates that it was on the First day of the week, the Lord was remembered in His death, and that it was their weekly custom to come together on that day for that purpose. The First day of the week is the Christian's day. The Sabbath is Jewish. On the First day of the week, Christ rose from the dead; Leviticus 23:11 is typical of it. On the same day Christ took His place in the midst of His gathered saints, John 20:19. On the First day of the week the Holy Spirit descended and formed the Church, 1 Corinthians 12:13; Leviticus 23:15-16 is typical of this. On the First day of the week the first gospel sermon was preached. Acts 2:1-47. On the First day of the week the disciples came together to break bread, Acts 20:7. On the First day of the week the Christians were to offer their gifts to the Lord, 1 Corinthians 16:2. And the Apostle John by the Spirit gave it its name, the Lord's day. Revelation 1:10.

{SH/}Ques. 4 What did the Lord mean by putting new wine into old bottles, or a piece of new cloth into an old garment? G. E. From Matthew 9:14-17. Mark 2:18-22. Luke 5:36-39. We can see that the Lord is bringing in something new. It is not the law and the ordinances, but the grace of the gospel and the energy of the Holy Spirit sent down. It is not righteousness by the law, the old worn out garment of phariseeism, but "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe." Romans 3:22.

It is not patching up the old man by trying to improve the flesh, but it is the bringing in the new creation standing "In Christ," Romans 8:1-39. 1 Corinthians 1:30. Christ Himself the new wine, which cannot be put into the old forms or ceremonies, old bottles (or skins). It is a living Christ for our hearts, ministered to us by the Holy Spirit. 2 Corinthians 4:6-7.

Address all Questions to A. Fleck, 51 Forest Ave., Hamilton, Ont., Canada.

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Correspondence Ques. 5. Was Judas Iscariot at the Lord's supper? T. C.

Ans. John is the only Evangelist that tells when Judas parted company with the Lord and His disciples, (read John 13:21-30.)

"He then having received the sop went immediately out;" As the sop belongs to the passover supper, we would judge that Judas left before the Lord's supper was instituted.

If Luke 22:21, was giving us the order in which it took place, then Judas was present.

It is therefore not meant for us to place importance on the point. A person might be there, who should not be there, but until evil is manifested we cannot put away. (1 Corinthians 5:13.)

There are instructions given (1 Corinthians 10:16-17) to show us that those who are there, should know that they are washed in the blood of Christ, and that they are members of His body. To deliberately bring unconverted people to the Lord's supper, is contrary to the scriptures. (2 Corinthians 6:14-18.) Matthew 13:30 refers to the Kingdom of Heaven, not to the assembly of the saints.

{SH/}Ques. 6 "I go to prepare a place for you." John 14:2. How and when does He prepare the place? A. T.

Ans. The Lord Jesus was leaving the earth to go to the Father. If He did not die, we could not be there with Him. (John 12:24.) His oath therefore led to the cross, where He bore our sins and died for us, then rose again, and ascended to the right hand of God, witnessing that redemption work is completed. (Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 9:23.) He is entered there as our Forerunner, (Hebrews 6:20) thus the place is prepared for us.

We might say, His work on the cross has prepared believers for the place: His presence with the Father in glory, has prepared the place for them.

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Ques. 7. Please give an outline of Mark 16:15-19. Is this mission, unto which the Lord sends "the eleven," continued beyond their personal testimony? W. H.

Ans. Here our risen Lord victorious over death, and sin, and Satan's power, is speaking "GO YE into all the world, (Lit. the whole creation) and preach the gospel to every creature". This is the good news just as we know it. "Christ died for our sins" and "is risen for our justification". And this was their authority to preach it.

16th Verse is the result of the preaching, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned." Whosoever believed the gospel, and united with the disciples by baptism, confessing the Lord, would be saved. He who believed not, would be condemned; it is a question of salvation or condemnation.

17th and 18th Verses. In the signs that follow, we see: 1st, Satan's power defeated; 2nd, Grace reaches people of every language; 3rd, The servants are protected till their work is done. 4th, They heal the sick.

19th Verse is Christ's present place at the right hand of God.

20th Verse shows that they went forth and preached everywhere as in 15th verse, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with the signs of His power following. (See also Hebrews 2:3-4.)

If there is a doubt on the mind of any believer as to his privilege to preach the gospel because he cannot do the miracles here spoken of, let him meditate and pray over the following scriptures which were written for the whole Church of God. Service is always individual, and each believer, young and old, male and female, needs to find his or her special sphere of service from the Lord and in obedience to the word. Acts 8:4; Romans 10:14-15; Romans 16:1-27; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:2; 2 Timothy 4:5; The gospel is good news committed to us who are saved, to tell others how they can be saved. Romans 1:14-17.

Paul is not carrying out this commission of Mark 16:1-20, but had his own direct from Christ, the glorified Head, in heaven. He preached to every creature under heaven, and unfolded the mystery of the church. Colossians 1:23-26.

Mark gives what is of general application; the rejection of Christ by the Jewish nation seen in Acts 1:1-26; Acts 2:1-47; Acts 3:1-26; Acts 4:1-37; Acts 5:1-42; Acts 6:1-15; Acts 7:1-60; Acts 8:1-40, and to "the Jew first" is left out by him.

{SH/}Ques. 8

Please explain Isaiah 65:20, "There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed." C. E.

Ans. Isaiah 65:17-25 is a description of some of the blessings coming to Israel during the millennial reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 8:8-12, tells us every one of them will know the Lord; Revelation 20:13, rids the earth of Satan during that period; Isaiah 25:8, with 1 Corinthians 15:54 and Revelation 20:4-6, let us see that ALL the sleeping saints have been raised, the First resurrection is completed; no more saints can ever die. It is of this period our verse speaks, death cannot touch the infant of days nor the old man leaning on his staff for multitude of days Zechariah 8:4-5. One of an hundred years is counted as a child or youth; if he die it is as a sinner, accursed.

Though Satan is bound and the Lord Jesus Christ is reigning; death and sin are present in Millennial days, proving that man's evil nature is unchanged. The new birth is needed in all dispensations before a man can enjoy communion with God. John 3:3-5.

{SH/}Ques. 9 What does the INN, in Luke 10:34 represent? L. G.

Ans. Luke 10:25-37. This story spoken by our Lord to the lawyer who tempted Him, and who thought he could keep the law; not knowing his own badness nor his helplessness, illustrates the grace of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. It pictures man on the downward road, ruined and helpless, unable to receive the benefit of priest and Levite; who therefore pass by on the other side. In the Samaritan we see the love and grace of God to His enemies, in our blessed Lord coming down from heaven, taking our place and bearing our sins on the cross, 2 Corinthians 8:9, taking us up in His compassionate love, bestowing upon us life everlasting, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessed hope of glory with Christ above. The INN, therefore would suggest to us the safe place the Lord has put us in till He comes for us; for in this parable it is not home (as in Luke 15:1-32) in the Father's house. We are seen as strangers here, but under the care of the Holy Spirit, who ministers to us the sufficiency of Christ; the two pence, that is; all that Christ is for us now, including our great High Priest and Advocate.

"When I come again, I will repay thee" and "Go thou and do likewise": might teach us our precious privilege of fellowship with the Lord in this Ministry of Grace to both sinner and saint.

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Correspondence Ques. 10. Does Matthew 10:22, apply to the Tribulation period, or is it for the present time? H. G.

Ans. Matthew 10:5-7; shows that it is a testimony sent to Israel only, and that it is the gospel of the Kingdom, not the gospel that is preached now, but it will be resumed after the church is taken to heaven. Before the disciples get over the cities of Israel; the Son of Man will come. As Son of Man He comes to Israel and the earth-and we, the heavenly saints, will come with Him. He is our Lord and our Bridegroom, He comes for us first. But there are general teachings true for us and for Israel. Matthew 10:22. "They shall be hated of all men for My name's sake", compare for us now, John 15:18-20; 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 John 3:13; we suffer for Him, Php 1:29; and with Him, Romans 8:17.

"He that endureth to the end shall be saved." This primarily refers to faithfulness to Christ through the time of Tribulation. Saved, here refers to saved into the Millennial Kingdom.

We are exhorted to faithfulness also, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Revelation 2:10; Revelation 3:11; James 1:12.

There are many scriptures that bring before us that it is God's faithfulness and not our own, that keeps us true to Him. Php 1:6; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 1 Peter 1:5.

{SH/}Ques. 11 Is it right for a young brother in a small meeting gathered to the name of the Lord to take part in prayer, or to give out a hymn? J. K.

Ans. When we are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus, we have His promise: "There am I in the midst of them". We must remember, therefore, that He is there; we are to wait upon Him. We are members of His body, He is our head; therefore the Head is to guide and control our actions. Each one who speaks, prays, reads or gives out a hymn, should be clear that the Lord is leading him to do so. Where this care is taken, it is a joy to all right minded persons when a young brother takes part; it is a great encouragement and help in a meeting when the brothers feel it their privilege to take part freely. In taking part we must bear in mind what we came for, so that our hymns and prayers or worship will be in keeping with the character of the meeting. When we come to remember the Lord in His death, our thoughts are generally led to His sufferings and to the love that gave Himself for us. If we read scripture it is to lead our hearts in that direction.

Ministry and prayer are reserved till the important point is gained and the Lord is remembered. Worship is the character of this meeting; deepest reverence becomes us in presence of His body given and His blood shed, as the symbols testify. A prayer meeting is for prayer and worship, to tell out our need as an assembly for all that burdens our hearts for Christ's glory. A reading is to wait on the Lord for the ministry of His word to our souls.

We might take three scriptures to guide us: 1 Corinthians 14:26, "Let all things be done unto edifying"; 1 Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order"; 1 Corinthians 16:14, "Let all things be done in love".

Avoid self-conceit; humbly wait on the Lord for His guidance. It is sad when a brother has a hymn or hymns ready as if he was determined to have his own way. Read Psalms 89:7; Ecclesiastes 5:1-2.

{SH/}Ques. 12 Please explain 2 Corinthians 3:17. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."
R. B.

Ans. From 2 Corinthians 3:7-16 is a parenthesis, teaching the exceeding glory of the gospel beyond the glory of the law. The law was the ministration of death, but the gospel was the ministration of righteousness by the Spirit. A Christian is made the righteousness of God; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him 2 Corinthians 1:22. In the 6th verse the apostle is speaking of the New Covenant, not of the letter that killeth, but of the Spirit that giveth life; 17th verse says "Now the Lord is that Spirit"; meaning, that He is the substance of all the figures and shadows which went before. If we see a shadow coming in view at a corner, we might say "some one is coming", but when we see the person, we cease to look at the shadow. So now we have seen the Person, the substance, and the Holy Spirit has, through the work of Christ, set us at liberty; and points us to Him glorified; now with unveiled face we look at Him and as we gaze we are transformed into His image from glory to glory. It is by learning of Him that we grow like Him. Wonderful privilege through grace! Not only are we set free from the power of sin, and Satan, but we are at perfect liberty to enter within the veil, delighting our souls in the glorified One.

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Correspondence Ques. 13. What ascension is meant in John 20:17? Please explain that verse in connection with Matthew 28:9. R. B., L.

Ans. The Lord refers to His new position at the right hand of God. His ascension took place forty days after He rose from the dead. When He died, His spirit went to the Father to whom He commended it; but that is not ascension. "David is not ascended." Acts 2:34; but he is "absent from the body and present with the Lord."

Ascension is the Lord taking His place as a man at God's right hand.

John 20:17-23, is an unfolding of the privileges of believers during the time the Lord is seated there. Mary had known Him as the Messiah, now the sheep of the Jewish fold are brought into the new position; and therefore she is told not to touch Him. 2 Corinthians 5:16. It is not now setting up the Kingdom in Israel. It is a new relationship, their position is changed. Redemption has brought them into new blessing. He sends the message to "My Brethren". "I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." This testimony gathers the disciples together, and Jesus came into their midst bringing news to them of the peace that He had made. What new joy this gave them.

Again He said "Peace unto you," and sends them as the Father had sent Him, breathing on them as the risen One the more abundant life promised, John 10:10; and the Holy Ghost, that they might bear the message of love to others.

John 20:24-29; and Math, 28:9, point to the future when, the church having been caught up, God will begin to deal with Israel again. Some will then believe before they see their coming Messiah, but the mass will not believe, till He comes on the clouds, when "every eye shall see Him", then Israel will say like Thomas, "My Lord and My God."

{SH/}Ques. 14 Explain the difference between "Kingdom of God," and "Kingdom of Heaven." M. G.

Ans. It is the same kingdom under two different names. "Kingdom of the Heavens" is the rule of heaven upon earth. "Kingdom of God" is what it is relative to God. Matthew only calls it the "Kingdom of the Heavens." The Holy Spirit uses him to describe its dispensational aspect.

Compare Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17, with Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43.

Compare Matthew 5:3, with Luke 6:20.

Compare Matthew 10:7, with Luke 9:2; Luke 10:9; Luke 10:11.

Compare Matthew 18:3; Matthew 19:14, with Mark 10:14-15; Luke 18:16-17.

Compare Matthew 19:23-26 with Mark 10:23-27; Luke 18:24-29.

Compare Matthew 18:3, with John 3:3. Compare Matthew 11:11, with Luke 7:28. Compare Matthew 13:11, with Luke 8:10. The Jews rightly expected a King to reign in power over them, but as they did not repent, this has been postponed. Now, it is a kingdom in patience and suffering; the King being rejected and absent from the earth. In this form it is spoken of as the "Mysteries of the Kingdom."

Matthew 21:43, tells it was taken from the Jews, the children by natural birth as a nation, and given to others, who received it by the seed being sown in them.

Matthew 22:1-46, explains when it commenced, Matthew 22:2 is the message to the nation of Jews before Christ died.

Matthew 22:4 is the message to them after Christ rose from the dead and went to heaven. (In Acts 3:12; Acts 3:26, the nation is set aside.) Jerusalem destroyed (Matthew 22:7) and the message goes out to the gentiles. (Matthew 22:9-10) Matthew 24:1-51 th and 25th chapters show its ending in its present form. The Son of Man will come and claim it as His Kingdom, while the heavenly saints, caught up, will shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

Matthew 13:41; Matthew 13:43. The principles of Matthew 5:1-48; Matthew 6:1-34; Matthew 7:1-29 will prevail then, except that Christ will not be rejected then. Matthew 5:11 shows their application now. The "Kingdom of God" leads us to think of what suits God's character. In Acts and the Epistles it is what belongs to Christ's new place as man exalted to the Father's right hand, "Not yet all things put under Him." The Kingdom in power was postponed: a Kingdom in patience and suffering now taking its place. Revelation 1:9.

Matthew 13:1-58 unfolds in seven parables what is going on now in a two-fold view; the external state of which man is responsible, and the hidden thing, as viewed from the point of God's sovereign grace, and which is indeed the fruit of His love.

It changes at the coming of the Son of Man to a Kingdom in power, when the King shall reign in righteousness, when in Israel's land, "They shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord:' for all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest." Jeremiah 31:31; Jeremiah 31:34, Hebrews 8:11-12.

{SH/}Ques. 15 Please explain 1 Corinthians 15:21-22. N. S. C.

Ans. "For since by man came" (consequence of Adam's sin) "death," "by man came" (consequence of Christ's victory over death as man) "also the resurrection of the dead." "For as in Adam all die" (death is entailed on his race), "even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (those in Him share in His triumph over death). The resurrection of the saints is what is before the mind of the Spirit; the resurrection of the body, not the impartation of eternal life to our souls.

1 Corinthians 15:26 alludes to the resurrection of the wicked in the destruction of death and hades.

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Ques. 17. Do the verses in Leviticus 10:17; Leviticus 22:16; Numbers 18:1; Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 2:5; follow out the thought of Exodus 28:38? W. H.

Ans. Exodus 28:1-43; The garments of glory and beauty present (in figure) the offices of Israel's high priest but fulfilled in Christ Himself. The priesthood in Israel failed, and these garments had to be changed for others when the high priest went into the Holiest of all. Leviticus 16:4.

It is therefore the Lord Jesus as the Great High Priest we are to see in them. Crowned with glory and honor. Hebrews 2:7-9. He is now not Israel's High Priest, but ours, who have a heavenly calling. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Hebrews 7:25. In Israel, one family of the tribe of Levi was chosen as priests. Now, all believers are priests, holy priests to enter in and to offer sacrifices of praise. And royal priests to show forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, 1 Peter 2:5; 1 Peter 2:9.

Aaron and his sons had to offer sacrifices continually for their own sins, and for the sins of others; Christ's one sacrifice for sin has perfected us forever.

Aaron and his sons, the offering priests (Christ in figure), had to bear the iniquity of those gone out of the way. Our great High Priest carries on His work for us all. His love seen in Exodus 28:29, (for we are carried on His heart) and His power, (Exodus 28:12), (we are on His shoulders) tell us He can never fail. He will be all we need on the road, and will carry us on to the bright end before us-the glory of God.

Exodus 28:36-38.

"For us He wears the Miter Where "Holiness" shines bright.

Read 114 hymn in Little Flock Hymn Book. Hebrews 10:21-22.

We can draw near, without fear, in full assurance of faith. All the mistakes of our ignorance and of our infirmities are understood and borne by our High Priest. What a comfort it is to know that He bears the iniquity of them, and gives efficacy to every desire and thought that is for the glory of God. This is not only true in our individual approach to God; it is also true for our collective prayers and worship, and should help us to bear with each other. We lose much if we allow in ourselves a spirit of criticism. If we look at the Lord in the midst of His gathered saints, (Matthew 15:20) and at the saints as He sees them, we will see their faults, and, knowing our own also, we will pray for them. Satan wants us to see them through his eyes, and be like him, an accuser of the brethren.

We are children of the Father also, our worship is to be in the liberty of children, "The Father seeketh such to worship Him" John 4:23.

{SH}Ques. 18 What does the thorn in the flesh mean, 2 Corinthians 12:7? M. E.

Ans. We are not told what it was. Galatians 4:13-16 is suggestive.

We see in it how careful the Lord was over the apostle, who might have been exalted above measure by the special privileges the Lord had given him. The flesh is just the same in an apostle as in us; it had to be kept down, so the Lord sent him something that kept him humble. Thrice he asked the Lord that it might be removed, but the Lord saw it was needed. Paul was in earnest and prayed on till he got the answer, "and He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness." When he knew the Lord's mind about it, he was content as his weakness brought in the power of Christ. This is a lesson for us. We need to be kept humble, so a messenger of Satan is allowed to try us in some way, then we go to the Lord. If we do, we hear Him saying, "I will be your strength, I will be your stay".

Precious Savior! May we never try to do without Thee.

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Ques. 16. What is the force of Hebrews 5:11-14? What is it to be dull of hearing? What is meant by the word of righteousness? R. B.

Ans. These Hebrew Christians had not clearly seen the distinction between Christianity and Judaism, brought up in a religion of ordinances: the tendency, if coldness came in, was to go back to their forms and ceremonies. The writer wanted to speak of Christ in His glory, but their state hindered him from at once unfolding the truth as to His place in glory. He had to arouse their attention, and point out what they were losing; so he calls them "dull of hearing", they had gone back instead of forward, and had become such as had need of milk, and not of solid food. Milk is not the full truth as to the death, resurrection, and glory of Christ; but is rather what could be known of the truth before He died. Solid food belongs to full grown men, who can discern both good and evil, having their senses exercised: that is, the "word of righteousness", presents Christ to us as dead, risen and glorified; so the "full age" means, one who knows Christ thus. It is not forms, ceremonies, and ordinances; it is a living, triumphant Savior at God's right hand, in whom we stand. This is the perfection mentioned in Hebrews 6:1. The "word of righteousness" is what reveals to us the true practical relationships of the soul to God according to His character and ways. We are brought to God in perfect consistency with His character through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

{SH/}Ques. 17 Does Psalms 23:5 refer to the Lord's Table? B. McC.

Ans. The Psalms are primarily for Israel. Jehovah is the name God takes in relationship with them. It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that is made known to Christians. Keeping this difference in mind, we can use much of the language of the Psalms to describe our feelings, experiences and blessings.

We could not find a better sample of this than the 23rd Psalm. Each word and line we might apply in a spiritual way to ourselves, and feed and lie down in the green pastures of His word, and by the still waters of His presence. The Lord's Table will then be a delight to our souls, and will strengthen our communion as we remember Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

{SH/}Ques. 18 Why does it say in Matthew 7:1-5, that we are not to judge, and in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, that we are to judge?

Ans. Matthew 7:1-5, plainly forbids us from judging the motives of a man's heart. We cannot see underneath, and something worse may be seen in our own case than is seen in our brother. We must therefore make every allowance for others and be very careful to judge ourselves, (see also Romans 14:1-23), where in some things all may not agree, but each is to go on as he has learned the way for himself. Also see 1 Corinthians 4:3-5, where Paul leaves this till the Lord shall come. In 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, it is not a question of motives, but of the judgment of evil in our lives. Here it

was fornication. It was manifestly against God's institution, it was immorality. In Christian fellowship there must be judgment of evil; "a little leaven leavens the whole lump," that is, if we allowed this sin to go on amongst us, we would all be guilty or leavened by it. So the "within" spoken of here is the fellowship of the saints, and we are responsible to put away evil from amongst us. Outside of that we leave it to God. He will judge all men, fellowship of saints can only be right when evil is judged and put away. The Lord Jesus in the midst of His gathered people Matthew 18:20, gives us wisdom how to deal with each case that may be allowed to arise.

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Correspondence Ques. 19. How can a believer in Christ get rid of doubts and fears?

Ans. A believer in Christ, to get rid of his doubts and fears, must be prepared to let his own thoughts go, and to believe against his own feelings what God says in His word.

He knows he is a sinner and that Christ died for sinners, let him bring it closer and believe heartily that he is the sinner for whose sins Christ died. Take Isaiah 53:5, and put it thus: "He was wounded for my transgressions, He was bruised for my iniquities" and remember that He said, "It is finished." (John 19:30.) If God raised up Christ from the dead to express His satisfaction in Christ's finished work, that is the receipt God gives the believer that God has nothing against him. (Romans 4:25; Romans 5:1.) This is where the believer stands before God. (John 5:24, Romans 5:1, Hebrews 10:14.) As to our walk, every one of us has sin in him, that is the nature. Our sins, the guilty acts that we have done, are gone, but the nature remains, it is called "sin in us" or "the flesh," and being children of God we have a new life, so we have two things in us. As we had no strength to save ourselves, so we have no strength of ourselves to live for Christ. We therefore turn to Him for strength and grace to keep the flesh under the sentence of the death of Christ.

Look at Romans 6:6; Romans 6:11 : these verses show that the flesh is condemned in God's sight, and executed in the death of Christ. By faith I give it the same place, it is not my master any longer. Looking to Christ we get grace to keep this incurably bad thing under God's sentence upon it-death; so that, though sin is in us, we do not allow it to work; we get grace to refuse its claims.

If the child of God has committed what he knows is wrong, his resource is 1 John 1:9. There he is assured that if he confesses his sins he is forgiven and also will be cleansed from the evil way so that he will not do the same thing again. Be real with yourself and God, go straight to Him and He will bless you.

{SH}Ques. 20 What is the meaning of transgressions, sins, iniquities?B. M. C.

Ans. Transgression is the violating of a law, Sin is what is offensive to God. Iniquity is perverseness or lawlessness, that is, pleasing self or doing my own will. In some passages it means unrighteousness or wrong doing. In asking questions, it is well to refer to some passage to get more exactly what you mean. For instance, 1 John 3:4 in the new Trans. reads, "Every one that practices sin practices also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness."

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Correspondence Ques. 21. Is it proper to speak of the Church as being the wife of Christ? W. H.

Ans. it is only when the Church is displayed in glory that the scripture speaks of it as the wife, when the marriage time has come, (Revelation 19:7), and when she is the display of His glory during the reign of Christ on the earth. (Revelation 21:9.)

It is scriptural to speak of the Church as the Body and the Bride of Christ now. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 5:25-33; Revelation 22:17).

We are united to Christ by the Holy Spirit given to us, and are one Spirit with the Lord. (1 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.) In 2 Corinthians 11:2, the apostle says, "I have espoused you unto one Man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ." God looks upon such an espousal, and so should we as if already one, (Compare Matthew 1:20) one in purpose. For all eternity the Church will never cease to be the Body and the Bride of Christ, and also the dwelling place of God. (Ephesians 3:21.) May this teach us how dear we are to Him now, and lead us into paths consistent with such a calling.

{SH/}Ques. 22 Please explain Isaiah 9:6. H. R.

Ans. This is a prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ into the world, but it is His coming as the Messiah or King of Israel. It is the Virgin's child (Isaiah 7:14, and Matthew 1:20-23) coming to be King. "The government shall be upon His shoulder." His name unfolds that He is God Himself.

Isaiah 9:7, His Kingdom shall he without fail, it shall be established with judgment and justice. The zeal of Jehovah of Hosts shall accomplish this.

He came, was rejected and is now seated on Jehovah's throne, (Psalms 110:1-7) till the time when He will come in power and glory and possess the Kingdom.

Mean time during His exaltation the Holy Spirit is gathering out the church-His body and His Bride. We know Him as our Savior, our Lord, our Head, our Bridegroom, our great High Priest, our Advocate. He will come for us when all His members are complete, so that when He comes to judge and reign, we will come with Him and reign with Him.

{SH/}Ques. 23 Does Zechariah 13:6 refer to Christ or to Antichrist? W. H. W.

Ans. Quoting from Synopsis Vol. 2, page 568, the following: "In Zechariah 13:5 read, 'I am no prophet, but a husbandman; for man [Adam] has acquired me as a slave from my youth?' That is to say, Christ takes the humble position of One devoted to the service of man, in the circumstances into which Adam was brought by sin (that is, with respect to His position as a man living in this world.) Zechariah 13:6 directs our attention to that which befell Him among the Jews, where He was wounded and treated as a malefactor. The true character of His Person, and of His sufferings is then revealed in Zechariah 13:7. It is the sword of Jehovah, which awakes against the

man who is His companion, His equal. This verse requires no comment. It is most interesting to see that, when Christ is looked at in His humiliation as man, He is treated by the Spirit as the equal of Jehovah in His rights; and when (Psalms 45:7) He is seen upon His throne of divine glory, and addressed as God, those that are His are acknowledged as His companions in glory, sharing His position.” This clearly shows this prophecy refers to Christ.

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Correspondence Ques. 24. What is the meaning of John 10:34-35? H. M. C.

Ans. In verse 33 they call the Lord Jesus a blasphemer, because He said He was the Son of God. He answers by quoting Psalms 82:6, where judges, or rulers, or great men of Israel are called gods (Hebrew: elohim; this word is used for men in Exodus 12:12; Exodus 21:6; Exodus 22:8-9; Exodus 22:28.) The Lord had given every proof in His words and works who He was. (John 14:10.) He referred them to His works as proof that the Father was in Him, and He in the Father, Alas! their hearts were hardened, and their eyes were blinded by sin, or they would not have sought Him to stone Him.

Man's heart, even when religious, is at enmity against God. Romans 8:7.

{SH/}Ques. 25

Please explain 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Ans. Confession is telling out my sins to God. It is as if a child said to its parent, "I have done wrong", then the parent encourages the child to tell what it has done. "I broke a window by throwing a stone at my brother. I threw the stone because I quarreled with him. I quarreled with him because I wanted the thing he had. To punish him I tried to hurt my brother."

Then the wise parent points out to the child the sins of disobedience, (for he had been told not to throw stones) anger, selfishness and covetousness. And another thing may be pointed out that he was powerless to hinder the evil, for he did not look to the Lord for strength; "Watch and pray that ye enter" not into temptation." So in confession, my heart is searched in the presence of God. And wonderful grace! "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," "faithful" to His own character; and "just" because of the work done by the Lord who bore the judgment of our sins. He now righteously forgives us. And more He "cleanses us from all unrighteousness." Our condition of soul is met by the Lord showing us what sin is, thus making us to hate it as a thing God hates, so that we might, through His grace, be kept from trifling with sin. Those who trifle with sin, fall under its power.

Vol 01 - Correspondence

Correspondence

Ques. 26. Please consider the parable of the Unjust Steward. Luke 16:1-13; especially ver. 9. W. F.

Ans. Man illustrated by Israel is a steward of what God has committed to him, he will be called to give an account. He is unfaithful. Christians, children of light, have owned this, and are set in a new place in grace. They are stewards still; temporal possessions are looked at here. (But see also 1 Corinthians 4:2.) And these temporal possessions might, if love to them is allowed, be a hindrance, holding the heart from Christ. The unjust steward used what was in his hands for the future, and this is wise or prudent, not just. Rahab was not just to Jericho, she betrayed it, so we are in spirit to be outside this world, because, like Jericho, it is under God's judgment.

We are now to use what is entrusted to us Christ, so that we may find it again in our future home.

Read 9th to 12th verses, with 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

Money, because the heart naturally loves it, Christian's enemy and is called the "mammon of unrighteousness." We are to make friends with it, or make it the means of future blessing by using it now for Christ, so that when this life is past, you will have in store a good foundation.

If we let possessions here fill our hearts, we lose the enjoyment of the "true riches," what is called "our own," that is, heavenly and spiritual blessings, but if we give Christ His true place in our affections and use what He has committed to us for Him, we have now rich enjoyment of what is really life. (See New Trans. 1 Timothy 6:19.)

Vol 01 - Helps

Helps The little word which we have just penned occurs in 1 Corinthians 12:28, where the inspired writer enumerates the various gifts and orders of ministry in the assembly. "God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then gifts and healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues."

Now, there is what we may call a beautiful undefinedness about the term "helps." We can see at a glance, and understand fully what is meant by an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, a miracle, a gift of healing, a government, a tongue. But the full import of the term "helps" is not just so easily seized. It indicates a very wide field of happy important Christian service. There are many persons in the assembly who could not be said to possess any special gift; they are not evangelists, pastors or teachers; but they can render effectual help to those who are.

You may sometimes find a man who is quite incompetent to take any part in public ministry, and yet he exerts a far more powerful influence for good than one who takes a prominent place. He is not a preacher or a lecturer; but he takes a deep interest in the work of such. He has no thought of occupying the desk or platform; but it does the heart good to see the way in which he opens the door for you, leads you to a seat, hands you a Bible or hymn-book. His heart is in the work, and he is ready to do anything or everything to further the good cause. There is a genial brightness and self-forgetting elasticity about the man, rendering him a most delightful element in the assembly and in the work. He is ready for every good work-ready to serve all who may need his service. No matter what you may want done, he is your man. Go to him when you will; or with what you will, he is always at your service. Difficulties are nothing to him. He only views them as an occasion for the display of energy. He is not encumbered with whims. He does not believe in them. His heart is free-his spirit fresh and bright. He loves Christ and His people, His servants and their work. He takes a profound interest in the progress of the gospel-in the salvation of souls-in the prosperity and growth of God's people. He is not self-occupied. He delights to see the work done, no matter who does it. He is ready to sweep the floor, if need be-ready to help in every possible way in which effective help may be rendered. Have we any difficulty in assigning such an one his place in the category of gifts? None whatever. He is one of the "helps"-a most blessed and valuable element. Would that we had more of such. We pray for evangelists, for pastors and teachers, and so we should, for we want them sadly. But we should pray for "helps" also, for they exert a marvelous influence for good, wherever they are found.

We have little idea of how much the blessing of God's people, and the progress of His work are promoted by that class of persons indicated by the brief-but comprehensive-term "helps." You may often hear a man say, "Oh! I am not an evangelist or a teacher. I do not possess any gift for speaking." Well, but you can help. You may not be a preacher or a teacher, but you can very effectually co-operate with such in a thousand ways. You can hold up his hands, and encourage his heart, and refresh his spirit, and further his work in numberless and nameless little ways which, you may rest assured, are more grateful to the heart of Jesus, and will be amply rewarded in the

day of His coming glory.

It is a very great mistake indeed to suppose that no one can help on the Lord's people or the Lord's work unless he has some special gift. Every one has his own place to fill, his work to do. Every bird has his own note, except the mocking bird. This latter has nothing of its own but mimics the notes of others. How much better to be real and simple-to give forth my own note, even though it be but the note of a robin, than to be seeking to imitate the thrush or the nightingale.

What we really want is a heart for the Lord's work. Where there is this, it will not be a question as to my gift. I shall be ready for every good work. Even though my gift may be most distinct, I should hold myself in constant readiness to lend a helping hand to others, to put my shoulder to the wheel, to further the blessed work in every possible way. Gift or no gift, if I really love Christ, I shall seek to promote His cause and His glory. If I cannot preach the gospel, I can gather, and I can pack the people. I can make them welcome and seek to make them comfortable and happy. I can prove that my whole soul is in the work, and thus give a holy impetus to others. I can help by prayer, by my presence, by my very look. A genial heart, a bright happy spirit, a mind freed from petty and detestable jealousies, a cordial well wisher may prove a most delightful "help" to the work and the workman.

Beloved Christian reader, let us give ourselves to earnest prayer, that the Lord may be pleased to develop in our midst that most interesting and valuable agency suggested by the heading of this paper. And may we all seek to do what we can for the furtherance of the cause and glory of that blessed One who gave His life to rescue us from everlasting burnings.

Vol 01 - Inspiration of the Scriptures

Inspiration of the Scriptures Our Lord, when speaking of the scriptures, said, "They are they which testify of Me:" and when the Spirit of truth is come, "He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you." It is clear then that those who are led by the Holy Spirit into the true teaching of scripture will have the Lord Jesus Christ ministered to them. How can it be otherwise, for is He not emphatically "The Truth"? Is it possible then, to overrate the value of such divinely-given landmarks?

Atheists and Deists have long indulged in throwing their invectives against the sacred volume. Every now and then a Voltaire, a Tom Paine, or some other of that stamp, has been the avowed champion of infidelity, and has made no secret of his blasphemies; so that faithful men of God knew whom they had to encounter, and what they might expect from such. But now a far more effective class of instruments are actively employed in seeking to undermine the infinite worth and divine authority of the inspired word; and, we blush to add, not a few of them are the professed ministers of the gospel. The fatal mischief is wrought too, not as formerly by ignoring the Bible as a whole, as much as by various persons leveling their attacks on different portions of divine revelation; so that at this time there is scarcely a fundamental truth of scripture that is not being either questioned or denied in some part or other of Christendom. The days of evil have indeed come. The emissaries of Satan are active. Everything that can be shaken is on the move. Rationalists are busy. Distrust and incredulity abound; and many are fearful as to what may be coming next. And why all this? Is it not because they have not known "the truth"? Our Lord said, "I am... the truth." "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free... If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." This only is true freedom. (John 14:6; John 8:32; John 8:36.) The root-error of all this departure from the truth, is doubtless the refusal to accept the divine verdict that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," and receiving, instead, the false notion of human competency to judge the things of God; thus ignoring our fall through Adam's disobedience. For matters of this life, no doubt, men have natural abilities; but we are plainly told in scripture that "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." (1 Corinthians 2:11.) Even the apostles, who were "able ministers of the New Testament," with marvelous gifts and qualifications, were wont to say, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything, as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Corinthians 3:5-6.) If such mighty men of God declared their inability to think a right thought apart from the teaching of the Spirit, how appalling is it in these days to find so many relying on learning and natural ability, and expressing their opinions of the scriptures with such temerity and boldness, instead of humbly owning and relying on the gracious ministry of "the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that obey Him," and thus receiving in faith God's testimony.

It is scarcely possible that scripture could speak more plainly than it does on this momentous subject. We say nothing against learning and human talent for worldly things, but in reference to the things of God, another scripture says that believers have "received... the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God... But the natural man [observe it is

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 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 2:14.) How truly this is verified in these days! Let us not fail to notice further that one must be "spiritual" (under the guidance, teaching, and power, of the Holy Spirit, who occupies the soul with the Lord Jesus where He is,) to discern the things of God - "He that is spiritual judgeth [or discerneth] all things." (1 Corinthians 2:15.) No doubt, most of the confusion in Christendom as to the scriptures can be traced to confidence in human wisdom, instead of honoring the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It would be impossible for those who are born of God to advance opinions, or value those of others, as to the plain testimony of the written word, much less would they confer with known skeptics and Deists, if they knew in their own souls the teaching and power of "the Spirit of truth." To question the divine authenticity of the holy scripture (alas! how few think it,) is to refuse God's word, God's Son, and therefore God's salvation. We are told that our Lord, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27 :) (to be continued.)

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Men may boast of "modern thought," and "intellectual progress," and style themselves "an advanced school;" but we are persuaded that a solemn crisis is not far off. The question throughout Christendom, already heard far and near, is, "Is the Bible God's revelation of His mind and will? or, Is it merely a collection of the writings and opinions of good men?" Many of the adversaries of the truth lavish their praises on its being "the best of books," but such compliments are unnecessary and unacceptable. Are the scriptures the utterance of God's mind, which came by His will, and not by the will of man, which holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? If not, there can be no faith, no divine ground on which the soul can rest. But, having His own word, and knowing His perfect love and faithfulness in the accomplished work of the Lord Jesus, and having heard and received the gospel of His grace, the soul rests in perfect peace before Him, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God. The believer is not called on to define inspiration. How the scriptures were inspired has not been revealed. It is enough for him that by them God is made known, that holy men of God testified by "the Spirit of Christ which was in them," and that they minister Christ to his soul. Our Lord, too, when speaking of us to the Father said, "I have given them Thy word." After that, we read that the apostles and brethren prayed that they might "with all boldness speak Thy word," and were so answered, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness." Believers knew that the ministry in old time, and also by our Lord and His apostles, was the ministry of "the word of God."

Neither are believers called on to solve all the mysteries and difficulties of the scriptures. They may know but very little of the Bible; but they find it therein revealed, without a shadow of question, that Jesus the Son of God "was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification;" and that "by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," and they are filled with "joy and peace in believing."

How plainly we may "see the day approaching!" The cry of "Peace and safety," the prelude of sudden destruction, well-nigh encircles the habitable earth. "The times of the Gentiles" are rapidly being fulfilled. Not a few have departed from the faith. The cloud which has been so long hanging over Christendom, thickens and lowers with incredible rapidity. The disciples of modern infidelity are being multiplied. "The way of Cain," or approach to God without blood; is becoming largely accepted. The name of Christ is unblushingly attached to unscriptural efforts, in order that they may be accredited; and "having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof," from which the faithful are enjoined to "turn away," is spreading itself far and near. The numberless confederacies of men on all sides may be casting their shadow, to intimate that the binding of the tares in bundles is not far off. Nor can we fail to see that the hostility between confessed infidels and formal professors of Christianity may possibly be the harbinger of that great collision ere long to have its solemn fulfillment, when they will "hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." (Hebrews 10:25; 1 Thessalonians 5:3;

Revelation 17:16)

It would be impossible at this time for the faithful not to "sound an alarm." We are to "warn" as well as "comfort." Neutrality is out of the question; for our Lord said, "He that is not with Me, is against Me." With those who are true to Him, the supreme authority of scripture will be maintained at all cost. Its intrinsic perfection and excellency have been tasted and enjoyed by them, and they know the Shepherd's voice. Christ Himself, their life and righteousness, is their resource; His Father is their Father, who loves them as He loved His Son. The Holy Spirit is their Teacher, Guide and Strength. Their watchword is, "It is written," and they find real delight in serving the living and true God, and waiting for His Son from heaven. They know that "the night is far spent," and "the day is at hand." That the scriptures have been marvelously preserved for us to the present moment is an unquestionable fact; but what means God has employed for its accomplishment is another thing. Certain it is as to the Old Testament that to the Jews "were committed the oracles of God;" and it is most interesting to observe how scrupulously pious Jews have sometimes guarded the sacred treasure, and also that the books which they still accredit as divinely inspired, correspond with what we call the Old Testament, though the books are not bound up together precisely in the same order. The pretensions of Romish or Anglican churches to be the appointed custodians of the scriptures, and that the decisions of their councils gives them their authority, is as gratuitous and unfounded as anything can be. Where is there a line of scripture to warrant such a conclusion? We are well aware that our opponents would say, "Hear the Church;" to which we reply, though that scripture gives church or assembly authority in case of discipline, it gives not a shadow of warrant as to the oracles of God being now committed to the church. The words, "Hear the Church" are found only in Matthew 18:1-35, and refer to an offending brother, who having been told of his trespass by the offended one alone, and not having been gained, then, having his fault again brought before him in the presence of one or two more, and having neglected to hear them, the assembly or church must then be told of it, and "if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Now, honestly, whatever has this to do with the church being the custodian of the scriptures, and to decide on their authority? Instead of the church giving authority to the scriptures, it is really the scripture which, in cases of discipline, gives authority to the church.

Another word brought forward to bolster up this tradition of men is quoted from Luke 10:16, when our Lord on sending forth the seventy to preach the glad tidings of the kingdom (for the Messiah was there, and ready to set up His kingdom,) said, "He that heareth you, heareth Me." Now where is there any allusion to the church or its authority here It has always been true to receive or reject the servant, is to receive or reject the Sender; as here, it is the servant being heard because he came to them in Messiah's name. We know from Matthew 16:18 and other scriptures that the church on earth was not then in existence, nor could it be till the Holy Spirit came down, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts.

(Continued and To be continued)

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Again, refuge is taken by the opponents of the truth in the words, "the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:2). These words are found in Paul's last epistle to Timothy, when all Asia had turned away from him, and a prominent fellow-servant had forsaken him, and loved this present world. The church had long gone on as God's corporate witness on earth, and had deeply failed, and nothing would have been easier than for the aged apostle in prospect of martyrdom, to have commended Timothy to church authority; but instead of that, he calls upon Timothy to look out for individuals in the church on earth whom he judged true to the Lord, and commit the truth which he had received from the apostle to such as he could call "faithful men," so that they might be able to teach others also. Timothy could not fail so to understand it. There is no thought of church authority in the passage. Nor is there such an idea here or elsewhere in scripture as that "the church teaches." Instead of the church teaching, the church is taught by the "gifts" received from Christ in ascension; and in the prospect of ruin and difficulty in the church looked at as God's corporate witness on earth, we are directed to the scriptures and their sufficiency as our resource in a time of evil in the last days. (2 Timothy 3:15-17; see also Ephesians 4:8-16.) From first to last in the sacred writings their divine authority is set before us. Even when Paul preached, who had received his commission directly from the Lord Himself, as he says, "not of men neither by man," the Bereans were specially commended by the Holy Spirit, because they searched the scriptures daily, "whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11-12.) How important it is at this time to see that instead of the church giving authority or adding any value to the written word, it is that word which is the only authority in the church, and is sufficient to guide, instruct, and correct every believer and furnish him unto every good work. The truth is, that "the faith once delivered," instead of being deposited to the care and authority of a corporate association-the church-we are plainly told was once given "to the saints," so that every believer (for all such are "saints" by calling) has received this wondrous endowment from the Lord, and is under obligation to Him to "contend earnestly" for it, and maintain it at all cost for His honor. (Jude 1:3.) When the word of eternal truth is not heeded in its divine character, as the daily resource and guide, men and books will be almost sure to be resorted to, and will usurp the place of "God, and the word of His grace," in the heart and mind, with great loss and damage of soul. "To obey is better than sacrifice;" and to heed and keep the "words" of the Son of God is the proof of our loving Him; and an apostle was wont to exhort believers to "be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior." (John 14:23; 2 Peter 3:2.) (Continued and To be continued.)

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If when Moses saw that the burning bush was not consumed, he was told to put his shoes from off his feet for the place whereon he stood was holy ground, with which humility of mind, and holy reverence, should we approach the consideration of the imperishable and unalterable word of God which has been written for our instruction; especially when we remember our entire dependence on the Holy Spirit to receive, reveal, or communicate the things of God!

God knows our total inability for searching His deep things apart from the operation of the Spirit of God; but the Spirit having been given to those who believe, we may now not only know the things that are freely given to us of God, but are enjoined to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." God's own revelation of His mind has not then been given merely to gifted preachers or teachers, but is the common property of the saints-of all those who are called of God by the gospel of His Son Jesus Christ. To such it is God's wondrous gift. It is the present heritage of all His children. To neglect "the faith once delivered" is therefore to dishonor Him, and plainly shows that the heart is on something else. To prize it beyond all else here should distinguish us. Not to find the deepest interest in the pages of holy scripture argues that we ponder it but little. It is well to read it; but to meditate on it night and day with delight is what God gives to those who seek increased acquaintance with Himself through His word. Happy are they who can truly say, with one of old, "How sweet are Thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." (Psalms 119:103.) With what lowliness of heart, then, should we approach the sacred volume, and with what gratitude to God for having given us such a treasure; with what godly fear, too, lest by an improper thought or utterance we tarnish the glory of its infinite perfection! When we consider that these "words of God" shall shine in all their unchanging brightness and eternal worth when heaven and earth shall have passed away, how can we but tremble lest by ignorance or weakness on our part we mar the testimony to the truth of God, or hinder its blessing to others?

If we think only of ourselves-our infirmities, our failures and unworthiness-how could we ever go forth to "fight the good fight of faith?" But when we consider that God has caused the scriptures to be written for our comfort, that the apostle desired that "the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified," that by it sinners are begotten of God, and His saints corrected and built up, we can then confidently cast ourselves on the loving care and upholding goodness of our gracious God, and reckon upon His tender mercy. Nor would we, by grace, forget that He has said, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word." (Isaiah 66:2.) May this be the state of heart in which we ponder the inspired volume! for "A glory gilds the sacred page Majestic, like the sun;

It gives a light to every age- It gives, but borrows none. The hand that give it still supplies The gracious light and heat; Its truths upon believing rise They rise, but never set."

Vol 01 - Inspiration of the Scriptures

Inspiration of the Scriptures WHAT IS INSPIRATION? By inspiration we mean that which is God-breathed. We are told "all (or every) Scripture is given by inspiration of God." It might be rendered "every Scripture is God-breathed." (2 Timothy 3:16). The Scriptures are therefore a revelation from God; and their force or authority to our hearts and consciences flows from that fact. If Scripture be not God's word, it has no more value to us than the writings of good men; but it is His word, hence it comes to us with the authority, love, and wisdom and holiness of God. Though its pages run over thousands of years, take us back before time was, and lead our thoughts on to the eternal state, and some of its books were written more than three thousand years ago, it is unlike any other book, for it is always new. Take up an ordinary volume of human composition, written two or three hundred years ago, or even go back to one of the Fathers, and you will find you have scarcely patience to read a few pages; but Scripture, as we have said, though old, is always new. It carries with it a freshness and power to the heart and conscience, as no other book does; and all the changes in the world and in mankind never seem to affect it. It warns us against "men" and their "philosophy," ritualism and its imposing ordinances, and of putting "tradition" in the place of authority instead of Christ: While addressing itself to the heart and conscience, it has always a voice of instruction and blessing to those who believe and receive its words from the mouth of God. Those who do not believe, cannot understand it, for "by faith we understand." Such only know its blessedness. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him," and we have "joy and peace in believing." To the rationalist Scripture is inexplicable, to the ritualist it is confusion, to the infidel it abounds with mistakes, to the literary man there are inaccuracies and contradictions. Such, however, little know that God hath said that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Corinthians 2:14. The Bible is the only book that faithfully tells us what we are, and that even to the discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart. This shows it to be divine, for God only searches the heart. It also truly reveals God, so that when the word is received, it brings our souls into the consciousness of God having to do with us. This also shows its divinity, for "the world by wisdom knows not God." The variety of aspects in which the Son who came forth from the Father to save sinners is presented to us—His personal glory, moral perfectness, finished work, walk, words, ways, life, death, resurrection, ascension, glorification, present offices, and future judgments and reign—as the leading truths of Scripture, give it also a divine character. Its unity, too, carries with it the stamp of divinity as nothing else could. The way in which the different parts are adapted to each other; types in the Old Testament having their antitypes in the New; a multitude of prophetic statements in the former having their accomplishment in the latter, and the immense number of quotations in the New from the Old Testament, to prove the soundness of the doctrines taught, combine to give it a divine character which is incontestable. It is not then surprising that an inspired writer should commend "the word" to us as if in its operations it possessed divine attributes. "The word of God, is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12) A professing Christian lately

said, "There are many opinions about the Scriptures;" to which we replied, "How can that be, if they are the utterances of God to us? for surely, then, we have only to hearken to His voice, and seek to do His will." How little did this man think that he was, in the vanity of his mind, imagining that he was competent, as a fallen creature in Adam, to sit in judgment on the things of God, and thus take ground with rationalists and infidels, instead of bowing to Scripture as God's word, and allowing it to judge him. Alas! such is the pride of man in these last and closing days, that many prefer their own opinions to Scripture, and, as of old, make void the word of God, that they may keep their own tradition. Hence, also, the word is being solemnly fulfilled in men's rejection of holy Scripture, that "seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (2 Timothy 3:13).

If we have not "the words of God," we have no basis for faith, and must therefore be tossed about with irremediable uncertainty; but having divinely-given communications, we have on their authority divinely-given certainty as to eternal salvation. By it we have present assurance, founded on the redemption-work of our Lord Jesus Christ, that our sins are forgiven, that we have eternal life, are the children of God, and shall not come into judgment. (Acts 10:13; John 3:36; Galatians 3:26; Romans 8:1). If such are asked why they believe on our Lord Jesus Christ? and why they have such certainty as to their present and eternal blessings? their reply will be "Because God in His word says so, and faith needs no other authority for confidence, and no other rest for the heart and conscience." The days are indeed evil and perilous. Time was when heathen idolaters were those who chiefly scoffed and mocked at the Scriptures being God's own revelation of His mind; and later on, avowed infidels in Christendom treated the subject with scorn and ridicule; but in our day it is those who profess to be servants of Christ, and guides of the flock of God, who are so busily engaged in undermining the eternal verity of the holy Scriptures, and their divine authority. This, too, is seldom attempted as a whole by one person; but by different persons in various places, so that it may be, by Satan's artifice, the less manifest. At this moment there is scarcely a vital and fundamental doctrine of Scripture that is not being assailed or corrupted within the length and breadth of Christendom.

What has especially stirred many hearts at this time, is the consciousness of the appalling state of souls in the neglect of the Scriptures, and the skeptical thoughts that are current among professors of Christianity as to their divine authority. Not that we imagine that we have power to lead any to see and act differently, for we are told that "no man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God." The prayer, however, of not a few, has been that God will yet work by His word, and bless and help souls according to His own thoughts, and for His own dory.

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Inspiration of the Scriptures SACRED WRITINGS.

"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4.

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Corinthians 10:11.

These two verses plainly teach us that in the apostles' days there were sacred writings, which they could speak of as written for our comfort and instruction. It is well, then, first of all, to see if we can gather from other parts of Scripture with certainty what these sacred writings were. As to this, one thing is very striking. It is the way in which our Lord in the days of His flesh referred to "the Scriptures." Not only did He say, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, for they are they which testify of Me;" but He was wont to appeal to His hearers saying, "Have ye never read?" "Did you never read?" "What is written in the law?" "How readest thou?" "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?"-all evidently referring to sacred writings. Moreover, He not only said, "Moses wrote of Me," but He was pleased to rank the "writings" of Moses with His own "words," when He added, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" There were writings, then, which our Lord in His ministry frequently authenticated as divinely-given, which He honored and obeyed, and their authority was to Him final and conclusive. In point of fact, "It is written," when quoting the very words of Scripture, was with Him the sword of the Spirit to resist Satan in all his temptations. There were writings, then, which our Lord used, honored, and obeyed, and commended to His hearers as testifying of Himself, Scripture which must be fulfilled and, because divinely-given, infinite, and pure, and holy. Now these were the books of the Old Testament, for the New Testament was not then in existence. The external evidence of the divine authenticity of Scripture is very weighty, especially when we consider that to the Jews were "committed the oracles of God," and from time immemorial to the present, it is well known that they have retained the different books of the Old Testament pretty much as we have them, and regard them as given to them by Jehovah. Our object now, however, is not to look so much at the external evidence, as to the internal testimony the Scriptures give of their being the Word of God. It is interesting, however, to know, that in the early centuries of what is called the Christian Era, there is abundance of proof from the writers of that time, that they quoted largely from the books of the New Testament. It is said also that Lord Hales, a Scotchman, having searched the writings of the so-called Christian Fathers who lived during three hundred years after Christ, found, with all their blunders, nearly all the writings of the New Testament as we have them in different parts of their books. To attempt to prove by human reasoning and external evidence that the Scripture is God's Word, would be just as absurd as lighting a candle to look for the sun. Everyone knows, except he be blind, that the sun gives light and heat. We know nothing of the sun without these effects. So every honest mind that has ears to hear, and gets before God, finds Scripture so searching, that it commends itself to his conscience as being the Word of God. He

finds it quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

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Inspiration of the Scriptures THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Forever, O Jehovah, Thy word is settled in heaven." (Psalms 119:89.) "Thou hast magnified Thy word above all Thy name." (Psalms 138:2.) In turning to the earliest books of the Bible, we read on one occasion that "Moses wrote all the words of Jehovah:" that Jehovah said unto Moses, another time, "Write this law for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua." Again, we read that Moses was commanded to write, and "Moses wrote this song according to the commandment of Jehovah, and taught it the children of Israel," and that he also "wrote their goings out according to their journeyings, by the commandment of Jehovah," (Exodus 24:4; Exodus 17:4; Deuteronomy 31:19-22; Numbers 33:2.)

Moreover, it is clear that Moses was conscious that the word he gave Israel had divine authority. He said, "It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all the commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high, above all the nations of the earth." His writings, therefore, are called "the book of this law," and "the covenant," and "his statutes which are written in this book of the law." "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests."

(Deuteronomy 28:1; Deuteronomy 28:61; Deuteronomy 29:21; Deuteronomy 30:10; Deuteronomy 31:9)

We find in the books of Moses such words as "Jehovah said unto Moses," over and over again. Sometimes it is added, "Speak unto Aaron thy brother," or "to the children of Israel," or to the priests; and afterward we read it was done, and it is frequently said, "as Jehovah commanded Moses."

Joshua also having been assured by direct communication from Jehovah of the divine origin and authority of the writings of Moses, was also taught that his own success in the service of God would be connected with his observing to do all that Moses commanded. He was told to "turn not from it, to the right hand or to the left." "... The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to that which is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Joshua 1:7-9.) Thus the writings of Moses were not only authenticated by Jehovah, but Joshua was held responsible by God to obey them "according to all that is written therein." It was all the Scripture that he had, and yet how careful he was to carry out its directions, Joshua also was a writer. "He wrote upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel." It is added that, "afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law." (Deuteronomy 27:3; Joshua 8:32-35.) It is scarcely possible to have a clearer testimony to the inspiration and divine authority of the books of Moses. The prophet Samuel also was a writer. He "told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before Jehovah." (1 Samuel 10:25.)

Isaiah, too, was a writer. We read that "Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, wrote the acts of Uzziah first and last." (2 Chronicles 26:22.)

"Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon." "And Jeremiah said unto Seraiah, When thou comest to Babylon, and shalt see, and shalt read all these words; then shalt thou say, O Jehovah, thou hast spoken against this place." (Jeremiah 51:60-62.)

Daniel had wonderful things revealed to him by God in dreams, and visions, and by the angel Gabriel. We read that "He wrote the dream." He also acknowledged the divine inspiration and authority of the ancient scriptures, for he tells us that he "understood by books the number of years, whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem;" and he also recognized the divine authority of what is "written in the law of Moses," and "noted in the scripture of truth." (Chaps. 7:1; 9:2, 11; 10:21.) Let us not fail to observe that Daniel speaks of the prophecies of Jeremiah as the words of Jehovah. The sweet psalmist of Israel said, "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was in my tongue." (2 Samuel 23:2.) "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer." (Psalms 45:1.) The wise man also exclaimed, "Have not I written to thee excellent things?" (Proverbs 22:20.) The prophet Hosea said, "I have written to him (Ephraim) the great things of Thy law" (Hosea 8:12); and Jehovah said unto Habakkuk, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tablets, that he may run that readeth it." (Habakkuk 2:2.)

Enough of quotations from the Old Testament we judge have been given to show, that writing was a means ordained by God for communicating and treasuring up divinely-given truth, and that its authority was acknowledged by the faithful in all ages. The people, too, were taught by God's servants to give diligent heed to these writings. When the children of Israel should have a king, Moses said, "He shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear Jehovah, his God, to keep all the words of this law, and their statutes to do them." Joshua also taught the people to "take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of Jehovah charged you." We read also that in Nehemiah's day, Ezra the scribe, when the people were collected together, "read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the meaning." (Deuteronomy 17:19; Joshua 22:5; Nehemiah 8:5-8.) From all these various witnesses, we not only learn that God had ordered writing as a means of communicating His mind and will, but, as a fact, we also find preserved for us in a most marvelous way for nearly two thousand years a number of books written by various persons who had no communication with each other; written, too, at different times, and under different circumstances for a period extending over 1500 years, and all the books so agreeing together that a spiritual mind can trace all as being under the guidance of a master mind; books that were valued by other prophets, treasured up by faithful men, esteemed by many as of more value than thousands of gold and silver, and ministering words which were found and eaten to the joy and rejoicing of the heart. In these many books we find the prophetic words of some afterward registered by others as fulfilled, and warnings unheeded, too, meeting with the predicted judgments; the depravity and utter ruin and wickedness of man set forth, and alas, manifested, while the nature of God, as love and light, His attributes and words of holiness, grace and truth, stand out in all their uncompromising perfection, and eternal excellence. Because of these things, the written work of the Old Testament brings such conviction to the soul of its divinity and eternal truth, when opened up and brought home by the Spirit, that the heart no more looks to men's opinions, or other

external evidence, than a child, when gazing with delight on a photograph of his living mother, would inquire who it is.

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Inspiration of the Scriptures THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE OLD.

Let us now take a brief glance at the books of the New Testament, and ascertain what testimony there is to the inspiration of the Old Testament. We shall only take a few examples out of many. In Matthew 1:22, we read, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of Jehovah, by the prophet." Observe, it is not merely that the prophet's saying was "fulfilled," thus to show how divinely true it was, but that it was "spoken of Jehovah." Is it possible that anything can show more clearly that the prophet Isaiah uttered it by inspiration? In the next chapter we find the same expression (Matthew 2:15); "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of Jehovah by the prophet"-the prophet Hosea. In Matthew 5:1-48, our Lord so authenticated the testimony of the Old Testament that He said, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." "The law" is sometimes used to include all the ancient scriptures.

Mark's gospel begins with quotations from the prophets Malachi and Isaiah, and in Mark 7:1-37, our Lord said to the Pharisees, "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me," and charges them with rejecting "the commandment of God," as in Exodus and Leviticus, and setting up instead, "commandments of men." "Thus," added our Lord, "making the word of God of none effect through your tradition." Here our Lord calls the writings of Moses the word of God. (Mark 7:6-13.) In Mark 12:1-44, our Lord declares that David wrote Psalms 90:1-17, "by the Holy Ghost." (Mark 12:36.) Again, we ask, Is it possible to have clearer proofs of divine inspiration? In Luke 1:1-80, we see a man full of the Holy Ghost; his testimony, therefore, must be very important; we find him saying that "He (the Lord God of Israel) spake by the mouth of His holy prophets which have been since the world began." (Luke 1:70.) In Luke 3:1-38, we have the testimony of one who was full of the Holy Ghost from his birth, of whom our Lord said, "Among them that are born of women, there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist." Well, what about him? We read that at a certain time "the word of God came unto John." What word of God? "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet," etc. (Luke 3:2; Luke 3:4.) In Luke 4:1-44, the Lord reads in the synagogue part of Isaiah 61:1-11, and stops in the middle of a sentence, and closed the book and sat down, saying, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." What scripture? "The acceptable year of the Lord." How? Because He came to call sinners to repentance. (Luke 4:18-21.) In Luke 16:1-31, the Lord again most authoritatively enforces the authenticity of the writings of Moses and the prophets. He says, "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.... If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:29-31.) Is it possible that such language could be applied to any writings that were not given by God? In John's gospel it is recorded that our Lord recognized certain writings which He called "scriptures," which testified of Himself. He also especially taught that Moses wrote of Him. But more than that; He so recognized that Moses wrote them not by his own will, but by the Holy Ghost, that He ranked Moses' writings as of equal authority with His own words, when He said, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" (John 5:47) In John 10:1-42, our Lord declared that

"the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), as He also said elsewhere "the scripture must be fulfilled." In Acts 1:1-26, the apostles are in a different state as to the truth, because our Lord after His resurrection had "opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures." Many men in our day think themselves quite competent to understand scripture by natural ability aided by education; but it is a great mistake, for "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 Corinthians 2:14.) Did people believe this, how anxious they would be that God would reveal His truth to them by the Holy Spirit's power!

Well, Peter, the apostle, in Acts 1:1-26, gathered from Psalms 41:1-13; Psalms 109:1-31, that another should be chosen ("ordained." is not in the Greek) to take the place of Judas the betrayer. His words show that he regarded the Psalms as inspired. He said to the others, "This scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David, spake before concerning Judas." (Acts 1:16.) It was Peter who after this wrote, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.... for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter 1:19; 2 Peter 1:21.) In Acts 2:1-47, Peter and the others have very much advanced spiritually. Why is this? The Holy Spirit had come down and taken up His abode in them, so that they were "filled" with the Holy Spirit, and had a power in ministry, and received gifts which were never known before. Peter stands up to preach! Now, what is it about? He first quotes from the prophet Joel, to explain that it was the coming of the Holy Spirit which had produced all this joy and power in them. He then goes to Psalms 16:1-11; Psalms 132:1-18; Psalms 110:1-7, to show that the death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ was a fulfillment of what had been written concerning Him many hundreds of years before; and we know what vast blessing accompanied this ministry. Observe here, that these Old Testament writings were given by the Holy Spirit and expounded by one full of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 3:1-26, Peter declares to the Jews that even then if they repent, turn to God, and have forgiveness of sins, Jesus will be sent down from heaven, and bring in millennial blessing as their true Messiah-"the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Here, again, it is "God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets." What could more plainly show us that these men were inspired by God to write? (Acts 3:19-22.) In Acts 4:24-25, "God" is said to utter the second psalm by the mouth of His servant David.

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Inspiration of the Scriptures THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE OLD. In Peter's sermon at Caesarea, when speaking of the Lord coming to judge, he says, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that, through His name, whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins." Observe, here, he includes all the prophets. We would only add as to Peter's testimony that in his first epistle, he refers to the scriptures of the Old Testament as final and conclusive. With him, "it is written," was enough, and he quotes from, or refers to Exodus, Genesis, Isaiah, Psalms, Hosea, and other Old Testament writings. He enjoins his readers to be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets. (2 Peter 3:2.)

Now let us hear Paul's testimony. In his first memorable sermon at Antioch, he begins by running through the ways of God with the people of Israel, from Egypt to that day, and thus authenticates the books of Moses, Joshua, Judges, Samuel on to David, from whom he traces the Savior Jesus. He further refers to Old Testament scriptures as to His death on the cross, in the brief statement, "when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a sepulcher; but God raised Him from among the dead.", He then goes to Psalms 2:1-12, which shows that God sent and gave His only begotten, whom men rejected, and he quotes Psalms 16:1-11, to show that He saw no corruption. Paul's ministry here was founded on the divine authority of Old Testament scriptures. It is well to observe that in those days preaching was giving out, not human ideas and eloquence, but "the word of God." Hence, we read, "almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God." "And the word of the Lord was published," and in the next chapter, "God gave testimony to the word of His grace." In Acts 17:1-34, we find Paul preaching at Thessalonica in a Jewish synagogue, and according to his manner, he "reasoned with them out of the scriptures." What scriptures? The Old Testament; from which he shows that "Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from among the dead; and that this Jesus which I preach unto you is Christ." The result was that many believed. Now if we turn to the 1st epistle to the Thessalonian believers, we find Paul by the Holy Spirit writing to them, that he "thanked God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13.) Can any testimony more fully prove the divine inspiration of the Old Testament scriptures? for the apostle began his ministry to them from those writings, and now as the Lord's servant, he commends them for receiving the testimony as "the word of God."

Paul then carries the gospel to Berea; and we are told that the Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica; and why? Because they held that the scriptures (then the Old Testament) were the only balance God had given to test everything by; so "they searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so." Yes, and they were commended for testing even the ministry of an inspired apostle by the scriptures. Oh that people would do the same in our day! We should not then hear such words of unbelief, alas! so common, as expressing opinions on this and that scripture, and asking others what their opinions are. The fact is, the opinions of men are often useless, and savor strongly of infidelity, because God has given us His own word. This, faith

rejoices in. Never, then, let us forget this divine commendation of the Berean believers.

Passing over much of Paul's testimony, we find him at length before king Agrippa. There he declares that he said "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from among the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles." (Acts 26:22-23.) In the conclusion of the Acts, we find him at Rome "persuading (the Jews) concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening;" and ended by giving another testimony to the Old Testament scriptures having been divinely inspired. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers." (Acts 28:23; Acts 28:25.) (Continued and To be continued.)

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Looking as briefly as possible into the epistles, we find the appeal to scripture always final and decisive. In Romans 3:1-31, man's utter ruin, all having "sinned," "all guilty," and "all under sin," proved by quotations from the Old Testament scriptures. In Romans 4:1-25, when the question is raised as to whether a man is "justified by works," scripture is at once appealed to—"What saith the scripture?" And the writing of Moses, that "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness" decides it. But lest any should suppose there was a difference as to this, in those who lived under the law, David is referred to, to show that even such as lived under law had no righteousness before God, but that which is of faith. "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Psalms 32:1-11). In other parts of the epistle references are made to the prophet Habakkuk, Isaiah, and other prophets, besides the books of Moses and the Psalms, as bearing divine and unquestionable testimony. In the epistles to the Corinthians we see the same appeal to scripture. Who would have thought that when Jehovah wrote by Moses, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," it had any reference to the saints now in ministering to those who preach the gospel? But, saith the inspired apostle, "Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Corinthians 9:9-11). In Galatians when false teachers had been seeking to undermine the gospel by mixing law with it, Genesis is again quoted to show that Abraham had righteousness only on the principle of faith; and to prove that now, those who "be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," it is most authoritatively added, that "the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." Habakkuk also is referred to, and tells us that "the just shall live by faith," Deuteronomy, that Christ has been made a curse for us, "As it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree," and has thus redeemed us from the curse of the law; and the inspired apostle further sets the Old Testament before us in its divine and infinite authority, by saying, "The scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." (Chapter 3; 6-22).

We cannot conclude our brief view of the apostle Paul's testimony to the sacred writings of the Old Testament, without referring to the epistle to the Hebrews. There in the first verse, (Hebrews 1:1) he disperses all question on the subject, if any yet existed. "God," he tells us, has spoken "unto the fathers by the prophets." Nothing can be more conclusive and incontestable, for it is "God" who "hath spoken." Let not the reader fail to notice also, that in Hebrews 3:1-19; Hebrews 10:1-39, the writer quotes from the book of Psalms and Jeremiah, and speaks of them as what the Holy Spirit saith. It need scarcely be added that a great deal of this epistle is a divine commentary on

sacrifice, priesthood, approach to God, worship and communion as taught by types of the tabernacle, priesthood, and sacrifices offered according to the law. Hebrews 11:1-40 also authenticates a great deal of scripture from Genesis to the book of Daniel.

James appeals to scripture as conclusive. He also brings the prophets before us without one exception who have spoken in the name of Jehovah and quotes from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Joshua, and 1 Kings.

John, in his first epistle, gives us as a test to distinguish truth and error, the hearing of the apostles, "We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." He authenticates the books of Moses by quoting from them. Jude also, in referring to Enoch and other parts of scripture, gives these writings unquestionable authority.

Thus we have looked briefly at a few of the testimonies which the New Testament writers and speakers give as to the validity and authenticity of the inspiration of the Old Testament scriptures. It is well not to overlook the fact, that the disciples were unintelligent as to the resurrection of our Lord, because "they knew not the scripture that he must rise again from the dead:" that is, the Old Testament scriptures which "were written for our learning." Our Lord also told His two loved disciples going to Emmaus that they were in error because they did not believe the scripture, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

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Before we turn back to examine the ancient writings as a whole, it will help us to remember how our Lord set them as such before His disciples after He was risen from among the dead. Not only, as before observed, did He open their understandings that they might understand the scriptures; but we are told that "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself." What a marvelous exposition it must have been! Is it surprising that they said one to another, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" Yes, when He applies scripture to our hearts and consciences it brings its own evidence of its divinity. When our Lord spoke to the woman of Samaria, she felt at once it was in a divine way, so that her conscience being reached she said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet;" and on learning that He was the Messiah, she left all to go into the city and say, "Come see a man that told me all things that ever I did, is not this the Christ?" Our Lord in life said the scripture cannot be broken; in death He consciously fulfilled scripture and spoke of it; in resurrection, as we have seen, He brought scripture to His disciples. Again, having eaten before them to show He was not a spirit but a body of flesh and bones, He said, "These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me." "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Our Lord not only testified of His having fulfilled the Old Testament scriptures in His death and resurrection, but He authenticated the entire body of writings in all their divisions of books of Moses, prophets, and Psalms; much as we still, through God's great mercy and guardian care, have them. In looking into the books of Moses, we find that our Lord recognized their divine authority, and referred to each of them as such. We hear Him saying on one occasion, "Have ye not read that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female?" (Genesis 1:27). And again He quotes from Genesis 2:24, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh." He was Himself, as the woman's Seed, to be the fulfiller of the bruising of Satan's head, after He Himself had suffered from him. This we find in Genesis 3:1-24; as also in the typical clothing of man's nakedness through the death of Another; the result of the death of the cross. Our Lord also spoke of the death of "righteous Abel," as recorded in Genesis 4:1-26; endorsed the doctrine of man's utter ruin of Genesis 6:1-22, when He said, "the flesh profiteth nothing," and "out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts," etc., and largely dwelt on the details of the days of Noah and the flood as typical of the sad state He will find the world in when He comes from heaven to judge. (Matthew 24:37-41). Our Lord also referred to Abraham, saying, "he rejoiced to see my day.... and was glad, "but asserted the divine glory of His Person, when He said, "Before Abraham was, I AM." Our Savior also quoted the words of Jehovah, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," to show they were still spiritually alive and to prove the reality of the resurrection of the body, and thus refute the false doctrine of the

Sadducees; and this scripture also authenticated their patriarchal history as detailed in Genesis. (Matthew 22:32). The tabernacle, with its priesthood and sacrifices, gave much typical instruction as to our Lord's death and High Priestly office for us. The Lord's death was the fulfillment of the typical sacrifices of Leviticus, and He often quoted from it; and from Numbers also, for most will remember that He used the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness as a simple illustration of faith, and the effectual and everlasting blessing those have who in their need and danger look simply to Him as the Object of faith. From Deuteronomy our Lord took words, and used them with "It is written," to overcome the devil in his temptations. Thus the Lord practically authenticated all the books of Moses as God's words, and repeated that we should live "by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

We have lingered over the writings of Moses because of the bold attacks that have been made on them by learned skeptics. It is asserted by some of them, that it is only the first five books of Scripture to which they object; but as the writings of Moses are quoted as having divine authority throughout the Old and New Testament, to disallow them as not divinely inspired, is not merely to lose them, but to deprive us of all the Scriptures. This, no doubt, was anticipated by our Lord who knew all things, so that He said, "If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?" It is most interesting, however, to know that Joshua is not only told to obey Moses writings, but at the end of his course as Jehovah's servant, he records the history of the children of Israel from the call of Abraham to that time. (Joshua 24:1-33.) About a thousand years after that, Nehemiah also recorded their history from the call of Abraham, traces them out of Egypt across the Red Sea, through the wilderness under God's care and goodness for forty years, their ways of disobedience in the land, and God's deliverances; and adds that. "God testified against them by His Spirit in the prophets." Thus He authenticated not only all the books of Moses and Joshua, but all the prophets before His time. (Nehemiah 9:1-38.) Nor should it be forgotten, that the facts in the history of the children of Israel, recorded in the books of Moses, right on to their captivity, and taken up in detail in the Psalms 78:1-72; Psalms 105:1-45; Psalms 106:1-48, thus endorsing many of the books of the Old Testament as divinely authenticated. In the divisional part of the Old Testament called "the Psalms" are included the book of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations of Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah 1:1-11 and 2 Chronicles. In reference to the book of Psalms, our Lord quoted from Psalms 110:1-7, and said David wrote it by the Holy Ghost. (Mark 12:26) He said to His hearers who refused Him, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?" (Psalms 118:22.) And when under, as it were, the shadow of the cross, He said "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" (Matthew 26:53-54.) What Scriptures? No doubt largely Moses and the prophets, but also the Psalms, which not only spoke of His death and sufferings as crucified, but also of His resurrection, glorification, and sitting at God's right hand, and coming reign.

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Inspiration of the Scriptures

Inspiration of the Scriptures THE TESTIMONY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE OLD.

It would be interesting in looking into the prophets, to trace the variety of instruments God was pleased to use in this blessed service, but that would far exceed our proposed limits. It is well, however, to observe how careful each was to impress those they addressed with the fact, that they came forth on their service with divine authority. They also knew little of each other; and their ministry, from Moses to Christ, occupied about 1500 years. A brief quotation or two from each may suffice for our present purpose.

Isaiah begins by asserting that what he saw was concerning Judah and Jerusalem. He says, "Hear.... for Jehovah hath spoken." "The word which Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." (Isaiah 1:1-2; Isaiah 2:1.) Jeremiah has, "The word of Jehovah came unto me," or, "The word which came to Jeremiah from Jehovah." In Ezekiel it says "The word of Jehovah came expressly unto Ezekiel," or, "He said unto me;" or, "Again the word of Jehovah came unto me," and such like expressions occur many times. He also was commanded to write. Jehovah said unto him, "Thou shalt speak My words unto them;" and in a vision he saw "a roll.... written within and without." So assured was he that what he declared was the word of God, that he said, "The word that I speak shall come to pass, and the word that I have spoken shall be done.... Thus saith the Lord God." (Ezekiel 1:3; Ezekiel 2:7; Ezekiel 2:10; Ezekiel 7:1; Ezekiel 12:25; Ezekiel 12:28; Ezekiel 16:1.) No one can have carefully considered The Book of Psalms without seeing the value and authority of the written word frequently set forth. It opens by marking one point in the righteous man, being that he meditates in the law of Jehovah day and night; and in Psalms 119:1-176, almost every verse speaks of the word, statutes, commandments, or law of Jehovah. Not only does this book extol the purity of the word itself, like silver purified seven times, but also of its cleansing virtue. The authenticity too, of the Scriptures is so regarded that the writer says, "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver;" and "I love Thy commandments above gold, yea above fine gold." (Psalms 1:2; Psalms 119:9; Psalms 119:72; Psalms 119:127.) David was one of those holy men of old of whom Peter speaks who was "moved by the Holy Spirit" to give unto us the "sure word of prophecy." (2 Peter 1:19; 2 Peter 1:21.) In Proverbs also we are told that "every word of God is pure.... add thou not unto His words." (Proverbs 30:5-6.) And again, "Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, that I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth, that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that sent unto thee?" (Chapter 22:20, 21.)

Daniel though he prophesied by the same Spirit, is somewhat different, for his line was "the times of the Gentiles," as also his own people. He gives us, in Daniel 2:1-49, the whole history of the Gentile nations, and their concluding judgment; he also spoke of the abomination yet to be set up in the temple, which our Lord referred to in Matthew 24:15, and is so soon to have its very solemn fulfillment. In Hosea it is, "The word of Jehovah that came to Hosea." (Hosea 1:1.) In Joel "The word of Jehovah that came to Joel." (Joel 1:1.) Amos said, "Thus saith Jehovah." (Amos 1:3.)

Obadiah begins, "Thus saith Jehovah concerning Edom." (Obadiah 1:1.) In Jonah we are twice told that "The word of Jehovah came to Jonah." (Jonah 1:1; Jonah 3:1.) Micah begins with "The word of Jehovah that came to Micah." Nahum says, "Thus saith Jehovah." (Nahum 1:12.) Habakkuk tells us, "Jehovah answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." (Habakkuk 2:2.) Zephaniah begins with, "The word of Jehovah which came unto Zephaniah." (Zephaniah 1:1.) The testimony of the prophets was nearly completed when the Jews were carried away into Babylon. We have only three post-captivity prophets-Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, though some of the prophecies of Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 52:30) and Daniel, were given after the great captivity. Haggai distinctly affirms that his word was "the word of Jehovah," and that it came to him at different times. He announced his messages authoritatively, with, "Thus saith Jehovah." (Haggai 1:1; Haggai 1:7; Haggai 2:1; Haggai 2:7; Haggai 2:20.) Zechariah also asserts the divine source of his most solemn and beautiful utterances, when he says, "The word of Jehovah came unto Zechariah." This he repeatedly asserted. (Zechariah 1:1; Zechariah 1:7; Zechariah 7:1; Zechariah 8:1.) Malachi also introduces his mournful testimony with, "The burden of the word of Jehovah to Israel by Malachi." It is well not to overlook how this prophet, like others, looks on to the Lord coming in glory to the faithful in Israel, His "jewels" as the Sun of Righteousness with healing to them and judgment on the wicked. This prophet also pressed, in Jehovah's name, the divine authority of the writings of Moses, saying, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments." (Malachi 1:1; Malachi 4:2; Malachi 4:4.)

It is scarcely possible that we could have more conclusive internal evidence of the writers of the Old Testament scriptures having been inspired by God for their service. Well then, has the Lord informed us by His Holy Spirit that, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Romans 15:4.) (Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Not Ashamed of Christ

Not Ashamed of Christ A group of young girls, employees in the same store, might have been seen one day in busy conversation. They seemed very happy and full of interest-all but one of the number-for there was to be "a show" that evening, and they were expecting to attend it: this formed the exciting theme. The one alluded to, listened in silence to the gleeful conversation of the others. Presently one of them addressed her; "Aren't you going this evening?"

"No," she quietly replied, "I do not go to such things."

"And why not?"

"Because I am a Christian," was her reply. And now came a chorus of voices: "I'm a Christian": "And I'm a Christian": "and I'm one, too": "And we go to dances, and such things:" "We've no notion of laying ourselves on the shelf yet awhile." From the dear Christian girl came the quiet rejoinder, "God says in His word that we can not serve two masters: we cannot serve God and mammon."

"But won't you go this evening?"

"No: the Bible says we should 'seek those things which are above.'" Was not this a happy testimony for a child in Christ to bear? This dear girl was not ashamed of the "gospel of Christ." Her companions might laugh at her, but after deep exercise of soul, she had found Jesus as her Savior; and now His approval was more to her than the smiles of the world; and in His strength she stood for Him. It takes true courage to confess Christ in the face of a sneering, jeering world. But He will give courage to the one who has a true heart for Him. And by and bye, the time will come when He will confess those who have Confessed Him. The scene will then be changed. In the bright blaze of glory, in the Father's presence, and amid the host of holy angels, who have witnessed the scenes of earth, Jesus will own as His, those who, in the midst of sorrow and temptation, owned Him down here. Oh, to be true to Him! Is it not worth more than worlds!

What about the girls who said, We are Christians, too, but we are going to have our pleasure yet a while! Let the Word of God answer, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Will Jesus own such? Ah! beware, ye who have the world. A fleeting moment of pleasure may be yours; but what about that eternity of woe!

"If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him."

"Ye cannot serve two masters."

Vol 01 - Only

Only Only a word for the Master, Lovingly, quietly said;

Only a word!

Yet the Master heard; And some fainting hearts were fed.

Only a look of remonstrance, Sorrowful, gentle, and deep;

Only a look!

Yet the strong man shook; And he went alone to weep!

Only one cry from the sinner, Bitterly earnest, and wild:

"Help, Lord! I die!"

Rose in agony; And the Savior saved His child.

Only some act of devotion, Willingly, joyfully done;

"Surely 'twas naught"

(So the proud world thought); But yet souls for Christ were won!

Only an hour with the children, Pleasantly, cheerfully given;

Still seed was sown In that hour alone, Which would bring forth fruit for heaven!

"Only"-but Jesus is looking Constantly, tenderly down To earth, and sees Those who strive to please; And their love He loves to crown.

Vol 01 - Picture of a Life

Picture of a Life

How are you painting it? For the light of time or eternity, for God's eye or man's, for heaven or for earth?

Some time ago, I stood before a masterpiece of Landseer's, representing a shaggy brown mountain pony, lying on the grass. I examined it closely, and it appeared nothing but a mass of the roughest daubs and washes. On retiring about twenty feet, the daubs and washes all disappeared, and the effect was perfect; the rough hair actually seemed to stand out from the pony's back, so lifelike was the picture. It is therefore most important to look at a painting from the right distance.

If I order a work from an artist, he must know whether it is a fine cabinet picture, that will bear the closest scrutiny, or a large painting for a gallery that is wanted. In the one case he will paint in every detail most carefully and minutely; in the other, he will lay on his colors boldly and broadly, for effect from a distance.

Now for the application. We are each filling in the canvas of our lives, and as soon as the picture is completed it will be passed in review before the judgment seat of Christ before it is hung in the courts above. By the light of that throne it will be examined closely, stroke by stroke, nothing will escape.

Many a Christian's life makes a very satisfactory picture before his fellow men, that will look, alas, sadly different on that great day before the throne.

Paul felt all this, and painted his picture for God, not for man. "We are made manifest unto God," "but with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you.... but he that judgeth me is the Lord." Such words as these tell us of the light in which the artist worked, and the eye for which he painted. A man must paint his picture in the light in which it is to be shown. If it is to be viewed by day, it must be painted by day; if by gaslight, it must be painted by night; and if our life picture is to be viewed by God, it must be painted in the light of His presence. Do we not all work too much in the light of man's day for present praise from one another?

If we live for man's approval we shall probably get it, and the applause and esteem we covet will be ours; but, remember those solemn words, thrice repeated by the Lord when speaking of the Pharisees of old: "Verily I say unto you they have their reward;" and the sentence pronounced upon, all who thus seek the praise of men, "Ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 6:1-2; Matthew 6:5; Matthew 6:16)

Face the question, beloved reader. You must paint your picture for time or eternity; which then will you work for? Oh seek, as you cover the daily portion of your life's canvas, to lay on every stroke in the light of the coming judgment seat, or better still, let God guide the brush, and move and direct it as He will, for only as He works in you, "to will and to do of his good pleasure", will your life meet His approval.

Nothing but the work of God will suit the eye of God. Even in natural things man's most perfect work is full of flaws. None that have ever seen under the microscope the finest fabric that can be produced, compared with such an object as a butterfly's wing (where the very grains of dust are seen to be rows of the most beautiful miniature feathers, each one hanging from a crystal peg,) can ever forget the difference between the works of man and of God. Let one thing be understood, you may paint your picture to suit man's present night or God's eternal day, but you cannot paint for both.

One solemn thought remains. We do not know the size of our canvas. Yours may be nearly covered, and you know it not. Oh, seek then from this day to live and walk and work for the eye of God alone, that there may be at least some strokes that will stand the light of the judgment seat of Christ. The truly spiritual eye will discern your object, and approve of it, and your eternal reward will be sure.

What a time of surprise that day will be! A man's name may be on the lips of thousands as he began painting his life picture for popularity. Discovering his mistake in time (it may be,) he finished his life for the eye of God. What a picture that will be in heaven-One-half all daubs and colors that will not stand the light, and the other (unheard of by man) radiant with the beauty of Christ that will all be shown out there. Oh, may this little paper wake up every reader to live for God and for eternity in His fear and for His praise alone.

Alone with Thee, O Master, where The light of earthly glory dies;

Misunderstood by all, I dare To do what thine own heart will prize.

Such be my path through life down here, One long close lonely walk with Thee, Until past every doubt and fear Thy face in light above I see.

"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12.

{SH/}Confidence Oh! that my bark were safe on shore, Lodged in the port where Jesus is; Where neither winds nor waters roar, And all the tides are tides of bliss. But while my floating bark shall ride And beat on life's tempestuous sea, My dangerous course may Jesus guide, May He my constant pilot be!

Though surges swell as mountains high- Though death and dangers threaten me- Though sleep may seem to close Thine eye, Stay faithful from waking Thee- On the dark wave may I behold Thy Spirit form, my Lord Most High, And with these words my heart unfold, "Be not afraid; 'tis I! 'tis I!"

Thus have I found that blessed shore- That port whose tides are only bliss; And though the winds and waters roar, Know Him, my Pilot and my Peace.

Vol 01 - Praying Always

Praying Always

Two things are essential to the nurture and maintenance of a fresh and healthy state of soul; the reading of the Word and Prayer; nor can we afford to neglect either the one or the other, if we desire that our hearts and lives may answer to the grace bestowed upon us. If the reading of the word be neglected, there will be the danger of our prayers becoming the expression of mere natural desires instead of "intercession according to the will of God." We need to have our desires even for spiritual blessings formed in the atmosphere of the word, in fellowship with the Lord Himself, and by the power of His Spirit; while where this is lacking, the more earnest the soul is, the more danger will there be of a zeal that is not according to knowledge. An opposite danger, on the other hand, is that the reading of the word, without prayer, tends to a spirit of intellectualism, ending in a cold, barren state of soul in which there is neither power nor joy, but abundance of spiritual pride. There is nothing more deadening to spiritual vitality than to have the mind occupied with divine truth, while the heart and the conscience remain strangers to its power; and this is sure to be the case just in proportion as prayer is neglected. There can be no surer and more certain sign of a low, unhealthy spiritual state than the absence of prayer, and there can be no better proof that a man is "filled with the Spirit," than to know that he "gives himself unto prayer."

Dear Christians, is there not a great lack of prayer amongst us? Alas! must we not confess that our closets, our households, our assembly meetings for prayer, bear witness to this and prove that we are oftentimes culpably indifferent to this high and holy privilege of expressing our interest in all that interests the heart of God, and affects the glory of His beloved Son.

Let us consider Him-our blessed Example and Pattern. He commenced, carried on and ended His ministry with prayer. We read of Him praying at the time of His baptism, Luke 3:21; "He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed," Luke 5:16; "He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God," Luke 6:12; "He was alone praying," Luke 9:18; "He took Peter, and James, and John, and went up into a mountain to pray," Luke 9:28; "He was praying in a certain place," Luke 11:1; "He kneeled down and prayed," Luke 22:41; "He prayed more earnestly," Luke 22:44, and finally, at the very close of His marvelous life, amidst the agonies of the cross, He prays for His enemies, Luke 23:34.

Consider Paul, who has exhorted us to be "followers of him even as he also was of Christ." When we think of his arduous and unremitting labors in connection with the ministry of the word, while pursuing at the same time when necessary, his calling as a tent-maker, we almost wonder how he found any time for prayer, and yet as we read his epistles we find he was much given to prayer. See Romans 1:9; Romans 10:1; 2 Corinthians 13:7; Ephesians 1:16; Ephesians 3:14; Php 1:4; Php 1:9; Colossians 1:3; Colossians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philem. 1:4.

Remember the repeated exhortations of the word-"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication" "in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." "I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men." "Continuing instant in prayer." "Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving." "Brethren, pray for us." "Praying in the Holy Ghost." "Pray without ceasing."

Think of the blessed results that have ever followed the expression of dependence upon God in united or individual prayer. The baptism with the Holy Ghost took place on the day of Pentecost at the close of ten days spent in continued prayer and supplication. The disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and made bold to speak the word of God, "after they had prayed," Acts 4:1-37. The angel of the Lord delivered Peter from prison in answer to the prayer which "was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him," Acts 12:1-25. Scripture is full of instances of the prevalence of prayer, 2 Chronicles 32:20; and James 5:17-18; are conspicuous examples. And without doubt when the history of the Church is surveyed from the glory, it will be seen that every wave of blessing to saints and salvation to sinners, has been preceded by the effectual fervent prayers of many whose labors are better known in heaven than on earth. Men and women like Epaphras, Colossians 4:12, who have prevailed with God in their closets, and like Jabez, 1 Chronicles 4:10, have had granted to them that which they requested.

Remember that God is gathering out His elect by the preaching of the word, and ours is the blessed privilege of interceding for the salvation of the lost. The consideration of the realities of heaven and hell, a perishing world, a loving God, a waiting Savior, and a world-wide gospel, surely should constrain us to more prayer. The word is "Praying always," by which I understand that a believer, though not always in the act, should always be in the spirit of prayer. His constant state is one of dependence, therefore his constant spirit should be that of prayer. But there are special seasons when, either alone or with others the soul turns aside from all else to have to do with God Himself and pours out its desires and requests to Him. Suffer me, in conclusion, to beseech you to embrace every opportunity of thus continuing instant in prayer. Redeem every moment, and you will be surprised to discover how many opportunities for a few minutes of prayer you have hitherto suffered to pass idly away. Then, when a brother calls, or a few saints come together for a little fellowship, what a sweet opportunity for prayer. We can then plead the promise to "two of you," and blessed it is to do so. Such a privilege should never be neglected, and would there not be much more prayer than there is, if every coming together of saints was characterized by it?

Then the assembly meeting. Well, introduce me to saints who are much in private prayer, and given to social prayer, and I will show you a gathering where the prayer meetings are bright, fresh and happy; full of vigor, faith, power and liberty. Where the prayer meetings are cold, formal, and lacking in fervor and liberty, depend upon it, the closet could tell a tale of indifference and negligence in respect to prayer, of which the more public barrenness is only the painful indication and the sad result.

Vol 01 - Praying First

Praying First

Two Christian men "fell out." One heard that the other was talking against him, and he went to him and said, "Will you be kind enough to tell me my faults to my face, that I may profit by your Christian candor, and try to get rid of them?"

"Yes sir," replied the other, "I will, do it."

They went aside, and the former said: "Before you commence telling what you think wrong in me, will you please bow down with me and let us pray over it, that my eyes may be opened to see my faults as you will tell them. You lead in the prayer." This was done, and when the prayer was over, the man who had sought the interview said, "Now proceed with what you have to complain of in me." The other replied, "After praying over it, it looks so little that it is not worth talking about. The truth is, I feel now that in going around talking against you, I have been serving the devil myself, and have need that you pray for me and forgive me the wrong I have done you." Are there not many who may profit by this incident? "Speak not evil one of another, brethren." James 4:11.

Vol 01 - The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures

The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures No doubt many of our young readers are often asked the question "WHAT CHURCH DO YOU BELONG TO?" and while some may be able to answer according to the varied names in Christendom, yet they are unable to give a scriptural reason for the same. So, amidst all this confusion today, which is the result of making certain doctrines centers of gathering, it well becomes us to know what the word of God says on the subject. The first distinct intimation of the church we find in scripture is Matthew 16:18. Peter having confessed, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Jesus having owned this as the revelation of the Father to him, He further said, "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter [a stone]; and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ the Son of God, revealed of the Father, was the Rock, on which the church was to be built. Peter should be a stone in that then future building. That this is the clear meaning many other scriptures prove. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 3:11.) "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner." (Ephesians 2:20.) Is it not also quite clear that the church was then a future thing? "I will build My church" - Jesus did not say, "I have built," or "I am building;" but "I will build." The next reference to the church is in Matthew 18:17. This also is evidently future; otherwise surely whilst the Lord was with His disciples, the case of an offending brother would have been laid before Himself "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

There are no other scriptures whatever that speak of the church until we come to the church's birthday- Pentecost.

We may have to point out many types of the church, as the body and bride of Christ, in the Old Testament, but these could not be understood until it pleased God to reveal the joint body by the apostles and prophets of the New Testament. (Ephesians 3:1-21.) No doubt my reader would like to ask many questions as we go through the scriptures on this deeply interesting subject: I will anticipate those questions.

What then is the meaning of the word (ekkleesia), which we translate church? By carefully examining every place in scripture where this word occurs, its plain meaning is 'assembly.' I will point out one or two instances in which it is even so translated, and cannot mean anything else. Turn to Acts 19:32; Acts 19:39; Acts 19:41. In each of these verses, the word translated 'assembly' is ekkleesia, and evidently means, a gathering of people together. In Acts 19:37, "neither robbers of churches." This word "churches" evidently means heathen temples, or buildings. Is it the same word? Oh no, this is quite another word altogether. There is no authority in scripture for calling a building a church. We should therefore never do so.

You said Pentecost was the church's birthday. Is this clear in scripture? This is a point of such importance that nothing could be made more clear in scripture. The disciples were to remain in Jerusalem, until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5.) It was on the day

of Pentecost: "They were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind... and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:1-47 gives a full account of the first day of the church of God. It was the first announcement of the gospel of the crucified and risen Christ ascended up to God's right hand. And God used this day's preaching in the conversion of three thousand souls. These were all added: "and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common," etc. What a wondrous new thing this was, the like of which had never taken place before. "And the Lord added to the church [or assembly] daily, such as should be saved." All this was entirely of God. The Holy Ghost came down from heaven. The Lord added together. Thus this assembly on the very first day of its existence, was God's assembly. It could not be thus baptized by the Holy Ghost until the Holy Ghost was given; and He could not be given until Jesus was glorified. (John 7:39.) And Jesus could not as our Substitute and representative be glorified until He had glorified God on the cross; then the Father must straightway glorify Him, by raising Him not only from the dead but by receiving Him to glory. When all this was done, the church was built. We shall see shortly in the Epistles, how the church is linked with the glory of God.

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The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures But were none saved, then, before Christ arose from the dead, and the Holy Ghost was thus sent down? And if they did not belong to the church of God, what were they then?

Certainly, all who believed the promise of God were saved, or justified by faith, but they were and remained, saved individuals; saved Jews, or saved Gentiles. But now "There is neither Jew nor Greek... for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28.)

Then if Pentecost was the first day of the church, and it was formed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, what is the subsequent history of the Acts of the Apostles? The Acts are really the acts of the Holy Ghost, how He acted in gathering the predestined church out of the world. He used a variety of instruments; but you will find, as you read the history of this wondrous assembly that wherever the Holy Ghost acted, it was to form the one assembly of God. Power, the power of God, not of man, is seen everywhere. In Acts 3:1-26, there is a man who could say, "Silver and gold have I none;" but such was the power displayed in the name of Jesus, that all Jerusalem is stirred to its center. And though all combined against the holy One of God, yet none could deny the power of God. The church was the display of the power of God. Let us listen to the voice of prayer, at the church's first prayer meeting recorded in the Acts:... "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child [or servant] Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitudes of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; and great grace was upon them all." (Acts 4:24-33.)

What a scene this was! one assembly, one heart, one purpose, the glory of Jesus! The Holy Ghost present. Surely it makes one sigh to compare this with the present state of Christendom. How could this assembly withstand the hatred and opposition of the whole world? God was with them-the divine person of the Holy Ghost.

It is of all importance to notice this in the history of the assembly of God in the Acts. The Holy Ghost is always present to guide the assembly-this fact is the foundation of the church's constitution as seen on earth.

Peter said to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost." The Spirit said unto Peter, "Behold three men seek thee, arise therefore, and get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them." (Acts 10:19.) And after the conversion of the Gentiles, and the pouring out of the gift of the Holy Ghost on them, Peter says, "And the Spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting." In Acts 11:1-30, the

believing Gentiles were baptized by the Holy Ghost into the assembly of God at Antioch. In Acts 13:1-52, the Holy Ghost takes the same place of divine guidance in the assembly at Antioch. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." "So they being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed." When a question of great moment had to be settled by the assembly at Jerusalem, the presence of the Holy Ghost was again distinctly recognized - "for it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us," etc. (Acts 15:28.) Even the apostles were guided by this divine person, "Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia, and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not,"

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Thus we see the assembly of God, throughout its history in the Acts, under the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost. Sad failure as to this was distinctly foretold. (Acts 20:28-30.) Yea, the apostle himself failed. (Acts 21:4.) But the failure of man does not alter the truth of God. Christ is glorified; the Holy Ghost is sent down; and He remains with the church. Oh, how has Christendom utterly failed to own the divine presence and guidance of the Holy Ghost! I beg of you, my reader, to compare your own condition and associations with the Acts as to this. The church, or assembly, of God is one, as gathered together by the Lord. Sects or divisions are not of God, but carnal and of man. Is that clearly revealed in the word of God?

Nothing can be more so; read 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 1 Corinthians 3:1-5 : "For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions [or sects], are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" Oh let us own the exceeding wickedness of sectarianism; and let us return unto our God with confession and humiliation. How fearfully has Christendom departed from that beautiful scene when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul!" One object-the glory of Christ: and all filled with the Holy Ghost. Compare this, say, with a so-called Liberation meeting!! But enough-can God approve of this wicked strife?

What do the Epistles teach as to the church?

They address the children of God now, as the one assembly of God: "Unto the church [or assembly] of God which is at Corinth," etc. "Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father," etc. This wondrous assembly we find was chosen of God in Christ before the foundation of the world, and blest of God with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." All this is more fully unfolded, the eye being fixed on Christ, in Ephesians 1:1-23. There we see Him raised from among the dead, and placed as the risen man, "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things, to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." But had He not always this glory? Doubtless He had in His own eternal Godhead. As the eternal Son He had glory with the Father before the world began. But now as man, the second Adam-the man who died for our sins, according to the scriptures-the Substitute forsaken of God on the cross-having glorified God there, having finished the work given Him to do; God has given Him, as man, this highest place above all things. The universe under His feet. But all this "to us-ward who believe;" all this as head of the church, His body.

We have seen the person of the Holy Ghost in the Acts, in His own divine sovereignty, as the foundation of all church constitution on earth, we now look up and see the Lord of glory, the head

of the church, far above all, in heaven.

Surely, then, the most worthy of mankind alone can form the church of God?

If you read Ephesians 2:1-22 you will be amazed to find the opposite of this to be the case. "And you who were dead in trespasses and sins"- "children of wrath, even as others." These are the very persons whom God hath quickened together with Christ; and hath given to them the wondrous place of oneness with Him, in all that exalted glory. This is altogether of God-God's new creation. Yes, the assembly of God is God's new creation. And the once rejected Jesus, now Lord of all glory, "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." (Colossians 1:18.). Mark, He is head of the body, not the different bodies, not the different regiments of Christendom, nor religions bodies of the so-called church. No, all this is not in scripture, not of God; it is entirely of man, or Satan, who never ceases to deface the assembly of God, the one body of Christ. Do not help him a bit in this work. This wondrous display of richest grace is far beyond all human thought. Just think of these words, if you have the discernment of the Spirit, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the, members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." (1 Corinthians 12:12.) Is not this wondrous? Just as all the members of the human body are joined to the head, and form one man, or one body; so also all who believe are joined to Christ, raised from the dead far above all, and form the one Christ! But do you say that all who are saved now on earth, form the one body of Christ, and every case of true conversion to God-is it possible that all the saved belong to this one body? What; we all?

Let scripture speak: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13.) This is the church of God as found in scripture. And this is the church of God, because it is entirely of God. Read the next verses, 1 Corinthians 14:27. "God hath set the members every one in the body, as it hath pleased him." "That there should be no schism in the body." "God hath tempered the body together." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."

Let us with all lowliness of mind own all this. "There is one body and one Spirit," "one Lord," one faith, one baptism: "one God and Father of all." Carefully study the context of these words, Ephesians 4:1-6. The effect is marvelous when the soul gets hold of this great fact (long lost, but true), that there is one body, even as there is one Lord and one God; and that in scripture two or more bodies cannot be found. And above all that, this one body is of God; God's workmanship. Then it is found, that all sectarianism is direct opposition to God.

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I grant this is a tremendous discovery; that so much that we have been proud of, is sin and rebellion against God. But evidently it is so. In deep humiliation let us own it. The one assembly of God is also presented in scripture as the bride of Christ, the wife of the Lamb. Grace beyond all human thought. Here we find the outflow of the affections of Christ as man. And though this mystery of divine love was kept hid until revealed to the apostles and prophets of the churches fully stated in Ephesians 3:1-21, yet many were the precious figures of this that went before. So early as in paradise, God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." God in His own love would give Adam an object on which his love might be placed. And thus, in this figure of Him that was to come, God sets forth His own eternal purpose; to build the church, the one body, the bride; that the Man up there in the glory shall not be alone but shall have an object in which the infinite love of His own heart shall have its eternal delight. And was not the way in which God formed the woman most significant? Adam was laid in deep sleep-type of the depths of death to which Jesus must descend to redeem His bride. Of that dead rib, in figure, the living woman was built. It was to that awakened or risen Adam, the woman, one with himself, was presented. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." There were many beautiful creatures in paradise; but only one made meet for the affections of Adam. God only built one Eve, God only builds one bride for Christ.

Oh what a thought, what a fact, that "Christ also loved the church, and give Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of 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." "Christ is the head of the church" "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." (Ephesians 5:1-33.)

It is blessed to gaze on Christ, the object of the believer's love, but that is not the thought here. The assembly of God, the bride of Christ, is the object of His love, of His delight. Have you passed from death unto life? then you form part of that one body, one assembly of God, bride of Christ, object of His love. Think; object of the love of Christ! In the call of Rebecca also we have a striking illustration of the bride of Christ. Isaac must first be offered up, and received in figure from the dead; Sarah, the Jewish economy, be set aside. Then the father Abraham, sends Eliezer from Canaan to the far country to fetch a bride for Isaac, the risen son from the dead, in figure. Jewels first are given to Rebecca, and raiment, then she gladly leaves all to go to meet the bridegroom whom not having seen she loves. Then the meeting. And then is she the possessed object of Isaac's love. Again there is one bride. Just so when God had actually received His beloved Son from the dead; offered up for us, and could not be spared; then received to the heavenly Canaan; then God the Father sent the Holy Ghost, to this far country, to fetch a bride for Christ. Jewels first, the righteousness of God established by the death of the cross; and then raiment-Christ raised from the dead our righteousness; and all given to, and put upon the believer: and then farewell;

separation from all below. And, like Eliezer, the Holy Ghost leads the bride along to meet the heavenly Bridegroom. The church of the scriptures is found waiting and looking for Christ, the second time unto salvation. And, oh, the meeting! As Isaac lifted up his eyes, so the loving eyes of Jesus are looking for us, His bride. And we shall soon, like Rebecca, lift up our eyes. We shall see Him as He is and be like Him. This joyful theme I leave until we arrive at the third part of our subject-the destiny of the church.

One more interesting figure in the Old Testament-Ruth. God is pleased by these His own figures, to give us understanding of this great reality, the church, the bride of Christ. Here is one who by nature was a stranger to the covenant and promise; death also was written upon her house. A Moabitess, and her own husband dead. Most touchingly does her history illustrate the grace of Christ in bringing a soul to Himself. She is brought by Naomi in bitterness of soul to the fields of Boaz. My reader may remember the bitterness of those days in which he was led by the Spirit to Christ. But oh, how welcome in the fields of Boaz! Is she thirsty? let her drink. Is she hungry? let her eat. Does she glean? let fall handfuls on purpose for her.

Such is the grace of our precious Jesus. Are you but a gleaner lately bowed in bitterness at the sense of your own lost condition? Ah, how welcome to Christ! Are you thirsty? welcome to the water of life. Are you hungry? welcome to the bread of life. Has He not let handfuls fall on your path on purpose? But far more than this was to follow, "My daughter shall I not seek rest for thee?" And now she is identified with Boaz in the figure of death-she lay at his feet; and what the other kinsman could not do, Boaz did. He redeemed her to be his bride. And all the elders bare witness. Once the object of the gleaning kindness of Boaz, now the object of his bridal love. A welcome stranger, now the most honored place on earth, the loved bride of Boaz, and the mother of David. Has not God thus dealt with us? He would not have us be merely welcome gleaners in the fields of Christ; but one with Him; bride of the Lamb. There was but one Ruth; there is but one church, one body, one bride. May I ask, then, have all Christians to leave the different churches of men; such as Romanism, Anglicanism, Wesleyanism, etc., and to form one church, and so make one body, one assembly.

Many have thought so, but it is a most unscriptural mistake. As we have already seen, the church of God is not a thing of man's making. It is wholly of God. Eve did not make herself. It is remarkable that at Corinth, where there was most failure and division, in that very epistle we learn that all believers are baptized into one body. Let this great truth be only received in faith that all believers now are baptized into one body; and that this is of God; and the effect is sure to be that instead of fleshly boasting we shall be deeply ashamed of sectarianism. And the believer who receives this truth can no longer belong to a sect, cost what it may. Only let the word of God have its authority, then how can I deliberately do that which is in direct opposition to God. In the Acts of the Holy Ghost then, we have the history, how God set up the church in the beginning of its days. Then in the Epistles we have the wondrous revelation of what the church is.

Before we look at its ministry. There are two things found in scripture I desire to call your attention to-the Lord's supper is one of them. 1 Corinthians 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." Is not this the perfect communion of the one body of Christ-each believer

introduced into the same fellowship of divine blessing? And does not this separate us from the world? "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." This communion is further explained, as received from the Lord by Paul, in 1 Corinthians 11:1-34. What impresses me in this distinct full explanation of remembering Jesus, and showing forth His death until He comes is this; that it is the act of the whole one assembly of God. There is neither a priest with his mass, nor a minister with his sacrament. Either the one or the other would entirely set aside the very act of communion. The Romish priest, the ritualist, with all his imitations of Rome, or the presiding minister at his sacrament; all this is not in scripture, and we must admit that it is all of human origin. Not one bit of scripture can I find for a shred of it. Oh what sad human interference; yea, what assumption for any man thus to act without the word of the Lord!

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The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures The second thing I would notice is this-Does the scripture foretell the failure of the Church of God on earth in outward testimony? There are sad and abundant proofs that failure did set in even during the lives of the apostles. (See 1 Corinthians 11:18-21.) Shameful evils, divisions, and drunkenness, and the Lord's hand in judgments, because they had not humbled themselves. In Titus, unruly vain talkers, etc., are found and rebuked. Terrible failures in 2 Peter 2:1-22, and in Jude, are spoken of. But this is not all; the Spirit accurately describes the fearful apostasy of the last days of this church-time or period. (2 Timothy 3:1-17.) "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." Read the description of these days. We may say those days unto the end of the chapter.

It may be asked, If God set up the one assembly of God, one church, one body, then is not the church of Rome that one church, and ought we not all to belong to her?

If the church of Rome is the church of God as found in the scriptures, then undoubtedly we ought to belong to her. But is this the case? I am not aware of one single particular in which the church of Rome is the same, or like the church of God as found in scripture. At a future time, if the Lord will, I may compare the church of God with the church of Rome. Professing Christendom, as was foretold by the Lord, has become a great tree, and evil men lodge in its branches. It has become the great house of 2 Timothy 2:1-26.

If this is so, what instructions has the child of God for his path in these last days? Is he to remain in fellowship with all this evil, or is he to separate himself from the evil?

Hear the answer of God: The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold, and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purge [or separate] himself from these; he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use," etc. (2 Timothy 2:19-21.) And again, "From such turn away." (2 Timothy 3:1-5.) The path of the obedient Christian need not be more plain. Hatred and persecution it must bring (2 Timothy 3:12), as all have found it who have obeyed these divine instructions for our days.

I now return to the church of God as found in the scriptures.

What is its Ministry?

I just remind my reader that in looking carefully at the history of the church in the Acts, we found one all-important fact as to Ministry-the divine presence of the person of the Holy Ghost. Bearing that fact well in mind I ask your attention to the three chapters on ministry, that God has been pleased to give us, with other scriptures. (1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40) Will you read these chapters, before we proceed? Observe this is the very subject. Chapter 12 contains the great principles of the Christian ministry; chapter 13, the spirit in which that ministry should be exercised; and chapter 14, those ministries in exercise. The Spirit of

God will not lower or degrade the person of Jesus-a most important test in these days. And again, no one can truly maintain the Lordship of Jesus but by the Holy Ghost. Great care is then taken to show that the various gifts of ministry are not held by one man! There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; different ministries, but the same Lord; diversities of operations, but it is the same God that worketh all in all. And then, after enumerating different gifts, the divine sovereignty and guidance of the Holy Ghost is maintained. "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." Thus we have the constitution of the church as to ministry-Jesus, Lord on high; the Holy Ghost using the gifts as He will on earth. It may be said, Some of those gifts are no longer manifested now. True; He divideth severally as He will, then and now. This then is the principle of ministry as set up of God, the ministry that is of God. "And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers," etc., etc. I do not however find such a thought, that God set up one man to be the minister or priest of the assembly.

Now that is important, as we wish to learn all that scripture brings before us on this subject.

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Then we have the place that love, charity, has in Christian ministry. (1 Corinthians 13:1-13.) May it have its place in every line of this paper! The principle then before us is plainly this, that the Holy Ghost is in the church, using the different gifts severally as He will. All of God, but on earth the order of the Holy Ghost. There was confusion: alas, what will man not spoil? (See 1 Corinthians 14:26.) But still the same order of God by the Holy Ghost is enforced. God did not say, My order has failed, now set one man to be the minister. No; but, "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the other hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted," etc. And these are the commandments of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 14:37.)

Now this is God's only order of ministry, and He is not the author of confusion; compare this with Ephesians 4:7-16. Here the ascended Christ, far above all heavens, "gave some apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." And these were to continue. These are the gifts of Christ, and the Holy Ghost divideth severally to every man as He will. Do not forget the personal presence of the Holy Ghost. But do we not read in the Acts that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every city? (Acts 14:23.) And that Titus was to do the same; was in fact delegated to do so. (Titus 1:5.)

I have read all this, but I have never read of Paul, Barnabas, or Titus, ordaining a pastor, or an evangelist, or a teacher. These are the gifts of the ascended Christ. And even when the apostles were here, we have not the slightest hint of the ordination of any of these. The only thing at all like it was when Paul and Barnabas themselves, who had long been most eminent gifts of Christ, were commended to a special evangelical tour, separated and sent by the Holy Ghost. (Acts 13:2.) But do you mean that there is no authority in the scriptures for the ordination of a pastor over a church?

Most certainly. There is not such a thought in scripture. It is entirely human invention. Elders, or bishops, were ordained. For an elder and a bishop is the same thing, that is clear from Titus 1:5-7. The same person is an elder in verse 5 and bishop in verse 7.

Eldership was an office; pastors, and teachers, evangelists, are gifts. I speak of scripture-I know nothing else. Again, in scripture an elder is never the same as teacher, pastor, or evangelist. The elders of the church at Ephesus were bishops, and as such, overseers, and were to feed the church of God. But does not the word "feed" imply that they were teachers? This word, translated feed, is used by the Spirit eleven times in the New Testament: Matthew 2:6; Luke 17:7; John 21:16; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 9:1-27; 1 Peter 5:2; Jude 1:12; Revelation 2:27; Revelation 7:17; Revelation 12:5; Revelation 19:15. A careful examination of these and their contexts will skew that it is not the imparting of spiritual food so much, if at all, that is meant, but shepherding, more in the

sense of ruling.

Elders, then, were brethren gifted with wisdom to shepherd or rule the church of God. An elder thus gifted and qualified to rule, must rule well his own house. And one thing they were needed for, was to stop the mouths of vain talkers. This being the sense of the word, then in Jude 1:12 "feeding themselves" would rather be ruling themselves-democracy. One of the dark signs of the last days. The very opposite of knowing or discerning them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. In short, the "unruly" are to be rebuked. And might not the same person be an elder and also a teacher?

Certainly, just as the same person may be a draper and a grocer. But that does not prove, that a grocer is a draper? Peter was both elder and teacher. (1 Peter 5:1.) Thus whilst qualified persons were ordained or appointed to shepherd or rule the assembly in every city by the apostles or their delegates (and it is true that such persons might or might not be also gifted of Christ to evangelize or teach) yet in scripture we never find the shadow of an interference either to ordain or to hinder any such gifts of the ascended Christ; as teachers, evangelists, pastors, etc. Is there such an instance to be found? Not one. To do so, two things must be interfered with; the administration of the Lord in glory, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly.

Well, this is very solemn; are you quite sure there is no scripture authority for the modern ordination of a priest, clergyman, or minister? Not a single text. Does not Acts 6:1-15 : give such authority?

No, not the least. These men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, were simply appointed to serve tables, or take care of the poor. Not a thought of ordaining them as modern pastors over churches. As with the elders, these servants of the assembly might be also gifted of Christ to preach the word. Some were so, but these were never ordained to preach; not such a thought. The thing is monstrous; if we see a teacher, pastor or evangelist gifted of Christ, empowered by the Holy Ghost to preach and teach Christ, for the church or any man to ordain or appoint such a person, would be to set aside as insufficient the act of Christ. Surely to recognize, becomes the whole church of God. For recognition of Christ's gifts to His church is obedience to Him. And not to recognize a gift of Christ is disobedience to Christ.

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The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures But does not Acts 13:1-52, afford some authority for ordaining a minister or pastor over a church? Is it not often quoted for that purpose?

Read the whole passage; now is there such a thought in it as ordaining a clergyman or minister over a church, or parish? These dear devoted men were already fully recognized teachers-Barnabas and Saul: And these were appointed by the Holy Ghost to a special work, or journey; and, as such, solemnly commended by the church at Antioch. It is very strange that so many take this matter for granted, without ever searching the word of God. Is there no other scripture that seems to favor the practice of ordaining one person, to be the minister over a church?

There cannot be one. It is impossible for God to contradict Himself, and if we own the constitution of the church which is of God; that is, the Lordship of Jesus and guidance of the Holy Ghost, as we have seen, and the distributing severally as He will; those gifted to speak to the edification of the assembly, to speak two or three, the rest to judge, etc.; the moment you introduce the clergyman, or a minister, having the Reverend pre-eminence over the assembly, you immediately set aside both the presence of the Holy Ghost and the godly liberty of the gifts of Christ to speak two or three. In fact it is utterly impossible for God's order, according to His word, and man's order set up since, to stand together. One man cannot have the pre-eminence, and the Holy Ghost be free to use whom He will.

Well, all this is amazing; but do the upholders of the clerical or episcopal system really know that it has no authority in the word of God?

Strange to say, they do; and the best and latest writer on episcopacy fully admits that it is nowhere found in scripture.

Then where is it found? In tradition; the traditional history. Some say it must have begun just at the close of apostolic times; some, later. But if there be no evidence of it in apostolic times, then what of apostolic episcopal succession?

All vanishes. How can there be a succession of what did not begin? But some say it began before the death of the Apostle John, in Asia Minor; and that he must have approved of it. But does the scriptures say this system of one man having the pre-eminence over the assembly began in the days of John? that is the question.

It does, it does. John wrote an inspired epistle, on account of this, and on the very subject. We shall therefore soon see whether he approved or not of the first person that assumed the position taken by the clergyman or minister over a church. (3 John.) Truly John approves of the well-beloved Gaius, found walking in the truth. He has no greater joy than that the children of God should walk in the truth. He says, "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren." These brethren were such as went forth for Christ's name sake, taking nothing of the

Gentiles, and they had borne witness of the charity of Gaius before the assembly or church. Now if you bear in mind the truth, and the constitution of the church, the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost in sending those brethren, gifts of Christ, in His name, in keeping with the truth as to this, Gaius had gladly received the visit of these ministering brethren, in the charity inculcated, as to this very thing in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Walking in the truth, he owned the order of God. And John says, "We therefore ought to receive such that we might be fellow helpers to the truth." Oh, how sweet is this fellowship in the ministry of the truth! "Let the prophets speak two or three" had long been the command of Christ, and so we ought to receive these dear gifted brethren who come in the name of Christ, and have fellowship in the truth. This was Christian ministry as instituted of God: "We therefore ought to receive such."

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Now we have another character, and John says, "I wrote unto the assembly: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them receiveth us not." Now study these words; here is a man who takes the place of pre-eminence over the church, or assembly. But to do this, he must resist the Holy Ghost; he must refuse liberty of ministry, yes, even if it be the aged and beloved Apostle John, and brethren with him. The very first development of clericalism proves, unanswerably, that it must resist and set aside the order of God. Did the inspired John approve of this first appearance of clericalism? He says, "Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us, with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the assembly." Thank God we have the strongest possible disapproval of clericalism in these inspired words. And I ask, Do not these words faithfully describe the proud spirit of clerical pretensions to this very day?

It is too true; but surely you would not say that every ordained minister over a church has the spirit of Diotrephes, the first to assume this place?

Far from it; many a dear humble servant of the Lord groans in that false position. But what we learn from this scripture is, that every one that takes this position of ministerial pre-eminence is in direct opposition to the mind and word of God. Diotrephes could not maintain that position and receive the brethren, neither can any clergyman or minister maintain his position and receive the brethren as the gifts of Christ, to be used by the Holy Ghost in the church. But are not clergymen and ministers receiving eminent evangelists? and is not God using these in conversions? That is so, and God is using them in proportion as they lay aside the sectarian and clerical position. Nay, is not the Lord even by all this rebuking clerical assumption? A noticeable fact must here be named: God has been pleased to restore to the church the knowledge of His own order of church constitution and ministry—the personal presence of the Holy Ghost, and the liberty of Christian ministry, to serve alone the Lord Christ. And though like the remnant in the days of Nehemiah, this feeble remnant whom the Lord has been pleased thus to bless, are conscious of much failure, yet God has been pleased to be with them. And this feeble remnant have proved the all sufficiency of God; and to this feeble and unworthy little flock God has restored the full gospel of His grace. And what is the result, at this present moment? The whole mass of the clergy of every sect under the sun are arrayed in determined hostility. Pamphlet, and book, and tract, teems from the press! full of gross misrepresentation. Yes, and nothing more common than for the clergy to be preaching the very truth God has restored by these weak dependent brethren, whilst they denounce with prating words, like Diotrephes, the brethren whom they cannot receive, and maintain their clerical position. The third epistle of John exactly describes the whole struggle of to-day. On the one side, there are a few like Gaius, who have learned to obey the commands of Christ as to ministry; on the other hand, there is the whole body of the clergy determined to resist the order of God's word and

maintain that human order of ministry begun by Diotrephes; in many cases, doubtless, ignorantly. The word of God calls one of these principles good; the other He calls evil. Surely it must be good to obey God, and no less certain is it evil to follow man. But you allow elders were ordained, if pastors, teachers or evangelists never were?

Yes, just so.

Then why does not the assembly ordain them now?

Simply because the assembly did not do so then; but the apostles or those they delegated to do so. We nowhere read that the church ordained elders. How plain would be our path if we really were subject to the word of God! Never were human pretensions found more utterly wanting, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, than the claims of the ordained ministry when thus tested by the word of God. And equally so as to this, whether we apply the word to Romanism, or Protestantism-what utter departure from the order of God! Not only so, but men have the audacity to ridicule God's order, nay, to call it confusion and discord; and to pride themselves with this humanly ordained ministry as if it were the church itself; and to talk of it just as though it could be traced in succession from the apostles; when not only did the apostles not practice it, but the very last of them, the beloved John, we have heard denouncing it in the strongest possible terms. But if the episcopal establishment has no authority in the word of God for the ordination of their clergy, and it is clear they have not the least, then where do they get their authority from?

Clearly not from God; but from the world-from the State-indeed it is the world. And to call it the church is to use words calculated to deceive. It is the world divided into parishes, over which a clergyman is ordained. Is this the church of God? Compare it with the church of God as found in the scripture; and compare its ministry with the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost. I ask, is there any safety in such a system of the world, unfairly called the church? Oh, is there any wonder that its members are going so fast to Rome, having never known the presence of the Holy Ghost? and never allowed Christ to give, and the Spirit to use, His gifts, as He will? But having adopted the Diotrephes ministry, as handed down from Rome, there is no remedy, there is no hope, but to withdraw yourselves from that form of godliness without the power. The clerical order has been, from its first development, the greatest lever of Satan for evil in Christendom. Oh, my brethren in Christ, come out of her. Let us return to the Lord. It is yet true that wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is present. We can testify to the truth of this promise. We have been now, some of us, gathered together in His blessed name some thirty, some forty, and some, more years; and, blessed be the name of the Lord, we have found His presence more than all the ordained ministry in the world. He is enough, the mind and heart to fill. Ebenezer, Hallelujah. Oh how we long that you should share the deep joy of His presence with us. We assure you one hour in His dear presence makes more than up for all the misrepresentations heaped upon us.

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If you return to the truth of the scriptures no doubt you will suffer persecution, but no pen can tell the blessedness, and deliverance, and deep enjoyment, of communion with Christ that is the portion of every child of God gathered together truly to Christ, in His precious name. Do you think it is a light matter to refuse the gifts of Christ and the guidance of the Spirit in the assembly; and to set up in its place an ordained man-be that man who he may? Can you thus grieve and quench the Spirit, and not suffer in soul? Impossible.

Oh, fellow Christians, awake, awake, to these solemn truths. Search the scriptures. Will you? Will you obey them? Do you own their authority? God give you decision and purpose of heart. I write to you thus in the love of Christ. I long for your deliverance, and am not ignorant of Satan's devices to keep you where you are. I write strongly, but there is power in truth to the children of God.

Just think, if all the believers in your town were gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus, truly owning Him as Lord, and all filled with the Holy Ghost, all of one mind and soul, each having one object-the glory of Christ-no clerical hindrance to the gifts of Christ, the Spirit using all the gifts in divine power, sectarianism not received-aborred; tell me now, what would be the effect on the world of all this? The gifts are so rejected and disallowed, that we can form no idea how many are laid aside now. I heard of one minister in Ireland saying lately, he had found forty evangelists in what he called his church! All these had been dormant. Ah, can you conceive anything so dreadful, so hindering, as this ordained ministry received from Rome?

One question more, Is it not said that Timothy was ordained the first bishop of the church of the Ephesians?

Certainly not in scripture, but in a note which has been added to the end of 2 Timothy. It is impossible that this could be true. It would not only have entirely set aside the order of God; but when the apostles sent for the elders (Acts 20:1-38), there is not the slightest allusion to such a person as the bishop of Ephesus; and there must have been, had such been the case.

Well, but he might have been after this time?

Then he could not have been the first, for the elders are called bishops as we have seen. It was evidently another name for the office of elder. We must conclude then, the more we search the scriptures, the more evident it becomes that the whole pretensions of episcopacy have no foundation in the word of God.

Only once more. Is it not true, that the episcopacy is found in the most early church history?

It is. And what does this prove? That the most early so-called church history, is the history of that ecclesiastical system which so soon entirely set aside the order of ministry we find in scripture. The one is of God, and found in His word; the other of man, and found in his history. Which shall

we follow?

Many of these remarks apply to the episcopacy, falsely called the church-whether of Rome, or England. But what of all the various bodies of Dissenters?

I am not aware that any of them has returned to the scriptural order and constitution of the assembly of God and its ministry. Is the presence of the Holy Ghost, dividing to every man severally as He will, owned in any denomination?

Well, but the church elects its own pastor or minister. Is this anywhere found in scripture?

Nowhere. The ministers are Christ's gifts to the assembly; and is the assembly to elect whether they shall have a gift from Christ? The glory of Christ and the heavenly dignity of the Christian ministry is lost in such a carnal system. I do not mean the painful scenes that occur at such elections-rejections and splits-but merely to the principle of daring to call in question the prerogative of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Ghost; failure there is everywhere, but man's failure does not alter God's principles. It is, too, in vain to try to find the order of God, as found in scripture, in Wesleyan organization. Do we find a conference in scripture daring to dictate where the gifts of Christ shall be placed? God may be working by one of His servants in such a town, the conference says, No you must obey us, not God, you must leave that town and go to such a place. Can you show me anything like this in the word?

Impossible. Not even an apostle ever dare so set aside the administration of Christ. But do not these people pray to be guided by the Holy Ghost in appointing the ministers?

Yes, indeed, they do; and what must such prayer be to God? Asking God to guide them in acting in direct opposition to His word.

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I ask, now, is there any wonder that the most spiritual in all these human systems, are leaving them; and are being gathered together, in the name of the Lord Jesus; a feeble despised remnant making no pretensions to be the church of God? But this they are; they are gathered together, as at the beginning, and owning nothing, but what they find in the word of God. Do you say, I own I see the truth of all this thus brought before me, and I admit how utterly wrong my position is, but I have been trained to it; I am in it? What can I do? There is my family, my needs; and all my friends would turn against me if I walked according to the word of God. I know all that, but Satan will try to magnify these difficulties. Is not God for us, greater than all these difficulties? I feel for you; I pray for you; God will be with you in His own path. (See Psalms 119:59-60.)

All are moving; either to infidelity, entirely setting aside the authority of God's word; to Rome, and dark superstition; or to the path of Christ as at the beginning. We now turn to our third inquiry: {SH}What is the Church's Destiny?

We must be most careful not to confound this with Israel's future destiny, as foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament. No doubt every promise to Israel shall be strictly fulfilled, although they are for the present set aside, as we learn in Romans 11:1-36. I name this because of the common mistake of placing the church in the position of Israel.

All the promises to the church are heavenly, whilst the promises to Israel are earthly. The confounding these two destinies has led to the mistaken expectation that it is the church that is to be the means of the world's conversion to Christ. The gathering or forming the church is a special work, occupying a special period of time, a parenthesis in Israel's history: known unto our God is that moment, when the church will be complete. Then will be fulfilled that promise of Christ, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2-3.) This is in blessed keeping with the first type of the church, when paradise was prepared, and Adam was there, and God brought Eve unto the man. Has not our adorable Lord gone up on high to prepare a place that the desire of His heart may be fulfilled? as He says, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John 17:24.) What a destiny! with Him; where He is. The second Adam, the second Eve. We are assured by revelation from our dear Lord, that He will come Himself. He will not send His angels for us-this He will do for the elect Jews, for the earthly kingdom-but the Lord Himself shall come for us from heaven, whether we are alive and remain to that moment, or whether we are asleep. Yes, He who came down to Calvary's cross will also come in the clouds for us. He died for us; He comes for us; oh, what love is this! No judgment for our sins; no, He has borne the utmost due to us, and now He is coming without sin unto salvation.

One more precious fact, "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2.) What a destiny! to be like Him. In the full image of the heavenly man in glory-holy, pure, incorruptible! We are now accepted in the Beloved; the whole value of His person and work reckoned to us; reckoned dead with Him, and risen in Him, one with Him. But actually, and everlastingly, to be like Him! Do not our souls long for this? and can we not say, "As for me I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness?" But, oh, most wondrous fact, is not this the language of Christ Himself? So really we are one with Him, that His own resurrection was but the first-fruits. And it will be when His body, the church, raised from the dust, or changed in a moment, and the millions of the redeemed meet Him in His own likeness; then shall He see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied; sweetly shall we share His joy. From eternity has He looked forward to that moment, now so near, when the bride shall be presented to Himself: and when it comes, do we not hear Him up there in the heavens saying, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone," etc. "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." And again, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." (Song of Solomon 2:4.) The Holy Ghost must use sweetest poetry to express the heart of Christ.

Such is the joy and love of that Man in the glory. Is it not wondrous that the glorified One should thus be waiting and longing for us? He has not only loved the church, and given Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, but there is yet the presentation so dear to His own heart, 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." (Ephesians 5:27.) This is the sure destiny of the church of God; the certain result of His work on the cross. "In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in his sight." (Colossians 1:22.) "Who shall also confirm you unto the end,... blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:8.) "To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints." (1 Thessalonians 3:13.) Thus we learn the settled purpose of God to fulfill the desire of Christ. We shall see Him as He is: we shall be like Him. We shall be unblameable in holiness, in spotless purity. Then shall the heart of our eternal Lover be satisfied. Oh, think of Him thus! Do not merely read these burning words of scripture, but in them see your Lord; He who will come quickly to call you away. Ah, this world's cold wintry blast will be over and gone. No more groaning over inbred sin, no more conflict, no more sins and failure, no more sorrows; all, all gone. And if the church is thus the object fitted to be the delight of Christ through eternal days, as Eve was the object of the love of Adam, and one with himself, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, ought not then Christ to be the one object of His church now? He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. The same love that we shall enjoy in that unsullied and eternal brightness, is the love wherewith He loves us now in this world's night of darkness. Oh, let our hearts rest in His precious love. Oh, the riches of His grace, to give such vile worms a destiny so glorious. The new creation of God, pure and holy. Members of His body, of His bone, and of His flesh. I gaze on that risen Man in the glory, and can say, I shall be like Him. What can I desire more?

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The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures Does scripture unfold anything further as to the church's destiny, after it is caught up to meet and be with the Lord as described in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18? Where will the church be in that hour of temptation, coming on the earth? And in that time of tribulation such as never was, and never shall be after? and when Christendom or Babylon is destroyed? and during the millennial kingdom of Israel on earth? Through all this, what is the church's destiny? Is it made known?

It is. After the close of its history on earth, and the outward testimony of the professing church is set aside, spued out of his mouth, the veil is thrown aside. Heaven is opened to our view. The redeemed are represented, by four and-twenty elders. God rests-sits on the throne. The saints rest-they sit on thrones around the throne of God. When seraphim and cherubim, the four living ones, give glory to Him that sits on the throne, the redeemed reply with worship to God, as the Creator of all things. (Revelation 4:1-11.) The Man in the glory has waited until His redeemed ones, gathered up at His coming, are there with Him, then He will be known to be worthy to take the book of counsels and judgments out of the right hand of God-emblem of divine power. What a sight is that! look at it. The Man, the Lamb as it had been slain, worthy to go up to God-Himself God-and take from His right hand the book. The glorified Man thus becomes the executor of divine power and judgments. Up to this point, He sat on the Father's throne; now He is seen in the center of the throne-the first preparatory act, for subduing of all things to Himself. This calls out the new song of the redeemed; and the loud saying of the angelic myriads. The redeemed become deeply interested in the future circles of redemption-as the corrected translation of Revelation 5:9-10 -not 'us,' but 'them.' Wondrous chapter, revealing the association of the saints with Christ, during the period of woes, on this earth afterward described. There they remain during the opening of the seals, the blast of the trumpets, the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath on the earth, the sudden resurrection of the Roman Empire, the utter apostasy of Babylon the Great, the full ripened wickedness of Christendom, and its fearful overthrow and destruction. Then the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. (Revelation 19:1-21.) This glorious event having taken place, the Lord Jesus will come in judgment on the living nations. All that have been beheaded for the word of God during this time of dreadful infidel wickedness will now be raised from among the dead, and form part of the first resurrection, its full complement.

Then the millennium, the one thousand years of blessedness, begins. After which the judgment of the dead, and then the eternal state. The church is found in intelligent worship, during all these events, from the beginning of the judgments or before, until the marriage of the Lamb. What a destiny! all clearly revealed in the word of God. But all heavenly, and of God. Nothing earthly or of man. This is very marked, even during the millennial reign. I invite close attention to this important fact very fully explained in Revelation 21:9-27; Revelation 22:1-6.

"Come hither," says one of the seven angels, "I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." And what did he show John? "That great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from

God." What a contrast this will be to what is now seen on earth! "Holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven"-what purity! "from God." Do you, my reader, belong to this heavenly bride that will be from God, and "having the glory of God?" This language could not be applied to angel or archangel, principalities or powers: "Having the glory of God!" oh, wondrous grace! And her light like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. What a change from this sinful state, to unclouded purity, in all its unsullied clearness! The wall, great and high, speaks of the perfect security of the bride during this time of reign, and putting all things under His feet.

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The Church of God as Found in the Scriptures The gates of the city-place of administration-show the wondrous part the church will have in the administration of the world to come; and this though in connection with the earthly people of restored Israel. Every precious stone is named to show forth the glory of this building of God: it is a perfect vast cube, heavenly perfection: also a perfect square. (Revelation 21:16.) Divinely perfect whether viewed in the heavens or from the earth. The city pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the street of the city pure gold, as it were transparent glass. Inherent, absolute, stainless, purity, and divine righteousness. Constituted the righteousness of God-and nothing without to defile. All transparent purity, within and without-thus shall we be the righteousness of God. What a destiny! No temple there. The Lord God and the Lamb shall be there. Still the Lamb-forever the Lamb. All, all, we owe to the once bleeding Lamb. No need now of sun or moon, or creation-comforts: "For the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." What a home above, and all is as certain, nay, more certain, than that the morrow's sun shall light the eastern hills. Every moment bringing us, yea, bringing the whole church of God, nearer this place prepared, this home above of peace and love.

Students of the book are aware that the eternal state is described in Revelation 21:1-8. Is the destiny of the bride revealed there? Her destiny in the eternal state!

Oh yes, when the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea, she is described as the same holy city, new Jerusalem, entirely of God, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband-forever the bride of the Lamb. What an eternity awaits us! Evil having been put down, all is happy subjection to God! There is now no wall, no gates. The administration is over, all is now eternal rest with God. The eternal destiny of the church is to be the tabernacle of God. Behold the tabernacle of God is with men. Such is a very brief outline of the destiny of the church of God, the bride of the Lamb. May our blessed Lord use these few thoughts to lead His children to search the scriptures in the presence of God; in wholehearted dependence on the teaching of the Holy Ghost.

Thus we have found the church of the scriptures to be the church of God, composed of every believer born of God since God began the church at Pentecost. And that all believers are now baptized into the one body of Christ. And that to use the word church, as meaning any worldly system, as that of Rome, or England, is not only unscriptural, but calculated to deceive souls.

We have found that true Christian ministry is direct from Christ, the ascended head of the church; that these gifts of Christ were never ordained, even by the apostles, and never should be ordained by men. To do so is to set aside the high privilege and administration of Christ. We have found no authority in the word of God for such a person as a clergyman or minister, over either a parish or a church.

We have found that the constitution of the church was, first, the personal presence of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, He using whom He will of the gifts in the assembly. And though all Christendom

has set aside the church constitution as found in scripture, yet we find no reason why we should give up the word of God to follow the traditions of men.

We have found the first man who did refuse the order of God in the fellowship and ministry of his brethren, in order to establish his own clerical pre-eminence, was strongly condemned by the inspired Apostle John. We have found that the dreams of men, as to the church being an improver of this present evil world, to be all false. That the destiny of the church is entirely heavenly. And it will soon be taken away from this dark night of sin and sorrow. The home above is prepared; the Man in the glory is waiting the moment when He shall rise and call us up to the skies. As Isaac waited for his Rebecca, so waits our precious Lord. Soon we shall meet, to part no more. Forever with the Lord. The end.

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Vol 01 - The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Caught Up.

Every Christian lives in the hope of one day being with Christ his Savior, of seeing the blessed One who died for him, and of dwelling with Him in heaven forever; but the thoughts of thousands are full of confusion as to the manner in which this will be accomplished. I desire in these papers to show firstly from the word of God that the Christian hope is the coming of the Lord; what should be the attitude and conduct of those who look for Him, and how that hope will be realized. But also to speak of varied circumstances which God has revealed, as both attending and following upon its accomplishment. Leaving details for a moment, I think we may broadly divide, the thoughts of Christians on this subject as follows; namely, those who believe Christ has come spiritually; those who believe He comes for them at death; and those who look for His personal return. In conversing with the first, you will find that they treat the scriptures which refer to the coming of Christ in a spiritual way, saying that He has already come into their hearts.

Surely no Christian would dispute the fact for a moment that Christ dwells in him; he would not be a Christian without it. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His." (Romans 8:9). But the Spirit of God dwelling in the believer does not bring about any physical change as to his body; whereas, when Christ comes, there is abundant proof from scripture that mortality will be swallowed up of life. (1 Corinthians 15:50-53; 2 Corinthians 5:4). The second class suppose, that when a believer dies, it is then that the Lord comes for him, and so apply all the scriptures relating to this truth. Now surely, again, no Christian will deny for a moment, that should he die, or fall asleep (which is a scriptural term for the death of a believer, 1 Corinthians 15:51), that in departing this life he goes to be with Christ. The word of God is equally plain as to this: "Willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8); "To depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." (Php 1:23.) But here also the same record of events that will transpire at the coming of Christ, most clearly disproves that it has reference to our death or falling asleep. For whenever this event takes place, we know that the spirit and soul are separated from the body, and the latter goes to the grave and corruption (1 Corinthians 15:42-57); whereas we are expressly taught, in Php 3:20-21, that "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," etc. And again, says the apostle, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

Suffice that which I have said, to show the fallacy of the above interpretations of the scriptures treating of the Christian's hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and let us now turn to the third

class, who look for this. Here too we find, in speaking with those who own this precious truth, the greatest divergence of thought as to the details of the manner of its accomplishment, though all may agree as to the fact that it will be a personal return. We rejoice that we are in Christ, and He in us (2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:27); we are thankful to know that if it please the Lord to put us to sleep, we should be absent from the body, and present with Himself; but we cannot let any rob us of the third glorious truth, that Christ is coming to change us into His own likeness, to perfect us forever, and to display us with Himself in glory. This is the immediate Christian hope. Our only resource, in the midst of the confusion of thought surrounding us, is to come with a childlike spirit to the word itself, and in humble dependence on the guidance and teaching of the Holy Ghost, seek to gather the Lord's mind there revealed. "For," saith He, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9.) But before we trace from this unfailing source the teaching of God as to the coming of His beloved Son, the hope of the Christian, let us pause just for a moment and consider what a Christian is. For unless my reader can apply this title rightly to himself, how can this hope be any source of comfort or joy to him? It must rather fill the heart with dread and fear. What then is a Christian? One who has bowed to God's testimony as to his guilty and lost condition as a sinner (Romans 3:19-23) but who has been led through grace to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God (Romans 3:26), who came into this world to save such. One who in believing has received the forgiveness of sins, and is justified from all things; already in the enjoyment of peace with God, a possessor of God's priceless gift, "eternal life." (John 3:36). Not one who hopes to be saved; for God describes us in our natural state, as "without Christ... having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12); but one who is saved "by (in) hope" (Romans 8:24) of the glory of God. Cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, his sins are gone; the penalty of sin-death-has been borne by his blessed Substitute; judgment passed on Him in his stead. and now, united to Him who sits at God's right hand, one spirit with the Lord (1 Corinthians 6:17), he looks with joy to see his Savior face to face, and to dwell and reign with Him.

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He knows too, for God has told him in His word, that he is a citizen of heaven (Php 3:20), that he is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world (John 17:16); and is called to be a follower of that blessed One, by denying himself, and taking up his cross. (Luke 9:23). He discovers that he is down here in a world which has rejected, cast out, and crucified his Lord. This brings out the enmity of the human heart; like master, like servant, and hence he has to suffer for His name. (1 Peter 2:21.)

How gracious then of his Lord to leave with him the sweet promise of His return, and whilst away, to give him that other Comforter, Himself also coming to him, that he might not be left comfortless, or as an orphan in this dreary scene. (John 14:16-18.) The world has yet to answer for the rejection and murder of Christ; the day of vengeance of our God will surely overtake the ungodly. But the Christian, through faith in the rejected One, is delivered from it, can look up with joy and confidence into the opened heaven, and there behold his Savior and his Lord at God's right hand, knowing that He who raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken his mortal body by (or, on account of) His Spirit that dwelleth in Him. (Romans 8:11.)

If he looks back, he sees a condemned world, from which he has escaped. If he looks around, he sees the fearful effects of sin on all sides. If he looks forward here, nothing lies before him but a waste, barren wilderness, a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, and where he may soon miss his way if he once steps out of the path of faith. (2 Peter 3:17.) If he looks in, he sees that wretched self, and the workings of the flesh; for although not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, the flesh is still in him. (Romans 8:8-9; Galatians 5:16-18.) But if he turns away from the world and sin, the flesh and self, altogether, and looks by simple faith into the glory, there he beholds the One so precious to his heart, the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, the fairer than the children of men (Psalms 45:2); and as he gazes, the heart is filled with The Person of the Christ Enfolded every grace, and he longs for the moment when He who has said, "If I go away, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also," shall fulfill His parting promise. He longs for the moment when, surrounding Himself with His loved ones and His own, He shall have the full joy of His own heart, and shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then shall he meet his Lord, leaving every trace of mortality and sin behind him forever, no more to go out (Revelation 3:12), but to spend an eternity in His own blissful presence. With Him I love, in spotless white, In glory I shall shine; His blissful presence my delight, His love and glory mine.

All taint of sin shall be removed, All evil done away; And I shall dwell with God's beloved, Through God's eternal day.

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The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ My dear reader, are you one of those who know the love of Christ? Is this glorious One the treasure of your soul? Have you believed on Him? Are you a Christian? Such alone can enter into these things with joy. But if you are a mere nominal professor, wake up ere it be too late! come as a guilty sinner to the Savior. He will in no wise cast you out (John 6:37); and all your soul needs you will find in Him. Come, oh, come to Him now! and peace with God shall be yours, and you with us will joy in God, and rejoice in hope of His glory. (Romans 5:1-11.)

Having thus briefly sought to show what a Christian is, let us now dwell upon the hope that God has given him as a stay to his heart, as he passes along through this scene, that he may be encouraged and sustained as he copes with the difficulties of the way, and as an incentive to faithfulness and devotedness to his Lord. This hope is twofold. We are taught to look both for the personal return of our Lord Jesus Christ in the air for His saints, and also for His manifestation in power and great glory with His saints. These are two events which, though both form part of His second coming (the one being preliminary to the other, with a certain interval between), are carefully distinguished by the Spirit of God, and must in no way be confounded together. I shall seek to clearly show the difference between them from the word. Many have mixed up the two, and therefore marred both, by making scriptures to clash which harmonize most perfectly, and misled thousands by causing them to look for things coming on the earth instead of waiting for the Lord from heaven, as well as for His appearing in glory. Hence they have helped greatly to lower the whole tone of the Christian's walk and character.

If we turn to the Old Testament, and trace through its pages, we find a repeated testimony to the sufferings and rejection of the Messiah, and His return in power to judge His enemies, take His throne, and set up His kingdom over all the earth. (Isaiah 53:1-12, for the former, and Isaiah 11:1-16, for the latter.) It is then that He will appear in glory (and, as we find in Colossians 3:4, we shall appear with Him); but not a single word about His coming FOR His people, which is brought out in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; and referred to in several other passages in the New Testament. Distinct mention of it is made by the Lord Himself, in the familiar passage in the opening of the fourteenth chapter of John's gospel, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3) The Lord Jesus is about to leave this scene; He is going to the cross and the glory, leaving His beloved disciples in this sinful world. He cheers and encourages their troubled and drooping hearts by telling them of His Father's house, the many mansions (or abodes, see J. N. D's trans.); and, precious thought! He Himself is going to prepare a place for them. He Who was about to give Himself for them on the cross, to atone for their sins by the shedding of His own precious blood (Revelation 1:5-6), will Himself prepare a place in virtue of His own work. And not only so, but He will COME AGAIN, and receive them to Himself, that where He is, there they may be also. Nothing short of this will satisfy

His heart; He delights to do everything for them Himself. Blessed Lord Jesus! He does not say He will receive them into heaven, but to HIMSELF. It is all for the joy of His own heart of love. And it is not the place, but His own blessed, glorious Person, that He keeps before the hearts of His disciples. Hence scripture nowhere speaks of the believer going to heaven in so many words, but always to be with Christ, unless in the case of the dying thief, and then it is, "Today shalt thou be WITH ME in paradise." (Luke 23:43.) Perfectly true, it is heaven, but what would it be without Him? He does not occupy us with a place, but with Himself.

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You will remark, dear reader, in this passage, that no details are entered into by the Lord as to the accomplishing of this promise; nothing is said as to how or when He will receive them, but simply the blessed fact, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words" said Jesus, "shall not pass away." We must look further on for DETAILS, in the writings of the apostle Paul; but here is the sweet promise, unaccomplished still though none the less sure. Christ, who has gone on high, WILL COME AGAIN. The skeptic may laugh, the infidel may sneer, the mocker may mock on; yet, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." (Romans 3:4.) Jesus said, "I will come again," and come He will, "the scripture cannot be broken." (John 10:35.) He will surely satisfy His own heart's love. In Mark 13:33; Mark 13:37 we find the Lord again addressing His disciples, and telling them what their attitude and conduct should be in view of His return: "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."

We get three things brought out here as to the responsibility of the Lord's servants during His absence; first, authority; secondly, every man his work; and thirdly, to watch; for we know not the hour of His return. He would not have us fear man, or look to man for authority to go forth in service to Him; but in His name alone, gifted, schooled, fitted, and sent forth by Himself. Neither would He have us to be idle, or clashing one with another in our service; but He has a work for each one to do, and it is for us to know what it is, and do it. Nor would He have us to be slumbering and sleeping at our post, but thoroughly awake to all our responsibilities, watching as we wait for the return of our Lord. The watches are now nearly passed; evening has gone, the midnight or dark ages, have run out, the cock-crowing has been heard, and the morning is already here. For many a year past the cry has gone forth far and wide that the Master of the house is coming, and thousands who had forgotten their Lord's exhortation have been aroused to watchfulness, and now await His return. This was strikingly foretold by the Lord in Matthew 25:1-46, where He likened the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins, surrounded by the circumstances of an Eastern marriage. There He presents to us those who take the place of the Lord's people during His absence, professing Christians going forth to meet Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom. Five are called wise, five foolish. All had lamps, but the wise had oil in their vessels with their lamps; the possession of oil was that which distinguished between the two. So is it in Christendom; there are those who are wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, and have the Spirit of God, so often figured by oil in Scripture, and there are those who have a lamp of profession, light but not life. Every feature of this striking picture may be easily traced in that which has occurred, or is going on, among the professors of His name. "While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered

and slept. And at midnight there was a cry (made), Behold, the bridegroom (cometh); go ye out to meet Him." (Matthew 25:5-6). Alas! not only the professor, but the possessor also, the wise as well as the foolish, all ceased to watch. The Lord's return was lost sight of, the coming of the Bridegroom forgotten, and they all slumbered and slept. But, blessed be His name, the cry went forth, "Behold the Bridegroom." On all sides has there been a restlessness of spirit, a waking up to the fact that the Lord is coming; a vast impetus has taken place. Thousands have heard the cry, and with oil in their vessels with their lamps, and hearts engaged with Him, await His return; thousands more, foolish virgins, are running hither and thither to buy oil where it cannot be obtained. Soon, very soon, the Bridegroom, the Lord Himself, will come; and oh wondrous moment! "they that were ready, went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Now mark, dear reader, "they that were ready went in;" not those that were getting ready, neither those who were trying to be ready, nor those who hoped to be ready, but "they that were ready" went in with Him, precious, precious Jesus, and the door was shut, shut close, shut fast, and shut forever on all Christless professors. Christians, watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour!

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Another Scripture in Luke 12:35-37 brings before us in a most precious way the attitude and conduct that should characterize those who are looking for their Lord.

"Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves 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. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them." And again the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath." (Luke 12:42-44). In contrast with this-the Lord's exhortation to His servants during His absence, and the sweet and precious promises of what He will do for those who are obedient to His word, and in loving subjection are found doing these things at His return-we have, on the other hand, a solemn warning to all who take the place of the Lord's servants, but whose hearts are far from Him.

"But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." (Luke 12:45-47). And then another class is spoken of, not mentioned under the term "servant." "But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." (Luke 12:48).

How very solemn to hear, as is often the case, professing Christians saying, "The Lord will not come yet; He will not come in our day," and to find them feasting themselves with the world in forgetfulness of Him, with such searching words before us from His own lips! "My lord delayeth his coming;" the servant professedly owning His authority, but putting off His return; living for his own selfish ends, following his own will, and having no heart for Christ. Judgment with the unbelievers must be the awful portion of all such. Another, knowing his lord's will, but doing his own, and not preparing for his Lord's return.

How many of this class surround us on all sides! Open Bibles in every house, the will of the Lord distinctly expressed therein, but thousands disobedient and unprepared. Reader, how is it with you? Many stripes shall be their portion. Others throughout this vast globe who know not the Master's will, but live in their sins, few stripes shall be theirs, saith the Lord. They have never had the privileges of the one who knew his lord's will, and thus a lesser punishment will be awarded by a just Judge. Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Romans 14:12).

Thus far as to the glorious fact that our Lord will come again, and what should characterize those who look for His return. Now let us turn to the epistles of Paul, and trace the revelation that God has given us as to the manner of its accomplishment; for in his writings alone do we find it. In 1 Thessalonians 1:9 we read of the effect of the preaching of the gospel to the idolaters at Thessalonica. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus," etc. They turned to God from idols (not from idols to God), henceforth to serve Him, and wait, not for death (this is never in Scripture presented to the Christian), but for God's Son from heaven, to wait for His coming again. Also in 1 Thessalonians 2:19 Paul says to them, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?"

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Now whilst they were thus simply awaiting their Lord's return, but without intelligence as yet to how He would come (for although they had been taught to wait for Him, they had not yet been instructed as to the manner of His coming), to their surprise some of their company fell asleep. The apostle writes them, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in (through) Jesus will God bring with Him." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14.)

Having been taught to wait for God's Son from heaven, they were sorrowing for those who had fallen asleep, as though they had lost their hope. Paul encourages them by saying that if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, God would surely bring with Him those who had fallen asleep. If Jesus had risen, He was the first-fruits of them that slept (1 Corinthians 15:20), and God would surely raise them also, and bring them with His Son when He should come forth to reign at His glorious appearing, which we have already remarked upon as an important part of the Christian hope.

Hitherto the Thessalonians were ignorant of this; he would have them so no longer. But mark, dear Christian reader (for this is a most important point to apprehend in order to get a clear understanding with regard to the Lord's coming), up to this point the Thessalonians were still in darkness as to how they would arrive in the glory. They waited for Christ; but how He would come as yet they knew not. The next verses, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, give us light upon the subject. Other Scriptures speak of the saints being changed (1 Corinthians 15:51), mortality swallowed up of life (2 Corinthians 5:4); but this alone gives us the details of what will transpire when the Lord comes for His people. Without it we should still have been in the dark on this point, and hence the importance of giving special heed to this remarkable communication. It comes in parenthetically, and is a direct revelation as to what will transpire at that wondrous moment—a perfectly distinct thing from, though doubtless preliminary to, the glorious appearing or manifestation of the Lord Jesus with all His saints.

"For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord." Mark, it is not a communication through a prophet of the Old Testament, but a revelation through Paul of the secret translation of the saints to meet the Lord. "We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18).

Blessed, comforting hope! The coming of the Lord Himself, who has all power in heaven and in earth. The rejected Jesus, who was crucified through weakness (2 Corinthians 13:4), but conquered every foe, spoiled the grave, and sat down as Lord and Christ at the right hand of God, is soon coming to claim the trophies of His victory on Calvary, by taking His redeemed ones home to Himself in glory. See how this glorious event will come to pass. "We which are alive and remain," says the apostle, including himself,* thus showing that it was his hope, as that of all Christians, "shall not prevent (or go before) them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself" (not simply the Lord, but the word "Himself" is added, as though to enforce the identity and personality of Him who comes, and to guard against its being spiritualized away); "this same Jesus"- "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." The shout is an assembling shout, a shout which is also an authoritative command. Every saint will hear it, alive or asleep. The dead in Christ will rise first. All who have fallen asleep in Him shall hear His voice, and come forth. The graveyard shall yield up of its dead! the mighty ocean also. The Lord knows where the dust of all His loved ones lies.

(*Some few years after this the apostle, writing to Timothy, says, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Timothy 4:6), from which it appears that it was known to him later that he himself would pass through death.) The fool says, "How are the dead raised up?" (1 Corinthians 15:35-36). The Christian replies, "with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26). Not one shall be left behind: no, not a sheep nor a lamb of the flock of God. Not one of the vast host redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, but shall hear the well-known voice of the Lord at that wondrous moment. "The dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." Again the apostle repeats the words "We which are alive and remain," including himself. Each moment brings us nearer to this glorious consummation. If Paul, when he wrote this, had not been waiting for the Lord, thinking that at any moment he might be caught up to meet him, would he have used such language? Might he not have said, "We the dead, and they which are alive and remain," if he had not expected his Master's return at any moment. But this he did not say. And so throughout this wondrous hour of the administration of the grace of God, every Christian ought to have been waiting (Romans 8:23), and ought now still be, for the coming of the Lord Himself, as well as for His glorious appearing.

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Christian, your Lord may come, as you read these words; if so, in a moment you would leave this world; the dead in Christ shall rise first, and then we-which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them; not in a whirlwind, with a chariot of fire and horses of fire like Elijah, but caught up by the invisible power of God. Enoch walked with God, and was not, for God took him; he "was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Hebrews 11:5.) So will it be with the Christian when our Lord comes, so may it be with us this very day; we which are alive and remain shall be caught up (translated without seeing death) together with them (that is those who are asleep, "the dead in Christ") in the clouds. They rise first, but the period of time is almost imperceptible, and all together, caught up in the clouds, meet the Lord in the air. Wondrous, glorious meeting! Marvelous meeting-place, the air. And precious thought, "so shall we ever be with the Lord." Blessed prospect, His own presence, His own company, His own likeness forever and forever. "Wherefore," concludes the apostle, "comfort (encourage) one another with these words." We are not to look for death, though we may fall asleep, but this is not our hope; comfort one another with these words, the Lord is coming!

How wonderfully all Scripture hangs together! Had not our blessed Lord this glorious event before Him, although the moment had not yet come for it all to be fully told out, when He uttered those memorable words to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die"? Not only will He who is the resurrection raise, by His mighty power, that one who died in the faith, but at the same moment shall mortality be swallowed up of life. For He who is also the life shall change the living believer. He who liveth then, when Christ comes, and believeth in Him, shall never die. (John 11:25-26.) The Lord did not say, "he that believeth and liveth," but "he that liveth and believeth," shall never die, never pass through death at all.

Some have had the thought that those who are not looking for the coming of Christ may be left behind to pass through the great tribulation, which shall come upon the earth after that event. But God accredits all Christians as looking for Christ, though many sadly lack spiritual intelligence as to the accomplishment of their hope in Him. When God says, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up," and "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed," His word is a sufficient answer to such unscriptural thoughts. The 144,000 sealed of the tribes of Israel, and the great multitude of Gentiles in Revelation 7:1-17, of whom we shall speak more later on in another paper, are a fresh company preserved of God (after the translation of the heavenly saints), for millennial blessing on the earth.

How often, too, have we heard the saying: "Oh, there's one thing certain, we shall all die," although the Word of God most distinctly asserts the contrary. Enoch and Elijah were both taken away from this scene without passing through death; two others are likewise spoken of, the beast

and the false prophet (Revelation 19:20) who shall also go to hell without dying. And, as we have seen, when our Lord comes, the living believers will be changed. Scripture is often erroneously quoted to favor this wrong thought; many say, "It is appointed unto all men once to die," whereas God never said "all," but simply "it is appointed unto men." (Hebrews 9:27.) It is the lot of men, death having come in as the wages of sin, but there have been exceptions, and Christ having died and risen, believers are in Him a new creation, on new ground altogether, and there will be a further exception for all saints who are alive when He comes. Death has no claim upon them; they have died with Him.

Another passage, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22), might at first sight present some difficulty; but when understood in its true import, it perfectly accords with what we have seen. All who remain in their old Adam-standing, natural men, will surely die; but Christians are in Christ, who is risen from among the dead, and are not viewed by God here, where the two headships are contrasted, as in Adam at all. All such shall be made alive. In 1 Corinthians 15:51 we read the very opposite: "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." How beautiful the harmony of God's Word, when we forsake our own thoughts, and bow to His! The apostle, by the Spirit of God, speaks of it as a mystery which he shows to the saints, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;" what could be plainer? The Lord will take the very smallest possible space of time to accomplish this mighty act, "a moment," "the twinkling of an eye," Beloved reader, if that marvelous moment were to come now, that moment only known to the Father, that moment for which the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and all heaven wait; that moment for which every saint on earth should be waiting; would you be amongst the number changed and caught up to meet Him, and so to be "forever with the Lord?" The last trump will very shortly sound, and "the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The term "the last trump" does not mean the last that ever will sound; Scripture distinctly speaks of others in the Revelation after this. It is a military allusion; a particular call or sound, the last of a series, well-known in military circles in that day, the signal for the departure of the men. So will this trumpet-call be responded to by every saint of God; this corruptible shall put on incorruptibility and this mortal shall put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:51-56); so beautifully agreeing with what we have seen in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18. The grave shall not hold back one single saint of God; He who is alive for evermore, and has the keys of hades and of death (Revelation 1:18) will exercise His omnipotence, and all His own in earth or sea shall rise to meet Him. He was the first-fruits, "afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Corinthians 15:23.) (Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ The same precious truth is taught in many other scriptures; Christ is coming for His own. In Php 3:20-21, speaking of the Christian, we read, "For our conversation (or commonwealth) 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." He who has already subdued our souls, will then by divine power subdue our bodies, fashioning them like His own, and shortly after subdue all things to Himself. The Christian's portion is not on earth, but on high, from whence He looks for "the Lord Jesus Christ, as Savior," for such is the real force of the passage. Having received the salvation of his soul (1 Peter 1:9) he waits for the adoption, to-wit, the redemption of his body, not for death and corruption. (Romans 8:23.) He waits for the Lord Jesus Christ to come forth as the Savior, to accomplish the salvation of his body; to change it, this vile body, or body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like to the Lord's own glorious body. Mark, not a new body, but this very same one, in which we now tabernacle, changed. The bodies of believers are already the members of Christ (1 Corinthians 6:15), even now the temple of the Holy Ghost. (1 Corinthians 6:19). At that moment He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. (Romans 8:11.) And take note again here, it is not the quickening of a corruptible body, as of those dead when Christ comes, but our mortal body, those who are alive and remain, who are indwelt by the Spirit of God. And this wondrous change is wrought according to the working whereby our Lord "is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The same precious truth is connected with the remembrance of Christ in the Lord's Supper; for the apostle says, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come;" not until we go into death, but "till He come." (1 Corinthians 11:26.) The question will probably arise in the minds of some who may read this paper, "But are we not to look for signs and events happening on the earth, as indicating the approaching coming of the Lord? Do not many scriptures teach that many things will transpire beforehand?" This mistake arises from the confusion that I have already spoken of, in the minds of many, respecting two actions quite distinct as to the times of their accomplishment. There is unquestionably much to take place before Christ, the Son of man,* comes in power and great glory to judge and reign, but nothing of necessity before He descends into the air for His people. Much before the glorious appearing, but at any moment, even whilst you read these words, this latter marvelous event may happen, and all the redeemed be caught away. After this, and before the manifestation of Christ with His saints in glory, will be an interval of terrible judgments, and the hour of tribulation. (Matthew 24:21-22.)

(*Whenever Scripture speaks of the coming or appearing of Christ, under the title "Son of man," it invariably refers to His coming to judge and reign. The words, "wherein the Son of man cometh," in Matthew 25:13, are not in the original.) (Continued and To be continued.)

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The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ In Revelation 3:10-11, the Lord in addressing the angel of the Church of Philadelphia (which, taken in its historical order, corresponds with the present time), says, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from (or out of) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

Here we have a distinct and express scripture speaking of God's people being kept, not in or through the hour of temptation, but from or out of it. The manner of its accomplishment is brought out in the next verse, "Behold, I come quickly;" the word "quickly" being added for the first time. What more forcible language could be employed to show that the Lord Himself is on the very eve of coming, that we should be expecting Him every moment? And thus will the saints be removed from this scene in a moment, delivered from the awful judgments that shall come upon all the world. The Christian, who is not of the world, will be saved out of it, being translated before the judgment, like Enoch before the flood. (Genesis 5:22-24). Noah passes through it in the ark, and comes out of it on to the earth again, a type of other saints saved after (to whom we have already briefly referred), who pass through the judgments, and are brought into blessing on the earth, when Christ comes as King to reign. These are quite a distinct class from Christians, who wait for God's Son from heaven; they are preserved Israelites and Gentiles blest under a fresh dealing of God, which will go on during the short interval of judgment between the rapture or catching up of the heavenly saints, and His descent with His saints to reign.

We find then in Revelation 7:1-17, Israelites and Gentiles distinct, which clearly shows that they are not the saints of this present interval; for Christians compose the Church of God, and in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile. (1 Corinthians 12:13, Colossians 3:11.) Whenever you find these distinguished in blessing, you may rest assured the Church is not in question. But we shall speak more of this period further on.

I must next call your attention to another very interesting and precious distinction, made by the Spirit of God in relation to the coming of Christ. In the end of the Old Testament (Malachi 4:2) the prophet says "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings," etc., when rays of light and blessing shall go out to all quarters of the earth, and He shall bring in all the glories of His millennial kingdom and everlasting righteousness. This will be at His glorious appearing; the day of the Lord. Whereas in the end of the book of the Revelation, the prophecy for the Church, we find Him saying, "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come." The Church, the Bride, during the darkness of the night of this world (and "the night is far spent, the day is at hand". Romans 13:12), should be watching, and waiting for Jesus in this double character. Blessed, glorious hope!

Knowing that many are much perplexed as to whether the heavenly saints will be removed before the hour of tribulation, I will add further Scripture testimony to prove it, trusting it may be helpful to souls. In Revelation 2:3, we have seven addresses to the angels of the seven churches in Asia,

which not only treat of their state at that time, but give us a succession of features which would characterize the professing Church* on earth till the close of its existence. In each address we have the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

(*The last four, though commencing in succession, run on together till the close. Characteristics of Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea are manifest at the present day.) (Continued and To be continued.)

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The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ This is the last mention of the Church on earth. The fourth chapter (Revelation 4:1-11) opens with a new scene altogether-"a door opened in heaven," a throne, the throne of God, surrounded by twenty-four seats or thrones, and on them twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white and with crowns of gold. Who could these elders possibly represent, if not the heavenly saints? They are distinguished from angels in Revelation 5:11, their crowns and robes denote their kingly and priestly character, beautifully according with the burst of praise in Revelation 1:5-6 : "Unto Him that loved (or loves) us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings (or a kingdom) and priests unto God," etc. The term "elder" too, would denote wisdom, and "we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16.) Their posture, seated in the presence of Him who sitteth on the throne, could only be that of saints, who have perfect rest and holy boldness before Him. In Ephesians 2:6 we are viewed, even whilst still on the earth in the body, as made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; whereas angels, with one or two exceptions, throughout Scripture, are viewed standing; they are servants, we are sons. And then, too, the language used by the elders, both in celebrating God's glory in creation, and also in singing the new song of redemption, clearly shows that they are the redeemed of God. So wondrous and so blessed is the relationship we are brought into, that it is our privilege in addressing the Lord to sing, "Thou are worthy," etc. Angels say "Worthy is the Lamb."

Now mark, here are four and twenty, elders -a perfect, complete company, seated, clothed, crowned and worshipping in glory, before a single seal of the seven-sealed book or roll of God's counsels, mysteries, and judgments is broken by the Lamb, who is viewed in the midst of the throne, and who comes and takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne. Surely every saint of God that has lived on earth up till that wondrous moment will have been raised or changed to be with the Lord, before one of the judgments of the seven-sealed book falls upon the ungodly.

Another scripture helpful to a clear apprehension of this precious truth is 2 Thessalonians 2:1, where the apostle, addressing the Thessalonian saints, says, "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." (Greek-the day of the Lord is present). "Let no man deceive you by any means; for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed," etc.

You will remark here that he clearly distinguishes between the coming (or presence) of our Lord, when the saints shall be gathered together unto Him (caught up to meet Him in the air), and the day of His manifestation in glory and judgment, before which latter event the man of sin, the antichrist, will be revealed. The apostle uses the Lord's personal coming for His people as a reason why they should not be shaken in mind or troubled by fixing their thoughts on this

event. He warns them against deceivers, who in various ways, even by an anonymous letter purporting to come from the apostle and his companions, were seeking to mislead them and make out that the day of the Lord had already set in, and that their hope had not been realized. In unmistakable language he tells them of their translation to meet the Lord; then the falling away or apostasy and the revelation of the son of perdition; closing with his downfall and judgment, introductory to the setting in of the glorious day of the Lord.

Beloved reader, take heed to this important scripture, and remember the warning of the apostle, "Let no man deceive you by any means."

Again, in the last chapter of the Revelation (Revelation 22:1-21) before closing this wonderful prophecy of things coming on the earth and the dreadful crisis which is at hand, ushering in the kingdom; to encourage the hearts of His people in Himself, and to keep them waiting for His return, no less than three times the Lord repeats His precious promise. Twice He says, "Behold. I come quickly." And then, after presenting Himself as the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star, (Revelation 22:16,) a third time in more emphatic language still, "Surely, I come quickly. Amen." The blessed response of the prophet, which ought to be echoed by every Christian heart, is, "Even so; come, Lord Jesus." Reader, is it yours?

Soon shall we hear Him say, "Ye ransomed pilgrims come";

Soon will He call us hence away, And take us to His home.

Then shall each ruptured tongue His fullest praise proclaim; And sweeter voices wake the song Of "Glory to the Lamb."

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The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ "THE FIRST RESURRECTION." In treating of the coming of Christ, when His living saints will be changed and caught up to meet Him in the air, we have partially glanced at the resurrection of the saints asleep through Jesus. The two acts raising the sleeping and changing the living, taking place at the same moment, it would be difficult to treat of the latter without referring to the former. But it needs a further paper to explain the way in which the first resurrection will take place, as the fact itself is so little understood by Christians generally; by many even denied. And of those who have bowed to the testimony of God's word as to the fact, numbers have failed to grasp the full extent of this truth, or the classes of persons embraced in it.

Like the rapture of the saints, the first resurrection finds no place in revealed truth in the Old Testament; it would be impossible to gather it from its pages, as it is only treated of in the New. Theology for hundreds of years past has taught a general resurrection and a general judgment of all mankind, basing it on certain passages of Scripture, which I think in these pages I shall be enabled clearly to show have been greatly misunderstood. God's word speaks distinctly of two resurrections, and of several different judgments. In Mark 9:9-10, when the Lord came down from the mount of transfiguration, He charged His disciples "that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean." They knew of and believed in resurrection, but this remarkable communication from the Lord's own lips of the rising from the dead was a strange sound in their ears. Notice the force of the words; it was not simply of resurrection out of death that He spake, but from (Greek-from among) the dead, showing that when this wonderful event should take place, other dead ones would be left in their graves. And the resurrection of the Son of man is a sample of what will characterize the resurrection of His people.

Scripture testimony is abundant as to the fact of the resurrection of Christ. Luke, in Acts 1:3, testifies that "He showed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being seen of the apostles forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Peter in Acts 2:32, declared to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses." And Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, writes "How that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that He was seen of James, then of all the apostles. And last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time," etc. Stephen also saw Him standing at the right hand of God. (Acts 7:56) In John 5:28-29, the Lord said to His disciples, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice" (speaking of Himself), "and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." This Scripture among others, has been thought strongly to favor the thought of a general and

simultaneous rising of the dead but if we carefully examine it with the context, we shall find that the reverse is the case. In John 5:25 we read, "The hour is coming; and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." The hour spoken of here, in which the dead in sin have heard the voice of the Son of God, has already lasted a period of nearly one thousand nine hundred years, and is running on still. And surely if this first hour is thus prolonged, there is no difficulty in the second hour, which has reference to resurrection, being taken to mean a prolonged period also. And further, instead of saying that all that are in their graves shall come forth to the general resurrection, the Lord distinctly distinguishes between the good and evil, showing that the former shall come forth unto the resurrection of life, the latter to the resurrection of damnation-the one perfectly distinct from the other.* We shall see further on, the time that will elapse between the two.

(*"They that have done good" does not of course mean that any are good in themselves, for "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12); but those who, justified by faith in Christ and His finished work, walk in practical godliness as the result.(1 John 3:7.)) In the gospel of Luke 14:13-14, where the Lord was dining at the house of one of the chief Pharisees, He said unto him, "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed;... for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." This saying evidently singles out the resurrection of the just as a distinct event from that of the wicked or unjust. Why should the Lord use such language if a resurrection of just and unjust indiscriminately were intended? And how could it be called the resurrection of the just, if all will be raised together to be judged?

Matthew 27:52-53 also makes mention of an event which took place just after the death of Christ. "The graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." As to what became of these saints afterward we have no record, and where Scripture is silent, it is well for us to be silent too; but it demonstrates without question that a resurrection of certain saints from, or from among the dead, has already taken place. In this, like the resurrection of Christ, we have another sample of what will happen when the Lord comes.

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Vol 01 - The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Coming and Reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ "THE FIRST RESURRECTION." The book of the Revelation speaks so positively and definitely as to this important truth of "the first resurrection," that it seems strange that any who profess to bow to the word of God could have a shadow of doubt about it. I will cite the whole passage that refers to it.

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God; and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. 'This is the first resurrection.' Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years." Revelation 20:4; Revelation 20:6.

You will remark that in these verses the term, "the first resurrection," occurs twice; and the very fact of the use of the word "first" implies a second. Those who have part in this resurrection are called, "Blessed and holy." How could the Spirit of God use such language if the whole of mankind were intended? Nothing could be plainer than that the saints only are treated of—those who, having discovered whilst on earth their lost condition, believed the testimony of God concerning His Son, were justified, fell asleep in the faith, and come forth, blessed and holy, to the resurrection of life. The rest of the dead, as this Scripture so plainly states, "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." The just, being raised at the first resurrection, reign with Christ a thousand years, the duration of His kingdom and glory, of which we shall see more in another paper; the rest of the dead—the unjust, the wicked—remain in their graves until the close of that period, when they are raised for judgment, brought before Him who sits on the great white throne, and cast into the lake of fire. (Revelation 20:11; Revelation 20:15.) "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

We must now turn to some details connected with this truth, which may at first appear to present difficulties to any who have not considered them; for we are very apt to come to God's word full of our own thoughts and thus are unprepared to receive what He has to communicate to us. Trained in tradition, we are very slow to grasp the scope of God's thoughts as to this and other truths of Scripture.

Now not only do we read of two resurrections, perfectly distinct in time, and embracing distinct classes of persons, but if we carefully weigh the passage that we have been already dwelling on in connection with others, we find that the first resurrection will not take place all at one time. That is to say, that those who have part in it are not only saints who fall asleep previous to the coming of Christ for His people, and are raised at that moment, but also those who pass away between that event and the commencement of His reign, the latter being raised just previous thereto.

Let me explain this more fully. We have already seen that when the Lord descends into the air for His saints, all will be removed-the dead raised, the living changed; "they that are Christ's at His coming" will be raised (1 Corinthians 15:23), and those who have not fallen asleep, but are alive and remain, "shall all be changed." (1 Corinthians 15:51.) But after this has taken place, and previous to Christ's coming forth to reign, a short, but most terrible period of tribulation will elapse, unparalleled for its horrors in the world's history (Matthew 24:21-22; Revelation 3:10), during which time the beast and false prophet will be manifest and the apostasy take place, details of which we shall speak of later on.

Whilst these things are coming to pass the Spirit of God will have raised a fresh testimony of Jesus among the Jews (Christians having been caught up), and fearful persecutions will be the result. The effect of this is seen in Revelation 6:9; Revelation 6:11, "And when He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, lost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Here you will observe there are two classes of sufferers, martyrs for the truth's sake, in that day. The former are seen in the vision in the disembodied state-souls under the altar crying to the Lord for vengeance upon their enemies (a cry which would point to their Jewish character, Christians being taught to bless them which persecute, etc.) and they are told to rest until their fellow-servants and their brethren (probable Gentiles and Jews) should be killed as they. If we compare these verses with the description of the first resurrection in Revelation 20:4 that we have already looked at, we shall find these two classes of martyred saints are again brought forward, distinct from those raised and translated at the coming of Christ in the air. All is in the most perfect order.

First, "I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them." These are the heavenly saints, corresponding with those represented by the four and twenty elders (Revelation 4:1-11; Revelation 5:1-14, etc.), glorified at Christ's coming in the air, here viewed on millennial thrones, judgment given to them. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Corinthians 6:2)

Secondly, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God," corresponding with the first class of martyrs of the fifth seal (Revelation 6:9), almost the same words being used of both.

Thirdly, "And (those, Gr.) which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," corresponding with the fellow-servants and the brethren of Revelation 6:11, for whom the other martyrs are told to wait.

Now mark, those on the throne are already in glorified bodies-seated, ready to judge; but the two classes of martyrs are still viewed in the vision in the disembodied state. "I saw the souls," says the prophet; but at the close of the verse we read, "They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." All three classes share the heavenly blessing during the millennial reign; they live and

reign with Christ. (See Revelation 20:6.) But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

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It is very evident, therefore, that Hebrew—poor a language as it may be in some respects—is exquisitely precise in these very particulars. No doubt the reason is obvious. It was God's pleasure to reveal His mind as to the outward creation in the Hebrew tongue. And what makes it the more striking is, that Greek—which is such a finely expressive language in most other respects—seems to fail not a little in this. They had no words at all competent to express these shades of meaning. They were driven to other ways of putting the idea. There is always a possibility in every tongue of expressing thought; but this may, in some cases, require a circuitous method. In John 1:3 we have creation alluded to. In the first verse we read: "In the beginning was the Word"—clearly this ascends, as often noticed, before Genesis 1:1. In the one beginning God acted; in the other the Word was, the uncreated expresser of God, before His power was put forth to call anything or one into being—the Word that was with God, and that was God. "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him." There is a beautiful exactness in the Greek expression, that is not found in the English, and is not adequately answered either by the Hebrew or the English "made." Properly speaking, it does not mean anything of the sort, but "caused to be." The Word gave to all things existence. This seems to be the best Greek method of expressing creation, if it can be expressed in that tongue by one word. "All things were brought into being by Him; they began"—or, rather, "were caused to be"—"by Him." Such is the force of the term. But this does not at all match the admirable excellence of the Hebrew tongue, where we have God's own absolute act referred to. Such is the essence of the word "create," and consequently it is invariably attributed to God. We never read of any created being of whom it is predicated, unless in a figure or evident accommodation. It could not be applied to the act of a creature. Not that it always means created out of nothing. It is the word for this, but not for this only. Hence it is applied to the fifth day's work—the first production of animal life for the Adamic world (Genesis 1:21), and still more emphatically to the latest task of the sixth day, when God gave being to the chief of this lower creation (Genesis 1:27). We ought always to gather the value of a word from its usage; to the use that scripture makes of it we may wisely, and must implicitly, bow.

Thus, without going farther, this very chapter of Genesis shows that, while the word here translated "create" is proper to describe God's origination of being where there was none before, at the same time it may express a particular act of God's will where there existed materials of which God made use. For instance, where He created the sea-animals, and where He created man in the image of God, it is evident that in neither case does it mean without pre-existent materials. Here we know from the account that such there were. The statements of Scripture are inconsistent, therefore, with the notion that the word create invariably means creating out of nothing. At the same time, while this modification of the word's meaning is allowed, it remains true that, if God would express creation in its full import where there was nothing before, this is the word and none other. Where is the word besides so admirably suited to convey it?

If some suppose it a defect that the same word is used with such shades of difference, let me tell them that their objection makes a demand on Hebrew which is not met by any other language-which, if it could be met, would involve mere barbarism even if practicable to be remembered and used; in fact, there is no language where words do not express varieties of meaning. If the most precise of tongues did not admit of some modification in the use of its terms, such a catalog would be an intolerable burden. If one were bound to use a new word for every new thought, how cumbrous would human speech become! Man would sink under the weight of that he had to carry in his mind, and utter in its proper time and place. But enough of this, which I merely notice to guard the unreflecting from a common misapprehension. When God, then, expresses not the first origination of the universe, but the constituting of the earth an abode for man, we find the plain fact, that in the six days Jehovah, the God of Israel, is said to have made all things (according to the fourth commandment, which views the whole scene as we have it now, not as primarily created). Accordingly, after the Spirit of God has been brought in as moving upon the face of the waters, we are shown in the six days' work the making of the earth for man as formed by the hand of God here below.

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The Creation This is the more remarkable, because no one can pretend that the theory was known. I am aware how scholars have permitted themselves to look down on the sons of Israel. I am aware that to your Tacituses and Gibbons they were the most contemptible of mankind. I am aware that poets cannot conceal their bitter scorn. Nevertheless how comes to pass the startling fact, that there have been heaps of philosophers before and since these scornful poets and historians, ancient or modern, but the only account of creation which survives is found in the simple yet sublime words of the Hebrew Moses? Many of them, if not all, wrote of the universe since Moses; but where will you put Cl. Ptolemy-one of the greatest names-now? Here shines day by day the same majestic statement in the word of God. The more you seek to degrade the Hebrews, the more you really, though unwittingly, exalt the God who employed them to be the vehicles of communicating what none else knew. Where is any other document of the kind that stands its ground like Genesis 1:1-31? If there be, show me it or the man that wrote it. Where is the theory of the earth, up to this year of grace, which has yet given such a graphic, comprehensive, or exact statement? And this is the more admirable, because it is given in a book meant for men, women, and children; in a book expressly designed to cast the light of God on a world involved in moral darkness; in a book capable of being understood from the first day it was written, yet at the same time so written that nothing shall ever be found to contradict it up to the last day. This is what I claim for the Bible. That anything has ever really contradicted it, on grounds that will bear investigation, I have yet to learn. It has not been for want of will or effort; it has not been for want of learning or science. I do not pretend to be so ignorant as not to have looked into what men have written against the Bible. I have examined what has been said in ancient as well as modern times. But I have not seen-and I challenge any other person to show me an account of creation that carries on its own face such an admirable combination. There is a statement of facts that does not go beyond what men in olden time could profit by and understand; and yet not only does it survive all the changing thought of mankind, but it gathers fresh illustration of its truth from the advance of science wherever the latter becomes so mature and fixed as to carry general conviction along with itself. That a man living at so very early a day (as Moses unquestionably did) has written in the same brief sentence that which one of the greatest wits of antiquity, and finest critics of style, cites as challenging universal admiration for its simple sublimity; and that he has at the same time given his account with an exactness that surpasses what the illustrious Newton displayed, only within a comparatively short remove from our own time-to me is the more gratifying, because it came from the remote history of a very little people in an obscure corner of the earth. It is no use to tell me that Moses was learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians. The wisdom of the Egyptians in these matters would have only misled him. Produce me such a testimony of their wisdom, show me from their hieroglyphics, or from any other source you like, that they understood the course of creation as Moses did. There may have been some points common; but they were points common to many others besides Egyptians. They were relics of current tradition, in some way or other generally received. But were the special salient points of Moses ever endorsed by the philosophers of Greece, Rome, or Egypt? The Egyptians held eternal

matter, primeval night, and the origin of their gods from earth and heaven, not the God who in the beginning created them and all things.

It seems to me, then, that the scorn of incredulity is, as usual, exceedingly misplaced; and that Moses must not be viewed as a genius who had by depth of intellect penetrated into nature's secrets. They are not to be rifled thus. Genius may develop itself in poetry; it may happily blossom and bear fruit in a waste of seemingly barren facts. But the facts of creation are an impossibility for mind to conceive and calmly state without exposing itself to successful attacks from all sorts of shafts of a hostile world. Not so! There is One above all the geniuses, scholars, and men of science, who gave them life and breath and all things; He it was who wrote by His servant Moses.

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The Creation A Lecture on Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:1-25

Again, for the dissipation of the dismal idea of development, take the fact of the superiority of the early remains of the Saurian order above existing objects of the same kind. Can they gainsay this? They know it is true. They are perfectly aware that the idea of development in the Saurian order is a fiction, that the superior objects of that family are not those that in point of time followed as the theory would require. A single, positive and well-defined fact of the kind suffices. No doubt there are others. Without pretending to any minute acquaintance with the subject, I know this much at least, and on their own authority, or rather on facts which cannot be disputed. Will they say that we should not bow to facts? I do not dispute them, whether it be facts of criticism as to the text of Scripture, or ascertained facts in the outward world of science I do not question that facts have a meaning; but the hypothesis some seek to build upon those facts ought not to be too readily accepted.

We may now pass on to look briefly at the following days. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven."

How comes this? It is another difficulty at first sight. Did we not hear of heaven in the first verse? To be sure we did; and here we are told of heaven again. What then, -contradiction? Not in the least degree: only another heaven-that is all. And is this, then, not true? Why this other heaven? Because man was about to be made. The circumambient atmosphere, extending upwards too, was essential not only to man's existence here below, but to vegetable life, to the due activity of light and heat, as well as to all forms of animated existence.

We find under the second day, then, the lower heaven. And that this is not a merely Jewish idea, but of God, is perfectly certain from the New Testament; for there we read how Paul was caught up (at any rate "a man in Christ," who, I have no doubt, was Paul) into the third heaven. We can easily understand, therefore, that at the beginning God made two heavens, and that in this case He made the lowest one. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Here we find He made another, man being about to be made. And this is called heaven too. They are all called the heavens. There is the heaven of His presence; the heaven of the stars, planets, and other astronomical objects; and the atmospheric heaven necessary for man and living things here below.

Again we find, as that which occupies the third day, that the waters under the heaven are gathered together to one place, and the dry land appears. "And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas." And then the earth is made to bring forth grass-that lovely array, as it were, for the earth-full of beauty as well as beneficence. "Let the earth bring forth: grass, the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after his kind."

I grant you that modern science denies genera and species everywhere. Development is in effect a denial of this. The Lamarckian notion, of which we have a representative in a rather celebrated living Englishman, sets it all aside. Do they really gain much by it? I do not see that the blotting out of kinds in fruit-trees or herbs is a great acquisition of science. To me it seems to be a blotting out of the landmarks, not of science only, but of distinctions that date from the workmanship of God. It seems to be thoroughly spurious-merely one of those dark clouds that for a season flit across the horizon of science as over other worlds. It may be fashionable, but this does not make it the better. Here we are told, for God has written, that the different herbs had their kinds. And this is one of the great facts of the vegetable kingdom. The simplest gardener, that thinks as well as labors, knows this. Since man observed facts on the earth, when was it seen or heard that an apple-tree brought forth pears, Or that a pear-tree bore apples. They can prove nothing but the liveliness of their own imagination. These dreamers contradict not only Scripture and science, but the facts gathered by observation in every land.

Again, on the fourth day we hear of the luminaries. And here mark the consistency and propriety of the language. It is not said that God then created them, but simply, "Let there be lights in the firmament." It is not light now, but "lights," or light-bearers, "in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night (the stars also)." These last are just referred to, and it was the more important because, as is generally known, many of those that had the greatest weight in the ancient world adored the stars. Even Plato, although a westerner, was sufficiently tainted by orientalism to yield to the monstrous figment that the earth is a sort of living creature. As the philosophy of Aristotle directly tended to atheism (for it was low-minded empiricism), so the philosophy of Plato led into, if it was not downright, pantheism. Such was the difference between them. Pantheism, though in sound opposed, is really near akin to atheism.

God here cuts off the ground of all these delusions, as well as the objection of moderns, who too hastily assumed that the stars are said to be created at this time. It is not so. No matter how long the space required for the light from more distant stars to reach the earth, it is evident that room is left for all by what is said, and not said, in Genesis 1:1; Genesis 1:14; Genesis 1:16. Had Moses written that they were created on the fourth day, it would have contradicted the facts; but as it is expressed, not only is there no contradiction, but obviously the Bible is wiser than either the friends or the foes of revelation. Compare what Moses wrote with any philosopher you please in the ancient world. Whose writings have failed to contradict the facts of modern science? How comes it that Moses did not? Whose care was it that preserved him from here implying -as many divines have been too hasty to say for him-the creation of the lights. A Scotch university professor not long since insisted to me that Moses affirmed it. He was so ready to believe the Scripture contradicts science, that he had not even weighed these few words with care. Had Plato or Aristotle written as Moses did, how loud the boasting, and how close the scrutiny, not to "hint a fault," but to set for the excellence of their philosophy! Scripture needs no apology. All I ask is a more exact attention to the word of God on the part of those who venture to assail it. It would be wiser at least to read it first.

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Chapter 70

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The Creation: A Lecture on Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:1-25

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The Creation: A Lecture on Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:1-25 The sabbath day is introduced at the beginning, though in truth the first three verses of Genesis 2:1-25 belong properly to Genesis 1:1-31. That is, they form a part of the great week of God's work and its rest. And there is a very beautiful connection with this which meets an objection of modern times on which a word may be well bestowed. You are aware that German authors have insisted loudly (whether the idea was originated by them is more than I would say) that we are indebted to different writers for the first book of Moses (just as it used to be the fashion of the Wolffians to divide Homer among, I know not how many, rhapsodists, though, in point of fact, this created far greater difficulties than it was supposed to remove; for it is far harder to imagine half a dozen Homers than one). One thing is very certain, that Moses, according to these sages, must have been a weak foolish man, who adopted at least two different accounts, without a suspicion of what to them is obvious, that the one writer contradicted the other. Such is the discovery of modern criticism. Let me say what I am sure is the truth on this: I dare not venture to put it forward as an opinion. It seems to me a sin to state anything that rests on the clear testimony of God's word as open to a doubt. If it is a mere question of your judgment of this fact or that, or your individual estimate of the person putting it forward, or your comparative view of the circumstances passing around, it is an opinion; and of what value can it be? You are yourself the measure of it, -your ability, with your special opportunities, or general experience, and nothing more. But when we come to the word of God, we should pass from the region of human opinions. What distinguishes it is that therein God speaks, and His people, yea, every soul, is bound to hear. For my own part, I am convinced, and I trust you are no less than myself, that God has written His word intelligibly. By this I do not mean that any part of it is according to the measure of man; but that it is all written for man to God's glory, and in His wisdom. Thus, what God has been pleased to put in the plainest possible language may be beyond our fathoming; but at the same time it is not beyond our understanding and enjoying, according to our measure of faith, though we may also find out that it is unfathomable. But ever so deep as it is, and infinitely exceeding man's plummet to reach the bottom, it is as clear as it is profound, and not the mud or shallows of the creature.

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Chapter 72

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Chapter 73

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The Creation: A Lecture on Genesis 1:1-31; Genesis 2:1-25

Vol 01 - The Creation: A Lecture on Gen_1:2

The Creation: A Lecture on Genesis 1:2 The reason why man, without a revelation, cannot reach up to creation as a certainty, I suppose to be this, that man, as such apart from a higher being cannot rise above that which he is himself. He is but a creature. He may reason as to the effects of creation around him; he may arrive at inferences and convictions and so he has, as the apostle Paul shows us of God's eternal power and Godhead. At the same time, as creation is clearly out of the sphere of sense and demonstration, so there can be no certainty of it unless God reveal it. When revealed, it at once accounts for and explains that which is before the eyes of all. Men have raised many difficulties about creation. There is nothing so easy, even for a child, as to put questions hard to solve; but, after all, the difficulties and objections of speculation are generally trifling, when looked into with candor, and fairly confronted with the light of divine truth.

Thus men have asked why creation should be at a certain point of time, why not always. I answer that to say always is to deny creation. You assume by your doubt the denial of that which God's word asserts, and which even your reason can find the only key that really unlocks the universe. More than this, creation necessarily implies an exertion of the power of God; for it means that God was pleased to put forth His energy, and to give being to that which had no previous existence. And clearly it belongs to a personal being, as God is, to have a will consequently, to create when He pleases, how He pleases, and as much or as little as He pleases.

Creation, therefore, is the action of sovereign will to call into being whatever seemed fit to His wisdom. If one used "time" of this, it must be in a large sense for, strictly speaking, what we call time ordinarily is duration measured by created objects, after they have been caused to exist by God's power. In ancient times the philosophizing Jews found considerable difficulty in bringing in measures of time into their thoughts of creation. Their difficulty was precisely the opposite of that which the Gentile philosophers feel now. The modern schools of science demand enormous tracts of time; but they themselves must admit they have made profound mistakes-their own books prove it. They differ not only from their predecessors, but from one another; not only from one another, but from themselves. Give them only a few years, and we find the most confident statements made-by geologists more particularly-refuted, not merely by other writers, but by their own subsequent investigations.

Again, in general it is not a question of disputing their observations, or well-attested facts. These may be interesting and important, as well as solid; the use of them is another thing. We are entitled to judge their conclusions: they assuredly have done so themselves, with no little freedom; we are entitled on incomparably better grounds, if we have confidence in the word of God, which they have not. Only let us take care, lest we bring, by our own haste or unskilfulness, unmerited blame on that word which we seek to expound. If they have let it slip, if they have dared to despise it, so much the worse for them both now and evermore. The truth is that scripture is infinitely larger than the systems of men. I shall hope to prove, this afternoon, two things:-that after the beginning there is room for the longest successive lapses of duration; next, that the ordinary divisions of time

are expressly introduced, and this precisely when it suits the character of God's revelation, and His dealings with men. Consequently the word of God leaves ample space for all that is true in the systems both of the ancients and of the moderns. Here, then, as ordinarily, and I dare to say always, it is only ignorance of scripture, and inattention to it, which have created the difficulty, as they are apt to do. In short, the portion that has been read gives two great facts: creation at first, apart from those measures of time which belong to the present condition of the heavens and earth, secondly, the introduction of the common course of time, when God is undertaking to prepare an immediate abode for man on the earth. Thus, then, is met the Alexandrian theory, as of Philo, who thought it derogatory to God to suppose literal time in creation.*

(*Philo, in his treatise on the Mosaic account of the creation, does not go farther than saying that the six days were said for the sake of arrangement, to which number is allied, of which he curiously thinks "six" is perfection. But in his first book of Allegories, he will have it that Moses wrote Genesis 2:4 to leave the time undefined, and so to exclude the idea that the universe came into being in six days.) His conception of the divine energy was an instantaneous result. The moderns have reduced God to a being rather more like themselves. For man undoubtedly would be a long time making such a world as this, and so is ready to imagine that God must have been a long time too. I do not say that there is much to boast of, either in ancients or in moderns; but the fact is that there seems to be a true element in both these suppositions. The mischief is that neither has been rightly understood, and that one has been set against another; whereas both, duly applied, have a solid existence in fact, and in the revelation of God's word. But we must distinguish and not confound them.

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Then the second verse puts us in presence of another great fact, which has been, no doubt, illustrated by geologists, but in no way are we indebted to them for ascertaining it. Here it is in the Bible without them, and before geology was heard of; "And the earth was without form and void." It is clearly a condition totally different from the first verse. Not a word about the heaven being without form, and void; the earth alone was so. Some, no doubt, have found a difficulty because of the word "and" (!) being introduced, as if it linked the second verse with the first in point of time; but this is all a mistake. If the word "and" had not been here, the first verse might have been taken for a sort of summary of all the rest of the chapter; and thus hasty readers, and preachers, and commentators have been too disposed to treat it in expounding the chapter. They imagined that God's creating in the beginning was set out in detail under the various days that afterward follow; but that little conjunction precludes such an interpretation. Compare such statements elsewhere, as for instance, in Genesis 5:1-32 "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him." There we have the absence of the conjunction. The reason is that the first words are an abstract of that which the rest of the chapter brings before us. Had there been no "and" at the beginning of the second verse of the first chapter, the common (or at least what used to be the common) construction might plead some show of reason for itself, as far as the language of Moses is concerned. There might have then been an impeachment of the accuracy of the divine record. As it stands, there is thorough and manifest correctness. The only persons that have made mistakes are either Christians with upright wishes, who have merely attached their own erroneous notion to the scripture, or men of science who similarly misreading it have forthwith sought to malign it. There was no just ground for either; the fault was in both, not in God's word.

"And the earth was without form and void." This is a second fact. There is no limitation of the space that intervened between the original creation of heaven and earth in verse 1, and the dreary ruin depicted in the earlier clause of verse 2. We are not told what were the grounds on which God dissolved the fabric of the earth He had created, and brought it into the chaotic condition so strikingly set forth. But I repeat my assertion that the creation of a chaos, or the existence of a chaos as a primeval state, is a heathen and not a biblical thought. What the Bible says is quite inconsistent with such an idea. "Heaven and earth," we have seen does not mean chaos, but a state of things with an order necessarily distinguishing them. What use God may have made of the earth as it originally came from His fiat is another question, and our curiosity is not indulged by the Bible. The fact, however, is certain; and it is a fact of the utmost moment, and of very great interest in its place. All the facts that have been discovered of the earliest conditions of the earth fall in with it; that is to say, they point to a time when the animal, or even vegetable kingdom, when life in its lowest forms, as yet had no existence on the globe. Is there no difficulty then? I grant you that man has the utmost possible difficulty at arriving at anything more than a First Cause. What the nature of that First Cause is, how can he tell? The very same principle that leads him to feel there must

be a First Cause forbids his understanding it. The reason of this too it is not hard to see. Man himself infers a first cause, but he, a caused being, never can per se understand a first cause that is not caused. It is outside and above the sphere and nature of his own being. There man feels, and alas! would hide, his own ignorance. But here in scripture all is plain. We are told that all things above and below had a First Cause, and that He who caused them to be was God, who by the absolute act of His own will was pleased so to create (verse 1). Then (verse 2) follows another fact-all the earthly part of the creation completely dissolved, and in hopeless confusion. I shall prove that scripture refers to the same words elsewhere; never as the original state, but a state to which God was pleased to reduce the object in question. The importance of this cannot be over-estimated in such a theme as the present.

Thus in Isaiah 34:11 we have these same expressions, once more. In describing the judgment upon the land of Edom, we read, "The cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it; and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness." No man can say that this is a description of the original state of the land of Edom: it is a condition to which God's judgment brought it down. This, then, confirms the interpretation already given of Genesis 1:2. The second verse is brought in as an additional statement to the first (not an exhibition of the state which was before us in the first verse). But, further, the use made of the terms elsewhere (as Isaiah 34:1-17) shows that they suit there a condition to which God consigned what He had made, and certainly do not describe that in which He made or created it.

Again Jeremiah 4:23 refers to these same terms, and clearly in allusion to Genesis. There the prophet writes in view of the land of Israel and the judgments impending,—"I beheld the earth" (it was a prophetic vision), "and, lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled." That is, it is not at all a vision looking back to a primeval condition, but one that looks onward to the utter desolation with which God would visit a particular land, the terms being pointedly chosen from the second verse of Genesis 1:1-31. What I gather is very simple:-that there is an analogy in the use to which the Spirit of God applies His own words; that Genesis 1:2 is a description of the state, not in which God made the earth, but to which He was pleased subsequently to reduce it.

I may be met by the objection that this represents God as capricious. Far be the thought! Was not, is not, He that made the heavens and the earth all-wise? Ah! it would have been a poor thing for man, as he is now, if God had not broken up the earth;-an imperfect provision, if He had not convulsed it, and many a time too. I am not prepared to endorse, still less to oppose, what men of science, who had, as far as I am aware, no thought of illustrating the Bible, have affirmed as to the number and character of the pre-Adamite convulsions. There is one that I could name among the most exact and comprehensive of modern writers on palaeontology, and he, if I recollect aright, affirms that some nine and twenty times the crust of this earth was broken up, before man was made to dwell here below; that nine and twenty times there have been successive acts of God's power, in bringing in what was new on the basis of the breach of the old. And suppose you that all this was arbitrary? Certainly I am not going in anywise to bind my faith or yours to that which M. D'Orbigny says; however competent he may have been to give a grave and ripe judgment. Convulsions may have happened nineteen times, or nine and twenty, or thirty-nine. To my mind it is rather a precarious affirmation, the exact number on a point so delicate and difficult to ascertain

with precision. Nevertheless, the general outline I cannot but hold to be as sure a series of facts as any other in geological science-that God was pleased to form successive deposits, and after each-or, at any rate, at intervals-violently to break up the surface that He formed. And so far from this being without a worthy purpose, it was the evidently wise course of things, if He destined the earth, after these vast geological eras, to become the home of man, or at least the sphere for man's activity and responsibility in such a world as this. How else would man have reached what lay in the bowels of the earth? How else could he have availed himself, for instance, of the buried coal measures? How else could he have turned to account the minerals deposited in its depths? How else could he have quarried the lime, the marbles, and other stones concealed there. On the one hand, all this chain of successive convulsions was requisite for man, when formed on the earth; but on the other hand, it was entirely incompatible with man, or indeed, any other being, when living on the face of the earth; because these violent disruptions, of course, would have been fatal, as they were when various genera and species of living creatures did exist at each epoch when the crash took place; and consequently the tale is told by the vast beds of fossilized objects, as we all know-when God laid down not merely unstratified formations, but strata with an ascending scale of organic being, before the Adamic earth. But all this was not without a beneficent design marked with the utmost wisdom and goodness too, as all that God does and says must be. So that although He was pleased here to pass over these geologic eras silently, leaving it to man who was about to avail himself of means to discover such facts by his observation, and by that mind with which God had endowed him, yet He has left ample verge for all in verse 2. it was natural that man should survey that world on which he was made, and of which he was constituted the lord. One can understand that man goes forth and enters with interest into the conditions of the world that was put under him; for things here below were his proper domain. Naturally therefore man seeks to understand the world which has been set in his heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11), where he finds himself now an inhabitant. It is perfectly certain that all the previous states differed more or less from each other, as they were totally different from the conditions in which man was made and tested in Eden.

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The Creation: A Lecture on Geneis 1:2

Vol 01 - Truths for Young Christians

Truths for Young Christians No. 1. Righteousness and Sanctification. The object of these papers is to set the more advanced truths of the gospel before young believers in a simple and practical way. In doing this we go over well-trodden ground, and must not, therefore, look for much that is new, but rather that a consideration of these blessed truths may be to the increased glory of God both in the praises of our hearts and in the tenor of our lives. The word of God, in speaking of the work of Christ and what it has done for us, says, not only "being now justified by His blood," Romans 5:9, (regarding Christ as the great Paschal Lamb), but also "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once," Hebrews 10:10 (looking at Him as the great burnt offering, the One who died to fulfill God's will).

{SH}Forgiveness, Justification, Sanctification

Now all Christians believe that their sins are forgiven. Many, however, do not know that they are perfectly justified before a righteous God, and still more have never heard that they are now perfectly sanctified by the same work that put away their sins. It is difficult to account for this, seeing that all are equally revealed in scripture, but still it is a fact. This ignorance would not matter so much did the words mean pretty much the same thing; but not only are they distinct in themselves, but still more do they differ in their results. A man may owe a large debt: if this debt is forgiven, he is free from all penalty; if another pays it, he is justified from it. All this, however, does not fit or entitle him to enter the mansion of his creditor on familiar terms. But the work of Christ has done all these three things: by it we are forgiven, and thus saved from hell; by it we are justified, and can thus stand before a righteous God, and by it we are sanctified, and thus fitted to enter the presence of a holy God.

{SH}A Righteous and a Holy God

"Righteousness" is spoken of in Romans, "Sanctification" in Hebrews. The scene in Romans is the throne, and a righteous God; in Hebrews the sanctuary and a holy God. In Romans the point is the guilt of the sinner; in Hebrews his defilement; while, with regard to the sacrifice of Christ, (of which both speak) Romans sets before us its perfection as meeting the righteous claims of God, whereas in Hebrews we get its eternal character in being offered once for all. On these two foundations our peace rests. Christ's work must be perfect that we may have a standing at all, before a righteous God; it must also be of eternal efficacy that this standing may never be lost.

{SH}God's Will, Christ's Work, the Spirit's Witness

Justification and sanctification alike stand on a three-fold basis: In Romans we are justified by the grace God, by the blood of Christ, and by faith the operation of the Spirit. (Romans 3:24; Romans 5:1-9). In Hebrews we are sanctified by the will of God, the work of Christ, of which the Spirit is the witness. (Hebrews 10:1-39.)

Righteousness and sanctification are both the combined work of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the Father's will and grace gave the Son, the Son's blood and work accomplished our redemption, and faith causes us to accept this work to which the Spirit bears witness.

{SH/}God's Righteousness, Not Mine The righteousness is divine, not human. The righteousness of works had been sought for in vain for four thousand years, from the Gentile, the heathen philosopher, and the Jew (Romans 1:1-32; Romans 2:1-29; Romans 3:1-31) but both the Jews, who had the law, and the Gentiles, who were a law unto themselves, had failed: and the trial is finally summed up in these words: "Therefore by deeds of law (lit.) (that is by works of any kind) there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." And now a new righteousness, apart from law (of every kind) is manifested, a righteousness not of man but of God. This new righteousness is not on the principle of works at all, neither our own nor the works (or law keeping) of another put to our account, for then would righteousness still come by the law, and Christ would be dead in vain." (Galatians 2:21). It is most important to be clear on this. Righteousness comes to me through Christ's death and resurrection, not through His spotless life. Indeed, it is only in dying that He takes up my cause as my substitute. It is here I am first connected with Him. So truly is this the case that through all the epistles we hardly hear of the life of Christ before the cross at all. I believe there are but ten verses in all that speak of it, and of these five are the merest allusions (Romans 15:3; Romans 15:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23, Galatians 4:4 and Hebrews 5:7). The only two passages that really speak of it are Php 2:7-8 and 2 Peter 1:16-18, and in neither of these is there any question of Christ as our substitute, but it is Christ as our example!

(to be continued)

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Truths for Young Christians GOD IS JUST AND ALSO JUSTIFIES THE SINNER.

Righteousness is two-fold in Romans 3:1-31. God's forbearance and grace had been shown in the remission (or passing over) of the bygone sins of Old Testament saints, in spite of His own words that the soul that sins shall die, but His righteousness had not been manifested. (Romans 3:25). He now shows, therefore, the righteousness of His own character by the cross of Christ, both in His past forbearance, and in now freely justifying the believing sinner. This last act is said to be the righteousness of God upon all them that believe. Hence we get two things; first, that God Himself is just, and next that He is the justifier of him that believes. (Romans 3:26). The finished work of Christ on the sinner's behalf, accepted by God as seen in His raising Him from the dead, has set Him free to show His grace in righteousness. Mercy and truth, and righteousness and peace, have thus met together at the cross for the first time (Romans 5:1), and God no longer forbears with the believing sinner, but justifies him freely by His grace (Romans 3:24).

{SH/}A Wonderful Contrast The full perfection of the believer's standing is seen by comparing these two passages: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23.) "We have peace with God... and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Romans 5:1-2.) The perfection of Christ's work enables every believer to rejoice in the absolute certainty of entering that very glory from which he was hopelessly excluded by nature.

{SH/}Standing and State But so far we have only spoken of the believer's standing before a righteous God, and if we say nothing now of the state that must accompany it, as treated of in the following chapters, it is not because we undervalue the importance of practical righteousness, but because we must reserve this great question for future consideration.

{SH/}Seven Eternal Realities On turning now to Hebrews 9:1-28; Hebrews 10:1-39, one thing impresses us is the words "eternal," and "forever." We get in these chapters seven divine assurances of the eternal value of Christ's work. We find that Christ's offering was once forever, and that therefore He is seated forever; hence we have eternal redemption, and are perfected forever (Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 10:10; Hebrews 10:12; Hebrews 10:14). We also read that there will be no more offering on Christ's part, no more remembrance of sins on God's part, and hence no more conscience of sins on our part. (Hebrews 10:2; Hebrews 10:17-18). On these seven eternal realities our faith rests. Now the sanctification spoken of here, like the righteousness in Romans 3:1-31; Romans 4:1-25; Romans 5:1-21, is perfect and complete, absolutely independent of our state, so that even the Corinthians, who were in anything but a holy state, could be addressed as "sanctified in Christ Jesus." Of practical sanctification, as of practical righteousness, we hope to speak, but not here. Let our souls first fully enjoy and enter into the work of Christ for us. Let us glory in our perfect justification and holiness in Him who of God is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Corinthians 1:30.)

{SH/}Another Contrast Compare here, as in Romans, two passages, and see what a testimony they give to the value of Christ's work.

"The way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." (Hebrews 9:8.)

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way." (Hebrews 10:19-20.) The worshipper, who in Old Testament times was rigorously excluded from God's presence, is now made, by the infinite value of the work of Christ, so holy, that he is able to come right into the holiest of all, standing in Christ without a spot.

Let us then glory in the work of Christ; nay more, let us boast in Christ Himself, through whom we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; and above all, let none of us ever harbor even for a moment a wretched unbelieving thought of His perfect work. Doubts and fears are impossible for the one who understands for himself the full meaning of the truth of Hebrews 10:1-39. Never, never allow a doubt about a salvation, which you have had no part in procuring, but which from first to last is the perfect work of the Triune God-Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Continued)

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Truths for Young Christians PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Taking practical righteousness first, we will briefly consider what Scripture says on the subject. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 we notice this remarkable fact; that it is the first thing mentioned in separation from evil. It is also the very first thing that we are called to follow after, 1 Timothy 6:11, and also again in 2 Timothy 2:22. Thus on three separate occasions it occupies the first place. Nay, more, it is the first of the three things of which the Kingdom of God is said to consist practically (Romans 14:17.) In 2 Corinthians 6:7, it is generally described as the Christian's armor, (consider this expression well), in Ephesians 6:1-24, as the breastplate, or that which protects the vital parts. Practically, it is said to give a good conscience (1 Peter 3:16), which is also of all importance. God's eyes are over the practically righteous man (1 Peter 3:12), and that His ears are open to his cry, is seen not only here, but also in James 5:16, where the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Not in one of the passages that have been alluded to does the word "righteous" refer to our standing before God (or what is common to all Christians, and what each possesses in full perfection), but to the individual acts and character in which none is perfect, and no two are alike. Turning to Ephesians 5:1-33, we find further that this righteousness is the fruit of the light (Ephesians 5:9 new trans.), an important point to which we shall refer again. In 1 John 3:7, we find that Christ only, is the standard of it, and in 1 John 3:10 that it is a proof of the new birth.

{SH}Righteousness in Daily Life

Such, then, is a brief review of the way in which Scripture speaks of this quality of the new nature. In what, then, does it consist? In perfect uprightness of walk and ways. How is it obtained? By living daily in the light of God's presence. It is the fruit of light. Do you suppose for one moment, that the man who transacts his daily business before God, can stoop to any of the thousand tricks of trade that pervade every calling: practices that are either commonly winked at or openly allowed, but which are not according to God's standard of right? Impossible. He must do one of two things: he must forego all such ways and buy and sell and transact his business according to the perfect light in which he stands as a Christian, or, turning his back on the light and shutting his eyes to it, he must descend to the level of this world's morality, and allow many a thing to pass in his business life that he would shrink from allowing privately. Alas! how few are found in all things to carry out the former practically. How many dwarf their souls, check their spiritual life, and grieve their Lord by slipping into the latter. O, beloved reader, weigh for a moment your daily life as you read these pages, consider how it will all look before the judgment seat of Christ. Think not, because it may be you are not actively employed in business, that this has no voice for you. All have their temptations to unrighteousness, and often in most insidious forms. Live as Paul did, in the light of God's presence and the nearing eternity, and do not allow yourself to stoop to any action, however advantageous to yourself, however commended and advised by false friends, which will not bear that light.

{SH/}Be Righteous in All Things

It is fearful to think how many of us live in daily unrighteousness in what is called little things, and then venture to approach God in prayer and the Lord's table at His Supper without confession. His ears are open to the cry of the righteous. Do not forget that. Nothing so arrests the attention of the world, and makes it believe in the reality, of Christianity as righteous acts that are to one's own disadvantage. For there is no disguising the truth; "You cannot serve God and Mammon." You will lose many a dollar, and many a good opening, if you walk strictly in practical righteousness, but in eternity I need not say who will be the gainer. If you enjoy and trust in the "grace of God" that has brought you salvation, remember and practice its lessons, and see that you live soberly, **RIGHTEOUSLY**, and godly, in this present world. Search out all the wonderful Old Testament promises made to the righteous man, and remember that you are not heir to these even spiritually, save as you walk in practical righteousness. Happy indeed, is the man who, standing before God in the righteousness which He has provided, walks before his fellow-man in that practical rectitude which can alone adorn the grace that has picked him up.

(Continued and To be continued.)

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Chapter 5.

PRACTICAL SANCTIFICATION. In our last paper we spoke on the practical righteousness of the Christian; the state, which answers to his standing in the righteousness of God through the finished work of Christ. We trust the subject has been made sufficiently clear to prevent any from thinking that the one can in any way be substituted for the other, or that any Christian can do without both. None can be saved by practical righteousness, one must be made the righteousness of God in Christ. On the other hand, none can take his stand on the fact that, divine righteousness being now revealed, practical righteousness is of but little value to the Christian. This would, indeed, be a gross abuse of grace, and yet is there not some danger of our deceitful hearts becoming somewhat lax as to this? We fear there is, and that there is therefore great need in insisting on a sober, righteous and godly walk, even amongst many who are well versed (in head at least) in divine truth; for a right standing can never excuse a wrong state.

{SH/}Two Sanctifications

Turning now to sanctification, it will be seen that it also has a double aspect, connected, like righteousness, the one with our standing, the other with our state. Sanctification and holiness are the same words, and mean "set apart for God." In one or two passages only, however, does the word mean merely "set apart" without reference to what we understand as holiness.

Every believer is not only justified, but sanctified, in Christ Jesus; that is, set apart for God by the work of Christ. We have already briefly touched on this in the first paper, and therefore do no more than allude to it now; as our present theme is not that first action of the grace of God which takes us like a stone out of the quarry, and sets us apart for His holy temple, and moreover gives us a new nature which is not only absolutely righteous but absolutely holy, but is rather the question as to how that stone is cut, and polished so as practically to answer to the glorious position it is one day to have; or, in other words, how this new life shows itself, not towards man in practical righteousness, but towards God in practical holiness of walk.

{SH/}The Work in Me Is Not the Work for Me

Great confusion exists between practical sanctification and divine righteousness; the former; the progressive work of the Spirit of God in me, the other the finished work of Christ for me. As a matter of fact sanctification of the Spirit (complete, not progressive) takes place together with belief of the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:13) which is salvation; and practical sanctification is always a result of this, never a means to it. In short, I must have this new and holy life before I can practically live it day by day.

Justified and sanctified perfectly when I believe, I have subsequently to walk in practical righteousness and holiness. But salvation must come first.

{SH/}Practical Sanctification Two-Fold

Practical sanctification, the fruit of the new life, shows itself mainly in two ways-obedience and holiness; obedient according to the obedience of Christ; holy because the Father is. (1 Peter 1:1-25.) Paul's sanctification began from the moment that another will took the place of his own. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" From that instant a new power moved him, a new life energized him, a new object possessed him, a new person controlled him, the love of Christ constrained him {SH/}Obedient as Christ

We are sanctified unto obedience. We have already seen that the obedience is not for salvation (we have the blood of Christ for that), but is one of the first fruits of the new nature. And not only "unto obedience," but "unto the obedience of Christ." "Lo, I come to do Thy will," is the sentence that explains every varied action of His perfect life. The divine will that sent Him into this world, was the sole cause of every word and work, and when it was accomplished, Jesus returned whence He came.

See now the force of the words, "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, so have I also sent them into the world." We are sent into this world by Christ. But you say, "I was in it before." Yes, but you have died to it in Christ, and are now by Him sent back into it, solely and expressly for His use, to obey Him as He obeyed God. Dear friends, what do you know about all this? Anything or nothing?

Oh! that we might allow God to rouse us up to judge ourselves honestly in this matter, and that we might allow Christ to make His love a sufficient power in our hearts to lead us to live really for Him. But how is practical sanctification or holiness obtained? First, by looking at, and copying Christ; "by faith, which is in Him"-certainly not by looking at ourselves, (Moses' face did not shine because he looked at it, but because he looked at God) and secondly, by becoming servants to God (Romans 6:22) yielding our bodies to Him wholly, which is our reasonable service, and thus He alone may work in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

{SH/}Holy as the Father The second part of sanctification is holiness. This is certainly akin to purity (1 John 3:3) and is only effected when inward as well as outward. (2 Corinthians 7:1.) Without following it we cannot see God, for it is becoming to His house (both earthly and heavenly) forever (Psalms 93:5; 1 Corinthians 3:17.) We are to be holy in all manner of conversation; which is not in word only (see 1 Timothy 4:12, where they are distinguished), but in deed also. It includes a cleansing from all pollution of the flesh and spirit (2 Corinthians 7:1), which embraces far more than what we call gross sins.

How this is to be attained we have already seen. It is step by step, bit by bit. In one sense we have it already, for we have Christ in us; hence we need not despair, the good qualities are all there, and we have to bring them out. On the other hand, it is this that causes our responsibility; if they are all there, then. why are we not more holy? Why so worldly?

{SH/}Two Persecutions

Now with regard to persecutions, they are connected both with righteousness and holiness. We get the former in Matthew 5:10, and 1 Peter 3:1-22; and the latter in Matthew 5:11, and 1 Peter 4:1-19. We are persecuted for righteousness sake, because, the world is unrighteous, and does not understand the Christian's high standard right and wrong; but for following Christ and bearing,

His image in obedience and holiness in the world that crucified Him, we are also persecuted and scorned, and to such the apostle says, "Happy are ye!" and calls on us to rejoice. "Living godly" includes both a righteous and sanctified (not sanctimonious) walk and such shall suffer persecution, that is to say, not those who merely are alive in Christ, but those who "live godly." Under which head are we found? May we seek help of the Lord to live Christ, and not merely to be alive!

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 2

Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 2 The Two Natures. Our last paper was to show how perfectly and eternally all that was against the believer is cleared away forever, so that he can stand without fear before a righteous God, and enter the very presence of a thrice holy God. We saw that in Romans the scene was laid in God's judgment hall, in Hebrews it was in the sanctuary, and that while in the former, the death of Christ perfectly took away every penalty attaching to sin, in the latter, the same death eternally took away its defilement; the summing up in the one case being that the sinner who had "come short," now rejoices in hope of God's glory; in the other, the one who was "afar off," now has boldness to enter the holiest. But if any think that these magnificent truths exhaust the value of the death of Christ for the sinner, they are greatly mistaken.

{SH}Sins Taken Away, Life Given So far, we have only touched upon what it takes away from us—our sins, death, and the judgment of God. On the other hand, it gives us something, for out of death we get life everlasting. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." We receive it when we are born again. When a person believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, the entrance of the word of God, for the first time into his soul, in the power of the Spirit, produces a new life, in Scriptural language he is born again "of water (see 1 Peter 1:23) and of the Spirit."

{SH}The New Nature Has No Sin Connected With It This new nature is holy, it bears the character of God, and the child of God, viewed according to that nature, cannot sin (1 John 3:9), because he is born of God. It is this new nature that makes us desire "the glory of God," that makes us love God's presence; otherwise, although I might no longer be shut out, I should not care to enter in. It is this life alone that enables us to glorify God in this world. Had we nothing but the old sinful nature, we should still produce nothing but sins, for just as the new is holy, so the old is sinful and enmity against God; those who live in it, cannot please Him (Romans 8:1-39).

{SH}Sin and Sins The question of sins, as we have seen, is dealt with in Romans 3:1-31; Romans 4:1-25; Romans 5:1-21, and we are shown to be justified in perfect righteousness. But in what follows from the middle of Romans 5:1-21, to the end of Romans 8:1-39, the question is not one of sins but of sin (or the old nature). Hence the subject is no longer justification; for the old nature is not justified, but condemned and put to death, nor do we now read of God's righteousness, for it is no longer a question of justifying the sinner, but of his old nature being crucified with Christ. The righteousness therefore, that we do read of (Romans 6:13; Romans 6:16; Romans 6:19) is the practical righteousness of the new nature, not God's, but mine. Now the old man is said to be crucified with Christ, (Romans 6:6.) I am also said to be crucified with Christ, (Galatians 2:20), for the old man was I, it was myself. All my thoughts, words and deeds flowed from this tainted source; they might please man, but could not please God. Our old man, was judged and condemned at the cross of Christ. Tried by every test for 4,000 years, he was found to be nothing but sin, and in raising Christ from the dead on the morning of the first day of the week, God began a new race in the second Man, and set aside the first forever. The cross of Christ is the end of the

old man, and if I am to have a standing before God, it is by no cultivation or improvement of self (the Old Testament is the history of the fruitlessness of this), but in the possession of a new life, a new nature.

{SH/}Sin Still in Us But although God has done with my old nature, I have not. All that we have spoken of is a question of faith, I still feel the old evil thoughts within my heart, and shall until I leave this world. "If we say we have no sin (no old nature in us) we deceive ourselves." (1 John 1:1-10). Inasmuch as I have died to it, (Romans 6:2) that is, have done with it at the cross of Christ, and am to have (practically) no more dealings with it, I am to treat it as it is in God's sight, in short I am "to reckon myself dead unto sin." I am not to yield any member of my body to its service.

{SH/}My Personality Changed In saying all this we find that there are three things connected with this subject-my personality, and the old and new natures; therefore we get the I (the old man) or the I (the new man), or I apart from either. We get the three all in one verse, Romans 7:20, a most interesting passage, for it shows the "I" (or the man himself) discovering that he is no longer connected with the old man but the new. Let us paraphrase it thus. "Now if I (the old nature) do that I (the new nature) would not, it is no longer I (myself, the man) that do it, but sin (as a foreign body) that dwelleth in me." So also we read in Galatians 2:20, "I (the old man) am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I (the new man) live, yet not (personal)I, but Christ (who) liveth in me: that is, the new nature is inseparably associated with Christ" who is our life.

{SH/}"Is It Right?" and "Is It Wrong?" The changing of the "I" from the old to the new man is most important. It does not always take place practically in our conversion. On the contrary, do we not often hear young believers say, "I want to go to the show, etc., but it would not be right now," or "I should like to have a dress like so-and-so, or as much money as some one else"? Now here the I is plainly the old nature, for the new does not care for shows, neither does it covet: only there is also the sense of the new life. It is not necessarily that I do the wrong things, but that I look on myself as the same person, only with a new nature within me. Now let us look at a man when the "I" has changed places. "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better," says Paul. Or take the case of a young Christian who could truly say, "I would rather not go to the show, it would give me no pleasure." Now in both these the I is the new nature, for the old does not desire to be with Christ, and it does love shows.

{SH/}I Am a New Creature

It will be readily seen from considering the above, that a thousand things that were snares and temptations, when I was still allied with the old nature, are no longer so when I am living practically in the power of the new, for I am a new creature in Christ Jesus, though I still have indwelling sin.

We have gone over this subject again and again, because of its great importance. It is a wonderful step for the young believer when practically he finds that his thoughts, his feelings, his pleasures are changed, not that he does this or that, because it is right merely, but because he delights in it "after the inward man." The only way to attain to this truly happy Christian state, is by daily being occupied with Christ, daily seeking to please Him, and always looking on myself as a Christian, never allowing such a thought as, "Well, of course, I should like it, but now I am a Christian." No, if I am a Christian, what would like it, is not myself but sin that dwelleth in me. You must own that

you have still evil thoughts and passions, but always look on these as intruders, not as yourself.

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 2 - The Two Natures

Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 2 - The Two Natures No doubt among the readers of these pages there will be Christians to whom sin is as a foreign body in them, and others whose old nature is still practically themselves. To use a simile we may compare the one class to militia, the other to regular soldiers. Outwardly both wear the government's uniform, both carry arms, both are drilled, both are soldiers, and yet between the two lies, an immense difference. If the militiaman is an artisan, or a tradesman, when he has his uniform on, he is an artisan and a tradesman still. He thinks of his work or his shop, and he feels that being in the militia is something put on, but that he himself is a civilian. Not so with the regular soldier. He, too, may have been an artisan or a tradesman, but he is one no longer. It is not merely that he wears the uniform, but he himself is a soldier. A long course of separate life in the barracks, of constant association with fellow-soldiers, and of daily drill, has so completely broken the old ties that he can actually go back to the very shop where he worked and feel he is not of it, he does not belong to it, all his tastes, yes, he himself is changed. Now we are called "soldiers of Jesus Christ," not militiamen. Not to put on Christianity at times but to be living Christian men and women, and the only way we can express what spirit we are of is by our bodies. Hence the whole question is, to what do I now yield my members? Is it to the old nature, the foreign body that still dwells in me? No; I will use them myself. I love truth, I love holiness, I love the Lord, and I will serve Him with my tongue, my hands, and my feet. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Think not, however, this is the work of a day. The old nature which has been yourself in the past, and has had sole control over all your members may manifest itself by its promptings. It is only by reckoning ourselves dead to sin, and alive unto God, that our members cease to be under the sway of the old master and we become accustomed to the new. You will find the old and new occupation for lips, hands and feet, in Ephesians 4:1-32; Ephesians 5:1-33. May the Lord make each of us true soldiers of Jesus Christ, men who have practically so broken the power of the old life as to be able to return to old scenes and associations as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

We have as yet said nothing as to the channel in which the new nature flows. As this paper is already long enough, we will therefore leave the unfolding of the new life for another time.

(Continued and To be continued.)

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Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 3

ETERNAL LIFE. In the last paper we considered the two natures that are in the Christian, and the relation of the man himself to them. We saw that the great point was for the man himself to let the new nature be the life in which he lives every day, and to treat the old nature as a foreign body to be kept in death or reckon himself dead to it. Before passing on to consider the channel in which the new life flows, let us pause a moment to make this still plainer by a well-known simile.

{SH/}The Two Tenants

Supposing a landlord has rented his house to a bad tenant, who drinks, gambles, swears, is a disgrace to the neighborhood, and never pays any rent; and suppose that at last (the law allowing him), he forgives all the back rent and puts a new tenant, a quiet, respectable, industrious man in the house, with full authority to keep the bad tenant in custody in one of the rooms, not to let him go about the house, and above all never to allow him to open the door. We should then have a rough picture of the Christian. His body is the house, his old nature the bad tenant, his new nature the good tenant, and God the owner of the property; for our bodies are not our own, but the Lord's. So to speak, we do not live in our own houses, but are merely tenants at will—a solemn, and often forgotten truth.

{SH/}The Comforter-The Holy' Ghost

Now comes a difficulty. The bad tenant is a very strong old man; the new tenant is a weak young man, and though he has full authority, he has no power to carry out the landlord's wishes. He appeals for help, and the landlord sends from his own house a strong friend to help him to overcome the old tenant, and to keep him in custody. This strong friend is the Holy Spirit ("strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man," Ephesians 3:16), and hence we often read of His overcoming the old tenant, rather than of the new tenant's doing so. See Galatians 5:17; Galatians 5:25, etc. We must of course understand that this friend never interferes unless the new tenant wishes it.

Suppose, now, I call with some boon companions at this house to spend a pleasant evening with my old friend who lives there. I hear there has been some change going on at the house, but I do not exactly know what. The door is opened by the old tenant, but he has a cowed look on his face, and when I tell him what I have come for, he says, "Well, of course I should like to ask you in, but I cannot, because the new tenant would not like it. You see he is responsible now to the landlord for this house, and he is very strict in having it kept quiet and respectable. I'm only out now because he is asleep, but if there was any noise in the house, he would soon shut me up again." It is clear in this case the same man answers whom I have known all along; the only difference being he has had his rent forgiven, and there is a new tenant in the house of whom he is afraid. Now, suppose that I call again in a few months to try and induce my old friend to come and spend a gay evening with me. It is quite dark when I knock at the door, so that I cannot see who opens it, but, supposing

it is my old friend, I say, "Come along to the theater with me."

"I never go there," is the reply.

"I know that," I say, "for you are afraid now."

"No, I am not afraid, I do not care for it."

"Come, now," I say, "that won't do, I know you like it well enough, but you are afraid of the new tenant."

"I am the new tenant," answers the voice.

Now, in this case, I do not find the old man with his rent forgiven, but a new man altogether, answering all my questions, and declaring he does not care for worldly pleasures at all. Here is quite a new thing, but this is also the true Christian position: that is, always to let your new nature answer the front door, never the old. Supposing now that I continue calling for some months, and invariably get the same answer. No wonder that I think that the old man must be dead, for he never answers the door. So he is, as far as any outward expression of his existence is concerned. The new tenant, however, could tell me of many a desperate attempt he makes to break loose from his close confinement, when nothing but the strength of the Friend prevents him from being as bad as ever.

We must remember this is but an illustration, but still it may help a little in understanding the two natures. Let us for next month consider the new nature, the eternal life the Christian possesses.

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Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 3 CHRIST IS OUR LIFE. This eternal life that is in us was, and is, in Christ. In 1 John 5:11 we read "this life is in His Son." There is the source; but in 1 John 3:15 we read "Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" which necessarily infers that there are others who have. It has been manifested once in all its divine perfectness, in the walk of the man Christ Jesus. In us it is only shown in broken bits, and very imperfectly. Now Christ is this life, and He is also its object. This is expressed in Colossians 3:11. "Christ is all (as object), and in all" (as life). This life gives a capacity of communion with the Father and the Son (1 John 1:1-10.); also necessarily (being the same life in all) with one another.

{SH/}Fellowship

"With the Father." This life on earth was the object of the Father's perfect complacency. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." There was none then to share the Father's joy, because Christ must be in us before He can be all to us. We must have the life, before we can understand or appreciate it. Now, however, we have fellowship with the Father in His pleasure in Christ. Again, "With the Son," God was ever His object. We, too, have now an object outside ourselves. His will is ever our delight. In this we have fellowship with the Son. "With one another," in our life, our hopes, our aspirations, our objects, our worship. Now, if God has given us no less an object than that which fills His heart, it is evident it must overflow ours. Therefore, if occupied with Christ, our hearts must overflow, and the overflowing of the heart is called worship and praise.

{SH/}The Conscience and Heart

Now the life of Christ was manifested in two ways, as grace and truth, or, in other words, as love and light. We, on the other hand, are complex beings, having both a conscience and a heart. The life is thus beautifully adapted to control the entire man, the conscience being guided by the light, and the heart ruled by the love. Oh, beloved reader, well may we ask "What manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" Consider, for a moment, our present glorious position: all our sins forever gone before God, justified and sanctified in Christ Jesus, and thus, made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, having a new, a perfect, an endless life, strengthened by the constant presence of an almighty Friend and Comforter, Christ's love using and filling and swaying our hearts, His light guiding and controlling our consciences. Listen for a moment to these words, and think that we "ought to walk even as He walked." Christ was at once a conqueror, a sufferer, and a benefactor. What moral glories shine in such an assemblage! He overcame the world, refusing all its attractions and offers. He suffered from it, witnessing for God against its whole course and spirit. He blessed it, dispensing His love and power continually, returning good for evil. Its temptations only made Him a conqueror; its pollutions and enmities only a sufferer; its miseries only a benefactor. Jesus did good, and that, hoping for nothing again. He gave, and His left hand did not know what His right hand was doing. Never, in one single instance, as I believe, did He claim either the person or the services of those whom He restored and delivered. Jesus loved, and healed, and saved, looking for nothing again. Surely there is

something beyond human conception in the delineation of such a character.

One cannot leave a subject like this without a sigh, as one thinks of how far, how very far, we come short of such a glorious example, and of the purpose God has in leaving us in this world. We see many men, godless men, men who deny everything we believe, seeking to lead upright, noble lives. Not knowing God, yet they are seeking to live unselfish lives for others, to spend and be spent for mankind; and shall we, with the whole horizon of our life lightened up with these eternal realities, live for ourselves? or shall we live for Him who died for us and rose again? "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." May the Lord seal home to our hearts in living power the subject we have been considering, and give us each to feel the controlling power of the love of Christ that passes all understanding. In our next paper, the Lord willing, we will consider some of the qualities of this eternal life and new nature.

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 4 - Practical Righteousness

Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 4 - Practical Righteousness In the first of this series of papers we spoke about our standing in righteousness and sanctification before God. We saw that, by the work of Christ, as brought out in Romans, we are made the righteousness of God, so that we are justified from all things through our Savior's death and resurrection. We also saw that in Hebrews the same work is presented as perfectly sanctifying us and fitting us to worship within the Sanctuary in the presence of a thrice holy God. We must, however, carefully remember, as we noticed at the time, that in both cases we were only considering our standing before God, and not our state. And having thus briefly considered the former, and subsequently spoken of the new life within us, we may now look at the two ways in which that life flows out of us leading to practical righteousness, and holiness or sanctification.

{SH/}Two Righteousnesses

If we look at Romans 3:1-31, we find the righteousness of God is the constant theme, but if we look at Romans 6:1-23, although we find righteousness continually spoken of it is never the righteousness of God; the reason of the difference being that there are two righteousnesses perfectly distinct; one is God's: the other is the believer's, and while in Romans 3:1-31, the former is the theme (connected with our standing), in Romans 6:1-23, it is the latter (connected with our state). For an instance of these two, let us look for a moment at the first person who is clearly said to have both. We are repeatedly told that Noah was a just and righteous man, and also that he was a preacher of righteousness. We know that he was not a preacher of what we call "the gospel," but that his preaching and practice were characterized by righteousness of walk and ways. This is analogous to the righteousness of Romans 6:1-23.

{SH/}Noah Had One and Was Heir to the Other

If we now turn, however, to Hebrews 11:1-40, we there find that Noah "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Mark the language well. In the first place he is an heir to it, which implies two things-the one, that he does not have it yet, and the other, that he has not worked for it-no man can work for what he inherits; and secondly, this righteousness is by faith. Turning to Romans 3:22, (so perfectly does Scripture explain itself), we see clearly that the righteousness which is by faith, is the righteousness of God. We thus see that Noah lived in one righteousness, and became heir to another. The reason he was only heir to the righteousness of God is explained, in Romans 3:25, where it is shown that God could not declare His righteousness, in passing over Noah's sins, until an adequate propitiation had been made by the death of Christ. By considering this case we see that the righteousness in which Noah stands (or will stand) before the throne, is the righteousness of God, as seen in the perfect work of Christ, whereas that in which he lived and glorified God on earth was his own practical righteousness. In Ephesians 4:24 we read that the new man is created anew in "righteousness and true holiness," or practical

righteousness and sanctification. Walking in newness of life (Romans 6:2) includes these two things, (see Luke 1:75), as is seen in the end of Romans 6:1-23, when both are connected as the result of a godly walk, Romans 6:19; Romans 6:22.

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 6 - Canaan

Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 6 - Canaan The whole history of the bondage, redemption, deliverance; walk and warfare of the children of Israel gives us perhaps the most complete picture of the whole life of a saint of God that the Bible contains. There is hardly a sorrow in Egypt, a trial or circumstance in the wilderness, a warfare or other event in the land, but may in some way or other afford a valuable lesson to the Christian. We purpose, therefore, looking to God for guidance, just to glance briefly at the wilderness history and Canaan conflicts, as being those parts that most concern a young believer.

It may seem strange to some that of these two we should first speak of Canaan, especially if this is to be regarded as our final rest in heaven. We trust, however, clearly to show that, on the contrary, "this goodly land" embraces the whole sphere of our spiritual blessings into which we are brought now; and without the enjoyment of which we cannot tread the wilderness path to the glory of God.

Let us in the first place consider such scriptures as Exodus 3:7; Exodus 6:7-8. These speak only of bringing out of Egypt into Canaan, no mention being made of the wilderness at all, thus showing that although they must necessarily cross it (an affair of a few days), their wanderings there for forty years formed no part of God's purpose. In like manner we find in Colossians 1:13, that the same act that brought us out of the kingdom of darkness translates us into the kingdom of the Son. The wilderness may come in by the way to humble us and to prove us, or it may not. The dying thief had no wilderness journey, but passed straight out of Egyptian bondage into the paradise of God. Most of us have, however, a certain stretch of wilderness to cross; but it is important to see at the outset that this is only by the way, and in no way interferes with the fact that the sinner who one day was in Egypt dead in trespasses and sins, the next may be raised up and sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (not as yet with Him). As a matter of fact, the heavenly life and the wilderness life go on together, the latter in the strength given by the former. As "in Christ" a part of Him (also as a priest and worshipper), I am in heavenly places now; as a pilgrim and a stranger I am in the wilderness. Thessalonians, Ephesians, and Colossians touch most on the Canaan side, while Philippians and 1 Peter take the wilderness path. It is clear that Canaan cannot be confined to our final home in heaven, though doubtless including it (when the wilderness journey is actually over), but is mainly a vivid picture of the saint's position in the heavenlies, now waging war like the Israelites of old, as soon as the Jordan is crossed, for the possession and maintenance of their rights, as well as the destruction of their enemies. This we read of not only in the Old Testament, but as regards the Christian in Ephesians 6:1-24. In Deuteronomy 26:1 we read, "And it shall be, when thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it and dwellest therein." This verse speaks of three distinct positions of the Israelite in Canaan, that is to say of the believer and his heavenly privileges. First he enters the land, next he possesses it, or makes it his own, and thirdly he dwells in it. Let us briefly consider these in order.

Those for whom we write are sufficiently familiar with the leading facts of the history of the Israelites to remember that, having been delivered from the judgment of God, not by the fact of

their being His people but by the atoning blood of the Lamb, they next crossed the Red Sea, and then leisurely crossing the desert found themselves on the borders of the land. This they refused to enter, and were therefore doomed to die in the wilderness; while the next generation were not allowed to enter Canaan, otherwise than by passing a second time through the waters of death in the Jordan.

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Two facts at once arrest us here. First of all, the fact that neither the Red Sea nor the Jordan lies directly between Egypt and Canaan (Abraham, Jacob and the Lord never crossed either in their journeys between the two); and, secondly, that the children of Israel did cross the Red Sea by the direct guidance and leading of God. They never needed to cross the Jordan had it not been for their own unbelief. Let us try and see what meaning all this has for us. We have not only as sinners the judgment of God to face, from which the blood of the Lamb delivers us, but after this we still need deliverance from our three great foes—the world, the flesh, and the devil. Nothing now but the death of Christ can deliver us from the power of these, and of this both the Red Sea and Jordan are remarkable types. In the waters of the former it will be remembered the pomp and pride of Egypt were drowned, and the strength of Pharaoh was broken, thus answering to the death of Christ, which separates us from the world and Satan's power (Galatians 6:14; Hebrews 2:14). But Romans 6:1-23 finds no real counterpart here, for although the Israelites should have left their old unbelieving hearts behind, as a matter of fact they did not. This is clearly seen on nearing Canaan. If the flesh had been left behind them, as truly as Pharaoh and Egypt were, no Jordan would have been needed; but alas! it appears this was the hardest lesson of all to learn. Those, therefore, who thus refused to leave it behind them, but on the contrary betrayed their confidence in it, by putting themselves under law, had all to perish in the wilderness, that it might be destroyed, and death was again presented to the generation born in the wilderness, at the Jordan. Only this time especial care was taken that they themselves, represented by twelve stones, should be left at the bottom. And this is the entrance into Canaan. The death of Christ has not only put away the sins of every believer, not only freed him from the world and Satan's power, but has also put an end to him, so that his old self is crucified and buried with Christ, out of which he is risen in the power of a new life, and brought into the new and heavenly sphere of Canaan.

If, therefore, we put the Red Sea and Jordan together, they present to us a full picture of the death of Christ, the former especially typifying what it delivers me from; in the latter, what it brings me into; or, in other words, death and resurrection. To cross the Jordan and enter Canaan is not the privilege of a few, but is the effect of the death of Christ for every believer, however few may enter into the meaning or power of it.

Let us now briefly consider the possessing: This only belongs to those who fight for it; the condition of possession is stated in Joshua 1:3. We find that all Israel entered it together, but that many were careless about possessing it (Joshua 18:3), while two and a half out of the twelve tribes never dwelt in it at all, or at any rate, in that part west of Jordan. This has great meaning for us, dear fellow-believers. In Christ we all have died and risen, and entered the land; but how slow we are to possess, to make our own, often after much exercise and conflict with our spiritual enemies, the blessings that are ours in Christ! We have to fight the Lord's battles, but we are poor soldiers, though after all the work is entirely His from first to last (Joshua 21:44). We have not

space here to consider the various wiles by which Satan, at one time by fright as a roaring lion, at another by deceit as a wily serpent, sought to hinder this possession, but we earnestly commend the study of the book of Joshua in the light of Ephesians to our readers.

All that we can do here is, while just pointing out the outlines of this interesting subject, to bring home to each of our hearts the fact that it is only as we are thus possessing, thus abiding in communion with Christ, in the enjoyment of His love and peace, in the blessed sense of our portion in Him, that we can hope to walk to His glory down here. And in all this let us beware of possessing without dwelling; the two and a half tribes were valiant enough in possessing, that is, in making the land their own; but they did not enjoy what they obtained. So with many of us. We are keen and eager, it may be, in the pursuit of truth, and a true position according to the mind of Christ, but how far are we dwelling in the power of what we know? How far does the atmosphere of Canaan so pervade our spirits, and its fruits so fill our lives that we are found to the praise of God down here? Only the man who lives in Canaan can rightly cross the wilderness; the heart must be satisfied and happy in Christ to be content with His portion and path down here. If we would be strangers here, we must practically have a home with Christ in heaven for our hearts; and the man who does not dwell in a home in Canaan can never be content with only a tent in the wilderness. May the Lord give us each to feel more and more the importance of keeping up a fresh and happy inward life in real communion with Christ where He is, as this is the only real power to maintain a consistent walk to the glory of God.

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 7 - The Wilderness

Truths for Young Christians: Chapter 7 - The Wilderness

We have seen that entrance into the heavenly country is the privilege of every believer, but that possession, and still more, dwelling in it, only belongs to those who make it their own and live in the enjoyment of it. In the same way it is true with regard to our wilderness life here below, that although all true believers are brought safely through the Red Sea, saved from the judgment of God, delivered from Pharaoh's power and Egypt's slavery, yet it is only as we are really following Christ that we practically find that this world is the "wilderness wide," of which our hymns speak, or that we are pilgrims and strangers in it.

{SH/}Am I in the Wilderness at All?

These things, beloved reader, are realities, and it will help us but little to know all the resources God provides for our wilderness journey if we are not in it in heart at all. Let us, then, seriously ask ourselves two questions.

First: "Am I, in any sense, a stranger in this world for Christ?" and second: "Am I passing through it as a pilgrim, or living in it as a citizen?" Simple, heart-searching questions like these, honestly asked, and faithfully answered before God, often speak to our consciences more powerfully than the most stirring sermon, and if we are conscientious and yet still clinging to this world, we shall find them very awkward and unpleasant questions to face. Do not shirk them, however, but if they do touch a sore point, let them have their full effect, and show us just where we really are before God.

We noticed in our last paper that we must have a home and enjoyment for our spirits somewhere, and that the only way not to seek this now on earth, is by truly having it as a present reality for our souls with Christ in heaven; or, in other words, the only way to be a stranger in the wilderness, is to be even now at home in Canaan, in spirit, though as to our bodies, we are still pressing on to our rest.

Communion with Christ in heaven alone gives the desire to follow Him on earth, while resurrection life in Him supplies the only power, hence the apostle prays both that he "may know Him," and the power of His resurrection, before he asks to know "the fellowship of His sufferings."

{SH/}All My Resources Are in God The first thing that characterizes the wilderness is that all my resources are in God, my food comes from heaven, my water is given by God, my guide is the cloudy pillar; in short, every detail of my life is ordered by God. All around is nothing but the thirsty desert sand, capable, indeed, of receiving all I have to give, but utterly incapable of helping me an inch on my journey. In fact, from the moment I first passed beneath the sheltering blood of the Lamb, God has been, and is, my sole resource and stay until, in His good time, I actually reach the long looked for "rest of God."

These, then, are two great lessons to be engraven on our souls as strangers here: 1. There is nothing of this world that can help my spiritual life.

2. All my resources are in God.

{SH/}Seven Wilderness Lessons

1. The Song.

We will now very briefly glance at seven things connected with the wilderness journey; not in the thought that in any way they embrace the details of it, or even its leading features, but simply because each one may give us food for a few practical thoughts which may be of service to any who with honest hearts are desirous of treading more closely in Christ's footmarks. The first thing we notice is, that at the start all is smooth, pleasant and joyful. What can be more delightful to the weary, worn out Egyptian slave than to stand on the wilderness shore of the Red Sea, and after seeing the destruction of all the power that held him captive, to raise his joyful heart to God in a song of praise, the first song in Scripture, a song of a delivered soul brought to God, a song full of beauty and meaning, a song that no angel can sing, a song which shall echo through the countless ages of eternity; and then to turn round with his back to Egypt, his face to that glorious heavenly country, which already by faith he counts his home, and starts off with God for his Guide in all the happy freshness of a new-born soul. Surely we all know what it is thus to begin our pilgrimage.

2. Marah-The Power of the Cross. The second thing that we observe is that Marah is reached, a place of bitter water, water which can only be sweetened by a certain tree. What meaning has this, beloved reader? Did we not think we should find all smooth and pleasant when we first set out to follow Christ, and did we not very soon come across something very bitter and unpleasant, and discover that practically to be crucified to this world, to be dead to it, is not a very pleasant thing? Do we not remember, too, that it was only when we cast in the wood of Christ's cross, and of His sorrows for us, that the waters became sweet, and according to 1 Peter 4:1-19, we rejoiced, inasmuch as so early in our journey we had been made in any measure partakers of Christ's sufferings. O! the power of the cross of Christ. No Christian can live three days in this world without meeting Marah in some Way or other, but it is the Marahs which draw us near to Christ's heart. It is the want of water here which makes us go for all our refreshment to the Rock which is Christ, "Who brought the water for our thirst, It cost His blood to win." To the soul, therefore, who knows what it is thus to have fellowship with Christ in rejection, these Marahs are sweet, each one marking a never-to-be-forgotten interview between the suffering servant, and the loving Master.

"We know Him as we could not know, Through heaven's golden years, We there shall see His glorious face, But Mary saw His tears."

(Continued and To be continued.)

Vol 01 - Who Is Your Master?

Who Is Your Master? A miner lad who was lately converted, and works in the pit among a lot of godless youths, took his Bible with him down to the pit the day after his conversion. He was met with a volley of abuse by the ungodly young men as they gathered in a group to play cards, and invited him to take a "hand" as he had done before.

"I've changed my master," said the young miner, "and if you are not ashamed to own your master, neither am I to own mine." So he sat down a little way off from the group to read his Bible by the light of his pet lamp. When they saw that he was determined to "stick to his colors," they let him alone, and in a short time, a number of them gathered around Davie to hear him read the word of God aloud, and God blessed it to the conversion of several of them.

Never be ashamed of Christ. The servants of the devil are not ashamed to own their master. Why should those who are the servants of Christ?

Vol 02 - A Plea for "Sound" Reading

A Plea for "Sound" Reading

Observant persons have not failed to notice that there is a serious deterioration in the quality of literature so much in demand the past number of years. A few briefly stated facts may serve to substantiate as well as explain this statement. In a leading daily newspaper of one of our large eastern cities, an editorial appeared lately from which the following is extracted, with a few words altered:- "Yet no authors of the upper rank are left. No author's writings to-day are worth intimate reading. Plays and novels win larger pay than they ever did in the past. The habit of reading good authors is dying out. Youth reads less than it did. Yet in life's purest joys, those who cherish noble books, know there is naught better than the intimate and constant reading of the few greater authors."

There is nothing perhaps, that will mold a man's character in the noblest and best ways of life, like association with his fellow-men who exhibit the best virtues in their lives. The Christian will, of course, associate with those who are God's. Next to this is the influence of literature, which will do more to character the young person in life than any other influence.

Thus according to our reading matter so will our thoughts be; and how careful the young Christian should be to choose only the noblest and best books, in order that his thoughts might be formed to the glory of God. We are all very careful in choosing friends to see that they are of the most worthy kind; and that their companionship will be for our mutual benefit. Should we not apply the same care to our choice of books? If we did, many that are unbecoming would be wisely laid aside.

Any person frequenting our many Libraries can readily see how eagerly youth takes to the lighter reading matter. "Card" records show the long list of readers the novels have, contrasted with the few records that show the more worthy books having been "out." Almost invariably the larger crowd may be seen standing about the "Fiction shelves." Perhaps for lack of parental restrictions, children are becoming alarmingly attracted more and more to this questionable class of books. A few years ago the Canadian authorities made vain efforts to prevent the "American" Sunday newspaper from crossing the border on account of the bad influence of their "Comic" and "Magazine" sections. Their efforts were useless. The clamor of the people was for such reading. A sober-minded person can easily see that the Sunday newspaper's influence is not for good in the homes where it is used. They are of the same general class as the ordinary novel. By this we do not mean that the newspaper is not very useful in its proper sphere.. The monthly magazines that are an exceptionally worthy factor along educational lines, have of late years introduced an abundant supply of fiction; while the number of purely fictitious are increasing rapidly.

These observations, to some, may seem to savor of partiality. Some there are who cannot tolerate anything which differs with their individual creed; and they will, to a great extent, exclude all reading not upholding their particular ideas. Secular reading is good and necessary when kept in its proper place. Next to association with man and tuition, book reading is a splendid factor in

supplying the mind with useful and necessary knowledge. The writings spoken against in the foregoing paragraphs are not the so-called "dime novels." They are usually downed by public sentiment and limited to a low class of readers. The writer has specially in view those writings that have no basis, or which are only works of the imaginative mind. When read they leave no lasting impressions upon the mind, except an exquisite sense of an airy nothingness. Written under the inspiration of imaginative minds, they readily appeal to the corresponding qualities in other persons, and are easily imposed upon the majority. They excite the sentimental qualities of the mind rather than the reasonable. The stronger qualities of the mind are not catered to, or cultivated by the ordinary fictitious work.

Whatever meritorious distinctions some of the fictitious works may have in delineating the social, political or historical times in which their scenes are set, all this is often obscured by that which can be condemned in the same volume. At this point some will begin to make such inquiries as these: - "How can I know whether a book is good or bad before reading it?" or:- "How am I to choose my reading matter?" While one cannot possibly choose subjects for another, yet general suggestions are appropriate; and many an elderly person can look with gratitude to the kindly advice given in youth. How many of us can recall the pious care with which our mothers would carefully choose our Sunday-afternoon reading matter. How grateful we are now that the young mind was so trained. To those who are well acquainted with books, the title will often convey an idea of the whole import of the contents of the book. Good authors are careful to select their titles accordingly. Then in all worthy books is the preface or introduction. This foreword is often as important as the text itself; and like a glow of light cast over the pages. In nearly all cases it gives a fair outline of what is found in the book. Again, while one cannot choose for another, it is best for young persons to give heed to the advice of elders and make use of their choice in reading matter.

Let us consider now for a moment a special class of fictitious writings,-the so called "Religious novel." Such works as "Quo Vadis"- "Ben Hur"- "The Dawn by Galilee"- "The White Christ", may be taken as fair examples of this class of books, whose popularity defies realization. All written by the more prominent novelists, and each title usually with the affix,-"A tale of the Christ", or some similar term. And all who "live godly in Christ Jesus" will testify that the Scriptures declare: "This world is in league with scorn and hate, The' clad in a garb of cultured state.

Conform to its ways, and smiles are thine, But frowns are thy lot, should'st thou decline". The books so strongly protested against here are attractive because they pass as "religious" novels. They assume to do homage to the phraseology of religion: using Biblical subjects and characters to accomplish this end. Some of the most bold take upon them the liberty of using the character of the divine Person, our Lord and Savior. It might well be said they degrade the Lord's divine character down to a human level. The young Christian who lives "to serve the Lord Christ" will readily detect the ordinary light novel and shun it; but the deep subtlety of those clothed in a religious cloak are seldom found out until they commence their ruinous work upon the soul. When reading them, the lure and the charm carries the mind onward; while the soul is left hungering for its needed spiritual food.

Through their pages the "Old Serpent" uses his time-worn tactics to take away the sense of reverence due to the Lord.

(To be continued.)

Vol 02 - A Plea for "Sound" Reading

A Plea for "Sound" Reading

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding". (Proverbs 9:10.) But the world has no "fear of God", and while the religious man of the world will give the Lord his patronage, he fails to reverence His name, or fear Him with that fear begotten in the soul by the Lord Himself. The writings that are of a detrimental character to the truths of Scripture, Mary's lament may be first applied; but may it not with equal force be written over the pages of the so-called "Religious" novel:-"They have taken away my LORD". This is serious, and if the young Christian will exercise a little diligence, he cannot fail to notice that the divine life within him resents the intrusion of all literature that intermingles the Lord's name with its contents in an unbecoming way. The place of honor and respect, the glory and reverence due to Jesus Christ as Lord, should be zealously guarded by the young Christian. The young Christian who is "begotten of God" has "received the Spirit from above", and has within the finer, delicate instincts of the divine life; which will, if heeded, save him from many of the delusions of the attractive literature of the world. The voices of the majority prevail to uphold this class of books as good reading. Some,-yes, many will say;-"But-recommended the books to me and I know they would not ask me to read anything that would not be good for me!" Yes,-but-may or may not be a Christian. Refined, amiable, cultured he may be. Living an upright, respectable and religious life. None such will care to go with the true Christian whose enlightened conscience necessitates his parting company with the world. The Spirit taught and spiritual Christian will have to pursue his lonely way unaccompanied by all such. Now those of us who are Christians, must part company with popular favor and public opinion. Scripture testifies that that which is "highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God". (Luke 16:15.)

These books, taking so rapidly amongst the reading class are influenced by the "spirit of the age", which is never in accord with the mind of God. Their titles and themes, appeal at once to the natural religious mind of man.

God has been pleased to give us in the past half century, a very great many valuable books by His "teachers", and they are they of whom it can truly be said, "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom, I have led thee in the right paths". (Proverbs 4:11-13.) Such "instruction" we should be diligent to "take fast hold of" and "keep", and we shall prove indeed to be "life" to our souls. An aged brother has said, "Reading is not everything; it is study that is necessary", and we may add, to allow the truths of the Word to take hold of the mind from whence they pass on to be realized and acted upon by the soul. How grateful the young Christian should be whose elders are maintaining the truth in the spirit of a contrite and steadfast soul. They are able to direct the unestablished to the writings that honor the Word of God. The word "sound" as applied to the quality of doctrine, occurs a complete number (seven) of times in the two epistles of Timothy and Titus. Do not fail to look for them, because they will guard your soul from the inroads of false teachings. Notice very carefully that in 1 Timothy 6:3 it speaks of "wholesome words", and

"doctrine which is according to godliness". Five times in the New Testament we find "fables" spoken against. Four times in the books referred to above, and once in 2 Peter 1:16. As regards reading matter, like so many other pursuits, most people do not like the Bible introduced where its presence would be embarrassing. Alas, this is true of many Christians! While they are not abashed to freely chat of the popular works of fiction. The Bible of all other books is supreme. The young person who chooses it as his special reading matter, can never by any means make a mistake. Its preservation from time immemorial renders it the grandest of books, even looked at from a literary standpoint only. But deeper far than this is the fact that it is the Revelation of God to and for us. To it, then, let us turn to discern therein the mind of the Lord as to what or what not we should read. The Christian who is zealous for his Lord's interests, will plainly see portrayed in many verses of the Scriptures, what should be the nature of his reading matter. Every word of it is "pure." Every "jot and tittle" of it is God inspired. Its precepts, doctrines and teachings present the principles of the noblest and highest morality possible. Its pages unfold in a divine way the glories and beauties of the "Man after God's own heart" our Lord and our Savior. For the "babe" in Christ it is the "sincere milk". For the older Christian it is "strong meat". When the unnumbered hosts of earth's books are swept into oblivion, the Bible will be the only everlasting and enduring Book. Young Timothy, whom the apostle Paul had found at Lystra(Acts 16:1), had known the Scriptures from a child; and they were able to make him "wise" unto salvation "through faith which is in Christ Jesus". Certainly, it is profitable to study well the Scriptures from earliest childhood; they should regulate the life in order that the man of God may be perfect. The apostle had instructed Timothy in all manner of doctrine, and in a fatherly way exhorted him to "hold fast the form of SOUND words." (2 Timothy 1:13.) He was to "continue in the things" which he had heard from the apostle. He was to "study" to show himself an "approved" workman, that would have no need to be ashamed, and to be "approved" he must "shun profane and vain babblings", (2 Timothy 2:16,) words that were no profit to the hearers.

How grateful we should be to God since He has preserved the Bible unsullied to this present hour, - a time when its teachings were never more urgently needed by the saints of God. The young Christian who fails to make it his daily study, and to allow it to influence his life, will do so to the sorrowful injury of his own soul.

"Read the Bible to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully".

(Continued)

Vol 02 - An Appeal in These Last Moments

An Appeal in These Last Moments

"Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58.)

If there ever was a day when this word of exhortation and encouragement was needed, it is today, and especially for the young Christian.

Every evil doctrine is on the increase, and the advocates of such are showing increased energy in spreading them, and often with considerable self-sacrifice. On the other hand, those who are the Lord's, are to a great extent folding their hands, taking their leisure, and giving Christ up to His enemies. May this not be the case with any of us who are readers of "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN", but may each of us "be... steadfast, unmoveable". Let us allow nothing to turn us out of the way, but be unmoveable from the path of faithfulness and response of heart to the Lord for all He has done for us. He has saved our souls at the great expense of giving Himself for us, and what more could He give than His life? He is not satisfied with doing this, but He is coming again for us, as the previous verses show, at any moment, to take us to be forever with Himself, and this is the reason for this word of exhortation. Is that blessed hope so before our hearts, do we have it so as a present reality, that we are abounding in the work of the Lord? Let each of us ask ourselves the question, What am I doing for my Lord? What am I doing for the good of His people? What am I doing for the lost and perishing all around me? What about that unsaved class-mate? that unsaved fellow-workman? or that saved friend who needs instruction and encouragement in the things of God? Often just a word to a young Christian friend, or a decided stand for the Lord, in all lowliness and meekness, gives encouragement to the other for faithfulness of walk. If we feel unable to speak, we have the printed matter, that can be procured at a very low price, and sent to them each month. Twenty-five "SOWERS" can be sent to our unsaved acquaintances, at their different addresses, for less than is often spent on trivial things. "THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN" contains simple truths that most Christians need; and if we were to pick out as many of our Christian friends as we could afford to send this paper to, only a little done in this way by each reader, would cover quite a large number; and then the little we do, if watered by prayer, with the Lord's blessing upon it, who can tell the extent of the blessing and the reward in that day so near? May we be assured and encouraged by the last sentence, "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord".

Vol 02 - Be Thou in the Fear of the Lord All the Day Long: Pro_23:1

Be Thou in the Fear of the Lord All the Day Long: Proverbs 23:1 When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write, When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight; - To be kept from all wrong when at home or abroad, Live always as under the eye of the Lord.

Whatever you read, though the page may allure, Read nothing of which you are perfectly sure Consternation at once would be seen in your look, If God should say, solemnly: "Show me that book."

Whatever you think, never think what you feel You would blush in the presence of God to reveal:

Whatever you say, in a whisper or clear, Say nothing you would not like JESUS TO HEAR.

Whatever you write, though in haste, or with heed, Write nothing you would not like JESUS TO READ:

Whatever you sing, in the midst of your glees, Sing nothing that HIS LISTENING EAR COULD DISPLEASE.

Wherever you go, never go where you fear Lest the Great God should ask you "How CAMEST THOU HERE?"

Turn away from each pleasure you'd shrink from pursuing If God should look down and say: "WHAT ART THOU DOING?"

Vol 02 - Burning With Pure Oil

Burning With Pure Oil In a devoted Christian family, who were walking in the fear of God, the daily reading was one morning in Exodus 27:1-21. The twentieth verse was dwelt upon. The parents talked together about the oil that was used in the vessels of the tabernacle, and looked up passages in the New Testament that explained its meaning and how it could be applied. When the reading was over and the older children had left the room, the youngest child, a boy of five years, was detained, as was the usual custom, to be taught some simple verses by his mother, and to pray with her. The parents had not supposed that this child would understand what they had been talking about that morning, or that he would feel the slightest interest in a subject which they thought far beyond his age. However, when he had learned his verse, he kneeled down to pray, and in the midst of his prayer he paused, then he exclaimed earnestly, "O, my God, make me to burn this day with pure oil." The morning lesson had not been lost upon him. And his earnest petition to God was not lost. For, throughout the day of his life, he was a devoted Christian. Thus was the earnest cry of that little child heard and answered. God's word had found its entrance in his soul, and it did its blessed work.

What an incentive this case should be to young Christian parents to maintain the "family altar," in this day of luke-warmness, when too many feel that they cannot spare the time for this. God's rich blessing is upon it; and sorrow will be to those who neglect it. And are there few, or many, young Christians who are seeking daily to "burn with pure oil"? Such as are, will be lights in the darkness, and will be "polished shafts" in the quiver of the Lord.

Vol 02 - Christ the Center

Christ the Center OR WHY CHRISTIANS SHOULD MEET IN HIS NAME ALONE. The question presents itself to the Christian who seeks to walk with the Lord, "Where amidst all the Babel of profession do the Scriptures place me as a Christian? How and with whom should I meet to worship my blessed Savior?" It is as an attempt to answer these all-important questions, that the following considerations are affectionately presented to all the beloved children of God. That Christ is the only divine center of worship for the Christian-that His is alone the name in which Christians should be gathered- is the teaching of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

First. THE WORTHINESS OF CHRIST! It is God who "hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Php 2:9-11.) Thus hath our blessed God and Father delighted to honor Him, who "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." (Colossians 1:18.) In this name, so precious to every believer, did all Christians meet in the days of the apostles; and when the veil of the future was drawn aside, what did John the servant of Jesus Christ behold? When he saw Jesus Christ he says, "His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last." (Revelation 1:16-17.)

"A door was opened in heaven." What a sight! The vision of the future glory of the Lamb in the midst of the millions and millions of the redeemed! A Lamb as it had been slain.

"And they sung a new song." What will it be to be there; to hear that swell of joy unspeakable - to join that song? Not one redeemed to God by His blood will refuse to sing, "Thou art worthy." Angelic hosts cry with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches... and honor, and glory, and blessing:" yea, all redeemed creation shall be heard saying, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." (Revelation 5:6-14)

Thus shall our adorable Lord be adored, and owned in heaven and throughout all creation. This is God's estimate of the risen Christ, who once died for our sins-the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. And thus shall God's will be done in heaven. Should an anxious, troubled soul read these lines, mark well that this is the redemption-glory of Christ. And who were those worshiping millions, redeemed by His blood? Dying thieves, Mary Magdalenes, sinners of the city. And is Jesus worthy of bringing such to glory? Yes, the most holy, holy, holy God says He is worthy! and all creation shout Amen. O, do you, my reader, now give God credit? Such is the worthiness of this risen Jesus, that God says, "Be it known unto you... that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Acts 13:38-39.) Thus salvation is wholly through Christ. Blessed are they who can say, "We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."

I do not presume to be able to set forth, by pen or tongue, the glorious pre-eminence of Christ. I point to the Scriptures that so clearly declare the worthiness of Christ. But many who read this paper will say, "What true Christian doubts for a moment the worthiness of Christ, or the greatness of His exalted name?" True, true, there is a chord in every Christian's heart that responds to the name of Jesus. But the question is how much, or how great, is that worthiness? There may be one thousand Christians in a town, or ten thousand in a city-I mean such as really have redemption through the blood of Christ, whose sins are forgiven. Now if Jesus be worthy of the united praise and worship of all creation, if all the millions of the redeemed in heaven shall gather around His adorable Person, then is He not worthy of the united worship of one thousand in a town, and ten thousand in a city on earth? Surely in heaven every name and sect must fall. And why not on earth?

It is a great mistake to suppose, then, that Christians should separate from every name and sect because they think themselves better than the dear children of God in those sects; far be the thought; no! it is because Jesus is worthy-yes, worthy the sacrifice of at once giving up every name and sect, and of gathering to His blessed name and Person alone. Yes my fellow believer, He is worthy that you, whoever you are, and to whatever sect you belong, He is worthy that you should own no other name but His. What must angels think, knowing and delighting as they do in the exalted name of Jesus; when they see our ways on earth? The divisions on earth must present a dark contrast to the unity of heaven. In many places all God's redeemed people may be seen bearing various names; and not even two, or three, meet in the whole town in the name of Jesus alone. And yet, most assuredly, Jesus is worthy that every believer in the place should meet only in His name.

Now, if God's will is so plainly done in heaven by all gathering to the Person of the Lamb, how can I pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven," unless I am prepared to give up every name and sect on earth as it is done in heaven? Would it not be more consistent to say-I have been in such a sect, and all my friends are there; excuse me therefore from doing Thy will on earth, as I shall do it, and as it is done, in heaven? Is it narrowness to do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven? Is it too much to own the Lordship of Christ, to the glory of God the Father, and to own no other but Christ.? God sets the highest value on the name of Jesus. Man says it is no matter what name you bear.

(To be Continued.)

Vol 02 - Christ the Center: Or Why Christians Should Meet in His Name Alone

Christ the Center: Or Why Christians Should Meet in His Name Alone

Every Christian who owns the Lordship of Christ, and has visited the Romish places of worship, must have been deeply pained at the reverence paid to the name of the virgin. And is not human nature the same elsewhere? Is there not the same idolatrous tendency where any name is owned as the head of a sect? As that name is exalted, the name of Jesus is disowned, until at length it is a small matter to be a Christian, but a great one to belong to the sect. Surely this is wood, hay and stubble, that will not endure the coming day. In the days of the apostles, Jesus was the name exalted above every name. To exalt another, though it were a Paul, or a Cephas, was denounced by the Spirit of God as carnality and schism. Even to tolerate another name, or names, was virtually to lower the glorious Christ to the level of a mere man. (1 Corinthians 1:12; 1 Corinthians 3:4-5.) Is it not the same now? Jesus is worthy of the united worship of the millions of the redeemed who shall be gathered in heaven; therefore He is worthy of the united worship and praise of all Christians now on earth. Whatever others may do, whether they own that name alone, before the world or not, fellow believer, if thou desirest to do the will of God, the path is plain-give up every name and sect, and meet only in the name of Jesus, heaven's exalted Lord. A question may now arise in the mind as to what order of Church government is really according to the mind of God. This leads us to the second consideration.

Second. The sovereignty of the Spirit of God as the second reason why Christians should meet in the name of the Lord Jesus alone. Before Jesus left this world, while in the midst of His sorrowing disciples, He said, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John 14:16-17.) The Lord Jesus solemnly promised that this Comforter or Guardian should teach us all things. Jesus says, "HE SHALL TESTIFY OF ME." (John 15:26.) Observe, Jesus did not promise an influence; but the real, divine person of the Holy Ghost; as real a person as Jesus. And as really as Jesus had testified of the Father, so really should the Spirit testify of Jesus. And further, that HE, the Holy Spirit, should guide us into all truth. "HE shall glorify ME." (John 16:14.) This promise God hath fulfilled. Jesus being glorified on high, God hath sent the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:4-38.) Now from that moment, we search in vain in the New Testament for any Church government except the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost. As really as the blessed Lord had been present with the disciples in the Gospels, equally so is the Holy Ghost present with the Church in the Acts. Pentecost was a marvelous display of the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. And again, "When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31.) Yea, so real was the presence of the Holy Ghost, that Peter in the case of Ananias said, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" etc. (Acts 5:3.) And

when the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, the Holy Ghost fell on them in like manner. (Acts 11:15.) Also at Antioch. (Acts 13:52.) And how marked the guidance of the Spirit to the apostle Paul and his companions when "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia," and when they would have gone to Bithynia, "but the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts 16:6-7. See also Acts 19:2.) If we now turn to 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, the government of the Spirit in the Church is stated with the utmost clearness, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." This passage is often applied to the world, in violent opposition to that scripture which saith, "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him." (John 14:17.) But whatever variety of gift in the Church, "all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." (1 Corinthians 12:11.)

Now tell me what denomination thus owns the Spirit of God in our day. Nay, the moment any assembly of Christians do thus own the Spirit of God, that moment they cease to be a sect, or denomination; because the Holy Ghost would not honor any name but the name of Jesus. Now let us compare an assembly in the apostles' time, with a denominational assembly now, and this will be plain. All the Christians in a neighborhood assembled together in the name of the Lord Jesus; the Spirit gave diversities of gifts; some were gifted to preach, others to teach, others to extort, and so on, with all the various manifestations of the Spirit. And He, the Spirit, was really present in their midst, dividing to every man severally as He would. They speak two or three-if anything is revealed to another that sitteth by, the first holds his peace-and this is the order of God; as we read (1 Corinthians 14:29-33), "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If anything be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." When the sovereign guidance of the Spirit of God was owned, this was plainly the order.

Now let us enter an assembly belonging to any denomination of the present day. Tell me, where is the Holy Spirit either expected or allowed to divide to every man severally as He will? This may not be intentional; the presidency of the Holy Ghost is forgotten. A man fills His place; and, whether led of or happy in the Spirit or not, he must occupy the time. This disowning of the personal presence and sovereign guidance of God the Holy Ghost is most sad every way. The diverse gifts are not exercised; the work of the ministry becomes a burden to the one man. But more than all, the Lord is disowned in the assembly for guidance in worship; and a human order, or rather, every kind of human disorder, takes the place.

It may sound well to call it liberty of conscience; but where is the liberty for the Spirit of God to use whom He will for the edification of the Church of God? Is this a light matter? Was not the disowning the guidance and government of God by His people Israel, and the desire to have a man in God's place, the first sad step in the downward path of that people? And what is the history of the prophets but that of a few men (in the midst of general departure from God) still finding and holding fast this blessed reality-the presence of God? How solemn the teaching in the Book of Jeremiah: he sat alone, yet called by the name of the Lord God of Hosts-how sweet were the words of the Lord to him, "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them." (See Jeremiah 15:16-21.) (Continued and to be Continued.)

Vol 02 - Christ the Center: Why Christians Should Meet in His Name Alone

Christ the Center: Why Christians Should Meet in His Name Alone

Such is the solemn yet blessed place of all, in these days, who have been led to own the real presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly. The Lord's words have indeed been found to be sweeter than man's. O, that all God's dear children, in every denomination, knew the blessedness of unfeigned subjection of heart to the sovereign guidance of the Holy Ghost. Where there is this, not in mere form but in reality, He does testify of Christ in such a manner, that no human wisdom can even imitate. Often the hymns by one, the prayers by others, and the reading of the Word, as led by the Holy Ghost, so manifest the divine guidance, and give such a sense of the presence of God, as can only be enjoyed where the Spirit of God is thus owned. I can not then go where He is not owned whom the Father hath sent to guide us and guard us, and abide with us unto the end. It is no matter what may be substituted- whether the Pope, or the Emperor, or the Bishop, or the Conference, or the minister- God is right, and man is wrong. It is not a question of opinion, but of owning or displacing the Holy Ghost as the sovereign guide and ruler of the assembly. I have found the reality of His very presence; and for this I must be separate from every community- Greek, Romish or Protestant, all alike- where He is not thus owned.

Third. I now state the third reason why Christians should meet in the name of Christ alone- THE UNITY of THE CHURCH; or more correctly, the unity of the one body. I am not aware that there is such a passage of Scripture as one Church, but there is "one body." (Ephesians 4:4.) The word translated church simply means assembly. It is so used to describe a crowd of heathen in Acts 19:32; Acts 19:39. The Church of God is the assembly of God; comprising every saved person in every place. So the assembly in a particular place would embrace all saved people there. But those, only, who are gathered to the Lord's name are the representation of the Church or assembly. What will characterize those so gathered is their recognition of Christ as the Head of the body the Church guiding and guarding, by the Spirit, each one in all things, as in the assemblies of God in the days of the apostles. Therefore no company so gathered or not, can properly be called the assembly of God, unless all Christians in that place are in that way gathered.

Take the following illustration: suppose the president sends out a commander to the army in the Phillippines, and that for a time the army puts itself entirely under his command. It could then be properly called the army of the United States. But if that army were to set aside the commander, and appoint another of its own, or if the army should divide into separate parts, each division appointing its own commander, each soldier might be still an American soldier, but could that divided army be correctly called the regular army of the United States? Having set aside the authority of the president's appointed commander, would not every division be in a state of mutiny? And would it not be disloyalty to join the ranks of any such mutinous division?

Now apply this to the Church or assembly of God. For a time the authority of the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, was owned, just as the American army for a time owned the authority of the president's appointee. Then the sovereign authority of the Spirit of God was set aside, and the authority of the Pope of Rome was put in the place of God the Holy Ghost. Can the church of Rome, then, be called the true Church of God? Impossible! She has mutinied against God's commander, the Holy Ghost. To join her ranks is disloyalty to Christ. But if I must declare the whole counsel of God, am I not compelled to adopt the same conclusion respecting every division of the professing church?

Take the Greek church: has it not set aside the command of the Holy Ghost? And though it put so high a person as the emperor of all the Russians in the place of the Holy Ghost, yet would it not be mutiny to join its ranks? Take again what is called the church of England. Are we not compelled to acknowledge that the sovereign command of the blessed Spirit is entirely set aside? As in Russia, so in England, the head of the world's government is made the head of the church; and instead of the Holy Ghost being allowed to divide, severally, as He will, a prime minister, whatever his principles may be, can appoint a minister over a given town or village, and according to this system no other person ought dare to name the name of Christ in that so-called parish. Only in this mail I have a letter from a Christian lady in such a town. A young woman had just been to request her to see her dying husband. She went, and put Jesus before the dying man. He appeared very thankful, and wished to see her again. She left him three gospel tracts: as she came out the vicar met her, and in the most authoritative manner, bid her only attend to the bodily wants of the dying man; that his soul's affairs were his (the vicar's) business alone. When he left he took all the three tracts with him. O, when I think of the eternal interests of that poor man dying this day, his young, weeping, anxious wife by his side, and then think of the delusion that I know that vicar will put before him, my heart turns sick at the fearful results in thousands of such instances, all springing from the solemn fact that the church of England disowns the sovereign guidance of the Spirit of God.

(Continued and to be Continued.)

Vol 02 - Christ the Center: Why Christians Should Meet in His Name Alone

Christ the Center: Why Christians Should Meet in His Name Alone Do you think it possible that the Spirit of God could appoint such a man; a man who will enter the cottages of the poor and take their gospel tracts and put them in the fire? Could Satan desire more sad departure from the Spirit's rule? Surely then I cannot be loyal to Christ, and join or sanction such a mutinous system. No; so far from the Church of England being the true Church of God, it is only a piece of the world governed by the world-in fact the very opposite of the Church of God, which is gathered out of the world, and governed by the Spirit of God. As I have before proved, every other division of the professing church fails to recognize the personal government of the Holy Ghost, and sets up a government of its own; therefore, no division of the professing church can be called the true assembly or Church of God any more than a division of the American army which failed to recognize the commander, and set up a commander of its own, could be called the true army of the United States.

I am fully aware that the personal guidance of the blessed Spirit of God has been so long forgotten that it is most difficult to make even Christians understand what is meant.

Take another illustration: a certain senator is announced to preside over a public meeting of the inhabitants of any given town. The meeting assembles, the senator comes, he stands on the platform, but nobody recognizes him; he speaks, but still no one knows him. Message after message is sent to his house begging him to come; they then desire his influence, and not knowing his personal presence, they appoint some one else to preside. Such is a precise picture of the divisions of the present day. However we may have grieved and disowned the Spirit, still that precious promise is fulfilled, "And He [the Father] shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever."(John 14:16) Yes, as the senator was present though not known, when the letters were sent to his house, even so in the assembly of Christians, the Holy Ghost has come, is present, at the very time prayer is being offered, in ignorance, for Him to come from heaven. Yea, to hear many Christians pray, one would almost think that they were praying for an influence. Would it not be shocking to speak of God the Father as an influence? Would it not be most revolting to say the life of God the Son, on earth, was only an allegory or an influence? And is not the Holy Ghost as real a person now on earth, as Jesus was when on earth, and now is in heaven? What a commander is to an army, or a president is to a meeting, such is the Holy Ghost to the assembly of God: commanding, directing, using whom He will. Where He is not thus owned, no assembly even of Christians can be called God's assembly. And hence from all such assemblies I must separate if I would be loyal to God.

(Continued)

Vol 02 - Correspondence

Correspondence Ques. 27. Who were the "Sons of God" in Genesis 6:2; Genesis 6:4? W. M.

Ans. There are three classes of angelic beings mentioned in the scriptures.

1st. Holy and elect angels, Luke 9:26; 1 Timothy 5:21.

2nd. Satan and his host of demons who fell before man's creation. Ezekiel 28:13-15.

3rd. Those who sinned or left their first estate, 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6. And are now confined in everlasting chains of darkness awaiting the judgment of the great day. As the word here translated "Sons of God" is never elsewhere used for men, it is generally accepted that it means this third class of angels.

Vol 02 - Correspondence

Correspondence Ques. 28. Please explain Matthew 12:31 and 1 John 5:16-17. J. K.

Ans. Read Mark 3:22-30. Notice the 30th verse "Because they said He hath an unclean spirit." The Lord Jesus was casting out demons out of men, the Pharisees and Scribes could not deny that, but their wickedness was so great that they deliberately put it down to the power of Satan, thus they blasphemed or spoke injuriously of the Holy Ghost, this showed their malice and enmity against God. And the Lord said "It shall not be forgiven him" (who committed it) "neither in this world, (1: e. the age of law that then was) "neither in the world to come" 1:e., in the Millennial age. (See J. N. Darby's Translation.) In this present time we can say to every man: "Whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." Acts 10:43. 1 John 5:16, is God's discipline on His children, there is no special sin mentioned. We might be able to discern that a believer was chastened and pray for his restoration, or, we might feel that his sin was unto death. It is the death of the body that is spoken of. 1 Corinthians 11:30. Some had died and some were weak and sickly, here it was because they did not discern the Lord's body in the Lord's supper. Acts 5:1-11 is another sample.

{SH/}Ques. 29 Was the woman in Luke 7:36-50, Mary Magdalene? Is Matthew 26:1-75; Mark 14:1-72; the same case? Has it any connection with that of John 12:1-50? F. F. S.

Ans. The woman in Luke 7:37, is unknown except in her character, her name is hidden; there is no evidence I know of in Scripture to say her name was Mary.

Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3; John 11:2; John 12:3; refer to Mary of Bethany and to the one occasion.

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