

# SCRIPTURE TRUTH

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*"Thy Word is very Pure"*

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THIRTY-SIXTH VOLUME

*comprising the years*

1948 - 1949 - 1950

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*"The Entrance of Thy Words  
Giveth Life"*  
(Psalm 119: 130)

**THE CENTRAL BIBLE TRUTH DEPOT**

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# "A PLACE FOR THE LORD."

F. B. HOLE.

AT first sight it has been to many a matter of surprise that the Lord should speak of David as "a man after Mine own heart," seeing he sinned so grievously, and gave such occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. Yet, on the other hand, the Scriptures do show that he was characterized by many excellent features, of which one of the most striking comes to light in the early part of Psalm 132, where we are given a glimpse of him in his earliest days.

Many a youth, possessing a strong character, vows that when fairly launched in life he will do this or that, in order to secure wealth or fame, and so establish for himself a secure place in the world. As a youth David made a vow, but it was to "find out a place for the Lord," and not a place for himself. In this he was in strongest contrast to his predecessor, who was made to "sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden" by Samuel, when the Lord had told him that Saul was to be king. That chiefest place Saul clung to, and for it he fought with bitterness. Saul's motto was "A place for myself." David's was, "A place for the Lord."

"Lo, we heard of it at Ephrath" (verse 6), and Ephrath was the ancient name of Bethlehem, and David's birthplace. But what was the "it"? Clearly, the ark, which is mentioned in verse 8; for verse 6 adds, "we found it in the fields of the wood;" for thus he describes Kirjath-Jearim, whence ultimately

he did bring up the ark to Jerusalem.

This Psalm therefore reveals to us that David, knowing that the ark which was God's throne in Israel, had been lost to the Philistines, and though recovered had never been properly reinstated, vowed in his earliest days that he would give himself no rest until he found that place for the Lord, where the ark of His presence might rest. Now that is the kind of man that suits the heart of God, and not the man that is merely seeking a good place for himself.

Shall we test our own hearts and live in the light of this as another year opens before us? We shall find it spiritually healthy to do so. The earth was never more full of place-hunters than it is today — nations, classes, individuals are all in the furious competition. Moreover, there are not a few who have considerable ground for their place-seeking, for they belong to the unhappy category of "displaced persons," for whom we may all feel the sincerest sympathy.

The fact is that in the present epoch everything is out of place, as far as the earth is concerned. Christ is not yet in the place which is rightly His, reigning as King of Israel, and over the whole earth as Son of Man. The church is not in the place of her destiny — the heavenly places — but still in the place of her pilgrimage. Israel is not in the land where her place is. The Gentile nations are not in the places which God has assigned them

as subsidiary to Israel. Nothing will be in its place until the Lord gets His place. We may well cry, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

But we do well to remember that while we wait for Him there is a way in which we may give Him His place, for has He not said, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them", (Matt. 18: 20). When He comes there will be "our gathering together unto Him" (2 Thess. 2: 1); but while we wait we may gather together in His Name, to the exclusion of all other names; owning His authority, and recognizing His presence in the midst. In doing this, we shall in a spiritual way be happily finding "a place for the Lord." Having so done we must carefully see that He has His rightful place in all our thoughts, our heart's affections, our service, our lives. This will be pleasing to Him, and to the Father from whom once He came.

The men of the world will look upon us as fools. They will tell us that if we do not bend all our energies to establishing our place in the

world no one is going to do it for us, and we shall lose our footing. We quite understand their thinking and speaking thus. How foolish the disciples must have looked as the Lord drew to the end of His earthly path. They had given up all — fishing boats, the table for the receipt of custom, and other things — to follow Him. They had lost their footing in Palestine, and now what was before them! Their Messiah was going to die!

Amongst His closing words, however, were these: "Let not your heart be troubled . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14: 1, 2). And the place He prepares and guarantees is infinitely preferable to any place any of them lost. And we can say the same.

Let us then step forward with good courage. The place He has prepared for us is sure and excellent beyond words. Be it ours to catch a little more fully the spirit of David, and, while we wait for His Advent, neither to seek our ease nor to slumber, but rather to seek our Lord's interests and be concerned to find **a place for Him.**

## "FROM THE TOP OF THE ROCKS."

H. HEY.

(Numbers 23: 7-13 ; I Corinthians 1: 4-9).

**I**T is said that years ago when two well-known servants of the Lord met, after the usual greetings, the younger one — known to be a man of much prayer — remarked, "I'm still looking up," to which the older man replied, "Yes, you're always looking up; why don't you

get up and look down." Now, what was this aged and honoured servant of Christ wishing to convey to his friend? We may be very sure he had no thoughts of discouraging prayer. But these few verses in Numbers 23 illustrate what he probably had in mind: the very

blessed truth of the oneness and perfection of all true believers in Christ.

How important it is to see that there are two great lines of truth running throughout the whole of Scripture; on the one hand, the purpose of God; and on the other, the responsibility of man. Here the children of Israel are seen from the standpoint of the purposes of God as suggested by the high altitude of "the top of the rocks;" hence Balaam, who had been hired by Balak to curse them, could only pronounce blessing upon them.

How the enemy would have liked to have stopped them from ever entering the Promised Land. But their wilderness wanderings were over at long last, and movement — real progress — was now marking them.

There had been a time when they turned back in heart to Egypt, and said in their murmurings: "We remember . . . the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlick" (Num. 11: 5); but now their faces were set towards the Sun-rising — towards the land of "the vine, the fig-tree, the pomegranate, the oil olive," and the good things just ahead.

How significant, by the way, that whereas Egypt's attractions were roots of the earth (the earth cursed by God) the pleasant land before them had its fruits that grew upward and heavenward. Surely, we do well to challenge ourselves as to the direction in which our hearts are set.

In verse 13 of our chapter, we see how very anxious Balak was

that Balaam should get another view of this favoured people, in order that he — "might not see them all" — Surely this is full of the deepest meaning. And would not the answer to this in our day be found in Ephesians 3: 18: "to comprehend with ALL saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

How we need to keep before the mind's eye, a full-orbed view of the whole Church of God — the only Church that Scripture recognizes, and by God's grace and help, the only one we should recognize too. Depend upon it nothing tends to disunity so much as for sectional interests to intrude themselves into the assemblies of God's people.

Now, when we come to 1 Corinthians 1 we see the same thing in practice in regard to the Assembly at Corinth, for the saints there were sadly wrong in their conduct in every one of the spheres in which they moved.

But, just as Balaam viewing "from the top of the rocks" those many tents, is only allowed to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents O Jacob" (whatever might have been happening to the contrary in any individual tent), so here the Apostle looks on to the time when these faulty Corinthians would be accounted "blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Moreover even as to their present conduct, he is led to commend all he can see of Christ in them. Truly this is ever the way of the Spirit of God. Would that we all sought grace so that in our small measure

we acted more and more in this spirit towards each other.

To sum up, just as in the type Balaam has to acknowledge that Israel's ultimate blessings rest on the work of God Himself ("What hath God wrought!") so in 1 Corinthians 1:9 we see the solid ground of the Apostle's confidence in the fact that: "**God** is faithful."

Depend upon it His purpose can never be frustrated and this blessed assurance gives stability to the soul,

A few weeks after this short paper was forwarded to us by the author, he was called, "absent from the body," to be "present with the Lord." [Editor].

and calls forth the heart's deepest praise and adoration.

How good to know that our blessings are secure "in Christ," and altogether beyond the reach of any breakdown or failure on our part. At the same time we do well to seek grace, that in the pathway of our responsibility (whether in the Assembly or the individual sphere), we may answer more and more in a practical way to that which God is most surely bringing to pass in the purposes of His sovereign grace.

## Exodus 33: 11—18.

Moses talks to God here as His friend but the believer's privilege now is far higher, that of entering into the Holiest with boldness, there to talk to God as his **Father** — for truly "our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." What is the meaning of fellowship? Is it not having something in common with another? If we have a taste in common with a friend is it not a bond of union, a tie that draws us together, makes us rejoice in meeting and holding fellowship over our common pleasure? A taste for music, drawing or botany will draw and keep people together for years. Well, what have we in common with God? We have Christ — Christ is God's well-beloved Son, the one Object to which all things in heaven and earth must bring glory — to set Him above all is God's great design in all His works. Well, is not Jesus the believer's first object in all things? Ah, my friends, take Christ to God and hold fellowship with Him about His well-beloved Son. Have you little comfort in prayer — little growth in grace or knowledge? I don't wonder at it if you are always bringing your own filthy self before God! Give up any hopes of ever finding anything but abomination in self — God does not expect you should — He knows you far better than you know yourself, but, in place of self, bring Christ to God, and ask to be shown more of His wondrous beauty, of His manifold perfections, to learn more of Him, who has purchased Heaven for you. I would leave that word with you "truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ" — and is not our fellowship truly with His Son, Jesus Christ? Have we not, by our fellowship with Him, eternal life now and eternal glory in prospect? The believer who is faithful to Him has also fellowship with Him in suffering, and in His place of rejection in this world.

# THE OLIVET DISCOURSE.

A. J. POLLOCK.

**L**UKE 21: 1-24 on the surface has much in common with Matthew 24: 1-29, and yet a little consideration will show how distinct they are. Luke 21: 1-24 has all been fulfilled centuries ago, and is still being fulfilled in the dispersion of the Jews among the nations of the world. On the contrary Matthew 24: 1-29 is all future, and awaits fulfilment in the last days.

In Luke 21: 1-24 our Lord saw the rich offering of their abundance to the Temple upkeep. He also noted the widow with her two mites, who gave all that she had, and her two little mites were more to the Lord than all the wealth poured in by the rich.

Our Lord with prophetic eye foretold that the day would come when the splendid Temple would be thrown down, and not one stone left upon another. His disciples then enquired when these things should be, and what sign would there be when it should come to pass.

In Matthew 24: 1-29 the disciples ask, What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world? The fulfilment of all this lies still in the future, we believe in the near future, for the signs all around us point in that direction very plainly.

But in Luke 21: 25-28 and Matthew 24: 29-31 these two Scriptures arrive at the same moment of time; in both cases still future.

A few words of explanation as to Luke 21 will help us to the better understanding of Matthew 24. Evi-

dently the two discourses followed hard upon each other, for in each of them our Lord prophesied the overthrow of the magnificent Temple at Jerusalem.

The Jewish nation rejected their Messiah, and in righteous judgment the destruction of their Temple and the scattering of them among the nations took place. So events moved on till Jerusalem should be compassed with armies. This literally took place in A.D. 70 when the Roman army, 100,000 strong, marched against Jerusalem, under Titus, the son of the Emperor Vespasian. A terrible and bloody siege took place. No less than 1,000,000 perished within a month. The city was captured, and the Temple destroyed.

In A.D. 135 the Roman Emperor Hadrian devastated Palestine. 580,000 perished. A ploughshare ran over Mount Zion, and the Scripture was literally fulfilled,

“Therefore shall Zion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest” (Micah 3: 12).

Thus accurately were prophecies fulfilled, that of Micah being uttered over seven centuries before Christ, and our Lord's fulfilled nearly forty years after His death. Luke 24: 24 foretells this, and it is being strikingly fulfilled in the condition of the Jews today, scattered, hated, persecuted, wanderers from their own land, their longing to re-

turn largely forbidden. Between verses 24 and 25 we skip over the whole of the Church period, now approaching two millenniums, and it is at this point that Luke 21: 25-28 joins on with Matthew 24: 29-31.

Let us now consider the Mount Olivet discourse of our Lord concerning the last days. In the three synoptic gospels there is no allusion to the hope of the church, the second coming of our Lord to catch His saints into the air in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. The scene is set for Israel, for earthly hopes, for the coming of our Lord returning in power to reign, and set up His kingdom as the Messiah of the Jews, and as the Son of Man, who shall reign over the whole earth.

In Matthew 24: 4-14 are outlined the opening characteristics of the last days. Many false Christs shall appear and seek to deceive. Whilst we can trace much today that looks like this, its final fulfilment awaits the period when the church has been raptured to glory, and when the restraining influence of the Spirit of God, as seen in the world today on behalf of His people, will be withdrawn, as stated in 2 Thessalonians 7-12. At this point wars and rumours of war would break out. Our Lord exhorted his disciples not to be troubled. How good it will be, when these dreadful days come to this earth in the government of God, that His hand will be over His own, and they are exhorted not to be troubled. We cannot think how the worldly without the knowledge of Christ, without the infilling of the Holy Spirit, without the en-

lightenment that God gives in His holy word as to these days, can be anything but troubled.

When we see the nations today, all disagreeing one with the other, we can understand how easily wars and rumours of wars will break out in the last days. Then the disciples are told how they will be persecuted in the last days. The experiences of the last war prepare us alas! to see how easily this may happen. The Jews being God's earthly people, the church gone, now no longer in the sphere of Satan's malevolence, dire persecution will concentrate on God's earthly people. The one who endures to the end will be saved, that is the one, who goes right through to the finish, will come in for the earthly salvation the Lord will bring to His tried and persecuted people when He comes in power to reign over the earth.

In Matthew 24: 14 we come to a very beautiful and important verse. Our Lord tells us that there will be in the last days a mighty movement of God's Spirit in the evangelization of the world. No longer will the Gospel of the grace of God, as we know it today, be preached, but the Gospel of the kingdom. At the second coming of our Lord all the Christians will be caught up, so the evangelists will be converted Jews. Matthew 25: 31-46 makes this abundantly plain. The fact that it is the Gospel of the kingdom that is preached, the Gospel that John the Baptist preached with such fervour, the Gospel our Lord preached in view of His claim to the kingdom, must be carefully noted. And further we find the expression in Mat-

thew 25: 40, "The least of these My brethren," pointing to the evangelists being converted Jews. The result of their labours will be seen in the judgment of the living nations, the separation of the sheep from the goats, the former to pass into life eternal, that is into the millennium, and once blessed, blessed for ever; the latter to pass into eternal punishment.

This is followed by a very solemn verse. We are told that at this time the abomination of desolation will be erected in the holy place. Our Lord refers to the prophecy of Daniel as to this terrible event. We read of Daniel's seventy weeks. These are broken into two parts, 69 weeks, or 483 years, and the 70th week, or 7 years. The beginning of the 69 weeks of years is marked by the building of the wall of Jerusalem. This began in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, a date easily decided upon (see Nehemiah 2: 1). At the end of the 69 weeks of years Messiah was cut off, but not for Himself, that is it was a sacrificial death our Lord died. He died for mankind. Then began the day of God's longsuffering grace to a guilty world, still continuing in His infinite mercy.

Then we find that the Roman people are prophesied as destroying the city and the sanctuary. This was fulfilled, as we have seen, when Titus captured the city and the Temple was destroyed by fire. Then we are told of a Prince of the Roman people arriving on the scene. Between the capture of Jerusalem under Titus, and the arrival of this great Prince there intervenes the whole period of God's longsuffering

grace, the preaching of the Gospel all down the centuries, the calling out and the rapture of the Church to glory. Putting one Scripture against another it is plain that there will arise in the last days a great superman, a great personage, in short the Beast arising out of the sea (Rev. 13), who shall make a treaty with the Jews for seven years. This is Daniel's seventieth week. In the middle of the week, that is at the end of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years, he will break his treaty with the Jews, and then will break out the Great Tribulation as described by our Lord in verse 21. This setting up of the image to be worshipped in the Temple, and all men called to bow before it on pain of death, will indeed be the beginning of great sorrows.

As soon as this takes place the saints are exhorted to instant flight. A man may be on his housetop, and when he hears this baneful news he must not even take a moment to snatch anything out of his house. Absolutely instant flight is his only hope. They are exhorted to pray that this event may not take place in the winter nor on the Sabbath day.

Then will come such pressure upon men that the rumours of false Christs will be common. They will show great wonders, calculated to deceive even the very elect. But the disciples are told that the coming of the Lord will be very sudden. Just as the lightning comes from the east and shines even to the west in a moment of time, so will the Son of Man come.

The state of things just prior to our Lord coming to reign is described. After the Great Tribulation

the sun will be darkened, that is supreme authority in a moment of time will be eclipsed. The moon will not give her light, that is with supreme authority fallen, it will carry in its fall the lesser authorities. The stars shall fall from heaven, all classes of authority will go by the board. In the midst of this awful chaotic state of affairs suddenly the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in heaven. The angels will be given the task of gathering the elect from one end of heaven to the other. Thus will be set up our Lord's earthly kingdom.

It will be seen how different is the setting of the coming of our Lord to reign on the earth and His coming for His church. In the latter no angels are set to the task of collecting the heavenly elect. The Lord Himself will come, not to set up His kingdom on earth, but to take His heavenly people to the Father's house on high.

Our Lord told His disciples that when the fig tree puts on leaves we know that summer is nigh. The fig tree is symbolic of Israel, so when we see these things beginning to happen we know that our Lord is about to set up His earthly kingdom, as prophesied for centuries by Old Testament prophets. We are told,

"Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only."  
(Matt. 24: 36).

That verse refers to the coming of our Lord to reign over the earth. No date is given for the rapture of the church, indeed nothing is said about that coming in this way.

The coming of the Lord to reign brings a different order of events to His coming for His Church. In the latter case those taken are taken for glory; those left are left for judgment. But in the case of the flood, the illustration given by our Lord, Noah and family were left for blessing on the renewed earth, all else perished in the waters, taken in judgment.

That will be like the coming of the Lord to reign. Two men shall be in the field; one taken for judgment, the other left for blessing, to have the privilege of entering our Lord's kingdom on earth. Two women will be grinding at the mill, one taken for judgment the other left for the blessing, for the King will take OUT of His kingdom all things that offend.

It is interesting as a sidelight to notice that in Luke 17: 34-36 we have two men in bed, that is at **night** time; two women grinding at the mill that is **early morning**; and two men in the field, that is in **broad daylight**. At one and the same time one is taken for judgment, and one is left for blessing. How could that be? It has been often pointed out that the Bible does not set off to teach scientific truths, but the rather to draw men's attention to what is moral and spiritual. Yet in this Scripture is wrapped up the truth of the earth being round, generations before astronomers discovered this, and before men generally believed it. It could only be if the earth rotated on its axis, thus making the difference between night and day.

We are seeing how easy it will be in the future day for the bringing

about the state of things when no one will be allowed to buy or sell unless they have the mark of the beast, which no believer could tolerate surely.

The Lord must take the reins of government in this world and we believe this time is drawing rapidly very near.

But before the Lord comes to reign upon this earth He will come for His heavenly people, His Church, and that event may come at any moment. Are we ready for this? "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John 3: 3).

## THE FATHER'S LOVE.

J. HOUSTON.

THE apostle John had been warning God's children about the last days, when antichrists would come, and apostates would depart from the truth. He saw an ever-rising and sweeping current of evil, which would not only carry away those that were unreal in Christian profession, but which would test very severely those that were real, even God's dear children. In his pastoral Epistles, he has this anti-christian movement much before him, and, through the Spirit, has given us the ground of safety, on which to stand, and where we can have, at all times, fellowship with the Father, and the Son, and with one another.

When he had given opportune exhortation about the evil, he broke away from all that would tend to sadden and depress the spirit, and soared into the heights of communion with the Father, and the Son, and exclaimed, in rapturous joy, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 John 3: 1). This rapture of the spirit was not unlike what Paul experienced, when he broke

forth in strains of praise and worship, saying, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephes. 1: 3). Both these inspired servants were led away from evil, even the thought of it, and transported to the source of all blessing, the Father's love. So should we, in our measure, follow their example, and have that communion with the Father, and the Son, which not only ensures us against evil, but which provides us with all that is good and precious to the soul.

John is insistent in taking us to what was in the beginning. He exhorts us to abide in it, and also to let it abide in us. "Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father" (1 John 2: 24). Now, we may well ask, What was this that was heard from the beginning? The answer is, the Father's love as manifested in Christ.

From it, all has come, of infinite good, in its very highest and most blessed sense. The Father gave His Son, in that love; His eternal counsels were, in that love, for His Son's exaltation; His express will, proceeding from that love, is to head up all things in heaven and earth in His Son; and He has given Him, the Son, "to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephes. 1: 22, 23). The Father's love is the spring and source of everything that has come to us in Christ. That love was on the Son in eternity — "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17: 24). That same love is on us now, and for eternity; for the Father's name is revealed to us, that the love wherewith He loves the Son, may be in us, and He in us. Well might it be said:

"The Father's love, the source of all,

Sweeter than all it gives,  
Shines on us now without recall,  
And lasts while Jesus lives."

The amazing thing about the Father's love is, "that we should be called the sons [or, children] of God." It is not merely that we are named "children of God," but that we are in that relationship, by **God's calling**. The very mention of "Father" infers children. Of what could He be Father? In a certain sense, He is "Father of all"; but this is in a creatorial way. Here it is **relationship**, and not **creation**. It is **love**, and not **power**. It is, in fact, the Father's love, enjoyed by those who are in the relationship of children, in which alone it can be enjoyed.

Who can know the **Father's** love, but those, who are children by calling, and have **filial** nature and capacity to know it, and enjoy it? "That we should be called the children of God." This filled John's heart, and it may well fill our hearts! The Father must have children, that is, objects for His love; and He must have them in a state of likeness to His Son, so that it could be enjoyed; that is, "holy and without blame before Him in love."

When we contemplate a state of holiness and blamelessness, it is **absence of evil**. Holiness is a state in which **evil does not exist, not even in thought**. In fact, the thought of evil would preclude holiness. What a blessed state to be in, for all eternity, in order to enjoy the Father's love! "Holy and without blame," and in that state, before the Father **in love**! God is love; this is His nature. He is holy; this is His character, unchanging character. To enjoy His love, we must be in conformity with His character, holy as He is holy. This we have, in perfection, in Christ.

In this relationship of children and sons with the Father, as called by the Father; having the Father's love, as our present and eternal portion; being holy and blameless before Him in love — this is something of which the world has no knowledge. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." In vain do we try to explain to the world anything about the Father and His love. It does not know the Father; and how can it know His love? "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee." This is what the Son said,

after He had been in the world, and was about to leave it. "The world hath not known Thee." Solemn words! They explain the state of the world, in total darkness. We too are in the world, and it does not know us, as children of God, any more than it knew Christ, the Son of God. We repeat, the Father, His love, His Son, and His sons — all this is entirely outside the world, and its knowledge.

It has pleased God the Father to leave us in the world ; but we are not of it, even as Christ is not of it. Nor is it His will we should be taken

out of the world ; but it is His will that we should be kept from the evil that is in the world. Antichrists rise, and deny the Son ; apostates depart from the truth ; the world does not know the Father, and hates those whom the Father loves. This, in few words, is what we have here. And it is all passing away. He who does God's will abides. Abides in what? The Father's love. Well, may we say :

" O Holy Father, keep us here  
In that blest name of love,  
Walking before Thee without fear,  
Till all be joy above."

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE

(Chapter I: 1-13).

**T**HE first book of the Bible has a place of very great importance in the whole scheme of God-given truth which the Book brings to us. This may be stated with special emphasis in regard to its opening chapters, for in them is revealed to us the origin of the visible creation that surrounds us, together with the true account of how has come to pass the conditions of sin and sorrow and toil and pain and disease and death, which fill the earth today. If we fall into untruth and delusion as to these things, we shall be deluded as to all things. If we are in doubt as to them, we shall be in doubt as to all else that is revealed.

Genesis I puts on record facts which preceded the appearance of man on the earth, and which therefore cannot have been derived from any kind of historical record. If its statements are not the record in

writing of a revelation from God to man, they can only be the guesses and brainy concoctions of men who lived some 4,000 years ago. Such guesses were of course plentiful enough in the ancient world, and some of them have come down to us, grotesque in their deformity. We need not waste our time over them, or even mention them, save that they serve to throw into relief the calm certainty and sanity of the God-given record of Genesis I.

The first four words of our English Bibles — "In the beginning God" — present to us the primordial germ from which springs all that is revealed to us in the entire book. Here is the great fact that comprehends every other fact within its all-embracing sweep. The Bible begins with God and not man, and we must do the same. If we begin with man rather than God

confusion will reign in all our thoughts.

That God exists and that He originated all things is assumed and stated. Unbelieving men may demand that **proofs** of His existence be produced, but nowhere in Scripture does God condescend to furnish such proofs. Were He to do so they would not be intelligible to the feeble minds of puny men. Moreover they are no more really needed than proofs that the sun exists and shines. That fact could only be doubted by a man who had neither sight nor feeling, and it is just because unbelieving men have neither sight nor feeling of a spiritual sort, that they doubt, or even deny, the existence of God.

The heavenly bodies above us and the earth beneath our feet are realities too plain to be missed, even by the most unthinking and degraded of men. What are they? Whence came they? Have they always existed? The first verse supplies the answer. They are not eternal, but had a beginning. Both heavens and earth came into being by the creative act of the eternal God. Three times in the chapter do we read, "God **created**," and five times another verb is used, meaning to **make**. To make is to fashion out of existing matter, whereas when we read of God creating, then "through faith we understand . . . that things which are seen **were not made of things which do appear**" (Heb. 11: 3).

But another thing confronts us in this first verse, though not apparent in our English Bibles. The Hebrew word for God is **Elohim**, a plural word, where the verb, created, is in

the singular. This is the more remarkable in that Hebrew nouns can assume a dual form, meaning **exactly two**. Hence the plural form must mean **three**, or more. Reading this in the light of the New Testament, we at once see the **Trinity in Unity**. That great revelation of the Godhead is not explicitly stated, but the words, given by inspiration of God, are so framed as to be wholly consistent with it, when it is stated.

To sum up: verse 1 gives us the original creative act of God by which the whole material and visible universe came into being, long before such things as "days and years" (verse 14), were known. Its epoch may have been inconceivably remote, but that His work was perfect in its season, we firmly believe. In the New Testament, as we know, this creative act is attributed to the Word and the Son, for creation was left in His hands, as also was redemption, and as judgment will be.

In verse 2 we move from that remote epoch to a time much nearer our own, and we descend, **as regards this earth**, to a state of very great imperfection. It is found "without form;" that is, a ruin, a waste: it is also "void:" that is, empty. Isaiah 45: 18 plainly says, "He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited." This is very striking, for here again the proper word for creation is used, as in our first verse, and "in vain" is a translation of the same word as "without form" in our verse. So we have a definite confirmation of the thought that the state of the earth as in verse 2, was one that supervened, long after the original

creation, as the result of some catastrophic event which is not revealed to us.

Besides the ruin and the emptiness there was also darkness, not everywhere but "on the face of the deep." It looks as if at this stage the earth was covered with water, the face of which was swathed in darkness. God is light, and elsewhere in the universe light was shining, but something hindered light from reaching the earth. In this condition of things the Spirit of God acted. We believe it was Herbert Spencer, an atheist philosopher, who said that, to account for things visible, five things must be predicated: viz., time, space, matter, force, motion. All five appear in our chapter. The Spirit of God is indeed **Force**, and He **moved** on the face of this watery **matter**.

But not apart from the Word of God. It is remarkable how in the New Testament the Spirit and the word are brought together, and specially so in connection with the new birth — see John 3: 5, 6, and 1 Peter 1: 25. Hence we cannot but see a striking analogy between God's work here in things material and His even greater work in things spiritual. When our spiritual condition was one of ruin and emptiness and darkness, light shined into our hearts by the moving of the Spirit of God and the power of the word of God. The first word recorded as proceeding from the mouth of God is "Light," for we understand that "Let there be light" is more literally, "Light be!" This is alluded to by Paul in 2 Corinthians 4: 6, only there he carries us beyond new birth in itself

to its glorious result, in beholding "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." What a contrast between the glory of His face and the darkness that once was on the face of the deep!

Note those words, "And God said." As we travel through the chapter we shall find they occur ten times. "The worlds were framed by the word of God," as Hebrews 11: 3 has told us; or we may adopt the words of Psalm 33: 9, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." How significant in this connection is the opening of John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word;" that is, He was pre-existent to the first beginnings of creation. Moreover He "was with God, and . . . was God . . . All things were made by Him." So it was the Word, who later, "was made flesh, and dwelt among us," that uttered the words of power that created and made all things. Hence creation contains very definite word as to the power and wisdom and glory of God, though the revelation falls far short of that which reached us when the Word became flesh.

Notice another thing. Six times in the chapter the words, "And God said," has the appropriate sequel, "and it was so." The word of God is seen at the very outset to be powerful, never failing of its effect. How encouraging to be assured of this fact in the first chapter of the Bible, for we may be sure it applies to every word that God has spoken. When the end of the story is reached we shall be able to say with triumph, "and it was so," in regard to every promise He has

made, every prediction He has uttered.

As the result of God's first utterance light shone upon the face of the deep, and God saw that it was good. This indeed it must be since, "God is light." Do we ask — what is light? Scientists have their theories as to what it is, or how it comes to be, but no better answer can be given than that which Scripture furnishes, "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Eph. 5: 13), or as another translation puts it, "That which makes everything manifest is light." In darkness unrealities may deceive us because realities are obscured, and that is not good. To have everything brought into manifestation is good indeed.

So God divided the light from the darkness. There was not to be a compromise, a mixture, a sort of indefinite twilight, but the darkness was for a season to give way completely to light, and thus there was a division between them. Hence there was evening and there was morning — a first day. For a long time great exception was taken by unbelievers to this statement of verse 5, because the sun does not appear until the fourth day. But the sun is not the only source of light.

The question is raised as to whether the days of Genesis 1 are to be understood in a literal sense or figuratively as indicating immense periods of time, and it has provoked much discussion, as neither interpretation of the word is free from difficulties. For ourselves, we believe it is to be understood literally. The figurative sense occurs in Scrip-

ture — "man's day," "the day of salvation," etc. But this sense is most evidently a secondary one and the literal sense is the primary. In our judgment this fact alone is pretty decisive. We must have the primary meaning established before we can arrive at any secondary meaning at all, and Genesis 1 deals with primary things. When we reach Isaiah's prophecy we get "the day of the Lord," but even that, though not a day of 24 hours is not a long period of time. The repetition of "the evening and the morning" fits in with the primary meaning, and would have very little meaning in the secondary sense. Further, in verse 16, where the sun is made to rule the day and the moon to rule the night, we do not see how the primary sense can be avoided.

That these mighty works should be accomplished with extreme rapidity presents no difficulty to faith. Mighty works, though of another order, were done instantaneously by the Word, when He became flesh and took "the form of a servant." He was "in the form of God" when He acted in creation and everything displayed His unqualified omnipotence.

But we must carefully bear in mind that after verse 1 the verb "create" does not occur again till we come to verse 21. In between we have "God made," an expression which indicates His action in forming or re-forming already existing matter. In the days of Genesis 1, God was dealing with the earth that had been in a state of chaos, putting it into order with a view to the creation of man.

On the second day a "firma-

ment," or "expanse," was called into being. As a result of this a further division took place; not now of light from darkness but of waters from waters. God called this expanse, Heaven. In verse 1 "the heaven" indicates what we should call the stellar heavens. In verse 8 the atmospheric heavens are indicated. There it is that immense quantities of water float above in the form of clouds, divided from the far greater quantities that lie on the earth beneath. As the result of the work of the second day the earth was surrounded with an atmosphere. It was accomplished by His word, "God said . . . and it was so."

Again on the third day there was division. The waters above the expanse were not affected but those beneath were gathered together into one place, and this permitted dry land to appear. In result that which was stable and fixed appeared, where previously all had been unstable and in motion. Other things followed before the third day closed, but this was the essential preliminary.

We have now had five things before us, the naming of which came from the lips of God. We observe this because in the next chapter we find God bringing to Adam the living creatures that He had made on the fifth and sixth days, that he might give them names; and in keeping with this the vast variety of creatures, indicated in verses 20-25, are only mentioned generically. The word "whales" in verse 21 might seem to be an exception, but the word so translated only means "sea monsters." So though Adam was permitted to display his powers

of discernment in many a minor detail, these five things he had to accept as named by God — Day, Night, Heaven, Earth, Seas.

As we go through the Scriptures we find the five things become symbolic and have spiritual significance. Our true "Day" will be found in the light of the knowledge of God, and there is complete division between that and that alienation from God which is "night." The division between Heaven and earth we all recognize. It is clear too that in the world of men "earth" symbolizes that which is ordered and stable, separated from peoples restless and agitated under the powers of evil, like the seas. As before, in the division between light and darkness, so now in the division between earth and seas, we get the remark, "God saw that it was good." There are divisions that are good because Divinely made. It is only man-made divisions that are evil.

The third day did not close before the newly revealed earth had brought forth grass and seed-producing herbs and fruit-producing trees. Here we note another step forward in the work of making the earth a fit habitation for man. Vegetable life is perhaps the lowest form of life that is known to us. It has neither the instinct and limited intelligence that animals possess, nor has it their powers of movement, yet we all know the difference between the plant that is dead and the plant that lives. And God saw that even this lowest form of life was good.

Here for the first time we meet with the idea of variety and of species, and consequently for the

first time we meet with the significant words, "after his kind." They occur no less than ten times in this chapter, and always in connection with the appearance of some form of life, which had within itself power of reproduction. Here at the outset then is stated most emphatically a great law that is binding on all animate creation. However great and many the varieties which may occur, or be induced, within a species, there is no development into another species.

No idea has been more diligently propagated by unbelievers during the last century than that of evolution, and though Darwin's theories as to how evolution can have been brought about have been, we understand, largely abandoned, yet the idea itself is still clung to as afford-

ing an alternative to the disliked truth of creation. In Genesis 1, with Divine foreknowledge we have this ten times repeated fact, which flatly denies evolution, and in practice it is continually verified. No species ever has developed into another species. Every creature reproduces itself after its kind, and never into another kind.

Adam in his fallen condition and all his race are bound by this law. No fallen sinner can evolve into a child of God. Our only hope lies in a new creation, and this is what we have in Christ, as becomes manifest when we turn to the New Testament. The "man in Christ" is a man of an entirely new order. Such is the work of God by His Spirit and through the Gospel.

## ANSWER TO A CORRESPONDENT.

Surely Hebrews 10: 26-31 does not mean that there is no hope for a backslider. Could you enlighten me through your magazine? -- Perth.

There is evidently no hope for the particular kind of backslider that is contemplated in these verses. But we are happy to be able to add that the great majority of those we should call backsliders are not of this type. Sad to say, all too often true believers get entangled and backslide for a time. There are not a few also who are moved emotionally to make profession of conversion, but tested by time they do not stand. Some of these later do get truly converted.

These verses, written to Jews who had professed the faith of Christ, have a third class in view who might "draw back unto perdition,"

as verse 39 says. If any did draw back, and desired reinstatement in Jewish circles and in the synagogue, they would have to denounce Jesus as an impostor, declare that His blood was the blood of a malefactor, and the Spirit poured out at Pentecost was mere carnal excitement and a sham. This is what verse 29 indicates.

If any backslide after this fashion, they commit themselves to utter blasphemies; they shut the only door of salvation in their own faces. For such there is no hope held out in this Scripture, but rather scorching judgment.

# “ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.”

J. BLACKBURN.

Condensed Notes of an Address to young Christians on Luke 10: 38-42

WE all understand that the word **Disciple** stands in close relationship to that of **Doctor**. The usual meaning in everyday life of **Doctor** is a man who gives you pills for illness and bodily disorders, but the word really means a **Teacher**, and **Disciple** really means a **Learner**. The Lord Jesus is our Master, our Teacher, and we are His **Disciples**, for He says, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

The central thought of discipleship is contained in the wonderful words of the Saviour in the passage we have just read, “One thing is needful.” The other day coming across the River Forth at Queensferry, I was reminded of the story of the learned professor who went out in a boat with a local fisherman, and when they had got out into the open current, he turned to the man and asked him if he knew anything about **Meteorology**.

The fisherman, not knowing he was being asked about the weather, confessed his ignorance. Presently he asked him if he knew anything about **Zoology**, and again later he asked if he knew anything about the **Archæology** of those parts. Again the fisherman shook his head, not even knowing the meaning of the words. “Well, how much of your life has been lost!” exclaimed the Professor. Then, all unexpected, a storm arose, and the boat was in difficulties and finally capsized. In the water the fisherman shouted to the Professor,

“Do you know anything about swimming?” and on hearing a faint reply in the negative, he said, “Well, Professor, the whole of your life is lost!” That man had his mind stored with precious earthly treasures but when the moment came to swim for his life he hadn’t that one thing needful and his treasures went down with him. Indeed, for us Christians there is one thing, one vital necessity of life above all others, and without that one thing we have nothing. We may have many advantages over others, but unless we have a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, all is lost.

It is, however, not so much in relation to the soul’s salvation as to the matter of our daily living that this principle is of such tremendous importance to us. We have so many things which are required of us, as young men and women, that easily we get distracted, but in our Scripture the Lord Jesus is telling Martha of the **one needful thing** which Mary had chosen. She was ministering to the King of kings — as a vessel unto the Lord — and gaining instruction for herself. He asked Martha to realize this and not be cumbered with her much serving.

There is a great deal of talk nowadays on the methods of Christian service. Right methods in the work of the Gospel, right methods in the Sunday School, etc., but I feel sure we must face the fact that unless the messenger of the Gospel is full of the Holy Ghost the methods and the work will be ren-

dered powerless. The vital force of our Christian service must be gained by **daily contact with the Lord Himself**, the one thing which is needful. Pray God that more of us may choose that good part, for it will not be taken away from us.

It is comparatively easy for us to study the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, but often we stop short when it comes to using it practically in our daily lives. It will not be, for instance, much use studying the Epistle to the Hebrews unless we appropriate its teaching and answer to the exhortations that so constantly occur in it. Again and again appear the words, "Let us . . ." — "Let us labour," "Let us fear," etc.

What exactly was this **ONE THING**? There can be no doubt that it was that Mary was giving her undivided attention to the Lord Jesus. She sat at His feet, **to hear His Word**. Let us ask ourselves the question, "How often do we give undivided attention to the Lord Jesus Christ?" That is the **ONE THING** which is needful. Everything else without it is worthless. There is no suggestion, however, that our whole lives should be lived like this. The early monks thought that these words should govern every minute of the day and week, but He also says to us, "Go and bring forth fruit" — "Go and preach the Gospel." Then He also says, "Come ye apart and rest awhile," and that is where the one thing needful comes in.

So we find that Mary was in the Lord's presence and her whole attention was devoted to Him. We, too, must choose definite times

when we come into His presence and give HIM our undivided attention. None of our lives can be successfully devoted to Him unless we have this one thing which is needful.

The Lord Jesus loved His disciples, and it in return they loved Him, He promised to manifest Himself to them. Then again, we hear His words, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me," as evidence that we can have the presence of the Lord Jesus. We can open the door by having fixed times for coming into His presence and giving undivided attention to Him and His word.

Let it not be a case of,  
 "Room for pleasure, room for  
 business,  
 But for Christ the crucified,  
 Not a place that He can enter,  
 In the heart for which He died."

Some may have given attention to the Lord like the Pharisees did, but like them their hearts were filled with pride, refusing His claims. We must be humble and with a contrite spirit — trembling at His holy word. This should be our attitude at His feet just as Mary was sitting there. In Luke 24, we read that the Lord opened up the Scriptures to the two disciples going to Emmaus, and they said on that occasion, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?" That is the only way to be His disciples.

We could make no attempt to enter into these things of God if the

Holy Spirit were not here to dwell in our hearts. He speaks a wisdom that is perfect, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. 2: 9, 10). God has given us His Spirit so that we should be able to enter into these things. No matter how young, or how feeble our natural intelligence may be, we can enjoy the deep things of God.

Our hearts are deeply affected in this matter. It is not the mind that governs us in our daily lives.— we are not animals governed by the mind — it is the heart alone, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Our hearts will burn within us as the

Lord speaks to us along the way.

Let me ask you, how often, when the enemy comes down upon you with temptation to gaiety and frivolity, etc., does he find your heart and thoughts fortified by the Lord Jesus Christ? Alas! He is often distant from our thoughts. Let us accept the challenge, for the enemy will do his best, and a thousand things will come to hinder you from that **one thing which is needful** — seeking the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and giving Him your undivided attention.

"Admit Him, for the human breast,  
Ne'er entertained so kind a guest,  
No mortal tongue their joys can  
tell,  
With whom He condescends to  
dwell."

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## FIVE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES.

D. Ross:

Condensed Notes of an Address to young Christians on  
Psalms 32: 8, 9 ; 36: 9.

**T**HE difficulties which confront the young people of today are no less than those which the older ones experienced in the past. But there is light given of God for the particular problems of our pathway. The schoolboy has his problems and he thinks them simple if he knows he has the answers in the back of the book! He may find the answer and write it down, but then he has to work out the answer, and he gets it all wrong!

Now some young people want to have the answers to their problems without working them out. They

say, "Is it right to do this?" or "Is it wrong to do that?" And they want a ready-made answer. You will find the answer in the Bible but it will not come to you ready-made.

Some have used the Bible in a haphazard way, to get an oracle from it, and be guided by that happening—what has been called, "the lucky-dip method." There was a young man once, who had decided to go to a far-off land to serve the Lord, but though he opened his Bible he did not work on this method. The first words he read were, "The eyes of a fool are in the

ends of the earth " (Prov. 17: 24), but that did not deter or discourage him.

If you search the Scriptures you will find luminous principles given of God, and from these you will find light for your particular problems. To return again for a moment to the illustration of the schoolboy — the master shows an example of the sum in question and its solution on the blackboard. Then the boys try the problem on their own. Some get the wrong answer. Then back they go to the master, who shows them more examples, but leaves them to work it out for themselves. Thus it is that practical Christianity works for us.

Let me now mention five of the governing principles of the New Testament.

The first principle is that **life is a trust**, and you are the trustees. This is brought out in the parable of the nobleman who departed, and gave each of his servants a pound to trade with in his absence. We are all trustees of something, for all we possess is not our own. What are we doing with our pound, whether it consists of material things or spiritual gifts? In the parable one man gained ten pounds and one five. But to the one who kept his pound wrapped up in a napkin the master spoke in unmistakable terms.

There is an Eastern poem, which tells of two servants, to each being given a sack of corn. After a time the first said, "Come and I will show you a wonderful harvest." But the second said, "Come and I will show you it — there is your sack of corn." But the corn was mouldy and useless!

Another illustration has been used. There are two similar bars of iron. One may be given to a blacksmith who turns it into horse shoes worth £5. The other is made into delicate watch springs worth £1,000. What accounted for all that difference? It was the work involved.

It is no use lamenting that you have no shining gifts. Something is entrusted to you. Find out what it is, and use it diligently, for your Master is going to enquire what you have done with what He entrusted to you.

The second principle is that **your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost**. It is important of course to see that the body is kept in fitness. Physical fitness is good in itself, but of greater importance is spiritual fitness. Always give first place to the thought that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. What are you doing with that body of yours? Merely pampering it — titivating it up? Use that body for the purpose for which God gave it to you.

Remember that it is a temple; so do not commit sacrilege with it. Oliver Cromwell used a cathedral in the south of England as a stable for his horses. We may deplore his action, but let us see that we do not stable the devil's horses in the temple of the Holy Ghost — our own bodies.

Thirdly, **you are His peculiar treasure**, and not your own; so God is to be glorified in your body. Some are called to live lonely lives with little fellowship, and may say to themselves, "I'm nobody's treasure." Ah, but you are! You are Christ's own treasure — fair and precious in His sight. The Lord

loves us: He esteems you so highly that He gave His life and shed His precious blood to purchase you for Himself. Being now Christ's peculiar treasure, you must be very careful how you pursue your way through the world.

Then, in Hebrews 12 we have the fourth principle, which is that **we are called to run a race**, and are **put into training for it**. The Apostle Paul says, "So run that ye may obtain" the prize. In the Olympic games the entrant had to subject himself to discipline, pursuing the exercises at fixed times and sometimes in the cold. He must abstain from pleasures, go before the physician, and then go forward to win the laurels and the crowns.

Many young men today do not care for the ways of their forefathers, considering them old-fashioned and puritan. Consequently there are many Christians who do not have fixed times for prayer and the study of the Scriptures — for training. Are you going to submit to this training, and become a trainee? If you do, you will be asking, Is this thing or that thing going to hinder me or help me in the Christian race? Will it help me so to run that I obtain the prize?

The fifth and last principle is that **true Christ anity is lived in the transforming power of the Lord Jesus Christ**. Psalm 32 deals with our having guidance in the way. I have always fancied being a horseman but the opportunity came too late in life. On one occasion I could not get the pony to come near and it required a sheep dog to get it into a pen. Then the bridle was put upon it. There are many who would like

to put bit and bridle on you, and bring you into bondage. But the Lord says, No! "I will guide thee with Mine eye."

On the next occasion the master called the pony and it came obediently into the stable without bit and bridle, almost as if it said, "Master, what do you want me to do?" To act thus, remember, we have got to be near the Master, and keep our eyes upon Him. Guidance is found in the Master's eye, the Master's voice, the Master's hand. Have you got your eye upon the Master? Are you listening to His voice? Are you near enough to see the Master's hand? Are you looking unto Jesus?

If we are, then we shall behold the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, and be transfigured into His image, from glory to glory — transfigured from contemplation, until in heaven we see His face. It is as we, like Mary, sit at His feet and hear His word, that we really contemplate Him, and are transformed into His image.

The five principles, then, and their practical application, are:—

- (1) Life is a trust — do not betray it.
- (2) Your body is a temple — do not commit sacrilege with it.
- (3) You are a treasure — do not cause sorrow to the One who bought you.
- (4) You are running a race — you must be prepared to give up hindrances.
- (5) Keep so near to your Lord that you have the guidance of His eye, and contemplating Him, become like Him.

## “WHILE WE LOOK.”

A. J. POLLOCK.

THE OUTLOOK today is anything but cheering. The words that pass from lip to lip on every hand are such as “austerity,” “coupon,” “point,” “ration book,” “purchase tax,” etc. Behind these terms lies the second great world war—(1939-1945)—which left the world in a truly woeful condition. The outlook to put it mildly is decidedly depressing. The condition of things on every hand is a solemn reminder that it is a sad and a suicidal thing for a nation to forget God and His claims, for this is at the bottom of all this sad mess in which we find ourselves.

In addition to this there are the individual's difficulties — sickness, disease, poverty, weakness of old age, bereavement — the combination of which has driven many a despairing man or woman to self-destruction, and so end things, as they vainly think.

But with the Christian how different things should be. For instance that great servant of God, the Apostle Paul, whose Christianity was a very practical thing, wrote in terms of veritable triumph over the greatest difficulties and sorest trials. He wrote of “always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake” (2 Cor. 4: 11) — a continuous and exacting experience of an intense nature. Yet he could write of “our light affliction, which is but for a moment” (2 Cor. 4: 17).

Did he make light of affliction? When crushing trial came his way, as we know it did — scourgings, stonings, imprisonments, perils of

every kind — did he sink under their weight, and their continuance through life, ending only in the executioner's sword severing the tired head from the body, ushering God's faithful servant into the presence of the Lord he so faithfully served? Did he call these things in their cumulative trial **great** affliction? He might well have done so. Nay, he called them, “**light** affliction.” Was he then a foolish optimist, who made light of heavy trials? Surely not. His trials were many and crushing, looked at from the human side.

What then caused the Apostle Paul to describe as **light** such sore and continuous afflictions as he experienced? The secret lay in the direction in which he was looking. Look only at this world with its trials and difficulties, and the stoutest heart may well despair, and sink under a leaden weight of woe.

The Apostle Paul, however, wrote of “our **light** affliction,” but this was because he did not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen, for “the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4: 18). It is only as we measure the present by the future, the temporal by the eternal, that we can understand the meaning of the Apostle's words.

What is the present, but at best a few brief days, months or years, which measured by eternity, amply justify Job's description of the brevity of human life. He exclaimed in weariness, “My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle”

(Job 7: 6). We have seen the shuttle fly in one second from end to end of the web of cloth. Again Job likens the brevity of life to "the eagle that hasteth to the prey" (Job 9: 26) — one moment poised in mid air, the next swooping down upon the prey, so rapidly as to outdistance human vision. But what of eternity, beyond the reach of the human mind even to dimly realize — something that has no ending — millions of years making no indent on its duration — eternity: for ever and for ever?

Contrast the Christian's present with the Christian's future. **Here** we are "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter 2: 11) for a brief moment; **there** the bliss of the Father's home beckons us — our home **for ever and for ever**. **Here** it is sorrow, pain, weakness, bereavement for a little while; **there** no pain, no crying, no sorrow, no death are known (Rev. 21: 4).

**"There no stranger - God shall  
meet thee,  
Stranger thou in courts  
above,  
He who to His rest shall greet  
thee,  
Greets thee with a well-known  
love."**

Is it any wonder when the eyes are fixed on the Father's house, the bliss of the Lord's own presence, that **heavy** afflictions, as measured by time in contrast to eternity, shrink and shrivel till the Christian's heart filled with ecstatic joy can truthfully describe trials as "our

**light** affliction, which is but for a moment."

Abraham well illustrates this. He thought it worth while to be a stranger and pilgrim in this world once the God of glory had appeared to him. "He **looked** for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God" (Heb. 11: 10), for no city on earth has completely stable foundations. So Abraham lifted his eyes to heaven, and died in faith, and will not be disappointed.

Moses too illustrates our theme. He turned his back upon a brilliant position of eminence in this world, the adopted son of the proud Pharaoh's daughter, and esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and they were vast and dazzling. And how did he come to do this? "He endured as **seeing** Him who is invisible" (Heb. 11: 2).

Their eyes were set on the eternal, and the weights and sorrows of the temporal became adjusted in their minds to the bliss of the eternal future which is so near; so **very** near, as we think of life as a weaver's shuttle, or as likened to the rapidity of the eagle's flight.

Take courage tried and buffeted saint, you may be bereaved of the dearest object on earth. Let the words of Scripture be ever before you: "**While we look . . . at the things which are not seen . . . the things which are not seen are eternal.**" (2 Cor. 4: 18).

Don't be discouraged because so few seem to be doing God's work. If the Holy Ghost is ungrieved and working, one is as good as many. When the Holy Ghost is not working, a hundred are no better than one.

## BETWEEN THE TWO.

G. HARKESS.

A brief meditation on the verses between John 8: 59 and 10: 31.

IT is well to be reminded of the special ministry that has come to us through the Apostle John. The outward order and administration of the church ministered through the Apostle Paul, and committed to the responsibility of the saints throughout the centuries, has failed, as we know. Yet that which is made known to us through John abides, and will abide. Taking Acts 27 as a figure, we may say that Paul's ship has been wrecked. But everyone on it will get safely to land, make no mistake about that! Just as the forepart of the ship stuck fast, so everything that was true for the saints at the beginning is true for them now. We have, in the words of Acts 20, "God and the word of His grace." Referring to that, a beloved brother, now at home with the Lord, used to say, "At the beginning they had that and **nothing more**: at the end we have that and **nothing less**."

On two occasions the Jews took up stones in order to stone the Lord Jesus: on both occasions because He uttered words in which He laid claim to Deity. He is the I AM, who existed before Abraham was. He and the Father are ONE. Everything depends on this, and it gives character to the remarkable passage that lies between the two verses, in which we have striking instruction as to what is going on to-day.

It is often said that in John's Gospel the Lord Jesus is presented as the rejected One from the outset — see 1: 10, 11. Then we may

ask, What is He doing? Chapters 9 and 10 give us the answer, where we have recorded the soul history of one who comes into living contact with Him, and also a forecast of the new things He was about to introduce.

In chapter 9 the blind man receives his sight, and as we go down the chapter we see how he was put out of the religious circle in which formerly he moved. But it is encouraging to notice that his knowledge of the Lord Jesus increases as he goes on. It is also important to see that the more closely we come to Him, who has been rejected, the less room will there be for us in the world — even in the religious world. This is our side, and for many of us it is a painful experience. But the object surely is to bring each and all of us to find our satisfying portion in the Lord Himself. So chapter 9 ends with the once blind man brought with his eyes opened into the company of the Son of God, outside every circle he had known before. He recognized the One who had brought him this deliverance, as the Son of God, and he worshipped Him.

But when we come to chapter 10, we get the other side of the story, and how blessed it is! For while in chapter 9 the once blind man is being pushed out, in chapter 10 we find him to be one of the Lord's own sheep, and he is called out and drawn out by the Good Shepherd, whose voice he hears and knows. Now this is what is still going on today.

Having given His life for the

sheep, the Good Shepherd is calling them that they may follow Him outside of every circle and association. Some, like the blind man, had been in the Jewish fold, and out of that fold He leads them that they may follow Himself alone. Others, called from the Gentiles, were never of that fold, but they also must be brought, so that all may form the one flock, that follows Him. Then He indicated His oneness with the Father both in purpose and power, so that the sheep might be eternally secured and the purpose fulfilled. It was this that stirred the Jews again to attempt to stone Him.

It is a wonderful day for each of us when we find ourselves so drawn in heart to the Son of God that He

becomes the Object of our affection and worship. Then we find ourselves kept together, not by rites, or ceremonies, or ordinances, or by any of the "folds," which have been constructed, but rather by love's constraint; happy to hear His voice and follow where He leads. So do we know the sweet experience related in Psalm 23, and that in larger measure than ever David can have known it. Because He gives us eternal life, and none can pluck us from the double clasp of the hands of the Son and of the Father, we can sing as we go:—

" Goodness and mercy all my life,  
 Shall surely follow me;  
 And in God's house for evermore,  
 My dwelling place shall be."

## "THE FULNESS OF THE BLESSING."

(Romans 15: 18-33).

J. B. MARSHALL.

**I**T would appear that Paul was led to consider his missionary service as at an end in those parts from which he wrote this epistle. Having preached where the gospel was not known, he now would seek to gratify a many years' desire to visit the saints at Rome that he might impart unto them some spiritual gift, as he states in chapter 1.

It was not the initial gospel that he wished to impart, they already had that; neither was it the teaching of practical experience, for his letter conveyed this, for in it we not only get justification from offences, but deliverance from sin, flesh and the law; we are transferred from

Adam to Christ and become more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Yet he had, by the Spirit, something to minister to them which was not yet stated, and we get the explanation of this in chapter 16: 25, 26. There he commends them to God only wise, who has power to establish them in his gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which, though kept secret since the world began, was now made known in the Scriptures, and commanded by the everlasting God to be made known to all nations "for the obedience of faith."

Peter in his Epistle, teaches that

we are the house of God, a holy and royal priesthood, a chosen generation, but this comes short of the mystery, though it may be one aspect of it. John leads us into blessed relationships as children of God. But neither present what Paul can rightly claim as his gospel; that is, the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revealed mystery. We need Ephesians and Colossians to understand what is implied, and doubtless his desire was that they at Rome should have the truth of these letters imparted to them. What had been hid in other ages was his ministry according to Ephesians 3. See also Colossians 1: 25-29, where he makes it the final word in the revelation of God's grace. The verses at the end of Romans 16 infer that such ministry should be theirs, and doubtless it was given to them when he was a prisoner amongst them in his own hired house.

But this was not all his service at this time, for he was to go first to Jerusalem to take a certain contribution from the Gentile churches to relieve the poor saints there.

To many this would seem like serving tables, and although others may go who are approved amongst them he states they shall go with him if it be meet. One wonders at this persistence, seen in Acts 21: 12, 13, but doubtless his special service in the mystery explains all. Here we have Gentiles who had received from the Jews of their spiritual things, thankfully acknowledging their indebtedness; but for the Jews to receive from Gentiles was quite a new thing, so he asks their prayers that the gift might be ac-

cepted. He had fear lest their national advantages might produce prejudice to hinder, and thereby spoil the manifestation of this wonderful truth, stated in Ephesians 2: 15. Every service of his would work to the teaching of this truth, and what a joy it would be to his heart to see saints called out from the two peoples, whom God had separated for the display of his ways amongst the nations, brought together in perfect unity, the wall of ordinances being removed in the death of Christ, so that both should be "one new man." No such division as God established between Jew and Gentile had ever previously existed, nor has there been the like since; but now both have access to the Father, with one Head in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ.

He desired that they should pray for him; that is, that his special ministry might continue, "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake" (who loved the church and gave Himself for it) and "for the love of the Spirit," which meant unity of the saints in the bond of peace, that they might express their love to Him. He also sought that he might be delivered from them who did not believe in Judæa, the religious leaders who despised the church, and who would endeavour to hinder its unity by persecution. The two closing verses prove what refreshed him, and that this truth produces peace amongst them that are sanctified.

We may rejoice in gospel meetings, we may find comfort, exhortation and encouragement in Bible readings, or we may in our prayer meetings remove mountains (that

usually are mole hills), or again we may come together to remember the Lord Jesus in His death, but these are contributions to the only unity that God owns in the present dispensation; that is, Christ and the

Church.

So may the Lord incline our hearts to know **why** we are saved, and not only **how** it has been accomplished.

## THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

J. N. DARBY.

**ONE** may have this precious knowledge concerning the Church and the principles on which it was founded, necessary in order to walk intelligently before God; but one may have it, boast of it, proclaim it, and with all this repel humble souls desirous of advancing, and throw them into the hands of those who have no wish that they should walk according to this knowledge. We ourselves must walk in seriousness, in humility, in the love which the **presence of God** produces.

This supposes faith and life in the soul. Where it is found, blessing is not wanting to those who thus walk. Although this does not justify the unbelief or the opposition of others, if you present the truth in such a way as not to glorify God, you give them power and influence against it. Principles are not enough: we need God. Without this, mighty principles are but a sword in the hands of a child or of a drunken man; it were better to take it from him, or at least, that he use it not till he be sober.

Let us show the fruits of our principles. Let us be firm in the truth. We must be firm. The more some oppose the truth, and others profess to wish to possess it, and accom-

modate themselves, without their conscience unreservedly submitting to it, to the wants it has produced in other persons (and both these cases present themselves), the more we have to keep in the narrow path it has marked out in the word for our souls, according to the grace and power of the Holy Ghost, who has sanctified us **to obey Christ**. Let our hearts be large and our feet in the narrow path. Often, when people talk of charity, their hearts are narrow and their feet are following the path which suits them. **It is this which makes the heart narrow**, because the conscience is uneasy, and people do not like those who make this evident.

The presence of God (and it is of this that we are speaking), gives firmness, practical submission to the word of God Himself, which tranquilizes the soul in the difficulties of the way, which causes one not to seek the prevalence of principles by crooked ways and human means; finally, it gives humility and uprightness. God will know how to enforce these principles, where He acts in His grace. Only let us manifest this power, He will do all the rest.

Yes, dear brethren, life, the presence of God, this is what (by the

operation of the Holy Ghost in us and in others), gives force to the truths which are committed to us, whatever they may be. Better that

these truths should not make way, than that we ourselves should get away from the presence of God to enforce them.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapter 1: 14 — 2: 3)

**G**OD'S WORK on the fourth day lay outside the earth, though in its effects a powerful influence on the earth was exerted. On the first day light had shone upon the earth, and day had been divided from night, but we are not told just how this result had been produced. The light-bearing matter may have been diffused; if so, it was now concentrated into one "great light," and the earth was set in relation to it. Also the "lesser light" was set in relation to the earth. They were now to give light not in a general way but specifically **on the earth**.

But more than this was included in God's purpose as to them. They were to be "for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years." We are well aware that the times — whether days or years — and the seasons are determined by them, but the fact of their being **signs** is perhaps not so familiar to us. Yet there are illustrations of it in Scripture, such as Joshua 10: 12—14; 2 Kings 20: 8—11. There is also the Lord's prediction in Luke 21: 25. The beginning of Psalm 19 points in the same direction.

Then again, they were to rule the day and the night respectively. From the outset the earth was placed under the rule and control of

heaven, even as regards the action of inanimate matter, so that in this these heavenly bodies become a sign that "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4: 26), and a faint prophecy of "the kingdom of heaven," of which we read in the Gospel of Matthew. The sad fact confronts us that fallen man soon perverted all this, and began to worship these lights as though they were creator and not creature, thereby changing God's truth into a lie. Romans 1: 25 refers to this, we believe.

At the end of verse 16 we have three words — "the stars also" — and with this brief mention they are dismissed. The ancients were acquainted only with those visible to the unaided eye, but those they did see they misused in the attempt to foretell the future, and astrology aided many heathen practices. Here we are simply told that they are the creatures of God's hand.

It is worthy of note that here the two "lights" are not named. The word "sun" does not occur until chapter 15: 12 is reached, and the first mention of "moon" is in chapter 37: 9, where sun, moon and stars appear together, and their symbolic meanings are fixed in connection with the family — the original and most primitive unit of

government in the earth. Jacob, the patriarch was **supreme** in his family. The mother reflected his authority, and was **secondary**. The brethren were entirely **subordinate**. Sun, moon and stars symbolize authority, supreme, secondary and subordinate, and this right through Scripture.

Again we have the words, "and God saw that it was good." That creation should be under authority and control was good. We find, alas! that man, when created as the head of things, soon repudiated the Divine authority and plunged into lawlessness, which is sin. That emphatically is **not** good, but it should make every believer keenly realize how important it is to be subject in all things to the authority of the word of God.

The rule of heaven being thus established, God proceeded on the fifth day to bring into being an order of life much higher than the vegetable kingdom of the third day. Moving creatures that had life now appear, to fill the seas and the air immediately above the earth. The word translated "whales" simply means monsters that inhabit the waters, whether seas or rivers. All these too, like the herb and tree previously, are made after their kind, and are bidden to reproduce themselves and multiply.

In verse 21 we get the word "created" for the second time. It appeared in verse 1, the original creation of the heaven and the earth. The intervening verses have told us what God **made** out of His original creation. Why does the word occur again here? We believe, because here the waters were commanded to

bring forth "the moving creature that hath life." We see nutrition, growth and reproduction in the vegetable kingdom. Here we see another order of things altogether, creatures with powers of sensation and of voluntary motion. Indeed the word translated "creature" in verses 20 and 21 is really "soul." On this fifth day then there was the introduction of a higher form of life, involving soul, so this was distinctly and properly creation.

As the result then of God's work on the fifth day both the waters and the air were furnished with living souls, that would be fruitful and multiply until both were filled.

In the early part of the sixth day God similarly furnished the earth with living souls, both beast and cattle and also creeping things. We notice that God **made** them: it does not say that He **created** them. Though so different externally from the denizens of the waters and the air, they were still only "living souls," and hence the word **created** is only used when first "soul" was created as distinct from matter.

We notice too that in both verses 24 and 25 the "beast of the earth" is distinguished from the "cattle." We gather from this that originally, and before sin came in, God designed certain animals to be specially for the upkeep and benefit of the man He was about to create. After sin came in the beasts developed their wild and savage nature, while the cattle remained comparatively docile and useful to man.

Man was to be the climax of all this work of God, and before the sixth day closed he appeared.

Verses 26-28 are of the deepest importance, and for the third time in this chapter we get the word **created**. This is because once more a totally fresh element was introduced, though we do not find it mentioned until verse 7 of chapter 2 is reached. Man possesses **spirit** by the in-breathing of God. We may say therefore that in chapter 1 we get three acts of creation. First, the original creation of matter. Second, the creation of soul. Third, the creation of spirit, which is man's prerogative as far as this world is concerned, since the creation of angels is outside the range of this chapter. All three acts bear upon man, for he possesses spirit; he is a living soul; his body is composed of terrestrial matter.

Verse 26 shows us that from the outset man was the subject of Divine consultation or counsel. That God should say, "Let US," is worthy of note. Elohim is, as we have said, a plural Name. In the Old Testament the three Persons in the Godhead are not revealed, but now that They are revealed we can see that, inspired of God, the language of our chapter is quite consistent therewith. There was present to the Divine mind all that man would turn out to be, and he was only brought into existence after this consultation within the Godhead Himself. In verse 26 it is "**Our** image;" in verse 27 it is "**His** image." There is no incongruity for it is the eternal "Three in One" who speaks.

Man was created in both the image and the likeness of God. The former word seems to be used in Scripture for that which represents unseen realities. The images of the

heathen world represented their gods, without necessarily being like them, for indeed they had never seen the demons they worshipped by means of the images that represented them to their eyes. Man was made, then, to represent God to the lower creation over which he was set. But he was also made after the likeness of God; that is, he was really like God in certain important respects. Not in all respects of course, for God is infinitely holy and man was merely innocent. Still man was God's "offspring" (Acts 17: 28, 29), a spirit being, though clothed in a body of flesh and blood, and hence with intelligence and moral sensibilities, which are a reflection of that which subsists on an infinite scale in God Himself.

Here let us pause a moment that we may realize the frightful debasement in both mind and morals which must flow from the degrading theory that man is only an improved ape, or come up from the protozoa, that are supposed to have existed in primordial slime, millions of years ago. Evolutionary theories have about them the fatal fascination of enabling their adherents to ignore the fall of man, and the state of sin in which he is found. What the Bible calls sin they regard as being merely unpleasing traces of animal ancestry manifesting themselves. The past 80 to 90 years have witnessed two things: the revival of the theory of evolution under the speculations of Darwin, which enables men to theorize on their **ascent**; and the **descent** of the more civilized peoples, where the theory has been mainly propagated, to a level of savagery and bestiality, far below the level of the heathen. This has

been seen more particularly in the past ten years.

NO! Man was created in the image and likeness of God, and his present condition of sin and degradation is the fruit of a great spiritual catastrophe, which is on record in chapter 3. He is now a fallen sinner; he never was an exalted ape.

Another thing about man confronts us in verses 26 and 28: he was created to hold **dominion** over the lower creation. In this feature he appears to be unique. There are rulers in the angelic world — “principality, and power, and might, and dominion” (Eph. 1: 21) — but their rule only extends over beings of their own order. Dealing with angels, Hebrews 1: 14 asks, “Are they not **all** ministering spirits?” Yes, **all**, even to the archangel himself, were created to serve. As far as Scripture informs us, **only man** was made to have dominion over others.

This is deeply interesting for it shows us that the Second Man was before God from the outset. The defection of the first man did not take God by surprise. When God said, “Let us make man,” He knew what was involved. Man was not to be a mere machine, or unintelligent and irresponsible like the brute creation, but a moral agent capable of representing God, but capable also of rebellion against Him. As the fruit of sin man has lost control of himself and misused his dominion, but God’s original thought for man is going to be realized on a vastly larger and grander scale in the Son of Man, who is the last Adam. Psalm 8 envisages this glorious prospect.

Verse 27 states that duality characterizes man. It says that God created “**him**; male and female created He **them**.” This fact is elaborated in chapter 2, but the few words here show us how closely male and female are identified. The word, “man” covers both, and jointly they were to have the dominion, though the male from the outset was given the leading place. From the outset too they were blessed by God and bidden to multiply and replenish the earth. Before sin came in therefore children were in God’s purpose for them.

The closing verses of the chapter show that the vegetable kingdom was designed to provide food for both man and beast. After the flood animal food was given to man — see, chapter 9: 3, 4. Before sin came in, and death by sin, no animal was to be slain for man’s food.

With the creation of man — male and female — and his being set in dominion and blessed, the work of the sixth day reached its end. As it concluded, God surveyed **all** that He had made. Six times already we have been told that God saw it was **good**, now on this seventh occasion, when the whole was inspected, we are told that **all** was **very good**. Let us take note of this for it demolishes at one blow the whole system of error, miscalled “Christian Science,” which has, as one of its most fundamental dogmas, the idea that matter is **evil** and only spirit is good. The truth is the exact opposite of this, for when evil entered it came in by way of spirit and not matter.

... We have seen that this chapter,

from the first verse onwards, refutes Unitarianism, for GOD — Elohim — in the plural occurs no less than 32 times. We have seen how it refutes Evolution, for every species reproduces itself "after his kind." We have just seen how Christian Science is refuted; and now as we open chapter 2, we meet with a statement that reinforces what has been apparent all through chapter 1; namely, that God is outside and above all that He created and made. Thus, on the seventh day when creation was what we may call "a **going** concern," God is said to have **rested**. Thus Pantheism — the idea that God is **only** to be conceived of as **immanent** in creation, pervading all nature — is wholly denied. He may indeed act in nature, but He is **transcendent**, essentially above it in Person and Being.

Chapter 2: 1-3, really belongs to chapter 1, and completes the paragraph. The seventh day was a day of rest for God. His work had involved both creating and making, but all was now complete, and evidently He has not set His hand to work of that order from that time until now. The entrance of sin necessitated His taking up work of another order, and the Lord Jesus alluded to this in saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5: 17).

Thus the seventh day was specially blessed and set apart, and we may say that a seventh day of rest after six days of work is a thought that dates back to the very beginning of man's history. The word "sabbath" does not occur until we reach Exodus 16: 23, where it designates **the seventh day after the manna was given**. After that the law was given, and this "sabbath" — this "ceasing" as the word means — became a legal institution for Israel, and a sign between them and the Lord for ever, as stated in Exodus 31: 17. Hebrews 4: 4-10 also alludes to this, and evidently Israel will yet enjoy her sabbath in the millennial age; God thus redeeming the sign He had given.

The sabbath was never given as a sign to the Church. In Christ we have not the sign but **the things signified**. The Seventh Day Adventist would put us back under the law, and into the comparative darkness of Judaism, ignoring the fact that for us the new moons and sabbath days are over, as indicated in Colossians 2: 16. Nevertheless we are as Christians very thankful to be able to observe one day's rest in seven, as indicated from creation, and to have that day of rest on the first of the week, **the day when our Saviour rose from the dead**.

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The disciples were occupied with meat and forgot souls.  
The woman forgot her water pot to tell others of Christ.

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If we shrink from service because of our inability we are self-occupied.  
If it is God's work and will, it is **His ability** that we must consider.

# “BREAK FORTH INTO JOY, SING TOGETHER.”

A. J. POLLOCK.

**T**HIS TITLE, taken from Isaiah 52: 9, has a very cheering sound, especially in this drab world, where men's hearts are failing them because of fear, and the shadows darken ominously on every hand. But amidst it all the Christian is in a position to sing with holy joy.

If you will turn to Isaiah 52: 7-10 and Isaiah 54: 1-10 you will find a good deal about singing. Please note carefully that between these two chapters we have perhaps the best-known chapter in the Old Testament — Isaiah 53. As you read through this article you will see that the position of this chapter between Isaiah 52 and 54 gives the key to all the rejoicing of God's people.

Let us lead up to this. To begin with, the singing in Isaiah 52 is pre-faced by a most delightful verse,

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth” (verse 7).

This undoubtedly refers in prophetic language to the advent of Christ. His second coming is primarily in view but we may apply it also to the coming into this world of Him, who “being in the form of God . . . made Himself of no reputation . . . and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2: 5-8). In standing contrast to the humble circumstances in

which our Lord was born was the wonderful sight of the very heavens filled with exultant praise, as the myriad hosts of angels praised God aloud, crying “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2: 14).

There was a fulfilment of Isaiah 52: 7 when our Lord stepped into public service, being about thirty years of age. We turn for the record of this to the four Gospels. There we see how beautiful were His feet as He trod the land of Israel proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom. Did He not say in the synagogue at Nazareth, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears”? (Luke 4: 21). What Scripture was this? Just what Isaiah had prophesied seven centuries before.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath appointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4: 18, 19).

No wonder His feet were beautiful on the mountains. Our Lord's forerunner, John the Baptist, that “burning and shining light” proclaimed sternly, “Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3: 2), a needed message for his day. When our Lord spoke it was in a gracious way. The common people heard Him gladly, and

they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth. The Spirit of the Lord was upon Him, He preached the Gospel to the poor, and a perfect stream of beneficent miracles marked His every step.

And when He read this scripture He closed the book, just before it goes on to speak of the day of vengeance of our God, pushing back, as it were, that day, lengthening out the acceptable year of the Lord to this present time; though the gathering clouds presage that the day of vengeance is not far off. The day will come when His hand shall open the book again, but meanwhile grace flows on its blessed worldwide course, and men are offered salvation.

No wonder with such a Person, proclaiming such a message of grace and mercy, that singing should break forth. We read,

“Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem” (Isaiah 52: 8, 9).

It is true that this verse is in a Jewish setting, and will not be literally fulfilled till our Lord comes to reign on the earth, but the application of the passage to the present time is striking. The great trouble in the world today is that men do not see eye to eye. Ambition, selfishness, greed, lust, cause men to fall out about everything. The cynic has said that you cannot get three

men to agree about anything, and there is a great measure of truth in this statement. But when the proclamation of our Lord shall be received by men they shall see eye to eye, a testimony to the only really uniting bond men can ever know, even the grace of God entering the human heart.

So we may have the wonderful privilege of hearing the footsteps of Him, who bringeth good tidings, and marking His gracious journeys as delineated in the four Gospels from the inspired pens of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

But here we must say a word as to Chapter 53. It is the despair of the Jewish expositors. It so plainly prophesies a **suffering** Messiah to come, whereas the Jewish nation waited for a **mighty conquering** Messiah, who would lift their little nation to the topmost place among the nations of the world. Their outlook was material and carnal. So hard put to it were Jewish expositors to explain away this Scripture, that when the prophecy of Isaiah was being read Sabbath by Sabbath, the minister would read Isaiah 52 one Sabbath, and the succeeding Sabbath he would read Isaiah 54, thus ignoring altogether Isaiah 53. We consider there can be no greater compliment paid to the plain surface meaning of this chapter than this omission.

Along with this refusal to receive the plain teaching as to a suffering Messiah, it carried with it the refusal of the solemn and most obvious meaning of the whole system of sacrifices on Jewish altars, setting forth prophetically that **only** through the sacrificial atoning death

of our Lord on the cross can God be righteously free to pardon sinful man. To this the Jewish nation shut their eyes. The writer has been at some pains to discover if the same custom obtains in the synagogues today of ignoring Isaiah 53 in the manner described, and finds that it is so.

As we read the chapter down we find the prophetic language treats what was still future then by long centuries, as if it were already past, so sure was the mind of Heaven that the prophecy would be fulfilled in the sacrificial death of our Lord. Note the past tense in verse 5,

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him: and with His stripes we are healed."

Could there be one note of praise, one song of joy emanating from human hearts, did we not realise for ourselves the blessedness of that verse of Scripture?

No wonder John Calvin was converted when this verse came in power to his soul, as he pored over the Bible to learn the secret of soul-blessing; aye, and a countless host besides. No wonder that the late J. T. Mawson, for long the loved editor of this magazine, practically never preached the Gospel, he so loved to proclaim, without sounding forth this wonderful verse, so clearly setting forth the **only** way of salvation. Here we get the secret of the singing, both of Isaiah 52 and 54.

We get this well illustrated in 2 Chronicles 29: 27, 28. It was a time of revival in the days of the

good King Hezekiah. We read,

"And when the burnt offering began, **the song of the Lord began also** . . . and all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued till the burnt offering was finished."

The burnt offering was typical of our Lord offering Himself without spot to God. It ceased, and with its ceasing the song ceased. But in the antitype, even the atoning death of our Lord, its efficacy will never cease, therefore the singing will never cease; it must be eternal, for ever and ever, never to die down. Hallelujah!

It is touching to remember that when our Lord left the upper room, where He instituted the supper in commemoration of His approaching death, they sang before going forth to Gethsemane with its inexpressible grief, and on to the far greater ordeal of the cross itself. We read,

"And when **they had sung an hymn**, they went out into the mount of Olives" (Matt. 26: 30).

Was this not a prelude to coming victory — to eternal song?

But if we go to the four Gospels, wherein to trace the footsteps of the One, whose feet were beautiful on the mountains, we must go to the Acts of the Apostles to trace the singing we get in Isaiah 54: 1-3. No sooner do we leave the solemn prophecy of Isaiah 53, where we get the ground and cause of it laid in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord on the cross, than singing bursts forth. Listen to how it reads:

“Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, that thou didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD . . . For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inhabit the Gentiles.”

How is this, we may ask? You may remember when our Lord was here on earth He told His disciples,

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 15: 24).

And further, when our Lord chose twelve apostles, and sent them forth, His instructions were similar to His own mission,

“Go not into the way of the **Gentiles**, . . . and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10: 5, 6).

But now, since our Lord has accomplished the mighty work of redemption, is risen from the dead and ascended into glory, and has bestowed the Holy Spirit indwelling believers, endueing them with power from on high, everything is changed. No longer are they forbidden to go to the Gentiles, but the instructions our risen Lord before He ascended gave to His disciples were,

“Go ye therefore, and teach **all nations** [Gentiles]” (Matt. 28: 19).

“Go ye **into all the world**, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16: 15).

“That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His

Name **among all nations** [Gentiles], beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24: 47).

Practically a synopsis of the whole of the Acts of the Apostles is condensed in the Lord’s own words, among the very few we find outside the four Gospels. We read,

“Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the **uttermost parts of the earth**” (Acts 1: 8).

No longer are they forbidden to go outside the boundaries of the little land of Israel. At once we read of Philip, the evangelist, preaching in Samaria, flooding the city with the good news of the Gospel. We find him further preaching to an Ethiopian, whom he met reading Isaiah 53. The eunuch enquired of whom the prophet spoke, and Philip opened his mouth, and preached unto him Jesus. And so he travelled back to his distant land, sunk as it was in the darkness of heathendom, with this precious Gospel in his heart, and to tell it forth to others.

Not only so but the Apostle Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, was forced out by the dream God gave him, and the summons to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles whom the Roman centurion gathered together, the very first time, on record that the Gospel was preached to a Gentile audience. True the preaching took place in the land of Israel, but the Gospel went out to the Gentiles nevertheless, and was the forerunner of much to follow.

And lastly the light of the glory of God struck down Saul of Tarsus, the arch-persecutor of the infant church of God, and in a moment he was converted, and straightway preached that Jesus was the Son of God. Moreover the Lord commissioned him to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. For years he did not go near Jerusalem, nor was he known by face to the churches in Judæa. We follow with deepest interest his missionary journeys as he went

everywhere preaching to the **Gentiles**. The greater part of the Acts of the Apostles is taken up with the account of the labours of that great servant of Christ in Asia and Europe, preaching Christ where He had never been proclaimed before. In all this we see a fulfilment of Isaiah 54: 1-3. And so the Gospel message has had free course and been glorified from those days to the present time in the mercy of God.

## "IN MY NAME."

J. F. ENGLISH.

**W**E have repeatedly recorded for us in John 14, 15 and 16 the Lord's promise that whatever His disciples shall ask "in MY NAME" shall be granted. In chapter 14: 13 and 14, the Lord promises "that will I do," and "I will do it;" in chapter 15: 16, "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in MY NAME, He may give it you," and in chapter 16: 23, "whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in MY NAME, He will give it you."

We know that this has been taken to mean that if we make our petitions and conclude by offering them in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be heard, and receive whatsoever we ask for. Experience, however, proves that such is not the case and many have been greatly perplexed thereby, and some have felt that the Lord was not faithful to His promise.

If we carefully examine the passages in which these promises occur, we will find that they are made in relation to special circumstances in

our spiritual life, and not in connection with anything we may need in the way of providential mercies in our pathway here. We are also reminded by James in chapter 4: 3, that we can ask and receive not, because we ask amiss.

The Lord has gone on high and we are left here under the control of God the Holy Spirit, who has come in the Lord's interests. It is as acting here representatively for Him in His interests that we are regarded as being in a position to ask in His Name. We know what it is for someone to hold a power of attorney giving him authority to act in the name of another for the administration of his estate or business during his absence from the country. This is precisely the significance of the Lord's words, "in My Name" in the passages we are considering. Further, as being in the mind of the Spirit we shall have only the Lord's interests before us; and for this we have, as it were, a blank cheque given to us with the authority of His Name.

This is a tremendous honour and a serious responsibility, calling for a walk in very close communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son, as brought before us by the Lord in these three chapters of John's Gospel.

In chapter 14 the Lord says, "the works that I do shall he do also," and it is in connection with these works that we have the first promise. The Lord speaks of our asking the Father, in His Name; in other words, he puts us in His place here on earth, in the knowledge of the Father and of our relationship with Him, to the end that our life may become a continuation of our Lord's, and we do the things He would do, being what He would be, and all in dependence on the Father. The Lord said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work" (John 5: 17). Again, in John 14: 10, He said, "the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works," and in all that He said and did He was ever dependent on the Father. He Himself said, "I do nothing of myself" (John 8: 28). So we, if we would do the works of the Father, will become conscious of our need to wait upon Him in prayer, and we have the promise in this connection that "whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." He is ever working, through the members of His body and always to the glory of the Father. How wonderful it is to know that we may be in such accord with Him that the works we do are not ours but His, and all to the glory of the Father.

In John 15 the promise is in connection with fruit bearing for the

glory of the Father. Works may largely be in the manifestation of the grace, love and power of God to our fellow men and particularly to our brethren in Christ, but fruit bearing is that which is for the pleasure of the Father, and it is to remain. The life of our Lord Jesus Christ was altogether for the joy and delight of the Father's heart, producing that two-fold testimony, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and "This is my beloved Son, hear Him." That which is and will ever be fruit unto the Father is all that is of CHRIST, and nothing else but that will remain.

It is in this connection that the Lord brings Himself before us as the true Vine — we the branches, to bring forth that which cheers the heart of God and man. For fruit-bearing it is essential that we abide in Him; only thus can the life of the Vine be expressed in fruit through us. We cannot produce fruit of ourselves and we prove the truth of the Lord's words, "without Me ye can do nothing." He would have us abide in Him and continue in His love, which will lead to our loving one another, ministering to that which is of Christ in one another, and so remaining eternally to the glory of the Father. The fact that we so greatly fail in this will lead us in prayer to the Father, the Source of all we need to this end, and therefore we have the promise, "that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you." For this which is truly acting in His Name we have the unqualified promise that whatsoever we ask we shall receive.

In chapter 16 the Lord brings us

into the consciousness of His absence, and of ourselves being the subjects of the world's hostility. We are in the place of sorrow and suffering, largely incited by those who profess to serve God but "have not known the Father nor Me" (verse 3). We are, however, not left alone for God the Holy Spirit, the Comforter from the Father, has come to be in us the power of another life, glorifying the Son of God now with the Father.

We have learned that all that the Lord did was in the power of the Spirit in communion with the Father, to whom He prayed. Now we, individually and collectively, as indwelt by the Spirit, and being here in the place of the Lord Jesus, are directed by Him to the Father.

In this we have fellowship with Him in His pathway of rejection and suffering here, and thus it is we turn to the Father and in His Name ask what we need to move onward following His steps.

We need not fail in this for the Father Himself loveth us because He sees that it is love in our hearts for His beloved Son that has brought us into this pathway, and so we have this further precious promise, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name He will give it to you . . . Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

May the Lord add His blessing so that we may realize the power of these things.

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## SANCTIFIED TO THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

J. MCBROOM.

**W**HAT a beautiful place this world would be if man were only obedient to God. His disobedience has filled it with sin, misery, confusion and death. Now obedience to God springs from the knowledge of Himself. A boy may obey his father from fear or duty, but how great the difference when obedience flows from the affections! We may treat our God as a stern Creator whose rigid demands must be met, or as One who holds before us a scourge, but how much more blessed when we know His heart of love, and seek to respond to Him in all our ways. An Apostle could say, "We . . . do not cease to pray

for you and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1: 9).

Obedience is better than sacrifice. It becomes us therefore to seek to please the Lord in our conduct by quietness and simplicity, rather than by aiming at big things in an ostentatious way. Thus we may be found walking with God like Enoch, who had the conscious witness that he pleased God. "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "we labour, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of [or, agreeable to] Him" (2 Cor. 5: 9). We may ob-

serve how closely obedience is linked with righteousness, that leading principle which is the great moral law of the creation. God the Creator is sovereign, and in the nature of things His will must be law to the creature. His will must be right, and from this comes the big word righteousness which is so often misunderstood — a word that runs right through the Scriptures. To say obedience is right is simplicity itself, and the result is beautiful moral order; disobedience, on the contrary, is wrong, and the result is disorder and chaos.

How blessed it is to be able to look with the eye of faith on a scene of perfect moral order — a world where all things are of God and where Christ is everything. This is the resurrection world, brought into view for faith by the resurrection of our Lord from the dead, spoken of in Scripture as new creation. By virtue of the operations of God in his soul the believer belongs to that world — an entirely new order of things brought in by the One who was obedient unto death. Having his home in **that** world, with a new life and all its relationships and joys, the believer is called to the obedience of our Lord in **this** world, as stated in 1 Peter 1: 2 — an obedience which went all the way to death. It is well that we should see the difference between the two systems. A new place is given us before the face of God in richest blessing with a divinely given capacity to enjoy it and be at home in the joy of the Father's love, all of which is fitted to bring us out here as pilgrims and strangers to walk as children of light in the obedience of Jesus Christ. "He

died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5: 15).

It is well that we should get at the root of things here. Obedience is linked with the question of race. By one man sin entered into the world, and all have sinned. As a result of the fall of Adam, all have inherited a fallen state which is opposed to God — is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The obedience of Jesus Christ to which we are set apart springs therefore from a new life and nature, into which we come as under the headship of the risen Christ. Christian obedience must therefore be distinguished from the obedience of the saints of the Old Testament. For although the power that produces obedience to God at any time or dispensation is always the same, namely, that of the Spirit, the circumstances, tastes, feelings and relationships that are ours today are altogether different from those of the saints of Old Testament times.

They had their line of conduct set before them in a moral code; we in a living Man. This will be clear when we recall that they lived in the period of man's probation. The race was tried, as we know, in a variety of ways, and all failed. God never leaves Himself without witness, and so He produced in certain elect vessels an answer to the revelation of the moment. We live in a day when there is not only the full revelation of God, but the perfect answer to it in a Man. In that Man there has been seen a perfect answer also to every expression of the rights of God from man in any and

every dispensation: whether we take Abel, Enoch or Noah; Abraham, Moses or David. With all these, it was God with His creature in His claims as Creator. All that order of dealing has come to an end in the Cross, and now all His dealing is on the level of Christ. We as Christians are sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ.

It will be said that this is putting things on very high ground. Blessed are they that see and accept it thus, for it must be so if it is to be for God. We have noted the character of obedience worked out in Old Testament saints: there is also that legal obedience which marks the Pharisee, and of which a good example is seen in Saul of Tarsus (Phil. 3: 5-7). There is such a thing, too, as feigned obedience, as seen in the Gibeonites and also in 2 Sam. 22: 45, Psalm 66: 3 (margin). And, saddest of all, that compulsory obedience which is seen in men such as Balaam and also in demons (Mark 1: 27, Luke 4: 36), which will go down to the lake of fire where all that remains irreconcilable will be an eternal witness to the supremacy of God. Compared to every other character of obedience, that of our Lord must for ever stand alone.

The obedience of our Lord is a delightful theme for contemplation. It went on to death. It is there, indeed, that it is seen in all its immeasurable perfection. But Scripture distinguishes between that and the path of glorious worth that led up to it. There, for the first time was a Man who never for one moment travelled outside the will of God. In this He established His

right to live. Man was to live by every word of God, and in keeping the Law he would continue to live. So true was this of our Lord that He might have been here yet, that is, so far as sin, death and the curse were concerned. But He became obedient unto death. His death was for us, as we well know. He could say, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me." "I do always those things that please Him." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." This was His delight; it was the joy of His Being. He had become Man to die, but the path that led up to it brought out all His excellences in such a way as to delight the heart of His God, fulfill prophetic Scriptures, and give a theme of praise for the redeemed of all ages. If we scrutinize such an obedience (and it is our joy and privilege to do so), we have to own it is far beyond us, while at the same time we rejoice that we are called to nothing less than the obedience of Jesus Christ.

Such a practical line of conduct amongst men would indeed produce a scene of beautiful moral order. "It is impossible," says some one: "God would have to produce a race of the same order as that blessed Man to bring it about." **That is exactly what He is doing.** He is operating in men's souls in such a way by His Spirit that they are transferred from their original standing and state in Adam to be in Christ, who is now at the right hand of God, the beginning of a new creation for God. The Gospel is sent to all for the obedience of faith with the revelation of the full purpose of God. It is the Gospel

of the glory of the blessed God. It came out from the glorified Man, God thereby signifying His intention of producing a race of the same order as that Man. For this the Holy Spirit — a divine Person — is given to the believer that Christ may be formed in him. God has reached His end in the ascended One; in the risen and glorified Man we have the Model from which He is working, and the Spirit is the

Worker to bring it about. It is well to see what God is doing, for how can we be right otherwise? Observe then, that the Bible is a Book describing two heads with their respective generations — Adam and Christ. We have only to read the last half of Romans 5 to see this; and if we wish to see the distinction in moral order and character between the two we must read I Corinthians 15: 45-49.

## “HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH.”

W. H. WESTCOTT.

“And hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the HEAD over all things to the Church.” (Ephesians 1: 22).

**H**ow great is the grace that inducts us into the knowledge of God's secret thoughts in eternity! Time is circumscribed; it is a circle with boundaries before and after but, outside of time and created things, before the foundation of the world, God planned for His Son (see Ephesians 1: 10). Part of that plan was to make Him HEAD of all things and another part of the plan was to give the Church to Him.

Christ, knowing the Divine purpose, set his love to the accomplishment of it; He “loved the Church and gave Himself for it.” The greatest love known to men is that of a man for his wife — the bridegroom for his bride — how great is the love of Christ for the Church, that He gave HIMSELF for it. There is not only love, but compatibility. The ideal relationship; suitability in holiness and intelligence.

God's picture of Christ and the Church is set forth so clearly and simply, before man's fall. Adam was made in the image and likeness of God, set up as head over the earth, rendered competent to be God's delegate on the earth. He was allowed, in that sphere of glory to feel a want. There was none with whom he could communicate his thoughts, he had no companion like himself; he was alone and felt his need in this respect. Then God gave him a bride, formed of his life, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, comely, suitable to himself, a competent partner in that glorious headship. She is taken out of his side while he is in a deep sleep and on his awakening, God brings the woman to him for the satisfaction of his love and to be the sharer of his glory.

This is all a beautiful picture of Christ and the Church in that transcendent glory of Christ as Head

over all things. Blessed happy portion of each of us who have, through grace, been called into this wonderful Assembly of God. It is interesting and instructive to note that in the Epistle to the Ephesians the Spirit of God through the Apostle does not begin with the life of Christ, but with His death, of which the deep sleep of Adam was a figure.

The truth of the Church was not made known in the Old Testament, and the first mention we have of it is by the Lord, given to us in Matthew 16: 18, "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and in the Scripture quoted at the head of this paper we have the first mention of the place of the Church with Christ in His glory as **Head** over all things.

It is the Church of the living God and everything in it is living; it is formed of "living stones" (1 Peter 2: 5) and, as we learn from Romans 8: 8, 9, everything of man after the flesh has been judged and ruled out of the Church since, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is formed of those born anew of God and indwelt by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, by whom all are baptised into **one body**, in which all earthly distinctions are gone. In that Body there is no ritualism, no rationalism and no lawlessness. There is variety in action and function, yet one body, as Romans 12: 3-5 shows; and under one control, it is here for the will of God, set free and separate from the world, entirely transformed. From 1 Corinthians 12: 4, we learn the differing members of

the body and their functions, but one permeating life throughout the body. Then the differing capabilities of the members, but one Lord controlling (verse 5); the different detailed works but one God whose end is to be served (verse 6). A simple illustration of this is to be found in men working on some construction. All operations are to fulfil the plan and will of the contractor. The foreman directs the men, and then the detailed operations, the fruit of life, eye, brain, fingers, hands, feet, etc.

In Ephesians 4 we have the administration of the Head in giving gifts to men. He gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the saints — speaking the truth in love and growing up to **Him** in all things, every part responsive to direction.

In Colossians 1 and 2 we have brought before us the truth that all fulness resides in **Him**, the **Head**, and thus there is the exhortation to hold the **Head** in contrast to heeding the beguiling persuasions of men.

Again, how great is the grace that has not only wrought us for a place in the Church but has revealed to us His thoughts and purposes concerning it in Christ Jesus, and the Ephesian assembly was the masterpiece of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, under Christ. Alas! he had to visualise the sad failure that would come in after his departure as recorded in Acts 20: 29-32, and which has developed over and over again throughout the history of the Church on earth.

In the light of this, well might we take heed to the warning of the Apostle given to Timothy in the first chapter of his First Epistle and also in his Second Epistle in each chapter of which he calls attention to the influences militating against the maintenance of the **truth**.

Jude also warns us of Apostasy and the need for loyalty. While Revelation 3 gives us a door closed against Christ on earth, in Revelation 4 a door is opened in Heaven, indicating that our view point is henceforth to be from above, not from anything on earth.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 2: 4 — 3: 1)

**T**HE opening words of verse 4 must be specially noted, since they indicate the second of the eleven sections into which the book is divided. As printed in our modern Bibles the chapters number 50, but ten times do we find this expression, "These are the generations . . ." (with once a slight variation), showing that, as given by inspiration of God, the chapters number eleven.

We will point out these inspired divisions at once, so that from the outset we may have them clearly before us. They are as follows:—

Chapters 1: 1 — 2: 3, which we have already considered, we may designate as — The Beginning.

2: 4 — 4: 26, Generations of heavens and earth.

5: 1 — 6: 8, Generations of Adam.

6: 9 — 9: 29, Generations of Noah.

10: 1 — 11: 9, Generations of sons of Noah.

10: 10 — 11: 26, Generations of Shem.

11: 27 — 25: 11, Generations of Terah.

25: 12 — 25: 18, Generations of Ishmael.

25: 19 — 35: 29, Generations of Isaac.

36: 1 — 37: 1, Generations of Esau.

37: 2 — 50: 26, Generations of Jacob.

The word translated "generations" occurs but sparingly in the Old Testament; apart from Genesis mainly in Numbers 1, and in certain chapters in 1 Chronicles, and it seems to have the force of "births," or "origins." If this be so, "the generations of the heavens and the earth" would signify their origins; whereas the generations of Adam, Noah, etc., would signify those who by birth found their origin in these respective patriarchs.

It is possible that Moses, the inspired penman of Genesis, was led to use existing records left by the patriarchs, in so far as they suited the Divine purpose, and also that he was led to indicate it in this way. From chapter 5: 1, onwards, we have a Divinely given history of things, that may well have been taken from humanly recorded tab-

lets of most ancient date, just as again and again in the Books of Kings and Chronicles we have allusions to the other books of reference written by prophets and scribes.

Two other remarks we make. First, what we may call the rejected line is always mentioned first; then the accepted line: Adam before Noah: The sons of Noah before Shem: Ishmael before Isaac; Esau before Jacob. Thus from the outset do we see indicated what is so clear in the New Testament, and plainly stated in Hebrews 10: 9, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second."

Then, second, we note that chronology is always confined to the selected line. God only counts the years in regard to these while the others He leaves unregistered. This is in keeping with what we find in Matthew 1, where in the fourteen generations between David and the captivity, kings who apostatized over Baal are omitted. God's thoughts and ways in these matters are not what ours would naturally be.

In verse 4 also we notice a change in the Divine Name: not now, as in chapter 1, "God," (Elohim), but "LORD God," (Jehovah Elohim); and this name characterizes the whole passage to the end of chapter 3. Based on this fact, the so-called "Higher Critics" many years ago began to build their theories as to Genesis being just a patchwork composition by nobody knows whom, but at any rate not written by Moses. The truth is, of course, that the Name is intentionally varied to suit the theme in hand. In

chapter 1 it is God in His supremacy, creating by His word. In chapters 2 and 3 it is God placing man, His intelligent and responsible creature, in relation with Himself—whether in his original innocence or afterwards in his fallen condition—hence **Jehovah** comes in, since this name sets Him forth as self-existing, unvarying, faithful to His covenant, as is shown in Exodus 6: 2-4. It is exactly the way in which He made Himself known to Moses, the writer of Genesis.

Verses 5-7, of our chapter, give us several additional details of the creation, and of man in particular. Verse 5 emphasizes that the vegetable creation came straight from the hand of God and was not produced by natural causes, such as rain, nor by man's cultivating skill. Verse 6 shows that it was maintained by a mist which rose from the earth itself, without water descending from above. Waters there were "above the firmament" (1: 7), but as yet they had not descended as showers on the earth. Not till verse 4 of chapter 7, do we read of rain. Some think that the watering of the earth by mist and not rain persisted until the time of the flood. It may have been so.

Verse 7 is very important, giving us man's spiritual constitution by God's original creative act. The material part of man — his body — is composed of the elements that are found in the dust of the earth, but there is also the immaterial part. He is a living soul, as were the animals whose creation is recorded in chapter 1. It is the way in which man became a living soul that altogether distinguishes him from the animal creation. Only man became

a living entity by the Lord God breathing into his nostrils the breath of life. As the result of this Divine act man became possessed of spirit as well as soul.

This great act stands good not only for Adam, the first man, but also for all his race. Hence in the book of Job we find Elihu saying, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life" (33: 4). We all can say the same today. The possession of spirit by the inbreathing of the Almighty is man's distinguishing feature. This act also defined man's relation with his Creator. God is a Spirit and so man, possessing spirit by God's inbreathing, was fitted to represent Him, made in His image, after His likeness, as we saw in chapter 1.

Man being thus created, a Garden of delights was formed for his dwelling place. The name Eden has the meaning of "Pleasure," and every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food was there, so for the sustainment of life and the giving of pleasure nothing was lacking. Two trees are specially mentioned. The tree of life was surely a witness to the fact that there was a life distinct from that which man already possessed, and that it was put within his reach. On the other hand the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to remind him of his responsibility, and prove a test to it.

The location of Eden is indicated in verses 10-11. Two of the rivers can easily be identified; the other two very uncertainly. It seems certain that it lay somewhere to the east of the Euphrates, in a district

noted for gold and precious stones and fragrant resin — for that is what bdellium is supposed to be. The Ethiopia of verse 13 is really Cush, of whom we read in verse 6 of chapter 10. There appears to have been a district bearing his name between Mesopotamia and India, as well as the better known land we now call Abyssinia.

In this Garden man was put, not to be idle and while away his time, but to dress and keep it. Even when in a state of innocence it was not good for man to have nothing to do. There was healthful occupation without hard labour and drudgery.

In our minds we often couple innocence and irresponsibility together; as in the case, for instance, of a very small child. In verses 16 and 17, however, we find that Adam though created in a state of innocence was put in a place of responsibility. He had no knowledge of good and evil, so that one tree was forbidden to him, though he might eat freely of every other tree in the garden. He was put under law in the simplest way, for the law consisted of only one commandment and that commandment concerned with only one tree. He might have had many commands given to him of an intricate and confusing nature, or alternatively, he might have been forbidden all the trees in the garden save one. As it was, the Divine command was cut down to the barest minimum, just sufficient to keep before him that as the creature he must be subject to the Creator and walk in obedience.

Moreover, he was warned as to the consequence of disobedience.

If he acquired the knowledge of good and evil by disobedience, he would be unable to perform the good because enslaved by the evil. This would bring him under the power of death immediately. As we discover in the next chapter, he would not at once suffer the death of the body, which involves the dissolution of existing personality by separating the spiritual part from the material part of man. But he would at once suffer complete severance spiritually and morally from God, his Creator, which is death in its more intense form. In that sense he would die the very day in which he ate of the forbidden tree. To obey the one prohibition was his responsibility.

We are introduced to another great thought of God in verse 18. Man was not created to be an altogether self-sufficient being. He needed not only companionship but an "helpmeet" or "counterpart." We see the goodness of God as well as His wisdom in the way by which the counterpart came into being. The object being the good and profit of Adam, he was allowed to see for himself that no such counterpart existed in the animal creation by the whole range of beasts and fowls being brought before him.

Adam was evidently at the height of his intellectual powers before they had been in any way tarnished by sin. He was able to discern in each case the characteristic feature, so as to give the suitable name, for the names of course were descriptive and not just fancy words meaning nothing. Adam had both intellect and language, with command of speech. And just because

he had, he found no counterpart in the animal creation.

In Ephesians 1: 23 we have the church spoken of as not only the "body" but also the "fulness" of Christ; which word signifies "that which fills up" or the "complement." What we have in Genesis is a foreshadowing of this. We must remember that in creating the first man God had the Second Man before Him, and therefore in a number of features Adam was "the figure of Him that was to come" (Rom. 5: 14). At the point we have now reached this figure begins to come clearly before us. The Son of Man is to have a far wider and greater dominion over all creation than ever Adam had, but in that exalted place He is not to be alone, but to have His complement or counterpart.

Hence in verses 22 and 23 we find woman made in a way that is full of typical significance. In the deep sleep we see that which foreshadowed the death of Christ. Woman was a part of man and designed as his counterpart. She was a rib of his body made into a separate being, which could be presented to him. In this was foreshadowed the fact that the church would be both the body and the bride of Christ. It is remarkable too that the word "made" in verse 22 is really "builded" as the margin shows, thus agreeing with the word of our Lord, "I will build My church" (Matt. 16: 18). Ephesians 5: 23-33 is our warrant for the above, and also shows us that God's action here was designed to foreshadow the truth concerning Christ and the church.

In verses 23 and 24 we get a new

word used for man. Up to the end of verse 22 the word is always "Adam," and in verses 26-28, of chapter 1, this word covers both man and woman, for it says, "God created man . . . male and female created He them." Now we have "Ish," and woman is "Isha," because she is taken out of him, and takes character from him. Here again we see a type fulfilled in Christ and the church. The church is of Christ and takes character from Him. If however 1 Corinthians 12: 12, 13, be read, we find the human body used as an illustration of the body of Christ; but verse 12 ends, not "so also is the body of Christ," but "so also is Christ." Here Christ, or more accurately, "the Christ," is used as a term which includes His body, just as "Adam" was used to include Eve. These things are worthy of note for they emphasize and illustrate the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

Verse 24 puts on record the thought of God as to marriage from the outset, and to this the Lord Jesus appealed when answering the Pharisees, as recorded in Matthew 19: 3-9. Deviation from this Divine thought and order, or worse still the denial of it, has probably been the cause of more sin and misery in the world than any other single fount of iniquity. When maturity is reached, a man is to leave father and mother and to found a new family, adhering to one woman as his wife. Thus they become one flesh. As we have just seen, Adam

and Eve were one flesh to start with, since she was taken out of him.

This Divine ordinance, if observed, is a great protection for woman; needed because she is at a disadvantage compared with man in more ways than one. In the heathen world it is unknown and in consequence woman becomes a mere chattel, bought and sold and misused by man. In some quarters she is regarded as though she were a distinct and inferior species. These errors, and the abuses originating from them, cannot live in the light of the truth we have here. Woman is not only of the same species as man but in her origin was of his very flesh and bone — taken out of man.

The last verse emphasizes how complete was the state of innocence in which they were created. Sin having come in, all is changed. Savages may still be found in a state of almost complete nudity but they are of the most degraded type. The tendency towards it, in lands where the light of the Gospel has been shining, presages a descent into apostasy.

Chapter 3 opens, "Now the serpent was more subtil . . ." He wormed his way into this fair scene of innocence. How much more easily will he deceive the silly creatures — men and women — who try to behave as though they were innocent when they possess fallen and lustful natures.

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To pray for others, if the prayer is prayer indeed and based to some extent on knowledge, is a sure way to deepen our interest in them, and our sympathetic insight into their hearts and conditions.

# DISPLACEMENT.

F. B. HOLE.

THE Scriptures present to us in very striking contrast the life history of two men named Saul. In the Old Testament we have Saul of Gibeah, who became the first king over the tribes of Israel; in the New Testament Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. Both were outstanding men: the one by reason of his great stature and imposing physical appearance; the other a man weak in bodily presence, but intense and powerful in his spirit.

Both of them were brought to a point where they had to face a most testing situation. They did not reach it in the same way, and the outward appearance of it greatly differed, yet in its underlying principles the situation was exactly the same. The strong contrast lies in the way they solved the problem it presented. If we tried to express it in one word, we should call it the problem of **displacement**.

This word has been largely used of recent years. People by the ten thousand, or even the hundred thousand, have been driven from the land of their birth and find themselves aliens in a strange land, having lost their nationality, their possessions and sometimes their families and friends. They are like so much flotsam and jetsam on the sea of nations. They are **displaced persons**, and may well call forth our sympathy and prayers. This term will suit us very well as we consider the history of the two men named Saul.

With Saul of Gibeah all was bright at the beginning. His im-

posing appearance helped to carry him from comparative obscurity to kingship. But a test came in the matter of the Amalekites. God's command was their utter destruction, but Saul thought otherwise. Now for the test: would he allow God's will in this matter to displace his own will? He would not. Though to obey is better than sacrifice, he committed himself to **disobedience**. As a result he was rejected from the kingship in favour of David.

The test now came in another form. He had not allowed **his will** to be displaced by God's will: would he now allow **himself** to be displaced by David? No, he would not; he fought against it might and main, and thereby committed himself to those months and years of self-seeking misery which only ended on Mount Gilboa, as recorded in chapters 19-31 of 1 Samuel.

With Saul of Tarsus things were very different. True, at the outset of his career he attained to some eminence amongst his co-religionists. He stated it thus, "I . . . profited in the Jew's religion above many my equals [contemporaries] in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers" (Gal. 1: 14). But this only landed him into a furious crusade against the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, who was anathema to him.

But on the road to Damascus everything was altered fundamentally and for ever. Jesus of Nazareth revealed Himself to him

in the glory of God, and in the once despised Jesus he found a new and commanding Object, which from that moment dominated his life. As he afterwards said before Agrippa and Festus, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision" (Acts 26: 19). He became **obedient**, and not disobedient like Saul of Gibeah. Moreover he was **wholly displaced** in his own eyes by the Christ who had been revealed to him. He stated it thus: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 3: 20).

Saul of Gibeah, disobedient and fighting all his days against being displaced by another. Saul of Tarsus, obedient and gladly displaced by the Son of God, whose love unto death had captured his heart. The history of the one is recorded to warn us; of the other that we may find in him a pattern to follow, as he himself was inspired to tell us — "a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him [Jesus Christ] to life everlasting" (1 Tim. 1: 16).

So let each one of us calmly and honestly face the issue. Am I following in the steps of Saul of Gibeah or Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul — meaning, **little** — the Apostle of Jesus Christ? Am I disobedient and fighting against being set aside or displaced; or am I

obedient to the truth of the Gospel, and glad to be set aside — displaced in order that Christ may be placed in His rightful position in heart and life? To be Christ-centred and not self-centred is proper Christianity.

And now let us note how strikingly the contrast appears when we reach the closing scenes in the lives of the two men. Near the end of his sad career, and after David had for the second time spared his life, we find Saul saying, "I have sinned . . . **I have played the fool**, and have erred exceedingly" (1 Sam. 26: 21). We turn to the last Epistle that came from the pen of the Apostle Paul, just before his martyrdom, and we find him saying, "**I have fought a good fight**, I have finished my course, **I have kept the faith**" (2 Tim. 4: 7). Saul of Gibeah fought for his kingship and his crown, when God had displaced him. It was a bad fight. Saul of Tarsus, now Paul the Apostle, fought for the truth of the Gospel and the glory of his Lord and Saviour. It was a good fight.

But could any contrast be more complete or more striking than "I have played the fool," and, "I have kept the faith." Pithy sentences indeed! And each one of us, as we approach the end of our earthly course, will find that our lives are to be summed up under one sentence or the other.

Let us face the issue now, Which is it going to be?

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The unity of the body and separation from evil are vital points. One is the original and abiding principle of the church's existence: the other, faithfulness to its nature, and specially necessary in the last days.

# GOD'S GATHERING CENTRE.

J. HOUSTON.

**PAUL** tells us the mystery of God's will is to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him" (Eph. 1: 10). When the dispensation of "the fulness of times" has run its course, this universal gathering of all things in Him will be fully displayed.

We can safely say, therefore, God is working towards that end now. We can also say, viewing the dispensations of the past, that He was working then to the same end. This considerably simplifies things for a right understanding of God's word.

The first mention of a gathering centre is in Genesis 49: 10. Jacob prophesied of Judah as follows: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The **people** referred to here is, of course, God's earthly people, the Jews; and the name **Shiloh** has reference to the Messiah.

No more mention is made of Shiloh till we come to Joshua 18: 1. Israel was settled in Canaan, "and the land was subdued before them." At Shiloh the tabernacle of the congregation was set up, and this divinely appointed centre of the nation, of which Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 12, is that from which Israel was governed and blessed.

But Israel did not enjoy the blessings of Shiloh for long. Coming to Judges, we see they forsook their centre of gathering, and

drifted, in consequence, from God, till they wholly apostatized. No mention is made of Shiloh in Judges, till we come to the end of the book. In fact, they acted as if Shiloh did not exist; they completely lost the sense of God's presence in their midst. They complained that "there was no king in Israel." What a slight to God, who was their King! And having lost the sense of their gathering to Him, and of all national unity, "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." This departure brought dreadful consequences. Judges closes with the most shameful scene of idolatry, debauchery and civil war. Terrible, indeed, when God's people turn to idols and the accompanying immoralities! Terrible, when they fight with one another! Such was the result of apostasy.

Shiloh comes into the foreground in 1 Samuel. This time it is not in connection with a happy and blessed nation, but in connection with a **remnant**. Elkanah and his family were this remnant. They go "yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh." Hannah sets forth the true character of the remnant. Her sterility, deep soul exercise, fervent spirit of prayer, well suit her as a representative of God's afflicted remnant in any dispensation. She prayed for "a man child" in Shiloh, and received the request of her exercised soul. How beautifully typical of God's suffering remnant, who long for, and pray for, the coming of their Messiah! It was the only link between God and His people at that crisis,

since the nation, as such, rejected God as their King, and chose Saul; and the priests degraded their office (we refer to Eli and his sons), till God was compelled to judge them, and cast them off. Samuel was "the man child" whom God raised up, as prophet-priest, to preserve the link between Himself and His people, till royalty came in David.

The symbol of God's presence in the midst of His people was the Ark. This was taken out of Shiloh, and fell into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines. Ichabod, the mark of departed glory, was written upon God's guilty people, and Shiloh was set aside as the nation's gathering centre, to make way for Zion, the place where the ark was to find its permanent resting place (See Psalm 132). Historically, David brought back the ark from its captivity to Zion; prophetically, he looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and exercised himself in faith, with that time in view. He would not rest in his own house; nor would he give sleep to his eyes, till he found a "place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." Notice, it is the "mighty God of Jacob," Jacob being the wanderer, indicating thereby that Israel, after all their wanderings, will enter into God's rest. We can thus see the force of the words, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest. Thou and the ark of Thy strength." Now, Israel's centre is Zion, Shiloh having passed away.

It is interesting to observe the change over from Shiloh to Zion in Psalm 78, "He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He placed among men" (v. 60); He

"chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which He loved" (v. 68). In reference to Shiloh, it is a **tent**; in reference to Zion, it is a **sanctuary**, established "for ever." The former indicates God's presence with his **wandering people** (in Shiloh the staves of the ark were never removed); the latter, **God's rest**, after all the wilderness experience has ceased (the staves of the ark were removed when the ark went into Zion).

The spiritual meaning of Zion is, God's intervention in grace, bringing back His people to Himself, when they had utterly failed under law, and lost everything. The ground on which they are thus brought back to Him is that of the new covenant under their Messiah. Jeremiah 31 makes this quite clear. See also Hebrews 8 and 12. The old covenant presented what **man should have done for God**, but which, needless to say, he never did. The new covenant tells us what **God has done for man in grace**, and that, of course, in perfection. What a basis of security is this latter! Here God rests, and man rests with Him. And it will be a blessed time when all enter into that rest! Well might God say, "This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it" (Psalm 132: 14).

But Israel was not disposed to accept God's grace. When their Messiah came in grace they rejected Him. This, of course, broke their last link with God. They are now cast off, and the Gentiles are brought in. See Romans 9 to 11. Through Israel's fall, "salvation is come to the Gentiles." So it is that, at the present moment, "blindness

in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11: 25, 26). We must look to a future day for Israel's salvation. At present, we are in that time called "the times of the Gentiles," while "the fulness of the Gentiles" is being gathered in.

The Church, to which all believers in this dispensation belong, is something quite outside of God's dealings with His earthly people. It is united to Christ in heaven, through the Spirit, and is Christ's body. It is also the "habitation of

God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 22). Christ, in the Church, is the true Centre of gathering today. We gather to Him, and He is in the midst of His own, leading their praise to God. And since failure has come into the Church, as in everything else where man's responsibility is concerned, we may find ourselves reduced to "two or three" (see Matt. 18: 20). Nevertheless, it is to Him we are gathered, and to Him we cling, as God's true gathering Centre. The day will soon come when it will not be "two or three," but everything in heaven and earth will be headed up in Him.

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## THE OBEDIENCE OF JESUS CHRIST. J. MCBROOM.

**O**NCE we were "in Adam," who disobeyed. Now we are "in Christ," the obedient One. Have we realized what this signifies?

What does this spiritual journey from Adam to Christ mean for us? We are moral agents, and cannot be transferred from one order to another like a log of wood. This journey involves an experience which reaches down to the depths of the soul; but if it be faced it is followed by an enlargement and an enrichment of soul and life that is beyond words. This wonderful transition is shown to us chiefly in the writings of Paul. It is a new relationship, implying not only a new life and nature but a new origin, with a new spiritual constitution — a new creation — the conditions of which are set forth in a Man who is in heaven, the beginning of a new race for God. To be

in Christ is to be of Him. To belong to Him is an unspeakably blessed thing, but to be of Him is the most wonderful thing of all. The greatest of angels, it has often been said, would desire such a place. The question for us is do we desire to know it? If so, the Holy Spirit is given to us that we may both know and enjoy it.

The passage of the soul through this transitional state is described in Romans 7. It has been likened to a person in a tunnel, in which every step taken brings him nearer to the light. He begins as carnal and sold under sin, and ends as one who delights in the law of God. In the intensity of his distress he is led to distinguish between himself as divinely operated upon by the Spirit, and the law of sin and death which is in his members. "If then I do that which I would not, I con-

sent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (vv. 16, 17). Here comes in the necessity for some abstract thinking, and so he concludes in verse 22 with, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." The journey is made. He delights in the good. Sin, however present and powerful, is not himself but a foreign element from which he is set free by "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (chap. 8: 2).

An important stage of soul history is reached at this point. When he says, "I delight in the law of God," he is using the very words that would apply to our Lord, as Psalm 1: 2 shows. True, there could be no "after the inward man" with Him, nor indeed what follows here, for He was altogether for God in sinless and stainless Humanity. Here we recognise not only the complex condition created by the work of the Spirit in us, but that the Spirit is the new power for working through us the obedience of Jesus Christ. Here surely is a note of triumph. The law with its stern commandments had brought him into death, "for I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died; and the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me" (Rom. 7: 9-11).

Here observe how the Cross in all its blessedness comes in for the soul's relief. "Death and the curse were in our cup." Both have been borne by our Substitute: the judgment of our sins borne, and

sin in the flesh condemned in the death of the sinless One, our great and glorious Substitute. We appropriate that death as ours and pass from under judgment into His risen life, where there can be no condemnation. Having been our Substitute on the Cross, He can now be our Representative in the glory. Our old state is judged and He who accomplished it is risen in a new order of life, and we are in Him there. That this may be a divinely accomplished reality, He has given us of His Spirit. "If any one has not the Spirit of Christ he is not of Him" (Rom. 8: 9, New Trans.) No words can adequately describe the blessedness of all this: its fittingness for God in the defeat of every opposing force, the perfect conciliation of all that He is in nature and character in the blessing of man, the bringing of it all to pass in His blessed Son by incarnation, death, resurrection and ascension, with the coming of the Spirit to make it good in our souls, so that we can be in a new order, a new creation now, and be consciously transferred from the fallen man to the Man of God's purpose to delight in Him and be able by His grace and the Spirit's power to walk as He walked and obey as He obeyed.

The obedience of Jesus Christ, then, is specific. It is not to be found as coming from the Adamic order, whether innocent or fallen. It stands by itself, and can be compared with nothing in the whole circle of nature. No imitation or counterfeit or mixture is possible. It flows from the divine nature, and is so linked up with its source in the Godhead that it passes from the

thought of responsibility to that of holy and happy response — that is, from a necessary moral obligation to a natural outflow. Responsibility is there, but in the background. A new life and nature finds its natural delight in pleasing its Object, that Object being the Father whose love has made us His beloved children.

“ Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons [children] of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not ” (1 John 3: 1). God has so wrought that the feelings, tastes and joys are the same in the subject as in the Object; and being maintained as proper to the relationship, they are reciprocated in happy and holy communion. So in the first Epistle of John believers are taken account of as the offspring of God, a new generation in the earth, and it goes so far as to say that they cannot commit sin. “Who-soever is born of God doth not commit [practice] sin; for His seed remaineth in him ; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” It is impossible to connect sin with the new life. Should failure come in, as shown in chap. 2: 1 of the same Epistle, there is the Advocacy of Christ in view of recovery. There we are viewed in the concrete as in our present condition, but here we are seen in the abstract blessedness of the life of God as a new generation, so that sin is impossible.

What a relationship is this, and what a place before our God it puts us in; the sweetness and blessedness of intimacy and nearness, brought before the Father in the life nature and calling of the Son in His glorious Manhood. Surely it is becom-

ing that His path and practice should be ours. Moreover, His obedience led to the Cross. He took upon Him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death. This too has its bearing on the believer. “ Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren ” (1 John 3: 16).

How simple and happy is Christian life in the light of all this. We often speak of difficulties. To be what God has made us, walking by faith and in the Spirit, many things which we call difficulties would be seen in their true light as food for faith, and coming in to provide a channel for the outflow of the life of Christ in us. Difficulties indeed amount to impossibilities for the flesh, for the flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. If we can say, “ I delight in the law of God after the inward man,” and say with the Apostle, “ The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death,” we shall follow on to say, “ the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Are we followers of a rejected Christ? If so, it can only rightly be in the life of an accepted Christ in glory. Are we living? If so, goodbye to all that is legal, formal and artificial, and in fellowship with the Father and the Son let us rejoice in the blessedness of being here in these closing apostate days as heavenly ones, separated to the obedience of Jesus Christ, in the enjoyment of the things of God and of heaven.

# NO PROMOTION NEEDED.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

From Some Notes on Judges.

AT the time of the incident related in Judges 9: 1-21 Israel had been delivered out of Egypt; carried through the wilderness and were established in the land. **God** had brought them there, as Joshua had reminded them and he had exhorted them to "fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth" (Joshua 24: 14).

Joshua and the leaders had passed away and failure follows. The people did not continue in the fear and service of the Lord. Consequently they are beset by enemies from without and within, being "mightily oppressed," "greatly impoverished," and "sore distressed." Yet they seem to learn no lesson from all this or to seek a reason why they are in such trouble. They forgot the resource of true saints, to whom there is one God, one Judge or Deliverer.

From the sixth chapter of Judges we learn that, following the evil which Israel did in the sight of the Lord, He delivered them into the hands of the Midianites seven years, and the Midianites reaped what Israel had sowed, so that Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; they cried unto the Lord because of them.

In reply to their cry to Him, God sent a prophet to tell them that they were suffering because they had not obeyed His voice. At the same time He raised up Gideon to deliver them out of the hand of the Midianites and the land was recovered and the foe expelled; "the

country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon." Alas, Gideon failed, in that he set up in Ophrah an ephod as a memento of the victory which the Lord had given him for Israel. This became a snare unto Gideon and his house and turned the people's heart to it and not to the Lord. Anything in the nature of a memento, set up on earth, to the Lord's victory is not of Him; He abides, the eternal witness to Himself and all that He has done!

Gideon's successor, Abimelech, is characterised by ambition which leads to the constitution of a central authority on earth with the determination to get rid of all that stands in the way, as seen in the most ruthless means taken to cut off the seventy sons of Gideon, all of whom were destroyed except the youngest, Jotham, who was not there, having hidden himself.

At this point we have the testimony of Jotham from Mount Gerizim, and in his parable we find much that is instructive for us to-day.

The trees wanted a King. But why? Had not God made all; why alter God's order?

They ask the **Olive Tree**, but the Olive Tree is content with God's order. It represented Israel in its place of privilege. "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man." The fatness of the olive tree is the oil pressed from its fruits.

The Spirit of God would produce, and work out in God's people in daily details, a character in line with the promise and purpose of God at any given time. His call was individual in Patriarchs, national in Israel, and is corporate in the Church age. The fatness of it in man, honours God and means power for worship Godward and for service manward. Saints who apprehend this highest, of all **privileges** want no promotion. It is enough to be what God has made them.

They ask the **Fig Tree**. The fig tree is contented with God's order. "Should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?" It is our **responsibility** to correspond with God's call and present purpose. If we answer to our present calling it produces sweetness and fruit. It requires to be tasted to be known. There is nothing finer than the internal features of character, produced by the present testimony of God; the mind of God understood for the present time and expressed. Fruit also, the external evidence of the grace within. The responsibility taken up and acted upon — saints apprehending this want no promotion. They are content with God's order.

They ask the **Vine**. The vine is a lowly plant, dependent and clinging. It is contented with God's order. "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" It yields wine and has its place in giving gladness to God and man. **Christ**, the lowly man of God's pleasure, the **true vine**, yielding fruit for the Father, always doing the things that please Him. Saints

also, abiding in Christ, living of His life, fed by His love, quietly expressing that life in fruit; love to one another and testimony to the world. A wondrous position affording contentment with our happy lot and desiring nothing of promotion from the world where Christ was, and is, hated.

They ask the **Bramble**. Being determined in their perverseness and in spite of these rebuffs, to have a king, they find that God in anger may give them one and take him away in His wrath. Their choice may turn out to be one of the basest of men. Only by debasing themselves could the trees acknowledge the bramble as having authority over them, and such is its demand in the parable. It is too insignificant and paltry to stand up with its own strength and dignity but is quite content to lift up itself if others will put themselves down under it. The devil himself will one day lift up a man the political anti-christ — as the puppet of his own ambition, giving him his power and throne and great authority and yet he is, in the Divine picture (Rev. 13) but a beast. But with what result? Only the destruction of the puppet and of all who trust in him and the final confusion and overthrow of Satan himself. The Shechemites of our chapter find out in the long run that their choice becomes their affliction and punishment.

The lesson for us in all this is that neither saint nor people going on with God require promotion. His life and character and service as he moves quietly in the sphere to which God has appointed him,

commend themselves; and ambition — save to honour God — leaves them cold. But one who is graceless and self-centred will gladly accept the adulation of foolish men

and climb over them to a tyrannical position, comparable only to the pride that goes before destruction. Christ, on the contrary **humbled** Himself. God highly exalted Him.

## THE DANGER OF UNGODLY CONNECTIONS.

**T**HIS was markedly seen in the case of the antediluvians. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose . . . And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Gen. 6: 2 and 11). The flood was the result. It was the case with Esau. "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath, the daughter of Elon the Hittite: **which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah**" (Gen. 26: 34, 35). Solomon is another case in point. "Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: **nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.** Shall we then hearken unto you to do this great evil, to transgress against our God **in marrying strange wives**" (Neh. 13: 26, 27). It was said of Jehoram, king of Judah, "He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: **for the daughter of Ahab was his wife:** and he did evil in the sight of the Lord" (2 Kings 8: 18). Ahaziah, his son, was no better.

"He walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as did the house of Ahab: **for he was the son-in-law of the house of Ahab**" (2 Kings 8: 27).

When the children of Israel were about to go into the land on the conclusion of their journeying for forty years in the wilderness, the Lord said as to the idolatrous inhabitants, "Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly" (Deut. 7: 2-4). In Old Testament times these were **national** instructions, very necessary to protect God's chosen people from being absorbed by the heathen nations around them.

But when we come to the New Testament the instructions are individual and very plain. Believers should not marry unbelievers. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion

hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6: 14). "**Only in the Lord**" (1 Cor. 7: 39), is clear enough, the very definite refusal of a mixed marriage.

To marry with the hope of thereby being used to the conversion of a worldly husband or wife is knowingly to contravene the plain commands of Scripture. By flouting these commands we cannot expect to achieve the conversion of the unconverted partner. It is as though we could make God a partner to disobedience to His own Word. Can any seek God's blessing on such a step?

A godly minister warned a young woman, a member of his congregation, of the sin and danger in marrying an unconverted man, saying, "If you disobey God's Word, you will sup sorrow with a spoon." In course of time he visited her. Her unconverted husband had abandoned her, and she was left in deep poverty with a couple of little helpless babes. In great grief she reminded him of his warning, saying, "You told me I would sup sorrow with a spoon; I have drunk it by the bucket."

— (ADAPTED).

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## PSALM 110

It is worthy of thought, whether the indefinite word, "until" (v. 1) is not the ground of Mark 13: 32. And further, this kingdom being the reward of Messiah's service, the time and all other circumstances of it would lie at the Father's disposal. (Matt. 20: 23; Acts 1: 7).

This is indeed a Psalm of great prophetic value, and much used by the Holy Ghost in the New Testament Scriptures. For by it He interprets that Jesus is greater than David (Matt. 22) — higher than angels (Heb. 1) — now in heaven as Lord (Acts 2: 34-36) — as an expectant (Heb. 10) — and in the joy of an untransferable priesthood (Heb. 7) which He has received, not of Himself but from God (Heb. 5). All this we learn by divine comments upon this Psalm got in other Scriptures, Scriptures of the New Testament.

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## ROMANS 1: 16, 17

What made the Gospel to be so divine a power? The revelation of the righteousness of God in it. He does not say, the love or the mercy of God, but His righteousness; because without permission of righteousness love and mercy cannot act; every act of God must be justified by all His attributes. No sinner was ever afraid of the love of God, or of His mercy; His righteousness is another thing. Consequently it is just the righteousness of God which, if it can be revealed in **Gospel** — is good news to sinners — that has the power to save.

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The notion that one can be wittingly associated with evil and be undefiled, is an unholy notion — a denial of the nature of holiness.

# BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapter 3: 1-20).

**T**HE SERPENT is introduced to us without any explanation as to the power working in and through him. From verse 1 we gather that he was amongst the beasts of the field that God had made, and that he was "more subtil," — of a higher order of intelligence — than any other, so that when energized by a higher power, speech was a possibility. The whole serpent tribe, as we know it today, is in a state of great degradation, as verse 14 of our chapter would lead us to expect. As originally created it stood at the head of the animal world, which had been made subject to Adam.

As far as our chapter is concerned, then, it is just the serpent, the visible agent of the mischief, that is mentioned. So also, in 2 Corinthians 11: 3 we read, "the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty." It is not until we reach the last book of the Bible that we get the clearest identification of the serpent with the unseen actor working through it. There twice over in almost identical words do we get, "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev. 12: 9; 20: 2). He is the originator and instigator of that fearful thing, sin, which has invaded this fair creation. Let us mark how he did it.

His first move was to throw doubt on the Word of God. Very little as yet had been revealed, but on one point God had spoken clearly and decisively. The serpent questioned that revelation, distorting what God had said while he ques-

tioned it, so as to make his insinuation of doubt more plausible. Moreover he addressed himself, not to the man who was primarily responsible, but to the woman. Of the two links in the human chain she was the weaker, and the adversary struck just there.

In her reply the woman maintained that God had indeed spoken, but she fell into the error of adding to His words, for He had not said, "neither shall ye touch it." To add to His words is as mischievous a thing as subtracting from them. The more one realizes the overwhelming authority of the words of God the more careful one would be in quoting them. It looks as if that authority was already weakened in the woman's mind.

Having gained this initial advantage the serpent struck a far heavier blow, as recorded in verse 4. He boldly denied the word of God. God had plainly stated that if man disobeyed he would involve himself in ruin and death as an inevitable consequence. The serpent denied that any such consequence would follow.

Then he supported this denial by the audacious assertion that the real reason for the prohibition was that God knew that if man partook of the forbidden tree he would be immensely elevated — he would have his eyes opened, knowing good and evil and becoming "as gods." Though he would not become the Lord God, yet he would become an independent being and an object of

veneration himself. Thus he blackened the Divine character, representing God as desiring to prevent man being a possible rival to Himself, and to keep him from what was to his advantage. He practically asserted that deity in a modified form was a possibility for man.

Thus the way of disobedience was seductively dressed up as the illuminated highway to enlarged knowledge and vastly increased importance. In truth it proved to be a dark and depressing road to utter disaster. Knowledge of good and evil there would be, but without power to do the good or to avoid the evil. Whoever commits sin becomes the slave of sin, as our Lord said so emphatically in John 8: 34.

All this sheds much light upon our own times. We have the word of God in the Divine Writings — the Holy Scriptures — but as the centuries passed they became inoperative, because withheld from the people and buried in an unknown tongue. About four centuries ago they were unearthed, translated, circulated, and their light once again began to shine. Then about the middle of the eighteenth century the devil's counter-attack was formally launched, and the same tactics employed.

First, came the questioning of Divine revelation, the casting of doubt on the word of God in the so-called "higher criticism" of the Bible. Second, there came the denial of the ruin of man and of the fact that death is the wages of sin. The fact of death cannot of course be denied, but it can be regarded as a debt that we all pay to nature, so as to clear the way for men of

a higher and yet higher character to be evolved. Third, came the bold assertion of deity — of a sort — for man. Man is considered the most god-like being of which we have any certain knowledge. This deification of man will come to a head in the antichrist that is yet to be. The root of all this is seen in Genesis 3.

The trap set by the serpent was cunningly devised. Verse 6 shows that the fruit of the tree had its natural appeal to the flesh. It was "pleasant" or "a desire," to the eyes, and further the lie of the devil so presented it as to appeal to pride. The elements of the world, according to 1 John 2: 16, were all present, and in their cumulative effect overwhelmed the woman. She acted independently of God and of her husband. She took and did eat the fruit. She gave to her husband, who wrongfully accepted her lead in the matter, and he too disobeyed.

This account of the fall, given to us by God, is often refused and even ridiculed. The awful evil that fills the earth cannot be denied, but to declare, they say, that it all sprang from Adam disobediently eating so small a thing as an apple is quite absurd. The absurdity however is on the part of those who think thus. The devil is far too astute to try inserting first the thick end of the wedge. Just as a railway train is only diverted from the main line to a branch over very fine points, so man slipped from the line of disobedience over what appeared on the surface to be a small thing. There was no shortage or want, urging to this disobedience. They were not hungry. It was just pure

defiance of God's command ; just that lawlessness which is sin, according to the correct translation of 1 John 3: 4.

The man and his wife were now creatures fallen from their original estate, and the results of this fall begin to unroll themselves. First, in verse 7, we have the effect upon themselves. In innocence they had been happily free from self-consciousness, as we saw in the last verse of chapter 2. Now they were very self-conscious and ashamed, and stirred to feeble and ineffectual attempts to hide their shame. We say **feeble**, because everyone who knows the shape of a fig leaf must admit that any apron sewed from such must have been elaborate patchwork and easily destroyed. We say **ineffectual**, because verse 10 shows that immediately Adam found himself in the presence of God he confessed himself as naked, just as though the fig leaf apron had never been made.

Second, we have that which verse 8 emphasizes. Their relations with God were ruined. Gone was the happy footing that had existed for so short a time between a beneficent God and His innocent creature. Alienation had come in. The presence of the Lord God inspired them with fear and not pleasure. Their one idea was to hide themselves from Him, and for that purpose they would use the very trees of the garden, which had been given to them for their food and their pleasure. Thus the earthly and material blessings granted to them they turned into a curse.

Verses 7 and 8 are full of gloom. A ray of light however appears in

verse 9. The Lord God might instantly have discarded the guilty pair and consigned them to their doom. Instead of that He sought them out; a sure indication that He had designs for their ultimate blessing. His call was, "Where art thou?" In response to this Adam had to reveal his whereabouts, and by attempting to cover his nakedness he uncovered his sin.

What is man's position as a fallen sinner? Where is he, now that he has broken loose from the Divine control? This is the first question of the Old Testament, and the rest of it works out the answer in all its hideous detail, till we come to the closing chapter of Malachi, ending with the significant word, "curse." We open the New Testament and not without design do we find the first question on record to be, "Where is He . . . ?" (Matt. 2: 2). We read on, to discover the glorious answer to this, and close the Revelation with Jesus as the coming One, the bright, morning Star, and meanwhile His grace resting as a benediction upon all His saints. The contrast is complete.

Having constituted Adam as the responsible head, the Lord God dealt directly with him, and challenged him as to his disobedience. Adam admitted it, and what he said in verse 12 was true, but stated so as to cast the blame on Eve, and even in an indirect manner upon God Himself. "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me" led me into this disobedience; the inference being that if God had not presented Eve to him all would have been well. Man's deep-seated sinful instincts are at once revealed. If he cannot deny his guilt he will

blame somebody else, and if possible blame God.

In turning to the woman the Lord God asked a second question as to what she had done. The first had raised the question of man's state; now the second challenges his acts. Eve admitted she had eaten of the tree but blamed the serpent. As with Adam so again here, what she said was true, for the serpent did beguile her, but her effort clearly was to shift the onus of the act from herself. In this connection Romans 2: 15 is very illuminating, though we have to add that apart from the working of the Spirit of God in the conscience the invariable tendency of sinful men is to indulge in the "accusing" of others and the "excusing" of themselves. So it was at the outset, but the truth was now out, as to the man, and the woman, and the serpent.

This being so, the Lord God pronounced the judgment that was to fall upon the sinners, beginning with the serpent and working back to the man. The serpent is recognized as the originator of the mischief; hence for him it is all judgment without a ray of light. The woman and the man were his victims; hence the only gleam is reserved for them.

The solemn words of verse 14 apply entirely to the serpent as a creature which God had made. It is degraded from the highest to the lowest place in the scale of creation. The opening words of verse 15 apply in the same way. The average man, if he espies a serpent, has only one thought — to kill it! The second part of the verse has in view however the great spiritual foe, who was operating through the serpent.

He has a "seed;" that is, progeny who are of his order in a spiritual sense, and they with him are in deadly enmity and opposition to the "Seed" of the woman. In the mention of this "Seed," we have the first intimation of the great Deliverer, the Christ, who was one day to come.

The first prediction of the Christ, then, came from the Lord God Himself and was entrusted to no human lips. It is, we may say, the germinal thought out of which every subsequent prophecy sprang, and it contains at least four very striking features.

Firstly, all through the realms of creation, from man downwards, seed appertains to the male and not the female. Hence the seed of the woman is not according to nature as we know it. It is something outside that which had just been constituted and points forward to a new creation. The Lord Jesus was born of a virgin and here we have the first intimation of that fact, which is a vital one. No taint of the fall attached to Him. He was not merely innocent, as was Adam at the start. He was holy.

Secondly, this announcement of the Seed of the woman was given before any "seed," or race of Adam had appeared or even been mentioned. That seed only appears at the start of chapter 4, and a sorry start it is. Adam is recognized in Scripture as the first man and the head of the race that sprang from him through the woman. Christ is the Second Man and the Leader of God's chosen race. But the Second Man was always first in the thought of God, and evidence of this we find here.

Thirdly, the conflict between the two seeds is to end in the complete victory of the woman's Seed. He is to "bruise," or "crush" the serpent's head, the head being the seat of its life and intelligence. The bright gleam of hope, given at the very moment of the entrance of sin, contained then not only the announcement of the coming of a Deliverer — a Man of another order — but also of His full victory over the author of the disaster, reducing him to eternal impotence. How much our first parents understood of this is another matter. But there the announcement stood right from the outset.

Fourthly, it was intimated that this overwhelming victory should cost some suffering to the Victor. The serpent in the process of the conflict should bruise His heel. In walking, the heel is the first part of the foot to come into contact with the earth. The figure of speech is a telling one, for it was when He first touched the earth in His holy Manhood that the Victor suffered. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death — that death that was instigated by the craft of Satan.

Having dealt with the serpent the Lord God turned to the woman. A twofold judgment fell upon her; the result in God's government of her sin. Childbirth was to become

a time of sorrow and suffering for her, and she was more definitely made subject to the rule of her husband. There has been much scheming in our day to get rid of both these things, but nothing can really abolish them.

Then Adam came up for judgment, and the governmental effects of his sin are more clearly seen. He had hearkened to the voice of his wife instead of hearkening to what God had said, and now he must face the fruits of it. The ground is cursed for his sake. He must earn his livelihood from it with sweat and sorrow until death should overtake him, when his body should return to the dust out of which it was taken. Nothing is said here as to his soul and spirit, for it is the governmental rather than the eternal consequences that are in view. There is an equal amount of scheming to get rid of the sweat and toil, and men may think they are going to achieve it. But already we have heard the slogan, "We work or we want;" to that we may add, "We sweat or we starve;" for we can no more dodge that part of the curse than we can escape death.

It was at this point apparently that Adam gave the name of Eve to his wife. She is the mother of all living. Ages had to pass and another woman be found before the Seed of the woman appeared.

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## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

It embraces all who take the ground of Christian profession. It includes all who profess to acknowledge Jesus as Lord and to receive the truths of Christianity. But, amongst the many who take this ground, there are, "tares," "bad" fish, which have to be thrown away, "foolish" virgins, "wicked" servants; as we see in Matthew 13 and 25.

# "I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE."

A. J. POLLOCK.

(John II: 25).

**S**UCH were the amazing words that fell on sorrowing ears from the lips of the Lord in the days of His life on earth. The circumstances in which they were uttered set forth our Lord's sympathy for His own in days of trial, and His power over even death itself, throwing light on our Lord's ways with His own. Blessed and memorable scene!

How dear was that Bethany home to which He loved to repair. There in the quiet atmosphere of love and appreciation He was often found. Three individuals in that home are mentioned in the narrative — Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. To the great grief of the sisters their brother fell seriously ill. The sisters, sure of the Lord's interest and sympathy, sent word to Him of this sickness, believing that He who freely healed the sick as He moved about the cities of Judah and Galilee would surely hasten to their relief, and heal their brother.

The Lord replied to the message, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Lazarus died and yet in the end he lived. The Lord knowingly and of set purpose abode two days in the same place where He was.

Did this show that He did not care sufficiently for the sisters? Surely not! The verse, that lies between our Lord's declaration that the sickness was not unto

death, but for the glory of God, and the statement that our Lord tarried two days where He was, reads thus, "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."

After the two days expired the Lord said to His disciples that they should go into Judæa. His disciples deprecated this, saying that the Jews were ready to stone Him, and why should He adventure into danger by going thither? He answered that when men walk in the light, they do not stumble; if they walk in the night, they stumble. Our Lord evidently was acting in perfect wisdom, walking in the light that is far beyond this world's. So He plainly told them He was going to wake Lazarus out of sleep.

The disciples took it as meaning literal sleep, but our Lord corrected their misapprehension by saying plainly, "Lazarus is dead." This disposes of the theory of soul-sleep. Evidently sleeping refers to the mortal body, for, if it referred to the soul, it would prove too much, for it would mean the soul was dead and ceased to exist. How could Lazarus then be awaked out of sleep, if that were true? The body was sleeping, the soul survived in full consciousness. In the resurrection of Lazarus we have his body restored to life in this world.

It is very striking that this chapter is taken up so manifestly with what Jesus said and did. We read,

“When Jesus heard,” “Now Jesus loved,” “Jesus answered,” “Howbeit Jesus spake,” “Then said Jesus,” “Then when Jesus came,” “Jesus saith,” “When Jesus therefore saw,” “Jesus wept.” There are several other instances in this incident in which our Lord’s name is mentioned in gracious activity, but these will show how thoroughly He dominated the situation, as indeed He always must.

As soon as Martha heard that the Lord was coming she went out to meet him. Reproachfully perhaps, she said, that if He had come in time her brother had not died, but that even now God would answer His petition, in relation to her dead brother. The Lord replied, “Thy brother shall rise again.” Martha replied, “I know that he shall rise again . . . at the last day.” Then our Lord gave utterance to the words that head this article, “**I am the Resurrection and the Life.**” Thrice wonderful words! The hope of the world, without which men would be utterly hopeless. Ponder over them again and again, and yet again, till their wonder thrills your inmost soul. None but our Lord could have uttered them.

“**I am**” is the assertion of His deity, and these words occur again and again in the Gospel of John, and in the Book of the Revelation, written by the same disciple. The added words, “**The Resurrection and the Life,**” plainly imply death, for it is only the dead who rise; so the completion of this wonderful announcement implied Manhood, pure, spotless Manhood, in which the incarnate Christ fully did the will of God. In time He would lay

down His precious life as a sin-offering — unlike those of bulls and goats, which were ineffectual and inefficacious — our Lord’s, the only real sin-offering, efficacious and accepted of God as the settlement of the whole question of sin. And further, the sacrifice being accepted, resurrection was the necessary sequence. But, blessed be God! it was for us believers He died **substitutionally**. He “was delivered for **our** offences.” He rose **representatively**. He “was raised again for **our** justification” (Rom. 4: 25).

Martha had said to our Lord that she knew her brother would rise again in the resurrection at the last day. She got her eye on an **event**, Our Lord turned her eye upon **Himself**.

Our Lord let Martha into a wonderful secret. Here is the whole utterance, “**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.” A believer may die, millions have, yet everyone of those believers shall live. Their bodies may crumble, and their dust be blown to the four winds of heaven, yet this statement of our Lord is gloriously true to faith. The body of a believer, alive on earth at the second coming of our Lord, will be changed, and mortality will put on immortality. The believer in that case will never die. And thank God, there are millions who might have this experience, even as these words are being read. In short, every believer on the Lord shall live eternally for their Lord is the resurrection and the life.

Martha sent for Mary, who, when she saw Jesus, fell at His feet weeping. When our Lord saw Mary weeping, and the Jews with her weeping, He groaned in His spirit and was troubled. Then we get a verse, one of the very best known and highly prized verses in the Bible. It is the shortest verse, consisting of only two words, "**Jesus wept.**" Yet it contains a wealth of meaning which will take all eternity to explore.

" **Jesus wept** " — Jesus, what does that sacred Name mean? Jehovah Saviour — **Jehovah**, the ever-present God, underived, self-sustained, none higher than He; **Saviour**, and this could not be true of Him unless He embraced Manhood, and died a sacrificial death upon the cross for our salvation. He wept! What sympathy these tears betokened; all the more wonderful in that He knew that very soon the sorrowing sisters would be filled with joy, as they welcomed their brother back to life. **And our Lord is just the same today**, as we stand round the open grave of a loved one, dying in the Christian faith.

The body of Lazarus was in a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Our Lord asked that the stone be removed. Evidently Martha's faith was tested for she came forward, and reminded Him that Lazarus had lain in the sepulchre for four days, and that corruption had set in. But our Lord was indeed Master of the situation. He replied, " Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God? " Then He prayed to His Father in order that those present might believe

that He was the Sent One of the Father. Finally with a loud voice He cried, " Lazarus come forth. " It has been remarked, that if our Lord had not said, "**Lazarus,**" marking the one who was to be subject to His divine life-giving power, **all** the dead would have risen.

This was performed, just before His own death, the most striking of all the miracles of our Lord. Surely if He could give life to Lazarus as the life-giving Son of God, He could not be holden of death Himself. And so it was. He proved that His Name Jesus — Jehovah Saviour — was a glorious reality. One word stamps the whole scene, not death, not corruption, but life, **life, LIFE!** For was not our Lord the resurrection and the life? Was He not the Prince of life? " They killed the Prince of life, " but He came forth in resurrection.

Surely in witnessing such a miracle, the like of which the world had never seen, all would have rejoiced. But no! Some went their way, and informed the Pharisees of what had taken place. A council of the chief priests and Pharisees to consider the situation was held. They were alarmed. If miracles such as these were performed, all men would believe on Him, and the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. They plotted His life from that moment with grim determination. And not many days after they carried out their fell design, and crucified the Life-giver. Such is unregenerate man in his wickedness.

In the light of all this, it can surely be seen that the Lord tarry-

ing two days where He was, allowing the sickness of Lazarus to run its fatal course, and raising him from the dead, justified to the full our Lord's saying, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." And this will ultimately be said of every saint whose body is placed in the grave.

And as to the chief priests getting their way, **as allowed of God**, in crucifying the Lord of Glory, did it plan out as they schemed and thought? Caiaphas, the high priest that year, unregenerate man as he was, ungodly plotter of our Lord's death, was used to utter a prophecy indicating what would really be the result of Christ's death — surely a remarkable example of inspiration, "Ye know nothing at all. Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that

the whole nation perish not. **And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation.**" And yet constrained to utter this prophecy, he would plot to murder Him, the Lord of life and glory. Such is man!

The evil deed of Caiaphas remains, the foulest crime this world has ever witnessed. But God has turned it to good and glorious result. Righteousness, inflexible righteousness has been maintained, and because our Lord has made full atonement for sin at the Cross and come forth as the resurrection and the life, God declares His glorious Gospel, proclaiming salvation to "whosoever will." From the Risen One has flowed streams of rich blessing to untold millions, and still the stream of blessing flows on to-day. What a triumph!

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## SEAL AND EARNEST.

S. E. AZIZ.

**A**LL true believers have received the Spirit of God as the Seal and the Earnest, as well as the Anointing. These symbols are co-incident for there is but one gift of the Spirit, yet the operations they indicate are distinct.

There is something precious in the fact that God has sealed us. There are three thoughts connected with it — our **security**, God's **ownership**, and a **new place for man in the risen Christ**.

There is an illustration of security in the book of Daniel 6: 17. When

Daniel had been cast into the den of lions, the King sealed the stone at the mouth of the den with his own signet to make it secure, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Again in Matthew 27: 66, we read how the chief priests and Pharisees sealed the sepulchre of our Lord to make it sure.

God has now sealed us by His Spirit to make sure of us. He loves us and wants us for Himself, so knowing the perils of the way, He seals us with His own Spirit for the

day of glory which is yet to come. In John 10: 28-30 our Lord said of His "sheep," "Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand;" and again, "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one." The two hands are joined in one and the sheep are held safe in their keeping.

Then in 2 Timothy 2: 19, we read of a seal which has this inscription, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." Here we have the idea of ownership. As His recognized property, we have been purchased at great cost, and the seal of His Spirit is placed upon us. If this truth possesses our hearts, it will have the effect of detaching us

from the world in all its varied forms.

This brings us to the fact that God has established us "in Christ," who is risen from the dead and in that connection has sealed us, as we find in 2 Corinthians 1: 21, 22. Our new place is in Him, and He is the centre of that world of blessing which will be displayed in the coming day.

It is in connection with this that we have the Spirit as the earnest — a pledge and foretaste of that inheritance which is ours in Christ, to which we look forward with joy. The whole inheritance has been purchased by the Lord and the day is coming when He will redeem it.

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## LORDSHIP, FULNESS AND RESOURCE.

W. H. WESTCOTT.

From Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 1: 9-31.

**W**E have been called by God into the fellowship of **His Son**, Jesus Christ, our Lord. This fellowship is not an organization. In the affairs of men it is the practice to have certain officers trained to do all the official part of the work, usually consisting of grades of offices, from lowest to highest; promotion being according to efficiency. This is seen in various Christian systems; where the laity are required to keep quiet and unexercised, save to do as they are told.

But in the Church of God, properly speaking as constituted by God, and comprised in the fellowship, this is not so. On the contrary, it is a living organism, the

body of the living Head in Heaven and each member of the Body has its place and function. It is the intention of God that in saints there should be seen all the harmonies and character of Christ produced, not in one saint only, in the way of pious and heavenly character, but worked out collectively in many, in the way of united corporate holiness and love. There is no part without its function and adaptability to serve the will of God. It is maintained, not by rules nor by the appointment of ritual, but by every member being operative, subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christ Himself being the Leader in the assemblies.

The leadership is just as real as though He could be seen, though this is true only to the eye of faith and to the affection that owns Him Lord. Its health and prosperity depend upon the state and conduct of each individual in it, to the refusal of the flesh and the entire subjection of the heart to Christ.

Hence the comfort of knowing that God is faithful. He will never fail to exercise the heart, though we live amid the unfaithfulness of man. He never abandons His purpose and never cancels His call. He never deflects for a moment from His principles which He has established in Christ. Three things are established in Him; Lordship, Fulness and Resource. These three things are challenged in the history of failing saints. Other leaders are set before men's minds, some part of the truth is made a rallying centre, or men insist on wisdom of words, i.e., a proper standard of education and training before one can be an instrument for God in the assembly.

In Corinth there was the effort to establish parties on the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ. We can understand the first three being named; Paul with his unique heavenly ministry of the Body; Apollos eloquent, fervent in spirit in the Old Testament expositions; Cephas, the leader of the Twelve, the Apostle of the circumcision, the pillar of the Church, impulsive and much used of God. But Christ!! What misuse of Him and His Name, in endeavouring to make out that He is connected only with a few! What a mistake it is to give the impression that He is not accessible to all and that He is specially identi-

fied with our number. The truth is that grace has taught us the ground where all may be on earth and where all will be in Heaven; every earthly distinction done away with in the Cross of Christ and we brought into association with Christ risen; the new man. Members of His body and equally indwelt by one Spirit.

Then all fulness dwells in Christ. Our testimony is to Him in all His fulness. No one portion of truth is to be a rallying centre, though it be part of the truth of Christianity. There is one body, but we are not "one bodyites;" there is one Spirit, but we are not "one spiritites;" there is one baptism, but we are not baptists.

There is no name named upon us but that of **Christ** and all Christians are thus named; He is the fulness of God and all else is confusion. The whole truth is set forth in Him and we cannot make any one part of the truth a rallying centre; we need the whole truth of **Christ**. The name sets out the glory of the Person. It is by that Name that we are called to refuse division and even contention.

In Him, and Him alone, is all wisdom and He is therefore the resource of His people. No matter what the difficulty, there is in Him wisdom to guide and overcome the difficulty. It is not necessary to turn to anyone on earth, but if we refer everything to Him, He will never fail His dependent servant or children. Thus, in the midst of all the present confusion we can encourage ourselves in the Lord, knowing that God is faithful and our confidence and hope is in Him.

# SATAN ALWAYS DEFEATED.

J. G. BELLETT.

**S**ATAN had understood Job. He knew the workings of that corrupt nature, which his own lie had formed in the Garden of Eden. He had said, "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him? . . . Touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face . . . Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." And serious and terrible is the thought that he knows us so thoroughly, and understands the springs of thought and will within us. But though he thus understands **Job**, he did not understand **God**. The counsels of grace are above him. And by reason of this, he has been always in the history of the world, defeating himself, while thinking that he was getting advantage of us. For he has to meet God, in the very thing he does, and the purposes he plans, against us.

When he interfered with Adam in the garden, he encountered God to his confusion, and the promise to Adam announced his own doom. When he provoked David to number the people, Ornan's threshing-floor was disclosed, and the spot where "mercy rejoiced against judgment" becomes the place of the temple. When he sifted the Apostles as wheat, he was answered by the prayer of Jesus, and, instead of faith failing, brethren were strengthened. And, above all, when he touched Jesus on the cross, the very death he

inflicted was his own perfect and accomplished ruin. So, in every trouble which he brings on any of us, he finds, or is to find, sooner or later, that he has met the mighty God, and not the feeble saint . . .

This thought seems to get the most striking confirmations from Scripture, beyond the cases mentioned above. He is the instrument, the willing instrument, of destroying the flesh; but that destruction ends in **the saving of the spirit** (1 Cor. 5: 5). He receives, gladly receives, one that is judicially delivered over to him; but all that ends in **such an one learning not to blaspheme** (1 Tim. 1: 20). He sends forth his messengers as thorns in the flesh, delighting to do so, as being bent on mischief, having been "a murderer from the beginning;" but this still works good, for the servant of Christ is thereby kept from undue exaltation (2 Cor. 12: 7).

These are illustrious exhibitions of the devil being **always** defeated. Because they show this — that he lends himself directly to his own overthrow. His own weapon is turned against himself. The one whom he assails is, by the very assault, given strength or virtue against him.

Happy assurance! Our great adversary is never victorious! It is the pricks he kicks against.

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Blessed be God. He loves not according to our desert, but according to our necessity.

The conscious prodigal expects a rod; his father runs, "falls on his neck and kisses him."

## “I WILL COME AGAIN.”

J. HOUSTON.

**B**EFORE the Lord Jesus departed from His disciples, to go back to the Father, He said, “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 then He promised, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14: 1-3). Everything of promise is bound up in that word, “I will come again.” Whatever we may think of the “Father’s house,” the “many mansions,” the “place” He has gone to prepare for us — all is secured in Him, and it is **Himself** that constitutes our hope. “I will come again.” Precious word! How it awakens in us affection for **Himself**! He might have sent an angel, or legions of angels, but no, He must come **Himself**.

Centuries have passed away, and He has not come; but He is coming. Thousands upon thousands of Christians have gone to their rest, and they have not seen Him; but they will see Him, at His coming. They have pillowed their heads on His promise, and have fallen asleep in Christ, waiting for Him to fulfil it, at His coming, when He shall raise their bodies from the grave, change them into the likeness of His own body of glory, and take them to be for ever with Him in heaven above. His servants have gone forth all over the world, as pioneers with the Gospel, that others may be saved from their sins, and be ready for Him, at His coming again. They feel the time for service is short, and the work to be done is great; that the ranks are being thinned,

and the gaps made in them need to be filled up by others, who will volunteer in their turn to serve. And all is being done, in view of His coming again.

Week by week, Christians all over the world gather to His Name, and remember Him in the breaking of bread, and the drinking of the cup. As they celebrate this feast in remembrance of Him, according to His own appointment, they do it, “till He come.” “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come” (1 Cor. 11: 26). What gives hope to the living, comfort to the dying, incentive to the worker, is that never-to-be-forgotten word, “I will come again.”

If we look back over the Church’s history, we shall find that, when Christ’s coming again was the living hope, all went well, for everyone looked for its immediate fulfilment with joy, anticipative joy, and arranged their life and work accordingly. When His coming again was forgotten, and nobody ever spoke about it to others, a cloud fell over all, service was abandoned, worldliness-came in, and a terrible state of apathy and spiritual inertia followed, to the exclusion of all true life. When God, in His great mercy, brought about revival, and a work of restoration years ago, it was through the preaching of Christ’s coming again. Christians, who had been asleep, awoke, like the virgins in the parable, and prepared themselves for the coming of the Lord. “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” (see Matt. 25: 6). That was

the awakening cry, " The Bridegroom cometh " — what a word!

A little over a century ago, the preaching of the Lord's coming again was so powerful and arousing that this " blessed hope," as it is called, possessed Christians in a way that had never been known since the days of the Apostles. Not even in the days of the Reformation, had there been such an awakening as to it. Christians felt the Lord was about to come. What a change was wrought in those who rose from slumber, realising that the Lord's coming was near, a proximate event, at any moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to take place.

It is a bright and blessed hope to have at all times. We go to bed, knowing that if the Lord come while we sleep we shall awake in glory, " for ever with the Lord." We go to work, knowing that if the Lord come while we are engaged in toil, we shall cease from earthly employment for ever, to go to be with Him. By night or by day, in sleep or at work, we should have this all-engaging event before us — the coming of the Lord. This will keep us in a healthy state of soul and will fill us with zeal in His service.

Then, if we look on the world around us, what hope or expectation of improvement can be held out? In man's hand, things are not improving; and we cannot expect that they ever will improve in his hand. What can mere man do? Only cause more confusion in what is already chaotic. The Lord alone can bring peace, for He is the Prince of peace. He alone can put away evil, for He alone has the power to do it. All power in heaven and in

earth is given to Him. The whole creation is groaning, waiting for His coming; nor will it cease to groan till He comes to deliver it (see Rom. 8: 22-25). Whether we think of ourselves as individuals, or of the Church as a whole, or of the world in all its great problems and needs, the coming of the Lord is the sure and final answer to everything. We see a glorious future as the hope of the Church and the emancipation of all creation from its groaning and bondage.

What saddens us is to see in some quarters a growing apathy, in reference to this glorious happening. In places where evangelical truth is held and taught, so often little, if anything at all, is said about the Lord's second advent. The result is that Christians are losing a true incentive to service, a true motive for practical sanctification, a soul-sustaining power that keeps them in warmth of affection towards the Lord, and one another. When death separates them they miss the comfort of the immediate hope of being reunited in the Lord's presence in glory, at His coming; consequently they mourn their loss much in the same way as worldly people do, who have no hope. What need, therefore, that we should all stir one another up to a revival of hope in view of Christ's coming again!

When the virgins in the parable lost hope, they went to sleep. The midnight cry awakened them: " Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." The very next thing to happen may be Christ's second advent. How necessary it is that we should be in the strength and joy of this blessed hope!

# HE IS COMING.

L. A. ANDERSON.

“ **I WILL come again** ” (John 14: 3). What a comfort these words of the Lord Jesus must have been to His disciples, after He had told them that He was going away. Indeed they have been a stay for the people of God ever since and are so still. Yes, **He is coming** and we have His own words to assure us of it.

Some may think that He comes to them when they die. That is **not** the case, for they **go to Him**, nor is it the meaning of the words here, which could not be plainer. He is coming, and that coming is the hope of the church of God, and should be the hope of every Christian. May this thought be ever in our minds.

“ **Occupy till I come** ” (Luke 19: 13). The people imagined that the day of Christ's reign over the earth was near at hand; that He would soon take the kingdom and all would be well. Therefore He spoke a parable to them of a nobleman going into a far country to receive a kingdom and then **return**.

Notice first of all that the servants were to be engaged in some occupation **until** he returned; they were not to idle their time. If that was to be true of them, how much more should it be so of Christians today?

Observe next that **every servant** had something — a pound. This teaches us that every one of us has **something**, no matter who we are, nor how young we may be, if we are His servants.

Then it is seen that every servant had a **like quantity**; and in this re-

spect the parable is very different from the parable of the talents, varying in number, as recorded in Matthew 25. It remains for each one of us to recognize what it is that we have.

Lastly, each one of those servants had to **give account** of how he had used his pound (v. 15).

Surely these are important lessons for us here. We may not have any great gift, indeed the nobleman in the parable said it was “ very little ” (v. 17). This should be an encouragement to us all. Let us find out what God has endowed us with and let us use it. A Christian girl about twelve years of age used regularly to go and read to a blind elderly Christian lady. It was not much, you may say, but she used the little ability she possessed in reading to one who could not read for herself, and that will surely get its reward in a day to come.

In the parable we are only given three instances out of the ten, but doubtless these are quite sufficient to teach us a much needed lesson. One of the servants used his pound so that it was worth **ten** times as much. How well he must have used his pound. What a privilege to know that there is practically no limit to which we can use our gift. Another servant produced **five** times as much, and he evidently had not been idle. Both received the nobleman's commendation and were rewarded according to their work.

The third servant did nothing at all with his pound. He had **got it**,

he knew just **where** it was, but he **had not** used it. Possibly it had been kept bright and shining, having been wrapped up in a napkin, but not having been used the coin might just as well have been dirty and tarnished. There was not only no commendation and no reward, but that servant eventually lost what he had.

May God help each one of us to find out what our gift is, use it, and use it diligently, till He come. When He returns it will be too late to start. Remember, the pound **you** have, and I also, is something "very little," so none of us need feel discouraged.

"Till He come" (I Cor. II: 26). Here is something else for us to do in our Lord's absence. What

more blessed than to meet to remember Him and partake of the bread and cup week by week, or as we have opportunity, till He come. He has asked us to do it; we are not compelled to do it, but by so doing we show the Lord's death till He come. May we value this great privilege more and more. How grieved the Lord must be if we neglect this one thing that before He went away He asked us to do.

"I come quickly" (Rev. 22: 20). These are almost the last words of the Bible, as though He wanted to give us a final reminder. Yes, He is coming, and coming very soon for aught we know. Things are moving very rapidly and we should pray surely that we shall be found waiting, working and watching for His coming.

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### "SEND US MORE TROUBLE"

It is said that the following prayer was offered by an Ethiopian at Soddu, Walamo, Ethiopia:

"O God, from the depth of my heart I plead with thee to send us trouble. When our king was exiled we were in much trouble with the foreign [Italian] rulers. We had to meet in secret, preach in secret, and were in constant danger of our lives. That was the time when we worked in harmony with our fellow Christians.

"Many a night after I had locked my door and gone to bed, tired from a day's long journey of preaching and teaching, there came a persistent knocking. Thou knowest, Lord, how I wanted to sleep, but they at the door would not let me. They wanted to be baptized. I told them that they wouldn't want to be baptized at night and be hunted and chased and put in prison and beaten, but they said they had seen the Christians' joy, and they, too, wanted that religion.

"Every night there were more and more. We read Thy Word, and talked about it, and prayed through the nights. We shared our joy in the Lord. We worked side by side with only one desire, to preach and teach the gospel.

"Then, Lord, our king came back. The foreign rulers were forced to leave our country. We have peace in our land. We baptize in the daytime. We are not beaten. We meet and pray, yes, but we are beginning to grow careless in our zeal for Thee. Jealousies creep in and spoil the harmony. Petty troubles take on large meanings. We are selfish in our ambitions.

"Dear Lord, send us more trouble, I pray Thee, that we may forget ourselves and be so dependent on Thee that we will have no time to become selfish and jealous of our fellow Christians. For Jesus' sake. Amen."

# BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 3: 21 ; 4: 26).

THE promise of God that there should arise a Deliverer, who should break the power of the adversary, was supplemented by an act of God, which shed light on the way the deliverance would be brought to pass. Adam and his wife had attempted to cover their nakedness with fig leaf aprons, and had failed. The Lord God did cover them with coats of skins. Now skins are not a vegetable but an animal product, and only available to clothe man when death has come upon the animal that produced them. Here then we find the primitive revelation of the fact that man can only stand clothed before God on the basis of death. He must own that the death sentence, which righteously lies upon him, has been endured by another in his stead.

The act that revealed this was followed by another act of God equally significant. Man had acquired the knowledge of good and evil without any power to achieve the good but rather with an acute propensity to the evil. Lest he should perpetuate his living in this condition he was driven forth from the garden of Eden, and his way back to the tree of life was barred by the cherubim with a flaming sword. This was doubtless an additional act of judgment but it contained within itself a strong element of mercy.

Supposing Adam had been able to put forth his hand and eat of the tree of life, what would have been the result? He would have perpetuated his condition of sin and misery,

making himself a deathless creature in a hell of his own devising. That would have been bad enough. But it would have been a much worse disaster in this respect, that even by becoming Man it would not have been possible for Christ to die. His death has become to us the door into life. In eating of the tree of life Adam would have closed and barred that door. We may well thank God for the cherubim and the flaming sword!

Our first parents had now lost their innocence, lost their Paradise, and lost such happy communion with God as they had at the beginning. They had gained the knowledge of good and evil, but only to find themselves enslaved by the evil, and they had brought themselves and the creation beneath them under a curse. Under these sad conditions the propagation of the race began, as stated in the first verse of chapter 4.

The first man to be born of woman appeared and Eve thought she had acquired him "from" or "with" the Lord, and hence the name that was given to him. We are not told what Adam said but only what she said, so it may have been again the case that she took the leading place which belonged to her husband. Anyway she again was wrong, for Cain was not from the Lord, but rather "of that wicked one" (1 John 3: 12). The Lord Jesus told the Jews that the devil "was a murderer from the beginning," and again that "he is a liar, and the father of it" (John

8: 44). We see him as the liar in Genesis 3, and as the murderer in Genesis 4.

When the second son appeared a name was given him more in accord with the fallen state of mankind; Abel meaning **Vanity** or **Transitoriness**. At this point the record of Adam's family stops, and we hear no more as to them until we come to the end of our chapter. Adam doubtless had many sons and daughters but God's object in Genesis is not to give us history, but to furnish us with sufficient detail to instruct us in His governmental dealings with fallen men, and that with a view to their ultimate deliverance and blessing.

When Adam was expelled from the Garden he was bidden to go forth and "till the earth," so there was no fault to be found with the occupation that Cain followed. Abel became a shepherd, since sheep are defenceless creatures and man's fall had produced wild beasts. Man had revolted from God, and feared His presence. The animal creation, broadly speaking, consequently revolted from man, and feared his presence.

Yet a day came when both brothers felt they ought to render some tribute to the Creator and seek a basis of approach to Him. In the sacrificial offering that Abel brought we see the second foreshadowing or type of the death of Christ. The first was in the coats of skins that clothed the guilty pair, where we discover that only by death can man's nakedness and sin be **covered**. Now we advance a step and find that the only basis of **approach** recognized by God is the death of an

acceptable sacrifice.

In Cain's offering there was no recognition of this. He brought the fruit of the ground which God had cursed — though probably he brought the finest produce of the toil of his own hands — and in this there was no acknowledgment of the death sentence that lay upon him. He was like a condemned criminal under sentence of death, seeking to curry favour with his judge by bribing him with something nice. Whatever an earthly judge might be tempted to do, God had no respect to this manœuvre, and he found himself rejected.

Abel's offering involved the death of the sheep, as is evidenced by the words, "and of the fat thereof." At this point Hebrews II: 4 should be read. It shows us that his offering was an act of faith — the first to be put on record. Now faith lays hold on what God has revealed. If we ask what had been revealed for Abel's faith to apprehend, we can only refer to what we have in verse 21 of chapter 3. Abel apprehended the significance of the coats of skins, and hence by his offering acknowledged that he was a sinner under the death sentence, and could only approach on the ground of the death of a victim. Cain had no faith, He ignored this, and approached under false pretences.

Thus almost at the start we see human life like a river dividing into two diverging and even opposite streams, which have continued to this day. Hence we regard this incident as one of the most fundamental in the whole Bible, and lay the greatest stress upon it. Near the end of the New Testament we

read of a "Woe" that rests on those who "have gone in the way of Cain" (Jude II), and the number of those doing this — even though they might wish to be called "Christian" — has greatly increased in our day. The verse in Jude shows it to be the first of three steps that lead down to perishing in utter apostasy.

On the other hand, Abel stands at the head of the men of faith, who are recognized in Hebrews II. The sacrifice he offered was "more excellent," and to it God bore testimony, accepting it in some way that was visible and definite, and this acceptance was clear evidence to Abel that he was righteous, or in other words, right with God. Yet even today there are to be found not a few who do sincerely trust in Christ and through a defective understanding of the Gospel, considering themselves rather than the Divine testimony, they have their doubts as to how they stand with God. Amazing, is it not? to think that nearly four thousand years before Christ came, Abel enjoyed what many are missing nineteen centuries after He has come.

Rejected by God, Cain became very angry with God, and wreaked his vengeance on the man of faith whom God had accepted. The picture is true to life, for the same thing has been re-enacted times without number in the history of the world. Cain was not irreligious. Had he been, he would not have troubled himself even to make an attempt at approaching God. No! He was a religionist, and just because he was, anger and hatred filled his breast. God was beyond

his reach. He could not strike at Him. Abel was well within his reach, so the blow was effectually aimed at him. The most prominent example of this in the New Testament is Saul of Tarsus. He hated Jesus of Nazareth with an intense hatred, and because He was in glory beyond his reach he struck at His followers on earth.

Cain became a murderer in spite of God having remonstrated with him, reminding him that, in spite of what had happened, his rights as the elder brother should be respected — Abel having the subject place — and indicating where the mischief, and perhaps the remedy, lay. We are told that the Hebrew word translated "sin" also has the meaning of "sin-offering." So it may literally have been that there was almost at his feet a lamb which he might even at this juncture have brought as a sacrifice, and thus have put himself right with God.

Slaying his brother, Cain revealed himself to be "of that wicked one," and he did it because "his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." He proved himself moreover to be not only a murderer as regards his brother but utterly defiant as regards God. Challenged as to his brother's whereabouts, he showed not the slightest sign of repentance, but rather a truculent spirit that feared not God, and made a play in words upon the fact that Abel had been a "keeper" of sheep. He was not going to admit that he was "keeper" to Abel!

But Abel's blood from the ground had uttered its voice into the ear of God, and swiftly a special curse descended upon him, in addition to

the curse that had already fallen upon Adam and his race, as we saw in chapter 3. Adam was to obtain his food only by the sweat of his face, but Cain was to find the earth unproductive even if he laboured to till it, so that he would become a wanderer, fleeing from the face of God. Verse 14 shows that Cain realized the significance of this curse and declared it was too great to be borne. From that day to this sinful men, **if unrepentant**, have complained of the severity of God's judgment. Only when men are repentant do they bow and humbly own that God's judgment is just.

Without a doubt there is in mankind an instinct that urges them to avenge wanton murder by the death of the murderer. Cain himself had that instinct and anticipated that some others of his brethren would slay him. No government was yet instituted in the earth and therefore God would allow no punitive action to be taken against Cain. When government in its most primitive form was instituted, then action was to be taken, as we see in verses 5 and 6 of chapter 9.

In the last verse of chapter 3, Adam was driven out of the Garden; in verse 16 of our chapter Cain "went out from the presence of the Lord." The one was a compulsory judgment; the other a deliberate forsaking. To an unrepentant murderer the presence of God was abhorrent. We read in Romans 1 of the barbarians that, "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and this was exactly the case with Cain. He departed to the land of "Nod," or "Wandering," carrying with him a wife and a son, and there he built a "city," some

primitive kind of stronghold. As far as he could, he defied God's sentence upon him, and showed that he distrusted what God had done that he might not be slain. If the earth was not going to yield its produce for him, then let others have the trouble of cultivating it! Rather than wander he would settle down and protect himself!

With this we take leave of Cain. Verse 18 merely mentions the names of his more immediate descendants. Verse 19 stops at Lamech to give us a few details. Remarkably enough this man was the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, just as Enoch was in the line through Seth. In the details given we see the world system beginning to take shape. Its basic principles are revealed to us, and they agree with the analysis given to us in 1 John 2: 16.

It was Lamech apparently who first broke through the Divine ordinance as to marriage of one man with one woman, and instituted polygamy. He was a forceful character who intended to do **what he liked**, and not what God had said. Here, without any question, we see the lust of the flesh raising its ugly head.

The two wives bare children and in the details given as to them we see the lust of the eyes appearing, for that term covers man's search for what appeals to the inner eyes of his mind as well as spectacular shows that appeal to the eyes of his head. In Lamech's family there was the beginning of the life of freedom and the acquiring of wealth — for in primitive times a man's possessions lay in his herds — the be-

ginning also of the arts and sciences in music; and the beginning of applied science in manufactures, especially in brass and iron. Here mankind started its career of expanding inventiveness, which in our day has reached the atom bomb stage. Man's eyes of lust have probed all too deeply into the secrets of the earth, and how much further they will penetrate before God drops the extinguisher upon all his projects by the appearing of Christ in flaming fire — who can say?

Lamech's daughter, Naamah, is the first woman to be mentioned after Eve. This is, we judge, because her name has the meaning of **Pleasure or Charming**. If we add pleasure, and its pursuit, to the features we have just noticed, we have the foundation principles on which man's world is based.

Lamech's speech to his wives may seem a little obscure, but the rendering of the New Translation, "for my wounding," and "for my hurt," makes it clearer. Some unfortunate young man had wounded and hurt Lamech, who in revenge, simply rose up and slew him. When Cain had murdered centuries before, he betrayed some sense of wrongdoing. Not so Lamech, who came home to brag to his wives of what he had done, and to make scornful allusion to God's action in forbidding revengeful action against Cain. If Cain was to be avenged sevenfold, why, he would be seventy and sevenfold. He felt himself to be eleven times more important than

Cain. Here was the pride of life, in high degree!

In this man, then, the seventh from Adam, we see both corruption and violence coming plainly to light. All evil may be classified broadly under these two heads, and evidently Lamech's polygamy and murder quickly bore their bitter fruit until, just before the flood, "the earth also was **corrupt** before God, and the earth was **filled with violence.**" It is a sad fact that in our day, and in lands where for long the light of the Gospel has been shining, similar conditions are rapidly multiplying.

The two verses that conclude our chapter carry us back long before the days of Lamech, for the next chapter tells us that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born. Many children may have been born between Abel and Seth, but they are passed over in silence for Seth was the seed appointed to carry on the line of faith, as contrasted with the line of Cain. That Seth was a man of faith we gather from the name he gave his son — Enos, signifying **mortal, weak**.

One of the first signs of faith springing up in the heart is that a man acknowledges himself to be a sinful creature under the death sentence. The next thing is that in the light of this he begins to call upon the Name of the Lord. So the closing words of our chapter are very striking. In the New Testament we find that "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom. 10: 13).

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That is very superficial which is only learned by rote; we must come into the school of experience in order to learn by heart.

# CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE AND PRACTICE.

From brief notes made at meetings for young Christians held at Long Sutton, Hants., in August last.

**A**LL true Christian experience has as its basis two great blessings; peace with God (Rom. 4: 24—5: 1), and deliverance from the power of indwelling sin (Rom. 7: 14-25).

When sin entered at the beginning, it wrecked man's original relationship with God, and left him guilty, alienated and subject to judgment and condemnation. With an unpacified conscience he feared God. But sin did more than this: it wrecked him internally, taking away his power to do good and enslaving him.

Peace with God is enjoyed when we know that Jesus our Lord has not only been delivered to death for our offences, but also has been raised again for our justification. If a man is sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and the law permitted a substitute to be delivered to the prison for his offence, the sight of him **going in** would not in itself give the offender complete peace of mind as to the matter. The kind substitute might die in the prison when but three months were expired, and the law lay hands on the offender and imprison him for the remaining three months. What would give complete peace of mind would be meeting the substitute outside the prison, set free because the sentence is fully exhausted. The offender could then say joyfully, "If he is out, I am out; if he is free, I am free." After this fashion can the believer rejoice, by faith in the risen Saviour. Peace with God is the result.

But there remains the other matter — the enslaving power of sin. The first step to the deliverance we need is a deep inward conviction that in our flesh there dwells no good thing. This terrible fact is not learned in a day. Many a struggle do we have, trying to get some good out of the flesh, as fruitless as the attempt to get gold out of sea water; a scheme for which, is said to have been started at the time of the South Sea Bubble over 200 years ago. **None was got out because none was in.**

Then we have to discover that though we have a new nature as born of God, the power we need is not found **there**. For power we have to look outside ourselves to the great Deliverer. It is when we do this, that we can say, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." As long as our cry is, "How can I deliver myself?" all is fruitless failure. When we cry, "Who shall deliver me?" we turn away from ourselves and seek deliverance by another from without.

The deliverance is made effective by the indwelling of the Spirit of God, as shown in the opening verses of Romans 8. In the Napoleonic wars there were more than once encounters between one British and one enemy warship. Usually the British ship was victor and the enemy surrendered. What transpired? The enemy ship changed masters; it took sailing directions to a new destination — some British port. But it had placed on board

it a British officer, and as many men as needed to dispossess the old captain and crew from any effective control of the vessel, by assuming control themselves. The illustration is easy of application. Each of us when converted changed our flag, owning Christ now as our Lord. We changed our destination; not hell now, but heaven. And the Spirit of God indwells us, not to be merely a convenient kind of "passenger," but to take command of us and our lives till He has piloted us safely into heaven.

Truth concerning the Holy Spirit is of great importance. We may view His coming in three ways, as the Comforter, the Revealer and the Energiser in spiritual conflict.

Before He departed, the Lord Jesus promised that He would come as the Comforter. His words are recorded in John 14, 15 and 16. He would not leave us "comfortless," or "orphans," but He would come to us in a new way by His Spirit. Some of us have read the story of how, when John and Betty Stam were martyred in China years ago, their one infant daughter was left lying on the ground utterly uncared for, and yet rescued and nurtured by devoted Chinese Christians. Let that represent the ministry of the Spirit as the Comforter to the disciples at the outset, and to ourselves today.

In 1 Corinthians 2, the Spirit is set before us as the Revealer. He concerns Himself not with material things but with spiritual things, the deep things of God. Modern thought concerns itself greatly with things material, and often seeks through man's wisdom to understand God,

but all in vain. The Spirit of God does not speak according to man's wisdom, whether in revealing God's things, or in giving power that they may be communicated to others. And, when revealed, these things are only discerned by the Spirit. Our happy task as Christians is to receive and understand by the Spirit the things which He has made known to us in the Holy Scriptures.

It is made quite clear in Ephesians 1: 13, that every true believer receives the Holy Spirit, and in Ephesians 6 we have Christian warfare brought before us and the armour of God. Connected with that we find, the sword of the Spirit and prayer in the Spirit.

The sword is the Word of God. Now a sword cannot be wielded with any success without practice. The hand of God was behind David in his conflict, but the fatal stone from his sling that struck Goliath's forehead was not slung by chance but as the result of long and arduous practice at home. So it is with the Word of God: diligence in the study of it is the keynote of success.

Prayer comes as the seventh piece of armour, and it is the one least mentioned and most often forgotten. Bunyan gave it a strong place in the heavenly armour, calling it "All-prayer." Who can estimate its value? It brings in the power of God. The Roman Empire fell when the Roman soldier lost his spirit. We are Christian soldiers, and victory can only be achieved and maintained as we are wholly dependent upon God — a dependence which expresses itself by prayer in the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit always exalts Christ. The believer who walks in the Spirit will be able to say as did Paul, "Not I, but Christ" (Gal. 2: 20). There is the exact opposite in Romans 7. All there is "I" and "me," and all ends up with, "O wretched man that I am." It is after this, that the writer turns to Christ and victory. In turning to Christ one turns away from oneself.

In the bygone centuries men's minds were geo-centric. To them the earth was the centre of everything, and they tried to explain the movements of all the visible heavenly bodies from that point of view. We are apt similarly to be ego-centric — making ourselves the centre of everything. And what confusion and failure proceeds from that! It was a great day when men discovered that the sun and not the earth is the centre of our little system. And for the Christian it is a far greater day when he finds in Christ the centre of his spiritual life and thus he is no longer centred in himself.

If we joyfully recognize the Lordship of Christ we find self eclipsed, and we come under the power of His love. Even Christian service can be quite bitter if not done in the power of love. We must not follow the Lord with the hope of gaining advantage over our fellow disciples as to position, like James and John; nor like Judas Iscariot, for the holding of the bag; nor like Peter, in order to gain a reputation for valour. We should rather be like Paul who was willing to become the slave of the difficult and almost cantankerous Corinthians, as we see in his letters to them (1 Cor. 4, and 2 Cor. 12: 15). If we have a true

vision of Christ we shall follow Him though it means thorns and trials. Following Him means the daily attitude of saying "No" to self, prepared for hardships but with the certainty of victory at the end. It has been said, "Measure thy life by loss and not by gain." Peter learned this, as we see by his Epistles, which mention so much about suffering.

Love, then, serves, and avenues of service lie open in many directions. We all recognize the need of service in connection with the spread of the Gospel in the world, but what about service in the assembly — among the people of God? In Philippians 2: 19-22, Paul emphasizes two things in connection with Timothy. He served in the Gospel, but also he had a deep and genuine care for the spiritual welfare of the saints.

First of all we serve God in thanksgiving and worship. This is open to all of us. It is remarkable that the Lord Himself first spoke of worship to a woman, as recorded in John 4. Again Luke 17: 15-19 shows us that thanksgiving is the **first** thing that the Lord looks for. Many other forms of service there are. The case of Samuel, in the Old Testament, shows that there is no age limit, for he started at a very early age.

The evangelist is needed. Only one — Philip — is mentioned by name in Scripture. Peter was told to feed the Lord's sheep, and in his Epistle he passes this instruction on to others — "Feed the flock of God." Paul exemplifies this, for in 1 Thessalonians 2 he reminds the saints there that he had been

amongst them in all the tenderness of a nurse with her children, and at the same time with the watchful authority of a father.

We must ever keep before us that separation from the world and its spirit is necessary before any true service to the Lord can be performed.

In all these things the Apostle Paul is an example to us. We get proper Christian experience in Philippians 3. In verses 4-8, we get **his conversion**. The revelation of Christ on the Damascus road eclipsed all else for him, so that he **counted** as loss what otherwise had been gain. Then 30 years after he could write: "I **count** all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." His mind was still the same. The **one thing** the rich young ruler **lacked** was the spiritual sight to discern the excellent glory of Christ. If he had possessed it, like Paul he would have counted as loss his great possessions.

We find here not only Paul's conversion but also **his conformation** to the death of Christ, as stated in verse 10. **That** he could face, and the sufferings attendant on it, because he had some knowledge of Him and the power of His resurrection. All depends upon the knowledge of Him. Had Martha had this in larger measure, she would

have had the "**one thing needful**," even as Mary had.

Thirdly, in this chapter we have Paul's **concentration**, expressed in the words, "**one thing I do**." He was like an athlete with his eye fixed on the goal, and straining every nerve to reach it. Without a doubt one of the greatest secrets of spiritual success is concentration.

There are today so many things to distract the minds of the young: half a century ago they were not nearly so numerous. A whole afternoon may be frittered away under the bonnet of the car, or polishing it up; a whole evening may be wasted, twiddling the knobs on the wireless. Radio and motoring are not in themselves wrong. They are neither moral nor immoral. All depends on how they are used; and let us remember the saying that **the good is often the enemy of the best**.

In Philippians 3 we have the best things brought before us. Let us follow Paul's example in pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Then, instead of being like a shallow stream, babbling over many stones and accomplishing nothing, we shall be like the same stream when, concentrated and deepened between narrow banks, it rushes into the turbines, providing light and power for a whole district.

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"Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3: 11). Here we have in six words a summary of the whole Epistle.

God's work done under God's direction in God's way will have God's support.

## “MY HEART SAID”

A. J. POLLOCK.

“When Thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek” (Psalm 27: 8).

THIS is a unique verse in the Old Testament, far removed from the bondage of the law of commandments, throwing a flood of light on God's dealings with His people, whether it be with His Old Testament saints or those in New Testament times.

When the law was given at Sinai, we read of the Mount that might not be touched, that burned with fire, of blackness and darkness and tempest, of the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words. So terrifying was all this that the children of Israel entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; and even Moses, their great leader, nearer to God than any, said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.”

And what was the lesson the law would teach? Said one, who most sincerely and earnestly sought righteousness by the law, “The commandment which was ordained to life; I found to be unto death” (Rom. 7: 10). So wrote the Apostle Paul, and he furthermore described the Old Testament, the law, as “the ministration of condemnation” and “the ministration of death” (2 Cor. 3: 7 and 9), for its only activity was to condemn those who failed to obey perfectly its commands, and its ultimate penalty exacted was death.

Was the law then not good? Surely, as emanating from God it was positively and altogether good. We read, “The law is holy, and

the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Rom. 7: 12).

The law is like a sculptor, handling with exquisite skill the most exact tools, and yet he is utterly powerless. Why is he powerless? The answer is, Because of the material he works on. He is called upon to produce a sculpture out of a block made of sand, loosely held together. At the slightest and most skilful blow of the hammer on the chisel, the sand crumbles.

It is thus with the law. The law is good, but man's heart is alienated from God. We read, “The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Rom. 8: 7). The law is powerless, because there is no response in the human heart of fallen sinful man to God, and the final verdict is that “every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3: 19).

But in Psalm 27: 8, we breathe a different atmosphere altogether. When God expresses His desire that His creature should seek His face, there is the immediate response of the heart — “my heart said, Thy face Lord, will I seek.” Psalm 27, with its single verse speaking of God's desire reminds us of Psalm 119 with its 176 verses, no less than 174 of which mention the law of God under different names — law, commandments, precepts, testimonies, judgments, statutes, ordinances, word, way, path. Psalm

119: 1-176 is but the expansion of Psalm 27: 8. Whatever name the law may go by, it is no longer condemnation and death threatening, but perfect delight and liberty. The writer bursts out, " My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments at all times " (verse 20) — " Seven times a day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous judgments " (verse 164).

Psalm 119 is formed of twenty-two sections in acrostic form, each beginning with a letter in the Hebrew alphabet, the whole constituting one long outflow of worshipful joy in the law of the Lord. The writer calls upon his soul, heart, eyes, lips, tongue, mouth, hands, feet, to take part in this anthem of praise. The statutes, terrifying to the man in the flesh, become his songs in the house of his pilgrimage (verse 54).

The man with the renewed heart rises at midnight to give thanks to the Lord because of His righteous judgments; before the dawning of the day he is hoping in God's word; in the night watches he meditates on the law of the Lord. His mind and soul and affections ever turn to the Lord, as the flower turns to the sun. In short the whole sets forth the law, the Old Testament, viewed from the standpoint of the New Covenant or Testament, that which consists of the forgiveness of sins, the new birth, " a new heart also will I give you " (Ez. 36: 26), and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Of course all this was not fully known in Old Testament times, not till the atoning death of our Lord showed how these blessings could

come to us, but the **spirit** of it all was even recognized by faith in Old Testament times. King David could write of forgiveness of sins (Psalm 32: 1), and of the Spirit's presence (Psalm 51: 11).

The correct, austere writer, James, takes up the same happy strain as Psalm 119. He calls the law " the perfect law of liberty " (Jas. 1: 25); no longer the law of bondage. Again the law is called " the royal law," compressed into one word, **Love** — " thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself " (Jas. 2: 10). The deep cloud of Mount Sinai has given place to the sunshine of a rejoicing heart, responding to and fully answering to God.

Command a true wife to love her husband! Is there any bondage there? Is it not what already fills her heart to overflowing — the love of one, who has committed her life, herself, to the object of her affections — her husband.

So the believer is not " under law;" that is, as **perfectly** keeping it in order to stand before God in unforfeited life; but as walking in the Spirit and fulfilling the righteous requirements of the law by a new Power, even that of the indwelling Holy Spirit of God, given to those who receive the gospel of their salvation. (Eph. 1: 13). " Ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him, who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God " (Rom. 7: 4).

Here is the path of Christian liberty, joy and peace.

# THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

J. HOUSTON.

**T**HIS short and unique Epistle holds a special place in the New Testament. It is short; in fact, the shortest of all the Epistles. It is unique; for it is the only Epistle that is addressed to a lady. Its importance, however, places it in the front rank of last-day Epistles, since it contains principles of guidance, definitely applicable to the close of this dispensation.

Its great subject is "the truth." Evidently the truth was known, for there is no attempt to teach it. This, in general, is characteristic of John's pastoral Epistles. "I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth" (1 John 2: 21). We might say it is the common portion of God's people to possess the truth, through the "Spirit of truth" that indwells them. The world cannot receive the "Spirit of truth," for it does not see Him, neither does it know Him. But of God's people it is said, "Ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14: 17). This, of necessity, places God's people outside the world, for the world lives in the wicked one, who is a liar and the father of lies. He abode not in the truth. And so it is with apostates; they abide not in the truth.

The persons, to whom the Epistle is addressed, are "the elect lady and her children." We cannot tell who, or where, they were. Of this, nothing is said. She is called "the elect lady," referring presumably to her election of God. Christians are called "the elect of God" (Col. 3:

12). This distinguishes them from all other peoples on earth. There is nothing in the epithet "elect," but what is common to all God's people. Hence this "lady," as she is called, was a child of God, by God's election. As to her children, we cannot say, whether they were her natural children; but we can affirm, they were God's children, for they walked in the truth. Of them, the apostle says, "I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father" (v. 4).

There is nothing to show that they formed an assembly. This could hardly be expected in an Epistle addressed to a lady. They were God's children, walking in truth. In John's pastoral writings, we find God's children viewed, as His family, and not exactly as an assembly in this, or that, place. Paul speaks of assemblies in private houses (Rom. 16: 5), and is, in general, occupied with assemblies. John views God's people as His family. Both aspects of the truth, we need hardly say, are equally important.

There are three things that form the foundation of the Epistle: **love, truth, obedience.** On these, all our conduct, as God's people, must ever hang, and that unchangingly. They are inseparable, and must be viewed as one. Love, without truth, would degenerate and run riot. Is there any telling where such a love (did it exist) would go? Truth, without obedience, would be meaningless. Why speak of truth, if it is not to be

obeyed? Obedience, without truth and love, would be some vague form of servility. Truth gives obedience its path, and love gives it its motive and power. Another writer has made the following remark on these three things: "Obedience without love becomes servile; love without obedience becomes unreal; neither of them can flourish outside the realm of truth."

What is most emphatically laid down, and insisted upon; in the Epistle, is the truth. We love "in the truth;" we "have known the truth;" we do all "for the truth's sake;" we walk "in truth." This comprehensively embraces our conduct, as God's people. And since the truth is permanently and unchangeably the same, there can be no progress, advancement, or development, of it, as if it were incomplete, and needed something to be added to it. Nothing can be added to it; nothing can be taken from it. We abide in it; and it "dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever" (v. 2). Could we have any greater treasure?

There were deceivers that had entered the world, "who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (v. 7). It was this denial of the incarnation that marked them as deceivers and antichrists. They were the instruments of Satan; not as a "roaring lion," but as a "subtle serpent." It was not opposition by violence, but the venom of deception, they presented to God's people. From the beginning, Satan

denied the truth. He was, and is, the liar, and father of lies. He denied the incarnation. This struck at the very root of everything dear to God's people — their most holy and cherished faith. If there is no incarnation, there is no revelation of God, no redemption, no resurrection — nothing!

It was in view of such satanic deception that the elect lady had to pay careful attention, in the matter of receiving people into her house. Satan sent his messengers, clothed in sheep's clothing, into the homes of God's people, to do their wicked work there. It was well that due warning should be given about receiving them. The doctrine of Christ was the test. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (vv. 10, 11).

In these last days of this dispensation, how careful we should be to see that we are abiding in the truth! Here we are safe from all the deceptions of the enemy; here we have love, divine love, in all its fulness; here we have fellowship with the Father and the Son; here we have fellowship with one another; here we have the foretaste of heaven, while yet on earth. Well may we ask God, in our song of praise:—

O Holy Father, keep us here  
 In that blest name of love,  
 Walking before Thee without fear  
 Till all be joy above.

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"Rooted and built up in Him" (Col. 2: 7). **Rooted**, because He is the Source and all life is derived from Him. **Built up**, because all true development is in Him.

## A NOTE ON JOHN 1 : 14

W. H. WESTCOTT.

**I**N the Authorized Version this verse reads, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth."

In Darby's New Translation it is, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth."

Differences will be noted in the above, worthy of reverent consideration; reverent because they speak of One whom all true Christians revere.

The first change is from "was made" to "became." The same Greek verb is used five times in the same form in verses 1 to 14 of this chapter, and several times also in another form. All things **were made** (became or received being) through Him and without Him not one thing received being (became) which has received being. There was (became) a man sent from God. The world was made (became) by Him. "The Word became flesh."

It is clear then that Scripture, in saying that the Word **became** flesh, teaches us that this was a new beginning, a condition not existing before, but now become true of the One who was and is the Word. And all true Christians agree surely that the words "became flesh" refer to His becoming Man; to the Incarnation of the Word, in fact.

The second difference is in one sense a minor one. "We beheld," in that context, would probably con-

vey to any spiritual mind that it was spiritual vision and not mere physical sight. So that it would not mean a mere incident in the lives of the beholders, but a continuous impression upon the mind, and hence is rendered in the New Translation as, "we have contemplated" His glory.

But this note more especially relates to the words that follow. The Authorized Version has, "the glory as of **the** only begotten of the Father." The New Translation has, "a glory as of **an** only-begotten with a Father." The actual words in the Greek give **no** definite article to either "glory," "only begotten" or "Father." Hence the Authorized Version is too specific. The translation therein given would imply that John and the other Apostles with him had some data in their minds of the eternal relations between **the** only-begotten Son and **the** Father, before He became flesh, which enabled them to identify them with their beloved Lord when He did become flesh. The absence of the definite article, while it forbids this idea, does, to a certain extent, lead the English reader to lean towards the indefinite article as **the** New Translation gives it.

**But** — is the indefinite article altogether right? It is needful to make proper **English** of it, for in such a case the English language requires either the definite or the indefinite article. Does not the insertion of the indefinite article, however, somewhat obscure the passage? So much has been made of

the change from **the** to **a**, that some have thought only of the phrase as an **illustration**, and in consequence have involved themselves in a comparison between Christ and anybody in that relationship of an only son with a father. Many would repudiate any such thought. But while there is an indefinite article in English, the Greek language does not possess an indefinite article at all, so that if they base such teaching on the indefinite form of the article in English, they are building on a flimsy foundation.

The Greek words for "His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten son with a father," taking them in their order, and literally translated are, "the glory his, glory as only-begotten (or unique) with father."

Now if their meaning be limited to **illustration**, then we must find some only son with a father in human history who answers to such a description. He must possess **glory** and be full of grace and truth, else the illustration is only a **fictitious one**. Can we find one? The nearest that I can think of would be Isaac with Abraham. One would not ignore for a moment the typical bearing of their history; but no one who knows it would think of them being **full of grace and truth**. Both Abraham and Isaac denied their wives, and publicly dishonoured the holy name of Jehovah whose saints they were; and Isaac very nearly put the blessing on the wrong man because of his appetite. It will not do

to use the indefinite article in that verse, because there has never been in human history any such instance as is suggested, to give basis for the comparison, either in respect of glory, or of grace and truth.

Suppose we submit then the rendering of the words just as they stand. "We beheld His glory, glory as Only-begotten with Father, full of grace and truth." The meaning would then become apparent. There was glory in this unique Person, "Only-begotten with Father" previously existent, that had never been beheld until He became flesh; but when beheld by His devoted disciples, that glory was presented to them in the form of the unlimited grace and truth that for ever bound them to Him. Thus the truth, the eternal truth of His Person, is preserved. The Word who became flesh is not only the Word who was with God and was God (verse 1) but was "Only-begotten with Father," and who became Man, bringing His glory to light in terms of grace and truth.

He was rejected here, and now in resurrection is in heaven and at the right hand of God. But in pressing His present place, and future glory as Lord, and as Head over all things; and the necessity for us to be engaged with, attracted to, and formed by Him, let us not allow the enemy to assail this Beloved One of the Father's heart, depriving Him of the relationship and moral glory that were His before He became Man.

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The love of Christ hath neither brim nor bottom. His love is like Himself; it passeth all natural understanding.

# BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 5: 1 — 7: 16).

**A**NOTHER section of Genesis starts with chapter 5, the preface to it being found in verses 1 and 2. Herein the unity of the human race is again stressed, for though Adam called his wife's name **Isha** (2: 26), and then **Eve** (3: 20), God blessed them and called **their** name **Adam** from the outset. So Eve too was Adam jointly with her husband. This is not surprising, when we remember that the relationship of husband and wife was designed of God as a type of Christ and the church. So in 1 Corinthians 12: 12, we have "Christ," or, more accurately, "the Christ," used in a way that covers both Christ personally and His body, the church.

Until we reach Enoch the antediluvian patriarchs are mentioned without comment, save their age when the son was born in whom the line of faith and promise was continued, and the total years of their long lives. Enoch was the seventh from Adam, as we are reminded in the epistle of Jude, and he was an outstanding character, as outstanding for good as Lamech, the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain, had been for evil. If in the one we see the world in its rebellion and sinfulness beginning to take shape, in the other we see the believer's separate pathway through the world.

Enoch walked with God, and as God and the world walk on wholly different planes, the walk of Enoch was of necessity apart from the men of his age. He was no recluse for he begat sons and daughters, and

moreover he boldly prophesied, as Jude tells us, predicting the coming of the Lord in judgment upon the ungodly men of his own age, and indeed of all the ages. When he had completed 365 years, "he was not; for God took him." The significance of this is made quite plain in Hebrews 11: 5. He "was translated that he should not see death." This indicates plainly that he was removed because death threatened him.

Seeing that he had barely reached half the average age of the antediluvians, we may feel inclined to enquire how it came to pass that death threatened him, and the more so when we read that, "he was not found, because God had translated him." Why use the word "found" if he had not been sought? Moreover Lamech's murderous act, recorded in the previous chapter, must have taken place some centuries earlier. We judge this was so because Lamech came of the line of Cain which had a start of 130 years over the line of Seth. It apparently started the orgy of violence which filled the earth, according to the next chapter, and helped to provoke the flood. We judge therefore that Enoch's bold denunciation of the outrageous ungodliness which in his time began to fill the earth, would have moved the ungodly to slay him. But when they determined to strike and sought him, he was not there, for God had translated him.

The flood was God's governmental wrath falling upon the ungodly world, and the case of Noah

shows us that God knows how to carry saints safely through such a period. But the case of Enoch furnishes us with an example of how God may be pleased to remove a saint to heaven without dying, before His wrath falls. In this Enoch foreshadows the removal of the church before the vials of Divine wrath are poured upon the earth in the great tribulation. It is, thank God, definitely stated that "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5: 9). A simple summary of Enoch's life would be: He **walked with God**; he **witnessed for God**; he **went to God**, without seeing death.

When we reach Noah, the tenth from Adam, the history again expands. To begin with, his father Lamech at his birth named him with prophetic insight. He acknowledged that the earth was under the curse of God and anticipated that his son would bring rest or comfort. This he did by building the ark at the command of God, thus carrying a few, that is, eight souls, into a new world. He lived apparently to the great age of 500 years before begetting his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Shem is mentioned first, not because he was the oldest, but because his was the line in which faith was preserved. He was apparently the second son, for Ham is called the "younger son" (9: 24), and Japheth is called "the elder" (10: 21).

We get a further example of this kind of thing when we come to Abraham, at the end of chapter 11, and this leads us to remark that it is not safe to lay too much stress on chronologies deduced from the details

given in our chapter as to the ages of these patriarchs. It is easy to do this, and to make the years from the creation of Adam to the flood to be 1,656. But then the version of the Old Testament in Greek, known as the Septuagint, made about a couple of centuries before the time of our Lord, and, we are told, often quoted by Him, differs from the Hebrew. Adam's age when Seth was born is given as 230, and his subsequent years as 700. The same feature marks the next four patriarchs and also Enoch, so this at once adds 600 years to the calculation. There is also a difference of six years in the case of Lamech the father of Noah, which brings up the total years, according to the Septuagint, to 2,262.

The same thing appears when we come to the ages of the patriarchs after the flood in chapter 11. Here the Septuagint version would add 650 years to the chronology we should deduce. This is the explanation of the difference between Usher's chronology, following the Hebrew, and that of Hales, following the Greek. Some of the earliest "Christian Fathers," asserted that the years were curtailed by the Jews in the Hebrew, in order to oppose the argument of Christians using the Septuagint, that the Messiah appeared in the sixth millennium from Adam, as their tradition had led them to expect.

Be that as it may, the one thing that seems certain is that we cannot arrive at absolute certainty as to these matters, hence it would seem to be rather a waste of time to give much thought as to them. It is quite possible that when the Apostle Paul warned Timothy about "end-

less genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith," he had in mind such things as these. Had the exact number of years been of importance from a spiritual standpoint, it would have been made quite clear to us in the Scriptures.

As we open chapter 6 we are carried on to the later centuries of the antediluvian age, when the population had considerably increased and human wickedness began to rise to a climax. Many have understood the term, "sons of God," to refer to men of Seth's line — the line of faith — who fell away and married daughters of Cain's line, but we agree with those who accept the term as meaning beings of an angelic order, as it clearly does in such scriptures as Job 1: 6 and 2: 1 and 38: 7. How such connection can have been established, resulting in progeny superhuman in size and strength, we do not know, but we believe that Jude 6 and 7 confirm what we are saying. Sodom and Gomorrah went after "strange flesh," committing such enormous evil as is forbidden in Exodus 22: 19, and these sons of God did the same thing in principle, by going after the daughters of men. Thereby they apostatized, leaving their first estate, and lest they should repeat the offence they are held in everlasting chains under darkness until eternal perdition falls upon them. They will be finally judged at the great day of the great white throne.

In Genesis however, we are only told about the terrible effect of this in the world of men. The monstrous men produced were monsters of iniquity, filling the earth with viol-

ence and corruption. Yet man in his fallen condition is such that these monsters instead of being considered men of **infamy** were treated as men of **renown**. They were the originals doubtless from whom sprang those tales of "gods" and "goddesses" and "Titans," etc., which have come down to us in the writings of antiquity. They are popularly dismissed as fables, but it looks as if they have a larger basis of fact than many care to admit.

How incisive is verse 5! Man's wickedness became great, or abundant, for he was wholly evil in the deepest springs of his being. His **heart** was evil; the **thoughts** of his heart were evil, and the **imagination**, which lay behind and prompted his thoughts, was evil. And all this was **only** evil — not one trace of good — and that **continually**. Thus **before** the flood we have exactly the same verdict as to man as is presented to us in Romans 3: 10-18, by quotations extracted from scriptures, which describe the condition of men **after** the flood.

In verse 6 we are told how all this affected the Lord, and here for the first time we have human feelings attributed to God. Only thus could we have any understanding of such a matter, and there is nothing incongruous in it, inasmuch as man has been made in the image and likeness of God. Only there must be an intensity and elevation in the Divine thoughts and feelings altogether unknown by man. How great must have been **His** grief! All good at the outset, and now all so abominable, that nothing could meet the case but the total destruction of mankind, with but few exceptions, and also of the animate creation

that had been committed to man's hand.

There was just one man that found grace in the eyes of the Lord. In this connection nothing is said of his wife nor of his three sons and their wives. Noah was a man of faith. Shem may have been the same. Ham, we know was not, and of the others we have no information, but as Hebrews 11 says, "Noah . . . moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." **Faith** on his part accepted the Divine warning, which moved him to **fear**. Fear moved him to **act**.

How the men of that age viewed the state of things that had developed in their midst we are not told, but to God it had become absolutely intolerable, so that He had to say, "The end of all flesh is come before Me . . . behold, I will destroy them with the earth." His Spirit should not always strive with man, and so a limit of 120 years was set. God thus condemned the world, and by building the ark Noah "condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by **faith**."

In his second epistle Peter tells us that Noah was "a preacher of righteousness." It was the period when "the longsuffering of God waited," as he said in his first epistle. Noah showed men what was morally and practically right in the sight of God, but it was without any fruit, for his hearers were disobedient and their spirits are now in prison. Only of Noah could God say, "Thee have I seen righteous before Me in this generation" (Gen. 7: 1). Righteousness for men was not fully accomplished until the

death and resurrection of Christ, and of that righteousness Noah became an **heir**. The believer of today is not an heir of righteousness, for he possesses it. He is an heir of the great inheritance, which is vested in Christ.

Noah was the builder but God was the Designer of the ark. The door was in the side to allow easy access by men, but the window was above, to let in light from heaven and shut out any view of the watery waste presently to be. Its dimensions were large. The cubit is computed to have been from 18 to 22 inches in length, and as it was made simply to float and not shaped like a ship to travel, its cubic capacity must have been very great.

Instructions also were given as to all that the ark was to contain; seven of the clean creatures and two of the rest, male and female, with a sufficiency of food for all. Nothing was left to arrangement or imagination; all was ordered by God from first to last. This is worthy of note for here we have the first illustration of salvation that the Bible furnishes. At a later date Jonah declared, "Salvation is of the Lord," and how fully this is so we discover, when coming to the New Testament we find unfolded the "so great salvation" that the Gospel declares. Chapter 6 closes with the statement that Noah was obedient in all particulars, doing just as he was told.

The first verse of chapter 7 furnishes us with the first instance of how God, in dealing with men on the earth, links a man's house with himself — "thou and all thy house" occurs for the first time. Salvation from judgment poured

out on earth is before us here, but in Acts 16: 31 the same principle holds good in regard to eternal salvation. How thankful we should be for that word!

If we read verses 1-16, we might be tempted to think that here was a good deal of repetition, but we believe the passage is so worded to impress us with two things: first, the exact and careful way in which Noah obeyed God's instructions; second, the exact ordering and timing of all God's actions in judgment; as also, that the great catastrophe was of a nature wholly transcending any ordinary convulsion of nature and altogether an act of God.

The term, "windows of heaven," is very expressive. It denotes an outpouring **from God above**; it may be in blessing, as Malachi 3: 10 shows, but here it was in judgment. The devastating waters descended for forty days and forty nights, a period that we meet again in the Scripture several times, indicating a full period of testing. But also there was **from beneath** a breaking up of the established order. What exactly is signified, when we read that, "the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up," it is impossible to say. The tremendous event had never happened before, and it will never happen again, for we read, "neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth" (9: 11). So obviously we must be content to know that there were immense internal convulsions, that produced a mighty upsurge of earth's waters, to meet the waters descending from above.

Verse 13 makes it plain that Noah and his family entered the ark on

the very day that the storm broke. Noah had been a preacher of righteousness, just as Enoch had been a prophet of the Advent. He is the first preacher of whom we have any record, and his theme was that which stands in the very forefront of the Gospel that is preached today, as Romans 1: 17 declares. Only today, it is God's righteousness revealed in Christ and established in His death and resurrection, which is presented as the basis of **blessing** for men. Noah had to preach God's righteousness as outraged by man's violence and corruption, and demanding **judgment**. Still to the very last day the door of the ark stood open, and nothing would have prevented a repentant man from entering, had such an one been found.

The last day came however, and each of the four men and four women took the last decisive step which ensured their preservation from destruction. The decisive step for each was when they planted one foot on the ark, and removed the other from the earth that was under judgment. It was impossible to have one foot **in** and one foot **out**. It was either both feet in, or both feet out. Which thing is a useful parable for Gospel preachers today. Their action endorsed God's judgment against the world, and expressed their faith in the Divinely appointed way of salvation. Once inside the ark, "the Lord shut him in." When the Lord shuts, no man can open — not even Noah himself had he wished to do so. The shut door secured salvation for the eight souls, and ensured destruction for the world of the ungodly.

In our day the Gospel is too often

preached as a way of escape from merited judgment, without any emphasis on the other side which is presented here. By building and entering the ark Noah "condemned the world" (Heb. 11: 7), and the reception in faith of Christ as Savi-

our and Lord today involves just the same thing. Let us not shirk the issue, as though it could be Christ **and** the world. It must be one **or** the other; and may God help all who preach the Gospel to declare this with boldness.

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### GLORY IN INFIRMITIES

**B**UT we have this treasure in earthenware vessels, that the surpassingness of the power may be God's, and not of us; in everything being afflicted, yet not straightened, sorely yet not utterly perplexed, persecuted yet not forsaken, cast down yet not destroyed, always bearing about in the body the dying [or, putting to death] of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our body. For we that live are ever being delivered up unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4: 7-11).

Thus does the Apostle meet the natural thought of man which the carnal mind among the Corinthians had taken up against himself, to their loss and his grief. In an apostle they had looked for a grand style of speech, for lofty speculation and subtle argument, as well as a dignified and attractive presence, backed up by such a display of power as would overawe all the world. They could not understand, therefore, that one who was not a whit behind the chiefest apostles should be with them in weakness and fear and much trembling; and that on principle he should forego every advantage of intellectual ability and acquired learning, of all that which is a matter of boast to the flesh; nay more, that he should glory in infirmities, and treat as his foolishness all reference to his devoted service and mighty deeds, signs, and wonders, with the vast and deep effects of his preaching. He was indeed the most remarkable of sufferers no less than of labourers; but he insists that, when he was weak, then was he strong. What he gloried in was the Lord, and His strength made perfect in weakness. Doubtless, as the Apostle surpassed all others in depth of heart and all-endurance for Christ and the church and the gospel, so in this also, the most abiding consciousness of weakness and insufficiency keeping him in dependence on the Lord.

W.K.

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I know no sweeter way to heaven than through free grace and hard trials together; and one of these cannot well want another. If contentment were here, heaven were not heaven. It is a blessed fever that fetcheth Christ to the bedside.

## PROGRESS OF EVIL ON THE EARTH. J. N. DARBY.

(Extracts from a Lecture delivered in Geneva in 1840, to which we call attention as having an unmistakable voice to us, whose lot is cast over a century later.—ED.)

**I**T is right that we should know the testimony which God gives of human wickedness. Let me hope, dear friends, that the consequence of knowing it will be to produce unfeigned seriousness of spirit. The sight of the progress of evil, and of the judgment which it draws down, ought, first of all, to have the effect of making us avoid it; and secondly, of impressing us with the power of God, who alone can remove it . . .

What we are about to consider will tend to show that, instead of permitting ourselves to hope for a continued progress of good, we must expect a progress of evil; and that the hope of the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord before the exercise of His judgment, and the consummation of this judgment on the earth, is delusive.

We are to expect evil, until it becomes so flagrant that it will be necessary for the Lord to judge it . . . What I have to say can be reduced under two heads:— First, the apostasy which takes place in Christendom itself. Secondly, the formation, the fall, and the ruin of the Antichrist, in the sense of a visible power.

I begin then with Matthew 13: 36, the parable of the tares. It brings out this circumstance, that, whilst men slept, the enemy sowed tares in the field of the householder; and that, upon the demand of the servants whether the tares ought to be plucked out, the answer was, No

— that the wheat and the tares were to grow together until the harvest. It is, then, the sentence of the Lord, that the evil which Satan has done in the field where the good seed of the word has been sown, shall remain and ripen there until the end. It is an express declaration, that the efforts of Christians shall not have the result of taking away the evil, which is to remain until the day of judgment: “ Let both grow together until the harvest.” The harvest is at the end of the world — the end of this age: that is, of the dispensation closed by the coming of Christ. We must bear in mind that now, in God’s dealings with us, and by us, we have to do with grace, and not with judgment. We have not to judge the world. Even could we say with certainty of such an one — he is a child of the devil, he is precisely on that account out of our jurisdiction; it is a tare. We have to do with grace; we cannot lay hand upon the evil which Satan has produced; but we can act as instruments of grace, for God permits us to sow good seed.

The tares are not simply wicked men — pagans; these last have not been sown among the good grain. The tares are some particular evil sown by the enemy after Jesus Christ had sown the good seed. What, then, we may call heresy, corruption of the truth, in whatever way, or to whatever extent, will remain until the harvest. The evil which Satan has produced by a cor-

rupted religion will exist until the end. All our efforts ought to be directed — not to pluck out the tares, but to gather in the children of God — to assemble together the co-heirs of Jesus Christ . . .

We may observe, that this Antichrist will unite in his person the characters of wickedness which have appeared from the beginning. First, man has always wanted to have his own will; secondly, he has exalted himself against God; thirdly, he has put himself under the guidance of Satan. These are just the three things which will be reproduced in the Antichrist — all the energy of man exalting itself against God, the king doing according to his will, his coming after the power of Satan. It is the ripened fruit of the human heart, which is itself an antichrist.

It is known to all of us that there have been three successive beasts: the empire of Babylon; then the empire of the Persians; then the empire of the Greeks, or of Alexander in particular; and that the fourth is the Roman empire — a beast with marks altogether peculiar to itself.

At the beginning, or rather before the beginning of these four monarchies, the throne of God was on the earth at Jerusalem. In His temple, above the ark where the law was deposited, Jehovah manifested His presence in a sensible manner. But at the commencement of this present period, which is that of the Gentiles, the throne of Jehovah was taken away from Jerusalem (as is detailed in the chapters from 1 to 11 of the prophet Ezekiel). The glory of Jehovah, which the prophet had seen in chapter 1, near the river Chebar, he sees, in chapter 11 leave

Jerusalem; it departs from the house (10: 18, 19), and from the city (11: 23). It is a remarkable fact, that the glory of Jehovah has quitted its terrestrial throne. But more; at the same time this terrestrial power was transferred from Jerusalem to the Gentiles, and government entrusted to men. So we read in Daniel 2: 36-38: "This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory."

You thus see that, by the destruction of the last king of the Jews, earthly dominion passed to the Gentiles in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. He began by establishing a false religion by force. He made a statue that all the world was to worship, and he became lifted up in heart; hence he was made to become as a beast for seven years. That is, instead of conducting himself humbly as a man before God — as before Him who had given him his power — on the one hand, he exalted himself, and on the other, ravaged the world to satisfy his will . . .

It was at the moment when the fourth monarchy, under its imperial form, had become the universal power (Luke 2: 1) — it was just at that time, we say, that the Son of God, by right King of the Jews and of the Gentiles, was presented to them. And what reception did He meet? They crucified Him. The chief priests, who, as viewed by God, were the representatives of religion upon earth, and Pontius Pilate, the representative of earthly power, joined in league together to reject and put to death the Son of

God. Thus the fourth monarchy became guilty of rejecting the rights of the Messiah. The Jews are set aside; and then comes in the calling of the Church for the heavenly places. But as to that which concerns the Church on earth, we have seen it marred by the seed of the wicked one, and the apostasy which resulted from it; we have seen afterwards that this corruption will give place to a more open and daring revolt of the beast itself (that is, of this same fourth monarchy under a new and last form yet to be developed). It is this that will be the occasion of its judgment (Daniel 7: 9-11, 13, 14).

The kingdom is given to the Son of Man when the fourth beast is destroyed. The judgment and destruction of the fourth monarchy has not yet taken place, as we know from Daniel 2: 34, 35. Before the stone cut out without hands spreads out and fills the whole earth, it completely destroys the statue: gold, silver, brass, iron, clay, are carried away as chaff before the wind. None of this is yet accomplished. In the action of the stone, no mention is made of a change of character of the statue; it is a blow — a sudden one — a blow which breaks in pieces, destroys, leaves not a trace of the existence of the statue; as it is said, "No place was found for them." The Roman empire — the feet, and with the feet all the rest — disappears. By this one blow the whole is pulverized, destroyed, annihilated; and **after** this judgment, the stone which fell upon the statue becomes a mountain which fills the whole earth.

Did Christianity break to pieces the fourth monarchy, when it began

to be promulgated? In no wise. The Roman empire has continued; it has even become Christian; nay, more, the feet of the statue were not then in existence. The act of destruction, which is marked in the fall of the little stone upon them, does not represent the grace of the gospel; nor has it any reference to the work which the gospel accomplishes. Besides, it is **after** the **total** destruction of the statue that the stone **begins** to grow; which signifies that the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, which is to fill the whole earth, will not begin to spread until after the fourth beast has been judged and destroyed . . .

I am afraid that many a cherished feeling, dear to the children of God, has been shocked; I mean, their hope that the gospel will spread itself over the whole earth during the actual dispensation. It was just the Church's task to proclaim the glory of Christ everywhere; but as for the fact in result, if we express ourselves according to the word of God, as we see it in the later epistles and other scriptures, we shall see all that is powerful in this world in operation, but without regard to God. All the intelligence of man, his faculties, his talents, his knowledge will be displayed; all that can seduce the heart, and master the mind, all the resources in the character and nature of man, apart from conscience, will astonish the world, and draw it into following the beast, and place them under the influence of Antichrist; because the glory of man in self-exaltation, and not service to Christ in humiliation, is man's natural bent. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased."

But, you will say, to insist upon

such a result is to discourage all our endeavours to propagate the gospel on the earth. We answer, If false hopes are entertained, you are already deceived. It is indeed true, that the view which has been taken of the progress of evil is not very encouraging to the efforts of those whose hopes have been founded on their own ideas. But ask yourselves this question, Did the fact that God told Noah that He was going to destroy the world, and did his full conviction that the judgment of God was about to come, prevent his preaching to his fellow mortals? On the contrary, it was precisely this which animated him, in order that he might gain those who had ears to hear. The conviction that false Christianity will become more and more refined, more corrupt in the world, ought to give but the more energy and activity to the love of him who believes; and the nearness of the judgment of God, instead of paralysing our efforts, ought to drive us with more power, more energy, more faithfulness, to present the gospel — the **only means** of causing men to escape the righteous judgments which threaten them.

When I say that the tares, instead of diminishing, will continue to grow, do we thereby hint that the good seed will not increase? By no means. If the evil is to ripen for judgment, God gives, at the same time, power to the testimony that would separate the good from it. This I believe to be God's usual method of procedure. If we were to see three thousand souls converted in Geneva in a day, it would be said the Millennium is come, the gospel is going to spread over the whole world. How is it? There are per-

haps not three hundred converted in a year. The conversion of many thousands at Jerusalem, what did it prove? That God was going to judge that city, and that He saved from that perverse generation those who should be saved. Whenever we see evil increasing, and God at the same time acting in drawing away from it those who believe, it may be taken as a sign that the judgment of God is nigh. It cannot be denied, that God is acting powerfully by His Spirit in these days; we ought to thank Him with all our hearts. Let it be a sign to us, that God will remove His own children from a world which will shortly be judged.

There are two signs of the proximity of judgment: the one is, that piety increases and that all the resources of man develop themselves in a wonderful manner; the other is, that Christians are withdrawing from this state of things. In either case, there is nothing to hinder us working for our divine Master. On one side is to be seen the work of grace operating, deepening, extending, and God separating His children from the evil around; on the other hand are to be seen all the principles of the wicked one in manifest development. In the word of God I see an express declaration, that the present economy will have an end, and the evil go on to a greater and greater height, until that wicked one is destroyed by the coming of Christ . . .

May God give us grace to continue steadfast in our hope, and to rest upon His faithfulness, which will never fail us!

# A WORD OF EXHORTATION.

A. J. POLLOCK.

As an elder I am venturing to address a word of exhortation to my young brethren; addressing specially those of you, who find your place in assemblies of the Lord's people, gathered unto His Name, where the direction of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is sought in a practical way. In these assemblies the truth of the one body of Christ is happily stressed — the ascended Christ in glory the Head of the body; the Lord's people, the members of that one body, through whom the life of our Lord is to be perpetuated on earth; the Holy Spirit indwelling believers, uniting them to the Head in heaven, and to each other on earth in a most blessed and wonderful way.

When we gather to remember the Lord in His death, or in other meetings of an assembly character, such as prayer meetings, it is noticeable that active part in these meetings is so often left to the elder brethren. It is well indeed that elder brethren should be recognized, if they have maturity and experience in the things of the Lord. Such are presented in Scripture as "guides" (Heb. 13: 7), and exhorted to be "ensamples to the flock" (1 Peter 5: 3). Such are worthy to be esteemed.

On the other hand we have to beware of clericalism, the bane of the professing church of God. It was an evil day when a sacerdotal class was recognised, and Christians outside that caste were called "the laity," and not expected to take audible part in the worship. In this

way the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2: 5) was **practically** denied.

Scripture very plainly teaches that the Holy Spirit is free to lead in praise, worship, or prayer, any brother, who is present. I once heard it said that every brother has a **right** to take part in assembly meetings. I ventured to dissent from this, and pointed out that no brother has a **right** to take part, but it is his **privilege to do so as led of the Spirit of God**.

Alas! is it not true that it never enters the mind of many a young brother that this privilege is theirs, and consequently there is no exercise of heart as to placing themselves in the hands of the Spirit of God for His direction? It is sad indeed to be in an assembly meeting when the pauses are dreary and long, and those taking part are all elder brethren, whilst the young brethren sit in silence with no thought that the Spirit of God might lead them as the mouthpiece of the assembly in praise, worship and prayer. It is true that many assemblies are small and isolated. It is wonderful how year after year they carry on; a tribute to the sustaining power of the Spirit of God, spite of the feeble condition of things.

We are surely living in Laodicean days, characterized by profession neither hot nor cold, not absolutely dead, and certainly not fervent in spirit. If this article stirs up any young brother to prayerful exercise in this matter, it will be well worth while writing these few lines.

Reverting to assemblies small in

numbers with few brothers present, the writer remembers when he was young that it was pointed out that the smaller the meeting the more important each brother became. If it were an assembly of one hundred persons, the brother would be one per cent. of the whole; if the meeting consisted of ten individuals, he would be ten per cent. If he were meeting with a single individual he would be fifty per cent., and so important that, if he failed to attend, the meeting could not be held at all. To such small meetings how cheering are the words of our Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18: 20). How wonderful it is that we have such a cheering assurance from the lips of our Lord Himself. Where realized what a wonderful character it would give to the gatherings unto His Name.

When a young brother is led of the Spirit to take part in an assembly meeting, all who are spiritual will recognise that it is so, and rejoice, and none more so than the elder brethren. There is nothing more offensive than a forward young brother, who will insist upon taking part, when it is very apparent that he has the spirit of Diotrephes, of whom it was said, that he loved to have the pre-eminence among the saints (3 John, v. 9).

Now a word to the young sisters. They are just as much an integral part of the assembly as the young

brothers, and just as much priests unto God the Father. Yet Scripture for its own wise purpose bids them to be silent in assembly meetings. But how helpful and sweet it is when an assembly has among it earnest devoted sisters, who are exercised before God as to the meetings, so that their exercises may often put a brother upon his feet to give utterance to what is passing in their minds. The presence of the sisters as **exercised** members of the assembly is a great cheer and encouragement to the brothers, and to none more than the elder brethren.

Some may feel there is little or no young society in an assembly, or may feel the pull of counter attractions, such as large numbers, agreeable society, good singing, and the like, and so may wander away from the assembly. May this article stir our young brethren to give their interest and energy to the welfare and worship of the assembly. Then they themselves may develop in due time into elder brethren, "guides," "ensamples to the flock."

It is very evident, that the old brethren, if the Lord tarry, will pass off the scene one by one, and if the young ones do not develop, then weakness increases. The Lord lead us all, brother and sister, young and old, to give the Lord what is His due and to "continue **steadfastly** in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2: 42).

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We are called to the fellowship of God's Son (1 Cor. 1: 9) and the next verse shows this will entail speaking the same thing, having no divisions amongst us, and being perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment.

## FELLOWSHIP.

F. J. FENNELL.

"**G**OD is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 9).

In the first nine verses of this epistle the saints at Corinth are viewed just as Balaam viewed Israel "from the top of the rocks," that is, from God's side, apart from failure and sin. The Apostle Paul magnifies God's purposes of grace in calling them. They are told, and we with them, to **what** we are called, even "the fellowship of God's Son." Here it is the fellowship of. In 1 John 1: 3, we read: "truly our fellowship is **with** the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Fellowship **with** conveys a different thought to fellowship **of**. There are two thoughts expressed by this word, "fellowship." It means firstly, "a body of associates with a **common** interest;" secondly, "companionship or intercourse or communion." The fellowship in 1 Corinthians is the expression of a body of associates with a **common** and uniting bond of interest. God's beloved Son is the bond of the fellowship.

We can understand, say, the fellowship of a photographic society. You do not have fellowship **with** a society, you are called by membership into the fellowship **of** the society. Photography is the uniting bond of interest. That one thing calls people together and binds them together, whatever their social attainments or position. God in wondrous grace has called us into an association which finds its bond in His dear **Son**, and is dominated by **Him**. When we reflect on **what we were**

when called, our hearts are bowed in adoration and praise to God. "For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Sovereign grace has brought us into living association with one another and with **Him**, and the all-absorbing Object and Subject is not photography, or any of the things of the world, but "**His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**" God's Son is paramount, and is the dominating factor in this fellowship to which we have been called, and characterizes — or should — all that occupies the mind, heart and bodies of the called ones.

There are four names and titles used in verse 9. They set forth the Person in all His grace and glory, and in a practical way determine the "articles of association." In business circles, a limited company has to act according to its "articles of association," to act otherwise is unlawful and is a breach of the Companies' Acts. We are not under law, but under grace, shall we exercise less care in maintaining what is due to our "articles of association"? Nay!

Let us think for a moment of **Him**. We are called to the fellowship of His **Son**. The name Son is His Divine Name, as come into this world as Man. He was, of course, ever the Eternal Son with the Father, but as Son His relationship is made known in time, as indeed all His Names. "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." He was proclaimed as Son

at His birth, baptism, transfiguration and in resurrection. Marked out "Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1: 4). The term Son also speaks of Divine love, and a relationship which ever has and ever will subsist in love. We must remember that "no man knoweth the Son," we cannot know Him in His essential Deity, yet we are privileged to acknowledge and confess Him as Son. At the same time we could not know and enjoy the relationship we have as children of God apart from the revelation of the Father by the Son. As sons marked out for adoption, and to be conformed to the image of God's Son, we should know nothing of the wonderful position this involves as being "holy and without blame before Him in love," apart from the Spirit of His Son. Connected with the Son there is relationship and position. Divine love is the atmosphere proper to the fellowship, and self-sacrifice should be commonplace. It is the "more excellent way."

As called into the fellowship of God's Son then, we are made conscious of the dignity conferred upon us, and the consequent responsibility to maintain in our assembly behaviour what is due to the greatness and glory of His Name and Person. At the same time disallowing the company of those who would deny or take away the pre-eminence of the Son, who is "God over all, blessed for ever."

But in our verse "His Son" is "Jesus." Now contrastive thoughts are connected with this. So in Matthew 1: 21, we have, "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He

shall save His people from their sins." Immediately following it is said, "they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." If then the name Son is connected with His Divinity, that well known name JESUS is connected with His being a "partaker of flesh and blood" — a Man, yes, but still God, manifest in the flesh.

His name Jesus brings Him very near to us. It speaks of His lowliness, gentleness, meekness — the perfect antitype of the meat offering mingled and anointed with oil. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." He was perfect in His walk and ways before God. His daily delight was the Father's will. He was holy, harmless, spotless, and separate from sinners. His inner springs were ever God-ward. The traits of the first man were not seen in Him, selfishness, envy, covetousness, deceit and guile. Sin found no answer in Him, for He knew no sin. He was not of the world. He was the Second Man out of heaven. As such He was a Stranger here. Men of the world hated Him, and maligned Him because they did not understand Him.

As a Man He perfectly exhibited and livingly demonstrated the grace of God. The natural man has not the **capacity** to appreciate it. We on the contrary, as called into the fellowship and associated with Him, do not only appreciate His grace but in measure are to be **characterized** by the graces of a renewed nature suited to Him. The worldly wisdom, pride and emulation of the natural man will not mark those who are conscious of their divine calling, but

rather they will be marked by the putting on of the new man as beloved of God, showing to saints and sinners alike bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering. There will be an inward response to the atmosphere of the fellowship, and the peace of God will rule in their hearts.

If "the Son" and "Jesus" are His personal names, Christ and Lord are His official titles. He **was** the Son, He **became** Man, He **was made** both Lord and Christ.

As the Christ He is the Head of every man, and Head over all things. He is Head to us in a sphere which sin and death cannot touch, for He has died to sin, and in resurrection power He is the source of life and blessing. Adam was the source of sin and death, and He imparts to all His race his own features, consequently men are an offence to God and come under His condemnation. But by the obedience of One many are made righteous, and to them is communicated eternal life "through Jesus Christ our Lord." He it is who has undertaken our case, and has perfectly glorified God in doing it. God is shown to be just, and we are justified as believing in Jesus who did the mighty work — it was all His own. Our justification is complete, and it is unto justification of life, because Christ is our life-giving Head.

There is also reconciliation connected with the work that is finished. Where formerly there was distance, and fear, and imputing of sin, there is now "in Him" nearness, access with boldness — the boldness of faith — complacency of heart and of mind. Perfect love has cast out fear,

and there is a sense of being before God, blameless, and unproveable in His sight. He is not only the **Source** of life to us, but is the **Sustainer** of that life. He also is the **Object** of it, "our life is hid with Christ in God." How blessed then that God should have called us into a fellowship of **life** — where all things are become new, and all things are of God. The old man and his life and interests, and world, do not occupy the time and thoughts of those in this fellowship, for they "hold the Head" and are conscious of union with Him.

Then lastly He is "Our Lord." Not merely **the** Lord, for the fellowship is a place where His Lordship and His claims are allowed and are pre-eminent. It speaks of His authority, exercised at present in grace; at a future time soon to come, in righteousness inflexible. He is God's Administrator of grace in the Kingdom of God. His public reigning time has not yet come, but those initiated into the mysteries of the kingdom now are His willing subjects, and have come under the sway of His grace. They gladly recognise that they have been bought with a price, they are not their own. They yield their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. It is their intelligent service for they have confessed with their mouth Jesus as Lord, and have believed in their heart (the citadel of their affections) that God has raised Him from the dead. Their walk, ways and service are characterized by obedience to His Word. They name the Name of the Lord, they depart from iniquity, purge themselves from vessels unto dishonour, and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with those that

call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

If we admit His **present** claims we enjoy in a **practical** way — with others — the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We are called to a fellowship where there is "neither Greek nor Jew [no national

distinction] circumcision nor uncircumcision [no religious barrier] Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free [no social classes] but Christ is **all**, and **in all**" (Col. 3: 11).

May we enter more into the power of these things.

## SATAN'S MOVES AND GOD'S COUNTERMOVES

W. H. WESTCOTT.

**I**T is profitable and establishing for our souls to trace in the Scripture the way God has, in **CHRIST**, triumphed completely over Satan and all his work.

We see how persistently and determinedly this great enemy of God set himself against God's work. He overcame man by sin; then he moved Israel to break the law. He overcame the influence of the prophets and other messengers from God, and finally stirred up men against Christ, the Son of God, leading them to crucify Him and putting Him on their part to a shameful death. Then when the Holy Ghost came with His testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ, he was instrumental in directing men to reject Him, thus apparently closing up all hope of recovery.

Thus it would seem that his moves had resulted in victory for him all along the line. But in reality it was not so.

God is not defeated and it has pleased Him to reveal to us His countermove. **Resurrection** shows that God is above all the power of evil; goodness has been vindi-

cated and is now enthroned at God's right hand. God had a plan in all that He has permitted, and in this **His Son** is to have the central place.

Although He was never seen again by men generally, there are abundant evidences to the Lord's resurrection, as detailed in 1 Corinthians 15. 4-8; John 20 and 21; also, Acts 1: 1-11. He has further been raised from earth to heaven and is seated at the Father's right hand. Then the Father's promise, intimated through the Son, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit, has been fulfilled by His coming and taking up His abode in the waiting company on the day of Pentecost. He came to each and all were filled.

The promised kingdom on the earth is not dropped but postponed and in the meantime witness is being borne and sustained in Satan's world by a power he cannot crucify and in men who were to be here in Christ's life all over the earth. A unity is formed which is not national and not international but is composed of those drawn out of every class — priest or people, Jew or Gentile —

once sinners in Satan's kingdom but transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love; kept, fed, taught and formed till Christ's return. For this is the service of the Holy Spirit, qualifying each one to be a witness for Christ, capable of multiplication. Satan's hatred is no longer concentrated on one Person, but having to do with 120, 3,000, 5,000, and ever growing numbers, and eventually in all lands.

Then finally the Rapture when all those indwelt by the Holy Spirit will be translated in a moment; no power of evil availing to delay by

one fraction of time or to prevent any single one being raised or changed.

God's triumph will be seen to be universal and complete. The blessed Man, His **Christ**, once discredited will be manifested in **glory**, and with myriads, after His own order, in glory with Him. All evil will be put down eternally; Satan bound, man delivered, the earth blessed. The will of God will be done on earth as in heaven. Heaven and earth will be in accord under the rule of Christ and **finally** a new heavens and a new earth and **God all in all. Alleluia!**

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## THE FELLOWSHIP (1 Corinthians 1: 9).

The fellowship to which we are called is of "His Son;" therefore there must be nothing inconsistent with His Deity. It is of "Jesus;" therefore nothing inconsistent with His Humanity. It is of "Christ;" therefore nothing inconsistent with the exalted position God has given Him in resurrection. It is of "our Lord;" and therefore there must be nothing inconsistent with the authority and supremacy that belongs to Him.

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## PERILOUS TIMES

Perilous times are these when Christians have time to play with idols; have time to feast with the world; to go rounds of formalities; to pick faults in their brethren; to amuse themselves in religious dissipation.

Certainly, times of persecution are times of prosperity to the Church — Satan is not asleep — and is more to be dreaded when undermining by expediency than when openly destroying; deceiving, if it were possible the very elect. Times of persecution will only admit of drawing up every faculty of the soul to one point. How splendid the grace of patient waiting for Christ in persecuted Christians.

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A study of telephone conversations has been made in order to discover which is the most frequently used word. It proved to be the personal pronoun "I," and it was used 3,990 times in 500 conversations.

Is this not a warning to us Christians? If the world talks so much about self, should we not be on the alert lest self crowds out our testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ?

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 7: 17 — 10: 32).

**T**HE flood waters, which brought destruction upon the world of the ungodly, had the effect of lifting the ark "up above the earth." This may serve to remind us that the salvation of God has an elevating effect at all times. Today, very specially, we are called to set our mind "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3: 2). When "the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth," no flesh was visible, and nothing but death was to be seen. God's word, as to "the end of all flesh" coming before Him, was fulfilled, for now all were either covered in the waters of judgment, or in the ark, as it rode between the waters surging from beneath and descending from above. Noah and his family were out of sight in the ark; a figure of the new place which is ours "in Christ Jesus," involving the non-recognition of our old status in the flesh.

How thankful we should be that judgment fell, not upon us but upon our gracious Saviour, just as the death-waters fell, not upon Noah but upon the ark. The whole episode is likened to baptism in 1 Peter 3: 21, or rather, baptism is likened to it. The first mention of Christian baptism being administered is in Acts 2, where it is connected with the word, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." The passing through death in a figure, and thus cutting all links with old associations, is, we believe, the main thought in baptism. All Noah's links with the old world were cut by the baptism of the flood. Peter wrote to con-

verted Jews, who had been severed by baptism from the mass of their nation, and thus saved from the governmental judgments about to fall on it. For us Gentiles baptism has the same significance, severing us — if we understand it and are practically true to it — from the world which is rushing on to judgment. Are we true to what baptism means?

As to the flood itself, the account given (7: 11 — 8: 14) is quite explicit, both as to its duration and its dimensions. The tremendous rain lasted for 40 days and 40 nights. The waters prevailed from the 17th day of the 2nd month to the 17th day of the 7th month, when the ark grounded on the mountains of Ararat. On the 1st day of the 10th month the tops of the mountains were seen. On the 1st day of the 1st month of a new year the waters had vanished from the face of the earth. On the 27th day of the 2nd month the earth was sufficiently dry for the occupants of the ark to go forth from it — one year and 10 days having elapsed from the onset.

Its dimensions were such that "all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven were covered." This seems to indicate that it was universal, and it is certain that nothing of a local nature could possibly have lasted for so long. Moreover the breaking up of "the fountains of the great deep" very possibly involved great changes on the surface of the earth: in other words, the configuration of continents, mountains, seas, etc., may have been very dif-

ferent in the antediluvian age from their present form.

God remembered Noah and all that were alive with him in the ark, and He stopped the waters and sent the wind, which commenced the process of drying up the waters. The window of the ark being in the roof and not in the side of it, Noah must have had an imperfect knowledge of what was transpiring without, hence his action recorded in verses 6—12 of chapter 8. A raven and a dove are birds of a different nature as to habits and food. The one feeding on carrion and other unclean things, the other a clean feeder. When first released there was plenty to attract the raven, but as yet nothing for the dove.

In the New Testament the dove becomes the emblem of the Spirit of God, and the expression used on the first occasion is worthy of note — “no rest for the sole of her foot.” As yet the whole scene was a waste of death and corruption. On the second occasion the dove returned with, “an olive leaf pluckt off.” Here was the first evidence of life appearing above the waters of death, for it was not a leaf that had been drifting among the debris but **plucked off** a living tree. Death entered by sin, and “so death passed upon all men” (Rom. 5: 12), as much after the flood as before it. The first evidence of real life rising up beyond the scene of death was when Christ rose from the dead. Though the Spirit came at Pentecost as wind and fire, He came as a Witness to Christ risen and glorified.

When the dove was sent forth for the third time she returned no more, but it is not added that **she did find**

**rest** for the sole of her foot. That she found somewhere to perch is obvious, but the statement is omitted, we believe, because there is a typical or allegorical significance, which comes to light when we reach Matthew 3: 16. When the Lord Jesus came forth there was at last found One, on whom the Spirit of God could permanently rest, and not before.

So what is related here is intended to cast our minds on to the Gospels, which begin with the Lord Jesus entering a scene of death as the only One on whom the Spirit of God could rest, and they end with His coming forth in risen life — a life on the other side of death and beyond its reach — the necessary preparation to the coming of the Spirit. When we read of the Apostles that, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost . . . and with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4: 31—33), we see what is indicated — though faintly perhaps — by the olive leaf in the mouth of the dove.

Let us remember also that fallen human nature feeds on what is unclean, as does the raven. Only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and therefore like the dove feeds on what is clean. If we recognize this we shall be very careful as to that on which we feed our minds. It has been well said that for spiritual growth we must “starve the raven and feed the dove.”

Noah did not go forth from the ark until God told him to do so. He went out as he came in, under direct instruction from God. And now we discover why the clean animals were taken into the ark in sevens and the

unclean only in twos. True, it is an unclean world still, alas! and hence unclean animals easily thrive, and one pair would suffice for such, as against three pairs of the clean. But why the odd one in the seven? Because they were to be offered in sacrifice as a burnt offering at the very start of the renewed earth. The Lord knew that the flood had effected no change in human nature. Even in Noah and his family it was the same after the flood as before it. Verse 21 emphasizes this; and hence from the outset the new world could only continue on the basis of sacrifice.

In Noah's sacrifice we have the third type of the death of Christ. The first type, in chapter 3, set it forth as providing a covering for the guilty sinner. The second, Abel's offering in chapter 4, as the basis of approach to God. Now we have it as presenting a "sweet savour," or, "a savour of rest," to God — that in which He finds His rest and delight, in the excellence of which the offerer finds the ground of his acceptance. The term, **burnt offering**, occurs here for the first time, the particular significance of which we discover when we come to the book of Leviticus.

It is not difficult to discern an orderly progression in these three types. When awakened to our sinful state, the first thing we were conscious of needing was a **covering** — the root meaning of **atonement** — before the eye of a holy God. That was good, but we could not endure to be permanently at a distance. We must have a basis of **approach** to God. And even more than this; we must be in full **acceptance** to be thoroughly at rest there. If God

finds a savour of rest in the death of Christ, we find there our rest too.

The promise, which closes chapter 8, was based upon the sacrifice, as also was the blessing which opens chapter 9. God knew what man would again prove himself to be, but He guaranteed that there should be no further judgment of the sort just executed. The flood had been of such magnitude that for just over a year seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and even day and night, had been obliterated. This was never to occur again. Indeed verses 8-17 of chapter 9 show that God established a definite covenant to this effect, the token of which is the rainbow.

This covenant made with Noah and all creation was unconditional. It was a covenant of promise, not depending on any faithfulness of the creature. It was something new. The words, "I do set My bow in the cloud," clearly infer that the phenomenon of a rainbow had never before been seen by mankind. This would appear strongly to support the thought we mentioned when considering verses 5 and 6 of chapter 2, that until the time of the flood no rain had fallen on the earth but it had been watered by mist.

Noah and his sons were blessed and made specially fruitful, so that mankind should multiply rapidly on the renewed earth, and their dominion over the beasts of the earth was emphasized. Moreover man was now given animal food for his sustenance as well as vegetable. And yet further, in the new regime established the sanctity of human life was clearly stated in connection with a primitive form of government. Murder had

filled the earth before the flood, and from the time of Cain any human vengeance had been forbidden. But now God would require the blood of man's life at the hand of the slayer, and He would authorize mankind — Noah in particular, no doubt — to be the executor of His judgment. The penalty of death for murder was thus instituted by God Himself, and that from the very start of the post-diluvian age, and not merely as enacted in the law of Moses centuries later. It is of universal validity. Efforts recently made to overturn the Divine enactment are significant, especially if taken in connection with efforts to overturn other basic enactments as to marriage, parental responsibility, etc. The end of the age is marching upon us. It will arrive not with a flood of waters, but in the revelation of the King of kings and Lord of lords, when "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Verses 18 and 19 again emphasize the fact that the only males now left alive were Noah and his three sons. From the three sons all mankind on the earth have sprung. Nations have become a good deal intermingled but the three strains — Semitic, Japhetic and Hamitic — can still be discerned.

We may say then, that after the flood mankind was given under Noah a fresh start. But, as under Adam so again, failure and sin rapidly supervened. We have had abundant testimony to the fact that Noah was a godly man who found grace in the sight of the Lord, and he lived for no less than 350 years after the flood, as we are told at the end of our chapter, yet the one and only thing on record concerning him in all those

years is that he planted a vineyard, made wine, was trapped into self-indulgence, and became unconscious in drunkenness. The man most responsible now to control others lost control of himself. The age of patriarchal government broke down at the outset, even in the hands of a godly man.

This sad episode became the occasion of revealing the character of Ham, and apparently also of Canaan the son of Ham. Shem and Japheth acted with due respect to Noah, both as their father and as the ruler in the new conditions, whereas it was absent with Ham. Disrespect of authority, whether parental or governmental, since both were originally instituted of God, is a very grave sin. It leads ultimately to the setting aside of the authority of God, who instituted it. It is only as we give these considerations due weight in our minds, that we see how justified was the solemn curse pronounced by Noah, when he knew what had happened.

In verse 22 Ham is mentioned, and Canaan only appears as his son. When we come, in verses 25-27, to the curse that came from Noah's lips, we find it fell upon Canaan without any mention of Ham. This, we think, indicates two things. First, that Noah's sad lapse occurred some time after the flood; sufficient years having elapsed for Canaan to have been born and come into activity. Second, that he was associated with his father in the matter, and on him rather than his father the weight of the curse fell.

We must also bear in mind that in uttering it Noah spoke as a prophet, and the subsequent history of

Canaan and his descendents fully justified his solemn words. The next chapter gives us the sons of Canaan, and from them came the nations that inhabited lands to the east of the Mediterranean and just north of Egypt, so that it became known as the land of Canaan. Centuries later these nations had become so abominable in their gross sinfulness that God issued an edict of extermination against them, and sent Israel in to inhabit their land. Only Israel's failure saved them from being completely wiped out.

But Noah's prophetic utterance contained a blessing as well as a curse. The blessing was to be specially the portion of Shem, and in a secondary way to come upon Japheth. The blessing, as ever, is connected with the name of the Lord, who was to be known as the God of Shem. Japheth was to be enlarged and "dwell in the tents of Shem." This, we gather, would signify that by reason of close identification with Shem, Japheth would also come into the knowledge of God. If the prophecy of Enoch was concerned with the coming of the Lord in His glory to judgment, that of Noah summarized in most concise fashion the future of the human family in its three branches until the Lord comes.

We can now see how it has been fulfilled. Out of Shem sprang Israel and Moses, and then in due time the Christ, "who is over all, God blessed for ever." Out of Japheth have come the nations who have been enlarged and assumed leadership in the earth, and amongst whom the

light of the Gospel has mostly shone. Ham, whose name means "Black," or "Swarthy," produced the races that most have been degraded and reduced to servitude.

But on the other hand, as is so often the way, the Hamitic peoples, on whom the curse rested, at first seemed to be the ones to prosper and assume leadership. Chapter 10 supplies us with evidence of this, filled as it is with lists of names and peoples who sprang from the three sons of Noah, lists which are important in connection with the early history of mankind. There is just one point where a short parenthesis occurs by reason of the great prominence of a grandson of Ham.

The forceful Nimrod, as a mighty hunter, acquired ascendancy and founded a "kingdom," the beginning of which was Babel. This happened, we judge, before Noah's long life ended; and if any **kingdom** existed, it should have been his. The power that should have been vested in Noah was taken by Nimrod, and prostituted to the ends of serving himself and his own renown. With this there began the founding of cities to serve as centres of human influence. Babel, Erech, Accad and Calneh are amongst the first of which there is any record.

Nimrod's action, in short, represented the setting aside of the primitive patriarchal government instituted of God, by brute-like, human force in self-aggrandisement. The results of this abide in the earth to this day.

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The schemes of men, if they are to make an impression, involve a display of power and pomp. God works in quietness behind the scenes and accomplishes that which abides for ever.

# ON READING THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

A. J. POLLOCK.

**T**HOSE, who are in the habit of reading the Holy Scriptures consecutively again and again, are often greatly rewarded by finding some gem of purest radiance, which they had failed to discover in a previous reading. One such struck the writer very forcibly, and he would like to pass on the thought to others. If you will turn to Matthew 2, you will find a phrase repeated five times in that chapter: "**The young Child and His mother.**"

As one's eye rested on this repeated phrase, the thought immediately arose, that in a general way the phrase on our lips would invariably be, "a mother and her child." Surely a mother is always more important in our minds and takes precedence over her young child. But see how carefully Scripture puts it the other way. What a rebuke to the mariolatry, the worship of the Virgin Mary, as practised in Roman Catholic circles!

The three wise men, who came from the East to Jerusalem, were guided by a star in their search for the infant Jesus. They did not ask for the Virgin Mary, but enquired: "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him" (Matt. 2: 2). When they came into the house where He was, "they saw the young Child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped HIM" (Matt. 2: 11).

The mother, "highly favoured" and "blessed . . . among women" — as she was highly honoured indeed

to be overshadowed by the Holy Spirit of God, so as to be the mother of our Saviour according to the flesh — was not the object of their search. Why did these wise men **worship** the Babe? They recognised Him as being born King of the Jews. Was He not the One foretold before by the prophet Isaiah as being the Child born, the Son given, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace? Would ever a Child be given such names by heaven were He not "God manifest in the flesh"? (1 Tim. 3: 16).

The wise men presented gold and frankincense and myrrh. In the Tabernacle in the wilderness we find gold greatly used in the make-up of the articles used therein, symbolically setting forth the absolute deity of our Lord, that He was from all eternity, the uncreated Creator of all things, and their Sustainer. Frankincense was an ingredient in the holy anointing ointment with which the Tabernacle and its furniture were anointed. Does this not set forth the fragrance that ever ascended to God from Him, whose every word was music in the ear of heaven, whose every footstep was pleasing to God? Myrrh, too, was used as an ingredient in the holy anointing ointment, myrrh which needs to be **bruised** in order to release its fragrance. Was not our Lord "bruised for our iniquities"? (Isaiah 53: 5). Were they not bitter aloes and **bruised** myrrh that Nicodemus brought wherewith to anoint the dead body of our Lord? Surely these gifts have their meaning, how-

ever much or little the wise men understood of their significance.

These wise men worshipping our Lord, and offering Him gifts when He was a Babe in His mother's arms, and in His perfect Manhood dependent on her for every need, present a very beautiful sight. Yet how significant and arresting it is to note in the sacred narrative, that the Child not only is mentioned before the mother, but is also the Object of worship as being **infinitely** above her, as God is above us all.

When Herod sought to encompass the death of Jesus by destroying all the children from two years old and under, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, and bade him: "Arise, and take **the young Child and His mother**, and flee into Egypt" (Matt. 2: 13). Note, how the angel, too, is careful to put words

in that special order, emphasizing the wonder of our Lord's incarnation. By night Joseph took the young Child and His mother, and departed into Egypt.

In process of time Herod died and Archelaus reigned in his stead. Again the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph saying, "Arise, and take **the young Child and His mother**, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead that sought the young Child's life" (Matt. 2: 20). Again the words are carefully put in this order.

Does not inspiration shine brightly on the sacred page? Is it not beautiful to see the careful way in which Scripture guards the honour of Jesus? We get here the reverence of the messengers of heaven, as well as the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in the sacred record, which is so very striking.

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## "WHOLESAME WORDS"

(1 Timothy 6: 3).

Not only did that which was spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ partake of the character of grace and truth and wisdom, at which men marvelled, but, being a Divine Person, the very form of language in which His blessed communications were cast was divinely perfect. Language with Him was what it could not be with any other, viz., the vehicle by which He perfectly conveyed what He desired to communicate.

Prophets of the Old Testament and Apostles of the New, though themselves failing men, were also

divinely **guided**, and divinely **guarded** in their writings. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1: 21).

In like manner an Apostle could lay claim to speaking, "not in **the words** which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 2: 13). And further, he urged Timothy to hold fast "**the form of sound words**, which thou hast heard of me" (2 Tim. 1: 13). And again, he could write of those things which he taught as "**wholesome words**, even

the words of our Lord Jesus Christ." The utterances, recorded in the Word of God, being thus safeguarded, as to their divine accuracy in the very language employed, on our side the responsibility is two-fold.

First, that ministry should be in **terms of Scripture**; interpretation not being so much what is needed, as the spiritual application of terms that are divinely accurate in themselves. The word interpretation does not appear to stand anywhere in Scripture in connection with ministry, though frequently found in relation to visions, dreams, languages or proverbs. Christendom has suffered for centuries from the insistence by some of a title to interpret Scripture, with disastrous consequences to the individual and to the church of God. Meanings have been read into, and out of, large portions of the Word of God, which the terms of Scripture themselves, in the passages concerned, do not authorize or clearly express. Hence the servant's responsibility in ministry is to enforce and spiritually apply, according to the measure of his own discernment, and relieves the servant from any possible charge of arbitrary interpretation of the Word of God.

Secondly, the responsibility, as well as the safeguard of those to whom ministry is addressed, consists in the acceptance of that only which clearly applies, and jealously adheres to, the terms of Scripture. The facility with which Divine words may be **misrepresented**, by failure to retain them in the form in which they were delivered, is brought before us in a very re-

markable and striking manner in John 21: 21-23, on the occasion on which the Lord said to Peter, " If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

These words came to be interpreted " among the brethren " as meaning that that disciple " should not die." To the natural mind this appeared to be the only conclusion from the Lord's words and their absolute equivalent. But jealous of the exact words in which the communication was made, yet leaving the meaning of those words undetermined, the Holy Ghost's comment, which amounted to grave rebuke, was, " Yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" thus recording again, with something more than a correction, the precise words which were uttered by the Lord, and emphasizing once and for ever the importance attaching to the unaltered words in which truth is divinely recorded.

The sincere milk of the word is thus, and only thus, furnished for the babes. That is the nourishing element of clear and unmistakable truth in terms of Scripture; and strong meat for them that are of full age is dispensed and distributed, as with the disciples to the multitude, in the form in which they received it from the Lord, and for us in wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are life-giving, health-giving and health-sustaining. The **written word** is the rule which God has given, containing all that He has revealed. The word of God is complete (Col. 1: 25). It can, because

it is the truth, be the means of communicating the truth to a soul. The Holy Ghost can use it as a means; but at all events it is the **perfect**

**rule**, the authoritative communication of the will and mind of God for the assembly.

— EXTRACTED.

## “NEW THINGS DO I DECLARE”

F. B. HOLE.

**W**HEN the eternal state is reached everything will be made new in the fullest possible sense, according to Revelation 21: 5. But at the present time God's work is characterized by newness, whether we think of the work of Christ for us or the work of the Holy Spirit in us. And even in the Old Testament there are prophecies concerning the new things God proposed to do. This is particularly marked in the three major prophets — Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

If Isaiah 42: 8-16 be read, and then chapter 65: 17, 18, it seems plain that we may speak of him as the prophet of the new things. Between these two passages we get the prediction of the great and glorious basis on which the new things will securely rest.

All attentive readers of this great prophetic book have been impressed by the way that it naturally divides into two parts; the second starting with chapter 40, and consisting of 27 chapters. At the beginning of chapter 42 Christ is introduced as the true Servant of the Lord who will not fail nor be discouraged till He accomplishes God's will on earth, and He it is who will introduce and establish the new things of which verse 9 speaks. In the chapters that intervene before we reach 65: 17, Christ is introduced

in a variety of ways, but particularly as “the Arm” of the Lord, and as “the Servant” of the Lord.

The 27 chapters are divided into three groups of nine, each ending with a solemn assertion that there is no peace for the wicked. (See 48: 22; 57: 21; 66: 24). The centre section of the three is therefore chapters 49-57; and the centre chapter of that centre section is chapter 53, which really begins with chapter 52: 13. So the prophecy of the One who is Jehovah's Servant, who goes even into death for the transgressions of God's people and comes forth in resurrection, lies at the heart of everything. The twenty-seven chapters begin with, “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” Having read the first thirty-nine chapters with their many denunciations and woes, we might wonder where the comfort is to be found. It is fully indicated when chapter 53 is reached. If we believe the report and discover the mighty “Arm of the Lord” in the suffering “Servant,” the comfort will flow into our hearts in abundant measure.

He it is who will introduce the new things of which chapter 42 speaks. He will not fail nor be discouraged till He has set judgment in the earth and brought them in.

All the servants of God, who were merely human, have failed in greater or less degree and have been discouraged. To the outward observer His course would end in what looked like the greatest failure of all. Chapter 49 contemplates this, and shows us that though He apparently failed and spent His strength for nought and in vain, He was not discouraged, knowing that He would be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and His God would be His strength. Israel would ultimately be gathered as the fruit of His work, and meanwhile God had wider and larger purposes of blessing, bringing light to the Gentiles and salvation to the ends of the earth.

As far as Isaiah is concerned the new things predicted are connected with blessings on the earth. The new song that they provoke is from both land and sea, from the far distant isles and from the wilderness and the top of the mountains. For heavenly blessing we have to go on to the new Testament.

Again, in chapter 65, the promise of the new heavens and new earth that shall be created must be read in the light of the verses that follow, where millennial conditions are described. The heavens will be new for they will be in direct touch with earth, as described in Hosea 2: 21, instead of being severed and silent as now. In consequence the earth will be blessed. Jerusalem will be a rejoicing, instead of a heartache, as now. Her people will be a joy, instead of "contrary to all men" (1 Thess. 2: 15) as now. Sorrow will depart and prosperity be established. All creation will be blessed,

and man's life greatly prolonged, since, "as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands." It will be new heavens and new earth indeed as to its character.

This golden age will be brought to pass by the Lord Jesus Christ and by His work alone. Let us get that firmly fixed in our minds, so that we may be preserved from meddling with present schemes to bring such an age to pass, be they political or otherwise. It will only come to pass when He, who came first as the Servant to suffer, comes again as Jehovah's mighty Arm to bring salvation for the earth by solemn judgments.

Following the great prophecy of chapter 53, Isaiah does mention the covenant to be founded on the death and resurrection of God's Servant. We have the words, "the covenant of My peace," which shall not be "removed" (54: 10). He does not however give us any development of this matter. We have to turn to Jeremiah for this.

Of all the prophets Jeremiah had perhaps the hardest task. All his words seemed to fail. He had one or two who helped him but no one seemed to listen to him or be converted through his word. He must have been endowed by God with a very high measure of moral courage. To the Israel of his day he had to say, "Thus saith the Lord, Thy bruise is incurable, and thy wound is grievous" (30: 12). So there was no hope at all for them under the old covenant of law, and the mailed fist of Nebuchadnezzar was about to sweep them away.

Yet in the very next chapter he is commissioned to utter words of hope. There is to be "a new covenant," which will stand upon a basis entirely different, indeed entirely opposite, to the old. Verses 31-34 of chapter 31 must be read to get its scope. To the old there were two parties, God Himself and Israel. God demanded obedience, and if it were rendered in all particulars and all the time, the promised blessing would materialize. The preamble was, "Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed . . ." (Exod. 19: 5). There was that fatal "If."

In Jeremiah's beautiful prophecy there is no "if." Rather the characteristic words are, "I will." Israel and Judah come into the picture it is true, but as passive recipients and not as important actors. The new covenant will come to pass when God acts in the sovereignty of His mercy upon the righteous basis laid down in the sacrifice of Christ of which Isaiah has spoken. God will so put His law within them and so write it on their hearts that it will be as natural for them to keep it, as formerly it was natural for them to break it. They will come into the light of the knowledge of God with all their sins forgiven and the very remembrance of them dismissed. And all by an act of God's sovereign mercy, as is made so plain in the closing verses of Romans 11.

Though this new covenant is to be made in a day yet to come with Israel, God's earthly people, the blessing of it is all ours today, as the Epistle to the Hebrews shows us. All that we have has reached us on new covenant principles, for

the blood of the new covenant has been shed at the Cross. The blessing that has come to us however is of a higher and heavenly character. It includes all predicted as marking the new covenant but goes a long way beyond it. Let us see that we do not slip into the error that ensnared the Galatians — the idea that though we are under the new covenant for justification, we must go back to the principle of the old covenant for practical sanctification.

But what, we may ask, is really signified by this putting of God's law in the inward parts, this writing of it in the heart, of which Jeremiah speaks? To answer this question we must pass on to the prophecy of Ezekiel.

In chapter 36 Ezekiel greatly enlarges our thoughts as to this part of the work of God. He still speaks figuratively, for the time had not yet come to speak with the plainness we find in the New Testament. If verses 25-31 be read, we notice such terms as "sprinkle clean water," "a new heart," "a new spirit," and the following verses indicate what is going to be the result of this great work of God. The Israel of that day will be entirely cleansed and renovated. In the words of our Lord, recorded in John 3, they will be "born again."

Here then we have, not the **new things**, of which Isaiah speaks, nor the **new covenant** of which Jeremiah speaks, but the **new birth** and this completes the picture. The new birth is an integral part of the new covenant, and without it the new things never could be enjoyed, even though they be righteously established by and in Christ.

In the natural creation water has been given of God as the cleansing agent. It cleanses internally when we drink it. It cleanses externally when we wash in it. Used figuratively, it sets forth quite simply the idea of moral cleansing, as we get it in Ezekiel 36. To this scripture the Lord Jesus alluded when He spoke to Nicodemus, as recorded in John 3. In answer to the question, "How can these things be?" the Lord said, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" He should have known them, for there they were in Ezekiel 36, which mentions both the "water" and "My Spirit."

When we reach the New Testament the water stands clearly revealed as the symbol of the word of God: such a passage as John 15: 3 shows this. When Israel is thus sprinkled, the clean water will come into contact with each and all of them, and the new heart and new spirit be produced. Then in addition to this God will put His Spirit within them. This surely is the gift of the Spirit which other prophecies envisage at the opening of the millennial age.

As the result of all this there will be found a new born nation, that will simply loathe the things they formerly loved, and loathe themselves for having indulged in them. They will also love the things they formerly had no desire for. It will be a completely new Israel that will enter into the blessings of the kingdom.

Hence in John 3 we have the Lord Jesus saying to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?" The new birth of which He spoke is an absolute necessity for entrance into the kingdom of God, when established on earth. It is equally needful if there is to be an entrance upon heavenly things.

We may indeed thank God that we have come by the Spirit of God under the cleansing action of the word of God, and thus are born again. We may thank Him further that the Gospel has reached us, bringing us into blessing on the lines of the new covenant. We have thus a new nature and we are cleared of our guilt. In other words, we are both washed and justified.

But we must further thank God that we are brought into new things, and by faith we have the knowledge of them — new things of a heavenly order rather than an earthly. The Son of God having come and accomplished redemption we are all sons of God by faith in Him, and God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, giving us the consciousness of this new relationship and ability to answer to it.

As Christians, let us be careful to live in the power of these new relationships, free from the defilements in which once we found our pleasure.

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In prayer I have not only to ask for things, but to realize the presence of Him to whom I speak. The power of prayer is gone if I lose the sense of seeing Him by faith.

# "YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD" W. H. WESTCOTT.

(I Cor. 3: 16).

**T**AKING an Old Testament Scripture for our guide, we see from 2 Chronicles 3: 4 and 8, also Chapter 4: 1, that the Porch, Oracle and Altar were all of the same dimensions: 20 cubits from the threshold inwards, never to be wider and never to be narrower. It is therefore necessary to know something of what is typified in the Oracle and Altar — in other words, the glory of Christ as the revelation of God, and His sacrificial death.

Amongst men, the soldier's cry is "death or glory," but the Christians may say it is "Christ's death and glory." We are God's temple today, and should be consistent with Christ's death on the one hand and Christ's glory on the other.

It may be asked, what is the use of speaking thus? If all is broken up in the church externally, why trouble? The word to the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2 is, "Remember . . . from whence thou art fallen, and repent." Unless we know what God's thought is, we become satisfied with less; proud of our shame.

Of old the temple was where God's glory was seen, and where God's Name was set. All nations were to be welcomed, and from it was to go out the testimony of the true and living God, whose house it was, and whose mind was made known therein.

What is God's testimony now? Briefly, the bringing in of Christ and those associated with Him, to

the exclusion of man after the flesh. Two things are predicated of man after the flesh. He demands wisdom and he demands power. Wisdom is to know how to accomplish the end in view; power is ability to do it. The Greeks sought wisdom, and with the Romans was power, but the Jews were contemptuous of both, maintaining their outward connection religiously with God, and yet leading both Greeks and Romans to get rid of Christ.

Now, to us who are called, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God; the knowing how and the power of being able. So Christians are equipped in Him for everything. Perhaps some think that our circumstances today are unique in their difficulties. There has never been any other kind of circumstances, as all have proved until they turned to **Christ**. Every sinner saved, probably thought he was too bad to be saved, that his case was unique and required a special salvation. So, too, for us who are saved. Circumstances are sure to be against us, but the thing is not to give up, but to use the resources that are in **Christ**.

There are hindrances which obscure **Christ** and mar unity in the testimony of God. But God is one, and those who bear the testimony of God, who are His temple and in whom His light is to shine, should be one also. Human leaders, special doctrines and human means, all militate against the setting forth of what God is in Christ.

# THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

J. HOUSTON.

**T**HIS Epistle is addressed to Gaius. Its subject is "the truth." We can see how emphatic John is about the truth, by his frequent references to it. John loved Gaius "in the truth." The brethren testified of "the truth" that was in Gaius, for he walked "in the truth." Finally, John had no greater joy than to hear that his children walked "in the truth." Then we have a general exhortation to be fellow-helpers "to the truth." Notice is taken of Demetrius, who had a good report "of the truth itself."

We need hardly say, these repeated references to the truth, in an inspired communication, may well arrest our attention, having this assurance, the Spirit of God has a definite message to us about the truth. And when we take into account that antichrists had arisen; apostates had gone out from the assembly, only to show that they did not belong to it; deceivers were working insidiously amongst God's people, seeking to undermine the truth; that the very foundations of the assembly were assailed by those who denied "the doctrine of Christ," which is the basis of the truth — little wonder we have the clarion call to **abide "in the doctrine of Christ."**

Of Gaius, it is said, he received his brethren hospitably. This seems to have been the most important part he took in helping on the truth. There were those who had gone forth to serve the Lord, "for His Name's sake." These servants had taken "nothing of the Gentiles," that is, of unbelievers. Their faith was ex-

emplary. John takes occasion to bring these brethren before Gaius and others, saying, "We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." We cannot help noticing the wisdom of God, in leaving this practical part of the truth on record, instanced in Gaius, so that there might be a perpetual reminder to all God's people, as to what He thinks of this spirit of hospitality and kindness. It is God who has given us the record of His appreciation of that unostentatious, and perhaps behind-the-scenes, work Gaius gave to his brethren. He had gone even further. When they left his hospitable home, he helped them on "their journey after a godly sort."

We may observe here that it was not the business of Gaius to question those itinerant servants, as to their calling and work in the Lord's service. Nor, indeed, was it the business of any one in the assembly, nor even the assembly itself. Service to the Lord was taken up entirely in a voluntary way, and in a spirit of freedom, with reference to those who took it up. There is no such thing as an assembly, or individuals in an assembly, **appointing** a servant for the Lord's work. The Lord alone can call His servants, and He alone can direct them. It is the business of the servants, to show themselves approved to the Lord, and that of the assemblies to recognise His approval when given. The responsibility of the assemblies, and individuals in the assemblies, was to see that servants brought "the doctrine of Christ." Failing this, they were not

to be received, when they came; nor were they to be bidden God speed, when they went away. Thus the assemblies, and individuals in the assemblies, could maintain the truth, and set up an effectual defence against evil workers.

The whole matter was this: it was not a question of **who** preached, but of **what** was preached. It is the solemn business of God's children to judge most carefully all they hear of ministry. They should follow always the example of the Bereans, who tested all they heard by the sure Word of God. If men will sleep, and take all that comes along, without any examination, it will be no wonder if the enemy succeeds in sowing tares, which will surely yield a sorrowful harvest. It was when men **slept**, the tares were sown.

Diotrephes loved the pre-eminence among the brethren. He was by no means "the **servant** of all;" he assumed to be the **lord** of all. His resistance of the apostles, and his opposition to them, were, to say the least, most serious offences. It is said, he "receiveth us not," and he prated "against us." This was his attitude to John and his fellow-apostles. He would not receive the brethren, when they came to the assembly, and forbad them that would receive them, casting them out of the assembly. Here was a case of complete disorder; in point of fact, a beginning of clerical assumption. Albeit, it is disorder in the assembly, where this took place, and not failure to bring "the doctrine of Christ."

Nothing is said about not receiving Diotrephes, nor of refusing to bid him God speed. Ecclesiastical disorder is one thing; false doctrine,

as to the Person of Christ, quite another thing. Diotrephes was thoroughly guilty of the former; but nothing is said to prove he had any responsibility in respect of the latter. His conduct was bad; and John had it before him to "remember his **deeds**" (v. 10). His **actions** would come under the censure of the Word of God; but, we repeat, nothing is said of him having false **doctrine**, as to Christ.

Demetrius had a good report of all, "and of the truth itself." Here we have a contrast. How **much** is said of Diotrephes; how **little** of Demetrius! We might have thought it would have been the opposite; to say little of the former, and much of the latter. Evil calls for condemnation, and thorough exposure; good, when humbly practised, as Demetrius practised it, needed no lengthy commendation; in fact, it carried its own commendation. But how full are the words of appreciation, spoken of Demetrius, even though they are few! He had a "good report of all," even "of the **truth** itself."

The assembly is prominent in this Epistle. The love Gaius showed to the brethren was borne witness to, "before the assembly." John wrote "unto the assembly," where Diotrephes misbehaved himself. In both cases (one contrasted with the other), it was in reference **to the assembly**, whether good behaviour or bad. Singularly enough, this is the only Epistle of John, in which the assembly is noticed. It not only existed, but it was the witness of Christ, and good, or bad, conduct was tested in the light of that witness. If there were no assembly,

carelessness might prevail, for there would be nothing to judge their conduct. There would be the light of the Word of God but no power of discipline now that the Apostles are gone.

Seeing there is an assembly, we are bound to walk as those who recognize it. This means, we have to judge our whole conduct in the

light of it as "the pillar and ground of the truth;" the place where the truth is enshrined, and from which the light shines, as witness of Christ. What if an assembly ceases to be a witness to Christ? Then Christ can reject it, as we see in Revelation 2 and 3. But we have to do with what is His witness, and not with what ceases to be His witness.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters II: 1 — 13: 4).

THE closing verse of chapter 10 alluded to the distribution of the nations of the earth after the flood. The first nine verses of chapter 11 tell us how that division came about. For some time after the flood nations did not exist. All men were descendants of Noah: a rapidly increasing family, but all speaking alike.

As time went on population increased and the urge to push outward from the original centre became irresistible. The pioneers of this movement were doubtless the more daring and forceful individuals, who soon became conscious that their migration from the centre of things might entail a loss of prestige and power. This they determined to remedy by a bold stroke.

Human history had recommenced under Noah in the mountainous region of Ararat: they now found themselves on a flat and uninteresting plain with no commanding heights. So they would build them-

selves a city surrounding a tower of immense height, and thus make themselves a name. When considering the last verse of chapter 4, we noted that the name Seth gave his son was significant, for Enos means mortal and weak. He recognized man's frail mortal nature, and it is at once said that **then** men began to call on **the name of the Lord**. What is now before us is in direct contrast with that. Here were men full of self-sufficiency and self-importance bent upon making **a name for themselves**.

The expression, "Go to" is old fashioned. Today we should say, "Come on." They incited one another in their course of self-aggrandisement. They had left the regions where stone was plentiful so they invented brick-making, and the "slime," or "bitumen," which abounds in the Mesopotamian plain served them as mortar. The Nimrod episode had taken place somewhat earlier. That was **one man**

exalting himself at the expense of his fellows. The tower of Babel episode was **mankind concerting together** for their own self-glorification in the establishing of a great centre of power and influence.

It is an interesting fact that the archæologists, who explore the ruined cities of the Mesopotamian plain, often allude to the "zigurat" that is, a large elevated structure — around which the city was originally grouped. So the tower idea was evidently quite popular in those far-off days. They became the "high places" where idols and idol sacrifices flourished. The tower of Babel may well have been the start of man's lapse into idolatry, for we know that in later centuries Babylon was recognized as the original home and mother of idolatry: see Jeremiah 51: 7 and Revelation 17: 4, 5.

Upon all these doings the eyes of the Lord rested. He not only saw its immediate significance but foresaw its ultimate development, as is so strikingly presented in verse 6. He knew the capacities with which He had endowed mankind, and the imaginations that would fill their minds as fallen creatures. Those imaginations are only evil continually, as we read in chapter 6: 5. If the human race remained in unbroken unity, to develop into hundreds of millions, all their evil imaginations would find speedy accomplishment. The Creator knew that man, His creature, had such powers and capacities as would enable him ultimately to accomplish all he imagined to do. Hence His action in confounding the language of the spreading families of man-

kind, thus putting a heavy brake on the wheels of man's chariot of progress.

We may pause to observe that now, for the last century or two, there has been renewed effort to consolidate the human race. There have been efforts to provide a universal language. Scientific and technical knowledge is much more freely pooled, and in result things have been achieved that 200 years ago would have seemed simply incredible. The ancients entertained the imagination of men flying like birds. A century ago romances were written of men travelling beneath the seas. The imagination was there, but will it ever be translated into fact? It did not look like it! Yet the Lord had said, "Nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do." We have reached the twentieth century after Christ, and lo! these things are done.

We are living in an age when there is being unfolded before our eyes the implications of Genesis 11: 6. Had it not been for the confusion of language the atom bomb would have arrived far earlier in the world's history, and mankind well-nigh destroyed itself long ago. 'The Governor of the nations acted in judgment at Babel, and we can thank Him that He did so, since an element of mercy was enfolded in His judgment.

The scattering of mankind into language groups was the inevitable result, and the building of Babel was halted. Each individual had of necessity to go with those who spoke as he did, and each language group

naturally separated itself from the others, who became foreigners to it, and with whom at the outset no intelligent intercourse was possible. Hence by this one act of God, the fruit of His wisdom and power, the plans of men were brought to nothing. Their purpose had been centralization, lest they should be scattered. The Divine act produced in the simplest possible way the very thing they aimed at preventing.

We regard this as a sign given in the very early days of the present world system of how God will always react in the presence of men's evil schemes and projects. Consequently men are again and again bringing upon themselves the things they aim at avoiding. And not only so, they also produce "Babel," that is, **confusion**. Was ever mankind so full of ideas and theories and projects as today? And was ever the earth more filled with confusion? We may be sure that though the mills of God's government grind slowly they grind with precision. Earth's outlook is terrifying apart from the blessed hope of the coming of the Lord.

Verse 10 starts the fifth paragraph or division of the book; Chapter 10 began the generations of the sons of Noah. We now come to the generations of Shem, one of the shortest of these divisions. It extends only to the end of verse 26, and gives us names and ages of the patriarchs descended from Shem up to the time of Abraham. As to these we have only two things to remark; the first being that, as before noted in connection with the ages of the patriarchs before the flood, there is again discrepancy between the

Hebrew Scriptures and the Septuagint, as explained when we considered chapter 5. Any chronology that may be deduced as to the lapse of time between Shem and Abraham is rendered doubtful to the extent of 650 years.

The second remark concerns verse 26, from which we should be inclined to assume that Abram was the eldest son of Terah, born when his father was 70 years old. But chapter 12: 1 quite definitely states that Terah died in Haran aged 205 years; verse 4 of that chapter states with equal plainness that Terah being dead (see Acts 7: 4) Abram left Haran, aged 75 years, and not 135 years as we should have expected. The conclusion to be drawn appears to be that Terah's family commenced when he was 70 years of age, that Abram was not born till he was 130, but that he is mentioned first in verse 26 because Terah's other children were of small importance compared with him. These things should surely teach us that God is concerned with moral and spiritual considerations rather than those of a chronological kind.

The generations of Terah begin with verse 27, and do not end until we reach the death of Abraham in chapter 25. As to Terah himself, we learn at the end of our chapter that Ur of the Chaldees was his home, and that late in his life he left Ur to go to the land of Canaan, but stopped at Haran on his way. With him he had Abram and Sarai, together with Lot his grandson. Milcah, who was Nahor's wife, is also mentioned, inasmuch as her descendants come into the history of God's ways later on.

But, as we open chapter 12, a new fact of great importance is mentioned. This migration of Terah from Ur of the Chaldees, just stated, really took place at the instance of Abram, to whom God had spoken, calling him to a life of separation from his old associations. He was to cut his links with country, kindred and even his father's house; that is, with his national, his social, and his domestic circles, in order to go to a land that God would indicate. The full significance of this will be better appreciated if, before going further, we read Joshua 24: 2, then the opening of Stephen's address in Acts 7, and also Hebrews 11: 8-10.

There is no mention of idolatry amongst the evils that filled the earth during the antediluvian age. By the time of Abram the post-diluvian apostasy that started with Nimrod and Babel, had developed; idolatry was overspreading the peoples, and threatening to exclude the true knowledge of God. It had got amongst the descendants of Shem and even Terah, if not Abram himself, had been infected by it. To preserve a testimony to Himself God called Abram clean out of the evil, to become a pilgrim and stranger in the earth. Mankind was already divided into nations **under the Divine government**: it was now to witness a division of another kind — the separation of a godly seed from the mass of the ungodly. This was a division produced by **Divine grace**.

To the men of Ur Abram's departure from their city with all its civilized amenities doubtless appeared as foolish an act as that of

Noah had appeared, when he built his ark on dry ground — foolish indeed but unimportant and soon to be forgotten. We now look back to it, nearly 4,000 years after it happened, and realize it to have been an epoch-making event, establishing a principle of God's ways, the effect of which will abide to the end of time. From that moment God's work in the world has been based on the calling out of a people for Himself and separating them from the ungodly. From Abraham sprang the nation of Israel, who were separated under **His government**. To-day the church is being called out and separated under **His grace**. In the coming age He will separate a people for millennial blessing under **His judgment**.

Verses 2 and 3 show us that the man of faith, separated to God, obtains what the men of the world aim at and miss. The builders of Babel desired to make themselves a great name by concentration, and brought down upon themselves a curse, and their names have long been utterly obliterated. God made Abram's name great in his separation by faith, and through him all the families of the earth have been blessed. No name from those early ages has remained so great and famous as his. It is known and revered even today by millions — not only by Christians and Jews, but by Mohammedans also. The promises of these two verses have been amply fulfilled in the 4,000 years since they were spoken, and supremely so by the coming of Christ.

Verses 4 and 5 declare that though Abram was detained at Haran until

the death of Terah, he did ultimately reach the land to which God called him, taking with him his nephew Lot and all their possessions. The following verses show that, having reached it, God again appeared to him, and confirmed the promise of the land to his seed as well as to himself. In that early day the descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham, who had come under the curse of Noah, were in possession of the land. Fully 400 years had yet to pass before the curse would fall upon them by Israel taking forcible possession, and meanwhile Abram was a pilgrim in a tent, but in touch with God and building an altar to Him in the places of his sojourn. Nevertheless from that moment there can be no question as to those who are the rightful owners of that land. To Abram's seed it belongs today, though it will need an act of God to put them in possession in a lasting way, just as their ejection from it, both under Nebuchadnezzar and under the Romans, were acts of God.

Abram had been called of God and greatly blessed in responding to the call. He was pre-eminently the man of faith, yet the Scripture does not hide from us his occasional weakness and failure. God had called him to Canaan and not to Egypt. Yet when famine arose he does not appear to have asked counsel of God, but down to Egypt he went. By so doing he doubtless escaped the famine, but he ran into difficulties that he had not faith to meet. Have we not often had to discover that a way which to worldly wisdom seems eminently wise, leads us into a position of spiritual danger? In Abram's case

this dawned upon him as he neared the borders of Egypt. With all its splendour and affluence the morals of Egypt were deplorably low and he sensed danger.

The simple ruse that Abram suggested to Sarai was not the telling of a downright lie, since Sarai was his half-sister, as we find in chapter 20: 12, yet it worked disastrously. It was just that kind of half-truth, or half-lie, which so often has been a snare to true saints of God. Men of the world may do that kind of thing and apparently be gainers, but if saints of God descend to that level they are always ultimately the losers.

His first thought was for his own life, and then for Sarai's virtue. The situation developed very much as he expected, but the outcome was not at all what he expected, inasmuch as God intervened. His mistake lay just there. In this move he had left God out of his calculations, though in the main purport of his life he was a man of faith. Thus it often is with us: we may trust Him in the big things, yet forget to refer to Him in the smaller things.

The Lord intervened so drastically in the plaguing of Pharaoh's house, that even that heathen monarch woke up to the facts of the situation, and acted rightly. And not only so, but he also rebuked Abram. Now it is a sorry situation when a man of the world can rightly rebuke a man of faith. But so it was here, and so alas! it has too often been since. Let us all be concerned that we do not find ourselves in such a situation.

As chapter 13 opens we find Abram returning into the south parts

of Canaan and making his way back to the spot between Bethel and Hai, where he had raised an altar when first he came into the land of promise. This was the spot where he had been in touch with God and where he should have stayed instead of going down into Egypt.

Back at the old spot, we read, "there Abram called on the name of the Lord." The interrupted communion was restored, since he had got back, so to speak, to his first love. Here is a record which is intended to make us "wise unto salvation" from backsliding of a similar kind.

Now that we have Abram back in his right place, let us sum up the situation. The world system started by men realizing that they could achieve as a community what they could not as mere individuals. They aimed at glorifying themselves by the building of a city as a permanent

centre of influence, and a mighty tower, which would be used ultimately — if not immediately — for idolatrous purposes, and for getting into touch with the demon powers which lay behind the idols.

Abram is called by God out of that world system. Instead of a city of bricks and bitumen he had but a flimsy tent, which could be taken down in an hour. Instead of a lofty and imposing tower he had a lowly altar, whereon were offered the sacrifices that were according to God's thoughts. And there he called on the name of the Lord, and entered into communion with Him instead of falling a prey to the deceits instigated by demons.

The world system has developed, but it has not changed its essential features. Let us see to it that we pursue a path through it in keeping with the way pursued by Abram.

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## FITNESS OF HEART

"I am small and despised" (Psalm 119: 141).

And what if you are? What does it matter if men disdain you and make a mock of your small capabilities, saying, "How shall he help us?" If God condescends to use for His purposes of grace those things which men despise, we need not mind the taunt of others. There is a fitness in these things. Flesh must not glory in the Lord's presence. When the instrument in use is conscious of how little account it is, then unreservedly it ascribes all the credit for its performances to the Hand that used it. By itself, what could it have done? It would have lain by useless. Take comfort, dear heart, and use your humble gift. Think far more of fitness of heart than of high attainments. Your smallness can never be a hindrance to God, but self-sufficiency always is.

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The Book of Judges, especially the latter part, is almost heart-breaking, but of all the narratives that of Samson seems the most pitiable. Here was a man, endowed with peculiar powers, and equipped in an unusual way, prepared withal from babyhood for a life-work, but wrecked, though his personal faith was preserved (Heb. 11: 32), — wrecked in his devotion, influence, and service, through giving way to himself.

# THE NATURE AND UNITY OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

J. N. DARBY.

Extracts from a paper published in "The Christian Witness," Vol. I, No. 1, pp. 14-30, January, 1834. We call attention to the basic principles enunciated in this article, which are as valid today as they were 115 years ago.—EDITOR.

To suppose . . . unity where the Church falls entirely short of the just consequences of its faith, is to suppose that the Spirit of God would acquiesce in the moral inconsistency of degenerate man, and God be satisfied that His Church should sink below the glory of the great Head of it, without even a testimony that He was dishonoured by it. In truth it has ever been so; judgments from without for a good while marked His displeasure while it was sinking; and when it was utterly sunk in apostasy, He raised His witnesses, who should sigh and cry for the abominations that were done in it; who in much darkness of spiritual understanding, bore testimony against the moral corruption that had overwhelmed the Church; and in the acknowledgment of redemption by the Lord Jesus, out of this present evil world, testified the apostasy of the professing Church.

When it pleased God to raise this testimony into the place of public sanction, while doctrinal truth (we may believe) was much developed for the foundation and edification of the faith of believers, it by no means followed that the Church, thereupon, emerged wholly in spirit and power from its depression, assuming the character which it has in the purpose of the Author of it, and becoming an adequate and distinctive witness of His thoughts to the world.

Such indeed, however blessed, as we are all bound most thankfully to acknowledge the Reformation to have been, was not the case; it was much and manifestly united with what was merely human agency; and though the exhibition of the Word, as that on which the soul rests itself, was graciously afforded, there was much of the old system which remained in the constitution of the Churches, and which was in no way the result of the development of the mind of Christ, by setting up the light and authority of the word. This gave to the general state and practice of the Church (whatever the excellence of individuals may have been) a character which many discerned to be short of that which was acceptable to God; and the authority of the word having been recognized as the basis of the Reformation, they sought to follow it, as they supposed, more perfectly. Hence arose all the branches of non-conformity and dissent . . .

From all this has followed an anomalous and trying consequence; namely, that the true Church of God has no avowed communion at all. There are, I suppose, none of its members who would not now acknowledge, that individuals of the children of God are to be found in all the different denominations, professing the same pure faith; but where is their bond of union? It is

not that unbelieving professors are mixed with the people of God in their communion, but that the bond of communion is not the **unity** of the people of God, but really in point of fact their **differences**.

The bonds of nominal union are such as separate the children of God from each other; so that instead of unbelievers being found mixed up with them, itself an imperfect state, the people of God are found as individuals among bodies of professing Christians, joined in communion upon other and different grounds; not in fact as the people of God at all. The truth of this, I think, cannot be denied; and surely it is a very extraordinary state for the Church to be in . . .

In the first place, it is not a formal union of the outward professing bodies that is desirable; indeed it is surprising, that reflecting Protestants should desire it; far from doing good, I conceive it would be impossible that such a body could at all be recognized as the Church of Christ. It would be a counterpart of Romish unity — we should have the life of the Church, and the power of the word lost, and the unity of spiritual life utterly excluded. Whatever plans may be in the order of providence, we can act only upon the principles of grace: and true unity is the unity of His Spirit, and must be wrought by the operation of the Spirit. In the great darkness of the Church hitherto, outward division has been a main support, not only of zeal as is very generally admitted, but of the authority of the word, which is instrumentally the life of the Church; and the Reformation consisted not, as has been commonly said, in the institution of a

pure form of Church, but in setting up the word, and the great Christian foundation and corner stone of justification by faith, in which believers might find life.

But further, if the view that has been taken of the state of the Church be correct, we may adjudge that he is an enemy of the work of the Spirit of God, who seeks the interests of any particular denomination: and that those who believe in the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, ought carefully to keep from such a spirit; for it is drawing back the Church to a state, of which ignorance and non-subjection to the word have been the occasion, and making a duty of its worst and most anti-christian results. This is a most subtle and prevailing mental disease, "**he followeth not us,**" even when men are really Christians. Let the people of God see if they be not hindering the manifestation of the Church by this spirit. I believe there is scarcely a public act of Christian men, at any rate of the higher orders, or of those who are active in the nominal Churches, which is not infected with this; but its tendency is manifestly hostile to the spiritual interests of the people of God, and the manifestation of the glory of Christ. It must grieve the Spirit of God. Christians are little aware how this prevails in their minds; how they seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ; and how it dries up the springs of grace and spiritual communion; how it precludes that order to which blessing is attached, the gathering together in the Lord's Name. No meeting, which is not framed to embrace all the children of God in the full basis of the kingdom of the Son,

can find the fulness of blessing, because it does not contemplate it; because its faith does not embrace it.

Where two or three are gathered together in His name, His name is recorded there for blessing; because they are met in the fulness of the power of the unchangeable interests of that everlasting kingdom, in which it has pleased the glorious Jehovah to glorify Himself, and make His name and saving health known in the person of the Son, by the power of the Spirit. In the name of Christ therefore, they enter (in whatever measure of faith) into the full counsels of God . . . But the very foundation on which these promises rest, is broken up, and its consistency destroyed by bonds of communion, not formed on the scope of the purposes of God in Christ . . .

Let us weigh His mind concerning us. The Lord has made known His purposes in Him, and how those purposes are affected. "He hath made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He should gather together in one, all things in Christ, whether they be things in heaven, or things on the earth, even in Him, in whom we also have received an inheritance." — In one, and in Christ. In **Him** alone therefore can we find this unity; but the blessed word (who can be thankful enough for it) will inform us further. It is as to its earthly members "gathering together in one, the children of God who are scattered abroad." And how is this? "That one man should die for them." As our Lord in the vision of the fruit of the travail

of His soul declares, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me: this He said signifying what death He should die."

It is then, Christ who will draw, will draw to **Himself**; and nothing short of or less than this can produce unity. "He that gathereth not with **Him**, scattereth." And draw to Himself **by being lifted up from the earth**. In a word, we find **His death** is the centre of communion, till His coming again; and in this rests the whole power of truth. Accordingly, the outward symbol and instrument of unity is the partaking of the Lord's supper: "for we being many are one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" . . . Accordingly the essence and substance of unity which will appear in glory at His coming, is conformity to His death, by which that glory was all wrought . . .

Of what then is the Church to be a witness, against the idolatrous glory of the world? Witnesses of the glory into which Christ has risen, by their practical conformity to His death; of their true belief in the cross, by their being crucified to the world, and the world to them . . .

Am I desiring believers to correct the Churches? I am beseeching them to correct themselves, by living up in some measure to the hope of their calling. I beseech them to show their faith in the death of the Lord Jesus, and their boast in the glorious assurance which they have obtained by it, by conformity to it, their faith in His coming, and practical looking for it, by a life suitable to desires fixed upon it. Let them testify against the secularity and

blindness of the Church, but let them be consistent in their own conduct. "Let their moderation be known unto all men." While the spirit of the world prevails (and how much it prevails, I am persuaded few believers are at all aware) spiritual union cannot subsist . . .

Farther, unity is the glory of the Church; but unity to secure and promote **our own interests** is not the unity of the Church, but **confederacy**, and denial of the nature and hope of the Church. Unity, that is of the Church, is unity of the Spirit, and can only be in things of the Spirit, and therefore can be perfected only in spiritual persons . . . There are two things which we have to consider; first — are our objects in our work exclusively the Lord's objects, and nothing else? If they have not been such in bodies separate from each other, they will not be in any union of them together. Let the Lord's people weigh this. Secondly — let our conduct be the witness of our objects. If we are not living in the power, we certainly shall not be consistent in seeking the ends of the Lord's kingdom . . .

The path of the saints is most simple; their portion is heavenly; to be not of the world, as Christ is not of the world: to be clear from all their plans, which will result only in the confusion of antichrist's power, when they have lost all **their** principles, and know not where they are. If the saint knows **his** intrinsically, his path is very clear, to wit, the spirit of separation from the world, through the knowledge of the death, and power, and glory, and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

The only point besides which it is important to notice, is the direct and undoubted title of Christians (inasmuch as it then ceases to be schism, and is schism only from what is worldly, which is a Christian's duty) to meet together and break bread, if they wish it or feel its need; not leaning upon ministry or assuming anything, or pretending to set up Churches, but simply (upon the ground that "where two or three are gathered together, there is Christ in the midst of them") as individuals, merely separating from present evil. The charge of disorder and presumption will be easily bandied against such: the best refutation is holiness and meekness, with utter separation from the world . . .

On the other hand there is a warning to be noticed; it is just when the Lord had said it was a broad way, as the nominal Church is, which leads to destruction, and charges them to "enter in at the strait gate," that He, the Lord, adds, "beware of false prophets." If the sheep are led out of the fold where they were, because the glory of the Lord abideth not upon it, it is exactly then the enemy would wait to seize them alone, if he could. The sheep of Christ shall surely be finally kept; but humbleness of mind is a great means of being kept in the way, for it leans ever on the Shepherd's arm; we are not more safe for staying where judgment is coming. Let a saint use the means God has provided, by which he may escape the snare, "let him prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;" let him delight in fellowship with other Christians in whom there is the same grace, who are seeking holiness for the sake of Christ . . .

# THE BUSH THAT WAS NOT CONSUMED

A. J. POLLOCK.

**I**T was a passing wonderful sight, a bush burning and yet not consumed. Moses, leading the sheep of his father-in-law, came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush, and he looked and behold, the bush burned with fire and was not consumed.

Moses drew near to see this strange sight, and God called to him out of the bush, telling him to put his shoes from off his feet, as the ground whereon he trod was holy ground. Moreover God told him that He was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whereupon Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. But the voice of the Lord was reassuring. God had looked upon the bondage and misery of His people in the land of Egypt, and, remembering His promises to Abraham and his descendants in the promised line, proclaimed, "**I am come down to deliver**" (Exodus 3: 8). What are we to learn from this strange incident? What great lessons have we to learn from it?

To begin with the Hebrew word, **seneh**, bush, literally means a **thorn** bush. The thorn is an emblem of the fall of man, of his sinful condition. When Adam sinned God cursed the ground in judgment, and said that in sorrow he should eat of it all the days of his life, and that thorns and thistles should it bring forth, emblems of the curse. In derision the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and pressed it with savagery on the Saviour's brow.

But here is a thorn bush, and God is in it, and it is not consumed. There is not a man in all the human race, and in all the centuries, but is a sinner, and if God took matters up with sinful men apart from the atoning sacrifice of our Lord he would be consumed. The law was given to man, and the result was only and altogether condemnation and death.

Can God then, in all His holiness, come to sinful man without man being consumed in judgment? But here was a thorn bush on flame with the very presence of God in it, and yet not consumed. Yes, thank God, there was One on this earth, who was perfect in thought, word and deed. Our Lord did no sin. He knew no sin. In Him was no sin. He was in the **likeness** of sinful flesh, but He was not sinful flesh, but holy and altogether acceptable to God as a Man down in this world. To use the figure we have here, He was **like** a thorn bush, but unlike a thorn bush, representing man as a sinner. He was sinless, and altogether pleasing to God.

God spoke out of that bush. How cheering was His announcement:

**"I am come down to deliver."**

Could there be anything more wonderful than that the God we have sinned against should be the One to come down to deliver? We are indeed in a favoured position if God Himself takes in hand the sin question. We find in this incident of God being in the thorn bush the setting forth of a truth of the last importance to every one of us.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself . . . For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 19-21).

It is very remarkable that the word for sin and sin-offering is the same whether in the Hebrew of the Old Testament or the Greek of the New Testament. Thus are we taught the meaning of the tremendously solemn statement that He, who knew no sin, **was made sin** for us, treated as the accursed thing that has violated God's holiness. The righteous judgment of God against sin was meted out to the sinless One, the One who has come down to deliver.

Thus in this burning bush incident we have a vivid picture of the wonder of the Person of our adorable Saviour, that He was GOD manifest in the flesh, that He was God and Man in one blessed Person, a mystery that none can understand, but the Father. The ripest and most

spiritual saint will never fathom this mystery, for "no man knoweth the Son but the Father" (Matt. 11: 27). This is absolute. This is the mystery of mysteries that shall never be revealed to the creature, whether on earth or in heaven in new creation circumstances. On reflection it must be so.

But in the burning bush incident we have three things, the thorn bush, God speaking, **and the flame**. The flame is indicative of God's judgment on sin being poured out on the sacrifice. All down the ages the fire of the altar consumed the sacrifices on Jewish altars, but they could never put away sin. But here is a Sacrifice, God come down to deliver, Jesus, the Man Christ Jesus, who could say, He only, "**It is finished**" (John 19: 30). He exhausted the judgment. He bore the sins of believers in His own body on the tree. He is the One who has triumphed over sin and death and hell.

Well may we say, Hallelujah!

## THE APOSTASY

J. HOUSTON.

**A**POSTASY may be considered in two ways: in what is **civil**, and in what is **religious**. The former has reference to the nations; the latter, to the Jews, and to the professing Church. To apostatize means, "to stand apart from," or "to depart from," the standard of rule and order, set up by God, in His wise government. It need hardly be said, it necessarily falls within the sphere of man's responsibility to God.

In the civil sense, we can take, by way of example, the case of Nebuchadnezzar. He was invested with universal authority by God, as head of the nations. Inflated by pride, he departed from God, and set up an image for universal worship. This was a clear case of apostasy; and it is just what will happen, when the great apostasy takes place, in the last days, when the beast and antichrist come.

Authority to rule, in the civil sense, is of God. And whatever be the failure of man, in the use of that authority, it retains its original character, as proceeding from God. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13: 1). This was written when Nero was in power, as wicked a ruler as ever known. Even Pilate, conscious of possessing power, as governor and judge, said to the Lord, "I have power to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee." The Lord answered him, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above" (John 19: 10, 11).

If rulers abuse that power, which is from God, then it is to God they will have to render account. Every man is judged in the place where he is found, as responsible to God, whether he be ruler, or subject. It is well for us, as Christians, to keep this in mind, and always act, as before God, responsible to Him, remembering that others, it may be wicked rulers, that abuse power, are also responsible to Him. Every man must give account of himself to God.

Taking a general view of civil power, as seen in the nations, we are well convinced, that dreadful apostasy has taken place, and that the use of that power is not for the glory of God, but for the exaltation of man, even to the rejection of God. How few rulers acknowledge that God is the Supreme Ruler of the universe! How many rule in pride, leaving God entirely out of account — acting as if He did not exist! And it is astounding to see how cruel,

even bestial, they can be, in the abuse of civil power. Wars prove this, when passions are let loose, and everything is employed for destruction, regardless of life. But all is heading up for the final stage; for "the mystery of iniquity" is now working, and signs of the end are well in evidence. (See 2 Thess. 2).

In the religious sense, apostasy assumes a different form. It manifests itself in the professing body, whether it be amongst the Jews, or amongst Christians. Peter speaks of "false prophets" being "among the people," that is, the Jews; he also says, speaking to Christians, that "false teachers" were "among you" (2 Peter 2: 1). Though they were in the professing body, they were recognizable. Jude calls them "ungodly men" (Jude 4); Paul names them "grievous wolves" (Acts 20: 29); while John designates them "antichrists" (1 John 2: 18, 19).

So far as apostasy amongst the Jews is concerned, it has always been noticeable. In the Old Testament, complete departure from God has been seen in kings, prophets and priests, to say nothing of others, who were often referred to, as "sons of Belial." But the great apostasy has yet to come, even amongst the Jews, and that will be seen, when the real antichrist comes, in the last days.

The apostates among Christians have done, and are still doing, an evil work, by what they teach, and the influence they exercise upon others, who follow them. They "bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow

their pernicious ways; by reason of whom, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2: 1, 2).

With these apostolic warnings before us, let us look at the state of the professing Church, as we see it today. The apostates are distinguishable, either by their manner of life, or by their teaching. The Lord said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." They are easily marked as "ungodly men"; and they are as easily known by their "damnable heresies." It cannot be said, that Christians have no means of testing them, to know them, when they have the Word of God in their hand. John, particularly, marks them out, by a twofold test; by what they **do**, or **practice**, and by what they **say**, or **teach**. What do they practice in their manner of life? "Unrighteousness." What do they say, or teach? "Damnable heresies." Scripture is perfectly clear about this.

The form of their teaching is mostly **negative**. They **deny** the Lord that bought them. They **deny** the Father and the Son. And we may affirm that they **deny** practically everything of sound Biblical teaching. For instance, they **deny** man is a fallen creature, and a sinner. They **deny** the work of atonement for sin. They **deny** all that is miraculous. They **deny** the virgin birth of Christ. They **deny** that His sufferings and death have any value in respect of expiation of sin. They **deny** the resurrection. They **deny** Christ's Second Advent. Above all this, they do not hesitate to speak blasphemously of God's Word, the Bible, as His revelation to man. They call it "mythical and legendary," "Jewish fables," etc.

When we remember that these deniers are in the very forefront of the professing Church, as officially recognised teachers, it presents a difficulty to the ordinary man in the street, who knows little, or nothing, of his Bible, and is dependent on what he sees and hears from others. On the other hand, the individual, who is indifferent about the Bible, and thinks nothing of what is of God, or of his soul's salvation, is content to follow these leaders, without making any investigation of right or wrong. "Blind leaders of the blind" make straight for the ditch; and both fall therein, leaders and led. Terrible end!

But the worst has yet to come. Evil must fill up its measure. The final stage is still future, whatever be the development of what is now seen, as "the mystery of iniquity" continues to work. Whatever may have happened in the recent war, it can but foreshadow the culmination, when the beast, antichrist, and all the forces of evil shall unite. We are warned of this, and we see it work rapidly towards the end. But God has chosen us, from the beginning, to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth: whereunto He called us by the Gospel, "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2: 13, 14). It need not cause us undue concern, if we yet see empires totter and fall, rulers dethroned, upheavals among the nations, greater problems of government which cannot be solved, perplexity in high places, and fear amongst all who see the shadows of the immediate future.

We know the course apostasy must take. Scripture has made it

plain. It must head up in the beast and antichrist, in the last days. We who are chosen to salvation, shall be saved the outpouring of God's wrath on all this. We, who are called by the gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be in glory before the dread and fateful day of the beast and antichrist. Satan has yet to be cast out

of heaven. When this takes place, after the Church is taken up to glory, the last stage of evil will begin, and develop apace, till it reaches its limit.

Then the Lord shall come, with all His accompanying hosts, and judge the world in righteousness, and set up His glorious kingdom.

## “THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH” J. J. ANNING.

**F**AITH is evidenced in two ways, by patience and by energy. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews gives a catalogue of men and women who lived by faith. God has taken note of these witnesses and recorded them for our encouragement, as we journey homewards in a dry and thirsty land.

1. **By patience**:— Believing that God will perform His promises, these saints of old time could go steadily on the path of life, in peace and hope.

**Abel** is noted first when he testified to faith in his offering, taking the place of a sinner who could do nothing to save himself.

**Enoch** is stated to have pleased God in that he walked with Him for 300 years after the age of 65, and then was translated. He just trusted unfalteringly in God and carried on through the long years in a world where the wickedness of man was great.

**Noah** believed God and carried on his work of Ark building, testifying to the coming judgment, in spite of mockery and ridicule.

**Abraham** was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance; after some delay he went out and kept on his journey. He waited for a city which hath foundations, though he went “not knowing whither he went,” because he believed God. He died in faith, not having received the promises.

**Sara** also, in spite of nature's impossibilities, judged God faithful regarding the birth of a son. Her faith is thus recorded.

2. **By energy**:— From the 17th verse of our chapter to its close we have examples of action and deliberate choosing, in spite of consequences, because of faith in God and His promises.

**Abraham** is named first, he offered up his only begotten son by God's direction, accounting that He was able to raise him up, even from the dead.

**Isaac, Jacob and Joseph** are next cited, then we have the faith of **Moses** with its energy. He made a definite choice, entailing affliction

and reproach, to forsake Egypt with the regal position and all the advantages pertaining to a prince. By his choice he began a life of faith in God that carried him through the 40 years' wilderness journey with its many trials.

The faith of Joshua, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephthae, David, Samuel, the Prophets, and others, is mentioned, as placing them among the company of those who having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise. Only that which is good is mentioned. The whole chapter seems designed to encourage true believers in the path of faith.

Elsewhere the Holy Spirit gives us the failures of all who are named. We, like them, have nothing to boast about or be proud of, but we also believe God and our hearts have been won by His love. It may be that we are discouraged and feel our weakness, but as we look back at the faithfulness of God with regard to these "witnesses," we can take fresh courage and with renewed strength live for Him according to His will. We know that "He careth" about us, and remembers, according to Matthew 25, even the little things He may give us to do for Him.

The writer of the Hebrews Epistle however does not stop with the notice God took of failing men and women who walked by faith. He takes us on in chapter 12 to another and better outlook. An outlook to One in whom there was no failure — perfect confidence and obedience, with no self-will. The second verse reads, "Looking unto Jesus," and these words imply "looking away" from other things

or persons to fix the eye exclusively on "Jesus."

In Him we find lasting encouragement—He is the Author and Finisher of faith. We follow Him. How can we sufficiently thank God for the four Gospels that reveal to us His perfections! We see Him in the wilderness tempted after 40 days of hunger, but not deviating an hair's breadth from the path of obedience and fidelity as the true Servant of Jehovah. We think of Him, hungry, thirsty, and weary, seated at Sychar's Well. It is recorded "He must needs go through Samaria." There He meets the great need of a sinner and causes her to bring others to Him for eternal blessing. His journeys were always marked out by God, human affection would have carried Him post-haste to Martha and Mary when the news of Lazarus being ill reached Him. He, in His holy perfection, awaits God's time and direction to glorify God in the raising of the dead.

At Calvary He is alone, for our sakes abandoned of God, He could have refused the chalice, but He had come to do the Father's will and not until the cup had been drained, the victory won, did He give His spirit back to God. The shame was despised, all the suffering endured, because of the joy that was set before Him.

We, who are His blood-bought ones, weak and feeble though we are, must by faith go on in His strength towards the goal — to be with Him and like Him for ever. Our pathway may indeed seem to be hard going, though nothing like His. May we take courage, look up to where He is and carry on to the glorious goal set before us.

# BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 13: 5—15: 21).

**A**NOTHER crisis in the life of Abram now comes before us. His was the faith that led to the migration from Ur, and in Lot he found a companion. Lot shared in his pilgrimage up to a certain point, but evidently, though a righteous man, he did not fully share in the faith that prompted the pilgrimage. A point had now been reached when the increase in their possessions, under the Divine blessing, was such that strife broke out among their servants and they could no longer dwell peaceably together. It was not seemly that the two professed pilgrims should be in conflict in the presence of the Canaanite and Perizzite.

Formerly they both had separated from Ur; now they must separate from each other geographically, and put sufficient distance between their cattle and herdmen to avoid conflict. Abram, the man of faith, is content to yield the first choice to Lot the younger man. The choice of Lot reveals him at once to have been one who walked by sight rather than by faith. They were dwelling on the central heights of the land, whence, lifting up his eyes, Lot could see the warmer and much more fruitful plains of Jericho, stretching down to the Dead Sea and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. With a keen eye to his own profit, Lot made choice of that alluring district and left the less fruitful heights to Abram. He journeyed east, coming down to the plains.

In this episode we see Abram

back at the moral elevation that had marked his outset. Then he gave up Ur with its civilized amenities; now he yields up the choicest part of the land of promise content to be still a pilgrim, if in communion with God. His altar indicated that he was in touch with God; his tent that he still remained a pilgrim, though in the land of promise. What lay behind it all is indicated in Hebrews 11, where we read, "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles [tents] . . . for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We also read in the same chapter, "They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly." He had been called by "the God of glory," as Stephen made known in his final address, and to that call he remained true.

In contrast to this, Lot saw that the plain, stretching towards Sodom and Gomorrah, was "as the garden of the Lord," and he embraced it, pitching his tent toward Sodom. The men of Sodom however excelled in wickedness, as verse 13 tells us, so evidently though those cities were like the garden of the Lord, they were really a playground of the devil. Towards that evil spot Lot gravitated.

From verse 14 to the end of the chapter we get God's response to Abram's faithfulness. The gift of the whole land to him and to his posterity is confirmed, and a promise is given that his seed shall be very

numerous as the dust of the earth. He is bidden to survey the land, walking through the length and breadth of it. This led him to move his tent to Mamre or Hebron, but there also he maintained his altar to the Lord.

We can have little doubt that the confusion of tongues at Babel, and the consequent division of mankind into nations, must soon have given rise to fightings and regular warfare, but we have no record of a battle in the Scriptures until we reach chapter 14, when four kings from the Mesopotamian district made an expedition towards the Dead Sea, ravaging cities as they marched, and ultimately defeating the five kings of the cities of the plain. The "kings" mentioned were mostly, if not all, the leaders of various cities, what we should now call petty chiefs. Chedorlaomer was apparently the suzerain of the kings associated with him, and he had extended his sway over the region of Sodom. The repudiation of his suzerainty was the reason for the expedition.

It is an interesting fact that at this point in the Scripture narrative we come to names of persons that the archæologists believe they can identify as the result of their researches in digging up the past. Some of these greater kings, such as Amraphel and Chedorlaomer, left their mark on very ancient records, whereas no mark of that nature would be left by Abram the pilgrim, who years before had severed himself from their cities and their whole way of life.

In Genesis, however, all the interest is centred upon Abram with Lot in the background. In verse 12 we

are permitted to see another step in the downward course of Lot. Not content with pitching his tent toward Sodom, he had now abandoned tent life altogether and taken a permanent residence in the wicked city — a spot worse than Ur, which originally he had left under Abram's guidance. He now suffered the fate of the people of Sodom and was carried captive with all his house.

Abram acted with great decision directly the news of this disaster reached him. Arming his servants he pursued after the victorious kings, and overtaking them by night, utterly defeated them. No idea is given us of the number of the adversaries but we are told the small number of Abram's forces — 318 beside himself. And we are told this, we believe, to indicate that Abram's action was prompted by very extraordinary faith. The army he attacked must have been immensely stronger than he, and also flushed with victory all along the line up to that point. Yet he hesitated not, and God was with him. His victory seems to us as remarkable as the victory of Gideon over the Midianites, recorded in the Book of Judges.

In result Abram recovered everything, including Lot, his household and possessions. How striking the picture, and how important its lesson for us! The man — even though he was "just" — who grasped at the world with its outward prosperity and pleasures, lost everything and found himself a captive. The man who gave up the world and walked with God, was the only one in the whole region who could act in faith, and have the power of God answering his faith, and giving him the victory.

At the end of the chapter we find Abram winning a victory of another kind, but before we reach it we have the episode of Melchizedek, of which much is made in Hebrews 7, inasmuch as he was a striking type of Christ in the power and grace of His eternal priesthood.

He is introduced to us in verse 18 without any details as to his ancestry: an unusual feature, seeing he held a place of nearness to God. With those who had lapsed into idolatry ancestors are sometimes not mentioned, as, for instance, in the early part of our chapter, but otherwise they are. This fact is part of the Divine design, as pointed out in Hebrews. As far as the record goes, he is without father or mother; there is no pedigree, no mention of his birth nor of his death. He appears suddenly at verse 18 of our chapter, and after verse 20 he disappears. The Son of God has neither beginning of days nor end of life, and in a typical way Melchizedek was made like unto Him in this. Note carefully that in Hebrews 7: 3, he was made like the Son of God, already existing from eternity; not the Son of God made like to him.

Melchizedek then was raised up as type of the eternal order of priesthood, which is consummated in Christ. His name means, "King of righteousness," and Salem meaning peace, he was "King of peace." The argument of Hebrews 7 is that the Lord Jesus, risen from the dead, is Priest after this eternal order, though at present He is exercising His priesthood in ways that were typified in Aaron.

This is the first mention in the Bible of a priest, and so, as we

might expect, the full thought of priesthood is here typically set before us. That which the Lord is doing today, as set forth in Aaron, is provisional, in view of our wilderness experiences. When, as seen typically in the beginning of our chapter, the power of the adversary is broken and the captives are delivered, the priesthood of Christ will be strikingly manifested. He will be the Minister of spiritual food, refreshment and blessing to those who come to Him. In the type we are not carried beyond the blessing that will be brought to pass on earth, and the millennial name of God — "Most High God" — is used for the first time in Scripture. We have to pass to the New Testament to get a view of heavenly things. Here we have to be content to know that the Most High God is the Possessor of heaven as well as of earth.

Abram, though possessed of earthly goods, as yet possessed nothing of that which God had promised him. To be blessed of the One who is Possessor of heaven and earth, must have been no small thing to him. Abram **received** the blessing, and he **gave** tithes of all. Both the receiving and the giving were through Melchizedek, the priest. And since the less is blessed of the better, we see, as pointed out in Hebrews 7, that as priest Melchizedek took precedence of Abram, and of the Levitical priesthood of Aaron. Once we know the One who was typified, how luminous the type appears!

The king of Sodom had gone forth to meet the victorious Abram, as mentioned in verse 17, but he does not really come into the picture till verse 21. Wishing to recompense

Abram he offered to him all the goods of Sodom, that he had recovered. The way Abram declined the offer is very striking. Through the ministrations of Melchizedek he now knew God in a new way. Put into touch with the Possessor of heaven and earth, the goods of Sodom, however attractive they might have seemed to others, had no value for him. Moreover they were all stained with the enormous sins of that city and brought defilement with them.

Hence, in verse 23, we find language of great decision. The young men had eaten certain things, and Abram's confederates and helpers might take their portion, but as for himself he would take nothing; not even the smallest item. He had been so fully enriched, both spiritually and materially, by God Himself, that he needed nothing more. His testimony to that would have been marred, if he had given opportunity to the king of Sodom to say he had made Abram rich. It is the same in principle for us today. If we are in the enjoyment of the spiritual blessings that are ours, we have neither need nor desire for the gifts or patronage of the world.

The first verse of chapter 15 is intimately connected with all this. Not only had the hand of God been with His servant, but the eye of God had been upon him. Abram had renounced his original home in Ur; secondly, the more fruitful parts of the land of promise in favour of Lot; thirdly, any portion or tribute from the sinful world, at the hands of the king of Sodom. All this had been observed, and now in a fresh vision God presents Himself to him as his shield and his "exceeding great reward."

If Abram had not had some confidence that God would be his shield, he would hardly have undertaken to pursue the victorious kings and rescue Lot with a mere handful of men, as he had just done. But that he should have God for his reward went far beyond this. When he left Ur, he may have looked upon the land of promise as his reward, though he never actually possessed it. Now God Himself is to be his reward, and this surely is "exceeding great." Brought, as we are, into the light of God revealed in Christ, we are better able to estimate the greatness than ever Abram could have done.

The greatness of it did, however, sufficiently dawn on Abram to make him feel acutely, by way of contrast, the poverty of his present position as a childless man with a servant born in his house as his heir. How could the everlasting God be reward to one who had no hope of a posterity to carry on his name? Hence his seemingly rather selfish enquiry, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me?"

The answer to this was the word of promise, which called forth Abram's simple acceptance of God's word in such distinctness and in such measure that he stands for all time as the pattern of faith. To his example Paul appeals in Romans 4, calling him, "the father of all them that believe." The word to this childless man was that he should have true seed as numerous as the stars of heaven; and the record is that, "he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness."

As yet there was no sign of the promise being accomplished. But

Abram simply took God at His word, and in view of this God accounted him to be righteous. As we saw in chapter 3, when our first parents began to doubt the word of God, sin entered and mankind got out of right relations with God. Conversely when a man dismisses doubting and simply takes God at His word he is thereby put into right relations with God — he is accounted righteous.

This promise of the seed enfolded within it a far greater blessing than appeared at the moment, for presently we shall find that the promise of the Saviour was wrapped up in it. For the moment a numerous posterity was guaranteed, and coupled with that the lesser promise of the land was repeated, as we see in verse 7. As to this second part Abram's faith was not so robust, and he desired some confirmation that he might know with assurance. Have we not often found that we may accept the greater thing in faith, and yet be lacking in assurance as to some lesser thing? He was already in the land and yet possessed nothing of it, and the years were passing by. He felt he needed some extra assurance on this point.

God graciously condescended to answer this by making a solemn covenant, according to a rite that was common and accepted in those far off days. In Jeremiah 34: 18, 19, we find an allusion to this kind of ceremony as ratifying a covenant. In the case before us the solemnity of the occasion seems to be enhanced by the number and variety of the animals that were sacrificed. Abram was kept waiting however until sundown before anything happened, and then he fell into a deep sleep,

accompanied by horror and darkness. God was drawing near to him, and the covenant involved darkness as well as light.

Verses 13-16, give the terms of the covenant. The centuries of affliction in Egypt for Abram's seed are predicted, and this was in keeping with the great darkness that had fallen upon him. But there was light also for he had the assurance that he should end his days in peace, and that ultimately his seed should be delivered from their affliction by the judgment of their oppressors, and back to the land of promise they should come. Thus, in spite of long waiting and much trouble, the land was made sure to his seed.

The ratification of all this as a covenant was when after dark a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between the divided pieces of the sacrifice. In this two-fold way did God manifest His presence. There was no thought of Abram passing between the pieces, as though he were pledging himself to anything. It was God pledging Himself to do as He had just said, and that in an unconditional way. This manifestation of God, passing between the pieces, was as remarkable as His manifestation to Moses in the burning bush.

In after days we find both Moses and Solomon speaking of Egypt as the "iron furnace" — see, Deuteronomy 4: 20; 1 Kings 8: 51. How apposite then the manifestation afforded by this vision! God was in the furnace equally with the flame of the lamp. It might be easy to discern Him in the bright shining of the flame, but not so easy in the

smoking furnace. It was the guarantee however that he would be with Abram's seed when they should be in the furnace, and then when the hour struck, lead them forth with Himself as a pillar of fire at their head.

Before we leave chapter 15, note two things. First, God was going to permit the Amorites to fill up the cup of their iniquity before he ejected and destroyed them. This is ever the way He takes in His holy government, and it accounts for the long-suffering He extends to the guilty world in which we are living. He knows the full nature of man's evil from the outset, but He allows it to

be fully developed, so that His judgment, when it falls in full severity, may be justified in the sight of all created intelligencies.

Secondly, the full extent of the land pledged to the seed of Abram, is given — "from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The land we call Palestine is bounded on the East by the small river, the river Jordan, and is only a very small part of the land they are ultimately to possess. Ten peoples are mentioned in the closing verses as then dwelling therein. All are to be dispossessed and in the millennial age the true Israel will possess their promised land.

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## ACTIVITY IN OBSCURITY

What was then the life of this Jesus, the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief? A life of activity in obscurity, causing the love of God to penetrate the most hidden corners of society, wherever needs were greatest; among those whom human pride repelled, in order to maintain its own reputation, but whom the love of God sought, because He needed not to establish for Himself a reputation, or to keep one . . . The toilsome life of Jesus was passed in seeking souls in all circumstances. It went through everything that could put it to the proof, but we see in it divine reality which never failed.

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Nothing can take the place of communion with the Lord; not occasions of Christian conference, larger or more private; not the intercourse of a chosen circle of pious friends; not the holy public worship of the Church of God. Sooner or later, the necessity of the personal, the individual study of the sacred Word, and of the solitary use of the throne of grace, will assert itself, if it is slighted, in the spiritual losses of the Christian who slights it.

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A recent article on the lot of a lighthouse keeper finished with these words: "But the essential quality for a lighthouse keeper is neither the ability to cook nor kill time. It is the ability to put up with your fellow keepers."

Substitute the word "missionary" for "keeper" and you have stated a main problem of the mission-field.

# SONSHIP TO HIMSELF

J. A. TRENCH.

(Notes of an address on Ephesians 1: 1 — 2: 10).

**T**HERE are two distinct aspects of the revelation that God has given of Himself. The first is connected with the way He has been pleased to enter into all our need — lost as we were in sins and utter ruin — to reach us according to His grace, and to bring us individually to Himself with the yoke of sin and of the law broken for ever. The Epistle to the Romans sets this before us, and here it is that we must begin.

The second is connected with God working according to the need of His own heart. He has acted according to that which He counselled from eternity to meet His own desires, and satisfy His love. This we find specially in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

How blessed it is when the truth unfolded in Romans has so fully met our need and set us in liberty before God, that we are ready to turn to Ephesians and learn how God has taken us up and brought us, both individually and collectively, into this wonderful place in Christ. This was the eternal thought of God before the foundations of the earth were laid.

A wonderful passage in Proverbs 8 gives the first intimation of what was in the heart of God. It runs from verses 22-31, and discloses the communion between the Father and the Son, in the words, "Rejoicing always before Him." But the next words are, "Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth: and My delights were with the sons

of men." Ages before the first verse of Genesis 1 — not to say the second verse — here was what was before the heart of the Father and the Son; rejoicing not in the wide waste of waters, or the desert where no man could dwell, but in the habitable parts of the earth, because there the sons of men would be found.

Think of the heart of the Father and the Son going out to the sons of men from all eternity! But we may well ask, How could this be? Where shall be found the sons of men, who could be a delight to God? Adam never was the son of man even in his state of innocence. God's counsels were not fulfilled in him. Where down the race shall we look to find their accomplishment? What a moral waste! Even when God chose out one family and one nation, there we find the law transgressed, the promises despised and the Just One slain. The Lord Jesus summed it up in the parable recorded in Mark 12: 1-9, and God's ways with man as a race were over.

In Luke 2, we find the heavenly host proclaiming, as the Babe was born, "Glory to God in the highest . . . good pleasure in men" (New Trans.) In that Babe was to be the accomplishment of God's glory, which is the first thought of heaven, before there could be peace on earth or good pleasure in men. He came revealing God's goodness, and later the heavens were opened and the Father's voice de-

clared, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." For the first time there was a Man on earth in whom the heart of God found its full pleasure.

But Proverbs 8 went further, in speaking of "the sons of men." We follow the Lord Jesus in His path — one solitary track of light across the darkness — and once again we hear the voice on the Mount of Transfiguration. No one could have disputed His right to enter the glory from there, but it would have been to leave us to perish, and Proverbs 8 could not have been made good. So we find He comes down from the mount to journey to Jerusalem to die.

"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." There was the meaning of that descent to go to Jerusalem. He must have been alone in His perfection for ever, unless He went down to the depths of death, where He laid a new ground for God's delight in Him, as He indicated in John 10: 17. The reason is not far to seek, for we read, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13: 31). Let Judas do his worst; let Satan do his worst; the glory of God was what governed His heart.

God was now to be glorified as never before. All His nature was to come out in holiness and righteousness; the majesty of His throne vindicated and His love revealed, as never before. How wonderful to have the scene of man's sin lit up with God's glory. He who knew no sin made sin for us. Our dark history as sinners closed under God's judgment. How blessed the deliverance for us, when we are

brought to bow to the judgment of all that we are in the Cross.

But not one word of this do we find in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which starts from the point that all are dead in sins. The Old Testament never declared this, for all God's dealings there with man were on the ground of His being alive in the flesh. When God was revealed the only answer of our hearts was, "Away with Him!" There was no movement in our hearts toward God. We all were dead in sins; dead towards God, though alive and active enough as to anything the god of this world presented. All was death, and that is where God has come in, and where Ephesians starts.

In this wonderful first chapter we are carried back into eternity. The Apostle begins with an outburst of worship. It so fills his heart that he exclaims, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Oh! that we may be able to enter into it in a worshipping spirit, for that is the suited place for us to take up before the opened heavens. Then verse 4 shows that all is according to His choice of us before the foundation of the world. It is not here His active counsel, but simply His choice. We choose what suits us, and our choice reflects our character. He has chosen us in Christ as the objects of His love.

In that verse is anything sweeter than the words, "before Him"? We think of Christ here below, the heavens opened over Him. There was manifested in Him what God

had counselled from all eternity. He was alone in it until He died and rose again — holy, without blame, and before God in love. Now we are in Christ, and it can be said of us before God.

Then as to relationship, we are predestinated to the adoption of children, or sonship. He might have given us an angel's place, but it would not have satisfied the heart of God. He had myriads of angels, but none of them could call Him, Father; so He predestinated us to **sonship to Himself**. It was to satisfy Himself, and it is this that is so exceedingly precious. We were predestinated to that which was set forth in His beloved Son. Now we see not merely the dawn of those counsels, as when the heavenly host proclaimed good pleasure in man, but we are positively "accepted," or "taken into favour" in the Beloved. Deep down in the place the Son has in the heart of God, that is the place we are given.

What a place to have! But there it is. No wonder that the first effect on the Apostle's heart was worship. The standpoint is that of God's eternal counsels. That is the wondrous calling of God. There too is the inheritance that stretches out beneath our feet. In Him we have become heirs of God to the praise of His glory.

One thing more. How are these counsels of eternity to be accomplished? In verses 19 and 20 we see that the first action of God was, to come into the scene where there was nothing but death and raise up Christ from the dead. In chapter 2 we find that the same almighty power of God has been put forth to

raise us up, and set us in Him in heavenly places. How blessed to see God working thus in His power now for the satisfaction of His own heart. And we, who are the subjects of this work, were but poor sinners, dead in sins, and without any movement of heart towards Him. God, who is rich in mercy, has wrought it.

And what is the object of God in it all? Does He give us any account of the meaning of these counsels? Yes, for in verse 7 of chapter 2, He says that "in the ages to come" He will "shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." If He had been dealing with good people, all the glory would have been for the good people, but since He has taken up people who were dead in sins, all the glory will be for God. We are His workmanship, as verse 10 states.

We have been "created in Christ Jesus," wonderful thought! It is not, "in Adam," for it has nothing to do with the old creation. We are His workmanship in new creation, and thus ordained to walk in good works. The preordained path is as much the object of God's counsels as the preordained position. Let us ever remember we are what we are by the work of God Himself.

We must have the position first, but later in the Epistle, from chapter 4 and onwards, we have specified the good works, the foreordained works, that flow from the foreordained position.

The Lord give us more and more to enter into the wonderful thoughts of God.

# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

A. J. POLLOCK.

**I**F we compare the New Testament to a lofty building, the Epistle to the Romans would answer to the **foundation**; whilst the highest part of the building would answer to the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. When a business man steps into such a building, and asks for the top floor, and rises quickly in the lift to reach this height, he leaves the foundation in one sense, and yet never for one moment in another sense does he leave it. The higher he goes the more conscious is he that the great building needs, and must have, a very substantial foundation. Thus we can see how indebted we are to the Epistle to the Romans, as setting forth the solid foundation on which God rears the vast edifice of His choicest blessings to the believer.

There is also a most intimate connection between the Epistle to the Romans and the four Gospels. The Gospels give us the historical **facts** of the Gospel, how our Lord entered this world of sin and sorrow; how He lived His life for God's glory and man's blessing; how He died on Calvary's cross, the one and only efficacious sacrifice for settling the question of sin for God's glory and the blessing of men; how He rose from the dead as witnessed by many witnesses; how He ascended to glory at God's right hand; and how the promise of His return was given to those, who saw Him ascend. But unspeakably precious as they are, they do not set out to teach in an orderly and systematic way the blessings flowing forth from the wondrous death of our Lord.

The Epistle to the Romans, as far as the Gospel of God is concerned, is the necessary complement of the Gospels. It is this that makes this epistle so deeply important. It was said that when Phebe carried the manuscript of the Epistle to the Romans under her cloak as she started to Rome, she may not have realised that she was carrying the very charter of the Gospel of the grace of God to the then metropolis of the world, and for all time. But so it was.

This Epistle to the Romans gives a very orderly presentation of the Gospel of the grace of God. It is addressed to Christians, already in an assembly of God in Rome. It is true that when the Lord is first trusted as Saviour, the believer knows very little of the Gospel. He must know enough to make him realise that believing on the Lord carries with it forgiveness of sins and salvation. After he is converted he needs instruction as to the full truth of the Gospel, and this is furnished in this Epistle. It is therefore the wisdom of all believers to study it carefully and prayerfully.

## CHAPTER I.

The Epistle begins by the Apostle Paul's declaration that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, that it is the power of God unto salvation. He then proceeds to review the heathen world. What of those, who have never heard the Gospel, and know nothing of the Saviour's death? They have a testimony rendered to them in crea-

tion. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handywork." (Psalm 19:1). In this God's "eternal power and Godhead" are presented, which, if rejected, leaves the heathen "without excuse." (Chap. 1:20). Alas! that men should turn from the living God, and bow down to images made like to corruptible man, to birds, four-footed creatures and even creeping things. Such is man!

### CHAPTER 2.

Then the Apostle takes up the case of the more enlightened heathen, who has enough knowledge to rebuke those on the lower scale of humanity, forgetting that whilst doing so, he is committing the very sins he denounces in others.

### CHAPTER 3.

Finally he takes up the question of the Jew from verse 17 of chapter 2. To them were given the oracles of God. To them God made Himself known in a special way, testing mankind whether there should be a response to His law or not. The Jew is found to be no better than his heathen counterpart — Jew and Gentile are alike proved to be under sin.

In a most convincing and masterly way the summing up is announced in few words. Fourteen quotations are made from the Old Testament, describing man's lost and sinful condition. These are principally culled from the Psalms — Scriptures accepted for long centuries as the Word of God by the

Jewish nation. It was no fresh discovery that was made, rather was it the confirmation of Scripture, if that were needed, but it is not. In these quotations we learn that all men have gone astray, that none seek after God, that none is righteous, no not one. Nothing could be more sweeping.

### CHAPTERS 3 AND 4.

As soon as the verdict is delivered, the result of which is to shut every mouth, and bring the whole world in guilty before God, God opens His mouth to declare His remedy. True, the law had been given to Israel alone, but their failure to answer to it proved the condition of the whole world, just as analysing a sample proves the condition of the bulk.

As soon as this section of the Epistle begins we are at once struck that there are certain words, that we do not find in the Gospels, such words as righteousness, justification, propitiation — words that remind us of the law courts. It is to be remarked that "righteousness" is mentioned no less than 35 times in this Epistle, and Divine love only 6 times; whereas in the Gospel of John Divine love is mentioned 31 times, and righteousness only twice. It will thus be gathered that the Gospel according to John presents the Gospel of the grace of God from the Divine side, from the aspect of God's mighty love in designing it at the amazing cost of the atoning death of His beloved Son on Calvary's cross; whereas the Epistle to the Romans presents the Gospel of the grace of God from the side of the sinner's need with the object of

clearing his mind as to the way that God has taken to meet **righteously** that need, setting up the believing sinner before Himself, consistently with His own character and holiness.

#### CHAPTERS 4 AND 5: I-II.

Here we find Abraham brought forward as one, who was justified by faith; and David as knowing the blessedness of the forgiveness of sins through faith. How confirming it must have been to the readers of this Epistle to find that what is brought before their notice was in germ, we may say, in their own Old Testament Scriptures, only that now the truth is seen in the full light of the accomplished death of our Lord. We are told that this was not written for Abraham's sake alone, but for us also, who, believing on the Lord, have had righteousness imputed likewise to us, so that we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Here we arrive at the height of the Gospel, even that the Holy Ghost is given, so that the love of God may be shed abroad in our hearts, and that we may joy in God, as having received the atonement (literally, **reconciliation**).

#### CHAPTER 5: 12-21.

Here we begin a quite new section of this remarkable Epistle. It is not now a question of what we have done, but of what **we are**. The question of what we have done, even of having sinned before God, has been met by the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross, bearing the judgment due to our sins, and enabling God to forgive us freely in His

amazing grace. But here it is, we repeat, a question of what we are. We have to learn from whence come our sins; are they not **the product of a sinful nature?** Sins may be forgiven, the nature, that produces them, never. So we read, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh.**" (Rom. 8: 3). Seeing that the flesh is being dealt with in this section we can understand how the word, **life**, that is Divine life, is mentioned again and again. This is all the more striking when we realise that the word, **life**, occurs only once in the preceding chapters, and that as something to be attained in the future. (Chap. 2: 7). We can now trace the great change in the believer's condition before God in this interesting section of the book.

Romans 5: 12-21 shows that the believer is under a new Headship, even that of our Lord Jesus Christ. As unconverted he derives from Adam, who communicated to his descendants a fallen sinful nature, described in Scripture as the flesh.

The word, **flesh**, it may be noted, is used to two ways in Scripture, first to describe the flesh and blood condition of mankind. Adam shared in this before he fell, and it continued with him after he fell. This way of looking at the word applied, sin apart, to our blessed Lord, "Who in the days of His flesh . . . was heard in that He feared." (Heb. 5: 7). The word is also used to designate the fallen sinful condition we naturally derived from Adam. With this our Lord

had nothing to do. The context leaves us in no doubt as to which meaning is attached to the word.

The contrast between the two headships is very plainly set forth in 1 Corinthians 15: 22, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all **that is, all who are in Christ** be made alive." Note the difference. In the one case death; in the other life. A new life is needed if we are to stand before God, so we read, that "the free gift came upon [literally **towards**] all men **unto justification of LIFE.**" (Chap. 5: 18). What a happy comforting thought it is for the believer to realise that he is transferred from the headship of Adam with its entail of death to the headship of Christ, who communicates to the believer life, Divine life, eternal life.

### CHAPTER 6.

This chapter is very practical, exhorting believers to be consistent and practical in their lives. Believers are buried with Christ by baptism unto death. (Verse 3). Not only has Christ died **FOR** us, but the believer is entitled to know

that he died **WITH** Christ; that is, that all that Christ died to is to be buried in the waters of baptism, and should never be resurrected; and the happy portion of the believer is to walk henceforth in "newness of life."

It should be observed that there are three dominant verbs in this chapter, **know, reckon, yield**, and they are mentioned in their due order. First the believer is identified with the death of Christ. He **knows** that Christ died for him, and that when Christ was crucified it meant that the old man of the believer, that is, the flesh, with its habits and ways, was crucified with Him. This leads the believer to **reckon** himself to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through Christ Jesus our Lord. (Verse 11). Finally we are exhorted to **yield** our members to God, that is, our mind, body, feet, hands, etc., which in our unconverted days were yielded to uncleanness and iniquity. They should now be yielded to righteousness unto holiness (verse 19).

(To be concluded D.V. in our next issue).

## RESURRECTION

W. H. WESTCOTT.

(John 5: 19-29).

**WHEN** Jesus was here He raised dead people to life. But His business when here was not to work miracles purely for the sake of showing that He could do so; but in order to make the Father known and to reveal God. He never did

any work except with the object of manifesting the willingness of God to meet men in their every need, and to carry out God's love purpose.

It would have been possible for Him to utter one call and **all** the

dead would have risen, and **all** the sick would have been cured. But the time for that had not come. There were other works to do.

He came to give eternal life with its knowledge of God. Mere power in raising dead people and in curing sickness would not give the knowledge of God nor confer eternal life. The tree of life is inaccessible on earth; the way back to Eden is closed. To open the way to eternal life for men, He must die; life and the knowledge of God became accessible there. When that work was done, life was in Him, even in Him raised from the dead, as God's gift to men.

Men are in death until reached

by God and by the voice of the Son. His voice is not, at this time, uttered to touch **bodies** but **souls**. Quickening out of death means a new order of life for men, in which sinning and doing our own will are hated, and doing God's will is loved. It is not a life merely to live continuously on earth, but of knowing God in Christ, so that here, in the midst of evil, we may live unto Him by the power of the Holy Spirit of God.

But all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. That time will also come. The earnest of it was when He was here: the fulfilment, both as to just and unjust, will be presently.

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## FAITH AND WORKS

J. HOUSTON.

**F**AITH and works have always been a subject of much controversy. And, like most Scriptural subjects, that have been submitted to the reasonings of the human mind, it has suffered a good deal of distortion. Councils have been held, decisions made, voluminous learned works written, in the attempt to give it a fixed, orthodox form; but the party spirit, so common in controversy, made this impossible, by the divisions it caused. Some made little of faith, and much of works. Others made much of faith, and little of works. The result is division.

A glance at Christendom suffices to show that the whole camp is split in two parts: one affirming that works are essential for salva-

tion; the other upholding that faith, without works, alone can save. What is left for simple Christians, who have no party spirit, is to repair to the Word of God, and seek humbly the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit, that they may learn what is taught there, for their comfort and edification. This we seek to do.

“Faith, without works, is dead” (James 2: 20). Works, without faith, are dead. They are called “dead works” (Heb. 9: 14). Hence either, without the other, is void. Of necessity, therefore, they must go inseparably together. They form one subject, which, in view of its importance, lies at the very foundation of the apostles' doctrine. We cannot, therefore, be too

careful, in studying the Scriptures, in order to due proportion and balance. If we take up one unduly, to the detriment of the other, we shall spoil both. What need we have of a right division of the Word of truth!

From the earliest times, faith and works have existed in individuals as **one harmonious whole**, which formed the basis of their relationship with God, and their testimony to man. Abel had faith; he also had works. Mention is made of his faith in Heb. 11: 4; of his works, in 1 John 3: 12. In just proportion, and in complete harmony, both were seen in him, and constituted him a "righteous" man before God, and his brother Cain. His faith was in God; his works before Cain. We see the same in Abraham. He had faith; he also had works. Paul makes reference to his faith in Romans 4: 3; James, to his works, in his Epistle, 2: 21. And this is without the merest trace of discrepancy. We say this, because the theologians have imagined there is discrepancy. Paul on the side of faith, and James on the side of works. In fact, Luther was so prejudiced that he called the Epistle of James, an "Epistle of Straw." But this we leave. Our business is to maintain balance, correct judgment, as a right division of the Word of truth demands.

As we travel down the history of God's dealings with man, we see that faith was always the recognised principle of life. "The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2: 4). Even when the law was in full force, this principle was unaltered, for the just always lived by his

faith. Faith, then, was not only **before** the law, as in the case of the patriarchs, but **above** the law, when the period of probation under law was actually in course, as Habakkuk proves.

Nor was it a principle of life, and the basis of man's relationship with God, confined only to the Old Testament; the apostles, in support of their doctrine, laid it down, as it was taught by Habakkuk, using the same words, "the just shall live by his faith," no fewer than three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1: 17; Gal. 3: 11; Heb. 10: 38). Difference of dispensation brought difference of teaching; but faith, in principle, has never changed. We are told plainly enough, "**Without faith it is impossible to please God.**" And the reason is added: "for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11: 6). This refers to all God's dealings with men, extending over all dispensations. When this is understood, and held clearly and firmly, as it should be, we shall have no difficulty in assigning to faith its proper place, in man's relationship to God.

As to the order of faith and works, we should be careful to maintain that faith precedes works, and not works precede faith; just as life precedes fruit, and not fruit precedes life. Works are the natural outcome of faith, just as fruit is the natural outcome of life. In order to prove this, we would turn to the Scripture, where we have clear examples. The Philippian jailor was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. This he did,

thus exercising his faith. After he believed, he showed his works, by washing the stripes he had laid on the servants of God, and giving them food (Acts 16: 25-34). The Thessalonians turned to God from idols. This was their faith. Then they served the living and true God. This was their works (1 Thess. 1: 9). A cruel jailor had no works for God, till he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Idolatrous pagans (such many of the Thessalonians were) had no works for God, till they believed on God, through the preaching of Paul. So, uniformly, we find it everywhere. We need not, therefore, put the cart before the horse, for the order is clear, and needs no more comment.

As to the object of faith, it is always, and only, God. "Have faith in God," the Lord said to His disciples (Mark 11: 22). Since it is the Lord's own word, it is final. We are well warned not to put faith in man; not even in princes (Ps. 146: 3). Nay, there is a curse on those who trust in man (Jer. 17: 5). Nor is it faith in a creed, drawn out by man; or any particular system of teaching, outlined by man. It is **faith in God**. We cannot improve on this. We do well to abide by it, with all the tenacity our souls possess. God alone is the object of faith. He has revealed Himself to us, in His beloved Son, in order that we might believe on Him; and, believing on Him, have eternal life. This is the true God, and eternal life.

Works, on the contrary, are before man, as a testimony. God must have faith; man must have works. God does not need the testimony of

works; He sees faith, and this is all He asks. Man does not see faith, and asks for works. With him, seeing works is believing, as he understands belief. And this constitutes our testimony to man, that we show him our works, so that, seeing them, he may glorify God. Thus the Lord instructed His disciples: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. 5: 16).

We have this very strikingly brought before us in Luke 7. The Lord had to teach Simon a lesson, about the woman, whom Simon called a sinner. In doing this, He did not speak of her faith, but of her works. Simon knew nothing of her faith; but he saw her works. She wept; washed the Lord's feet with her tears; dried them with her hairs; kissed them, and anointed them with ointment. Simon had failed to show the Lord the ordinary courtesies a host should have shown to his guest. He did not, therefore, have difficulty in learning the lesson the Lord taught him, through the woman's works. When it was a question of the woman's salvation, which is of faith, the Lord said to her: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Her faith was in God, from whom she had salvation; her works were before Simon, who could not fail to see them.

But we cannot close, without saying something about the law given at Sinai. When it is allowed to come in and mix itself with the Gospel all is spoiled completely. It is like the wild gourds in the

prophets' pottage; it spoils all (2 Kings 4: 38-41). We have neither faith, nor works, when the law comes in, to spoil both. Yes, the law has wrought great havoc in Christianity, as the Epistle to the Galatians shows. When it mixes itself with the holy and precious things of **pure** grace, then "there is death in the pot," to use the prophets' words. The result is, all is unserviceable. With "death in the pot," the prophets "could not eat thereof." Nor is our food eatable, when the law is mixed with it.

But should we allow this alien principle to come in, to spoil our divine and glorious things? Surely not! By simple faith we can shut

it out; just as Abraham shut out Hagar (type of the law), and Ishmael (type of the flesh). In fact, it is the only ground of peace. But what has the law to do with either faith or works? Nothing at all. Faith, we have already seen, existed before the law was given; nor did it alter faith, when it was given. Works pleasing to God are not of the law; they are of faith. The Thessalonians were praised for their "work of faith." This, to an obedient mind, is conclusive.

What remains is, that we should see to it, that our faith in God grow "exceedingly," and that our works be an ever-brightening light before men, that God may be glorified thereby (2 Thess. 1: 3).

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**"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."**  
(Hebrews 11: 13).

Those whose ambition is dignity and power, those who dream only of riches, those who have no other aim than the pleasures of this world, act according to that which is in their hearts. Their habits bear the mark of what they are longing for. So it is in the Church. If the faithful understand **their** calling, which is no less than participation in a coming heavenly glory, what would be the consequence? Nothing less than to live here as strangers and pilgrims. — J.N.D.

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**"There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?"** (2 Peter 3: 3, 4).

If we study the history of the Church, we shall find it to have declined in spirituality exactly in proportion as this doctrine of the expectation of the Saviour's return has been lost sight of. In forgetting this truth, it has become weak and worldly. — J.N.D.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 16: 1 — 18: 33).

CHAPTER 16 introduces us to the episode in the life of Abram, which has an allegorical significance, as the Apostle Paul shows in Galatians 4. Hagar was a bondswoman; she came from Egypt, type of the world; her son was born "after the flesh;" her name is said to mean "Wandering." Law and the flesh and the world and bondage are closely connected all through Scripture, and here first we have them all brought together.

In chapter 12 we saw Abram's lapse in going down into Egypt, and though both he and Sarai came out safely, owing to God's intervention, it appears that they brought something of Egypt out with them in the shape of this handmaid of Sarai, who became a snare before long, and a source of trouble that has persisted over thousands of years. The hostility between Ishmael and Isaac is visible in their descendants today. In the same way many a trouble in our lives as Christians may be traced to some lapse into worldliness of which we have been guilty.

The standards that prevailed in patriarchal times as to matrimonial relationships were much below those established in the light of Christianity. In those days no law had been given, and when it was given through Moses it did not express the perfect thought of God, as the Lord Himself said in Matthew 19: 8. This accounts for the action in this matter of both Sarai and Abram. What they did

was done without any sense of wrong. The promise of a seed had been given to Abram: Sarai was barren, and this was just an attempt to secure its fulfilment after the flesh. We have to learn that everything achieved after the flesh ends in failure and trouble.

The trouble started before Ishmael was born, as soon as the bondswoman effectively took the place of the freewoman. The bondswoman then despised the freewoman, just as later the child of the former persecuted the child of the latter. The immediate result was that the freewoman asserted her place and dealt hardly with the other so that she fled.

At this point the Angel of the Lord intervened. According to the customs of that time Hagar had evidently had no option in the matter, and God is a God of pity, and of judgment. Even if she had been impertinent to her mistress, she was not to be left in the wilderness in her need; only, returning she was to be subject and submit to her mistress. Viewing her personally, apart from her typical significance, she was as much sinned against as sinning, and by God's intervention the scales of justice were evenly held.

And not only this but the future of the coming son was foretold: his name was given, his character indicated. His name means, "God hears." Hagar spoke of God as, "Thou God seest me," or "Thou

art the God who reveals Himself" (New Trans.) The well by which the angel appeared to her became known as "The well of the Living who was seen." Thus even poor Hagar derived blessing from this trying episode, though the son, when born, became a trial to Abram himself, as well as to Sarai and the future Isaac.

The name of the son, Ishmael, was to commemorate the fact that God heard the affliction of Hagar. It had reference to her rather than to him. He was to be a "wild man," the word really means a "wild-ass." In the light of Galatians 4, this is significant, since "he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh." Now Romans 8: 7 tells us that the mind of the flesh "is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Man after the flesh has lawlessness stamped upon him, and he is aptly typified by a wild ass.

Here too we see in figure what accounts for the state of the world today. Man in the flesh is not only lawless in regard to God but antagonistic in regard to his fellows. The one characteristic springs out of the other. There could be no peace where Ishmael was. And to make matters worse there was to be no shutting him out or getting rid of him; for the decree was, "he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." Hagar typified the covenant of the law, given at Sinai. Now that did not abolish the man after the flesh. It only laid restraint upon him, "which gendereth to bondage." The restraint was immediately broken and the "wild-ass" character more fully revealed.

This Hagar episode took place when Abram was 86 years old, and we hear nothing further as to him for thirteen more years. When 99 years old another great revelation reached him and a further covenant was established, as we find in chapter 17. Here for the first time do we get "Almighty God" (El-Shaddai). Abram was to know Him according to this name — the God who can raise the dead, and to whom nothing is impossible — as is made clear in Exodus 6: 3. Abram knew the name, Jehovah, for we have the record of his using it, but what that great name signified did not come to light until the time of the Exodus and the subsequent giving of the law, for it was relevant to that. God Almighty was the name relevant to the unconditional covenant made with Abram. That covenant altogether depended upon God, and His almightiness ensured its ultimate fulfilment.

The closing words of verse 1 show the responsibility that rested on Abram in the light of the revelation. His ways were to be regulated by his knowledge of God. His perfection lay in his complete conformity to the revelation that had been given. In Matthew 5: 48 we find the word, "perfect," used in just the same sense, only there according to the revelation of God to the disciples as their Father who is in heaven. Today we should be perfect according to a revelation of God which is even higher than that.

This revelation, "I am the Almighty God," was followed in verses 2-8, by a covenant of promise, in which no less than seven times God states what He will do.

“I will,” is the characteristic phrase; beginning, “I will make My covenant,” and ending, “I will be their God.” The little word “if” is only conspicuous by its absence, for it was a covenant without condition on Abram’s part. He had sought to obtain a seed by natural means through Hagar, but God intended to multiply him abundantly, making him a father of many nations, and securing to his seed the land of promise, being in a special sense their God.

In confirmation of this covenant God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, meaning, “Father of a multitude,” and from this point onwards the new name is used, though as yet the promise involved in the name had received no fulfilment. Thus God pledged Himself to bring it to pass in His own way.

Though the fulfilment of this covenant depended upon God and not upon Abraham, there was a sign given in connection with it, and Abraham was to keep the covenant in the sense of observing the sign. Of this verses 9-14 speak. The sign was circumcision, and it was to be observed by Abraham and his descendants and all his household; the latter term including all born in his house and bond-slaves, obtained by purchase. The casual type of servant, who was only hired, was evidently excluded. Here for the first time in Scripture we find a household recognized, as identified with him who is the head of it. They are those over whom the head has authority, so that he can command them, as we see in verse 19 of the next chapter.

As far as Abraham was concerned circumcision was just a rite to be observed, since there is nothing to show that he was instructed in its spiritual significance. Twice in Deuteronomy does Moses mention the circumcising of the heart, in contrast with that accomplished in the flesh, but it looks as if its full significance did not come to light until “the circumcision of Christ” (Col. 2: 11) became an accomplished fact. Abraham and his descendants had the rite, for it was the sign of the covenant of promise — just as the Sabbath was the sign of the Mosaic covenant of law — but the meaning of it is reserved for us Christians, who, if Gentiles, do not observe the outward rite at all.

According to that verse in Colossians the true circumcision is that done without hands in Christians “in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ” (New Trans.) As the next verse shows, the allusion here is to His death. He, the Messiah, was cut off as predicted (Psa. 102: 24; Dan. 9: 26). He was actually severed from His life down here in flesh and blood, in order that He might take up life again in resurrection. As identified with Him, we put the sentence of death on the old fleshly life that once we lived, and thus put off the body of the flesh. Thus the significance of the rite was the putting of the death sentence on the flesh and all its works. God’s unconditional covenant of promise is not to be made good on a fleshly basis. If the flesh was spared, the covenant was broken, as verse 14 indicates.

In connection with this, God also changed the name of Sarai to Sarah,

which means, Princess. She too was to be blessed and become the mother of a son, though she was now nearly ninety years of age. Abraham's response to this surprising announcement was remarkable. He fell upon his face and laughed, raising in his heart the question as to his own great age, and Sarah's also. At first sight we might be inclined to regard both the laughter and the language as indicating a spirit of scepticism, but in the light of Romans 4: 18-20, we must regard it rather as expressive of joyful wonder. Verse 18 of our chapter points to the same conclusion. He recognized that the supernatural birth of the one who was to be the heir of promise involved the supplanting of him born after the flesh. Hence his request that Ishmael might yet live before God.

In response to this the promise of a son is confirmed and his name is given by God. Now Isaac means **Laughter**. This further confirms what we have just stated, for Abraham's laughter would hardly have been thus commemorated by God if it had signified doubt and not faith. The covenant of promise was to run in the line of Isaac, yet God answered the request as to Ishmael and promised to bless him in natural things, making him a great nation under twelve princes. The fulfilment of this is recorded in chapter 25: 12-16.

The closing paragraph of the chapter shows how the faith of Abraham promptly expressed itself in works. He accepted the outward sign of circumcision for himself and for his house. No time was lost: the thing was accomplished "in the

selfsame day." The operation itself was not a pleasant one, running contrary to natural feelings, and in each the flesh would have cried out to be spared. How suitably therefore does it typify that death to the flesh, of which the New Testament speaks, only there it is not the material body of man that is in question but the fallen nature characterizing that body, with its appetites and lusts.

This prompt response of faith on Abraham's part invited another manifestation of the Lord to him, with which chapter 18 opens. It evidently took place very soon after the other. It was unusual in character, differing from any preceding appearance inasmuch as "three men" approached, and it was "in the heat of the day," just when no one would pay a visit in the ordinary way. Abraham's hospitality rose to the occasion, and angels were entertained unawares, as Hebrews 13: 2 puts it — indeed more than this for one of the three was a manifestation of Jehovah Himself. The picture presented of patriarchal simplicity is striking and beautiful, and the heavenly Visitors partook of the refreshment provided.

Sarah was now to be tested, and the announcement of the birth of a son to her was made in her hearing. Her response also was a laugh, but one which she thought was hidden from others, and which evidently did have in it an element of unbelief, so that she tried to deny it. It was known to the Lord however. Sarah's unbelieving question only drew from Him the great question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Nothing was too

hard, for He had just recently revealed Himself to her husband as "the Almighty God," though she had not grasped it so far. Jeremiah grasped it in his day (Jer. 32: 17) and presently Sarah did so, or we should not have the statement: "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed" (Heb. 11: 11).

But the heavenly Visitors had come, not only to confirm the wavering faith of Sarah, but with other purposes in view. They set their faces toward Sodom and Abraham went with them for some distance, and this gave occasion to that incident in which we see Abraham as the friend of God. A mere servant does not know what his Lord does, as the Lord indicated in John 15: 15, whereas a friend has access to things kept secret from others.

Hence Abraham is not to have hid from him that which the Lord was about to do in the judgment of the cities of the plain; and that not only because of the privilege conferred upon him, but because of his moral character and worth. He was privileged not only to become a great nation but also to be the progenitor of the Messiah in whom all the nations would be blessed. His character was such that the Lord could say: "I know him," and that he would maintain what was right, not only personally but also in his family and household. So later on the prophet, speaking on God's behalf, could say, "Abraham My friend." (Isa. 41: 8).

Thus it was that when two of the three had proceeded on their way to Sodom, Abraham was permitted to speak to the Third, even to the

Lord Himself, and even to reason with Him. Of all the cases recorded in the Old Testament where men were brought face to face with God this instance stands alone, we think, in the intimacy and liberty enjoyed, coupled with absence of fear. Abraham, secure in his own standing before the Lord, took the place of an intercessor.

He reasoned before the Lord in the assurance that the Judge of all the earth would do right, and in his pleadings he doubtless had in view Lot and his family. In the next chapter we read of Lot's sons-in-law, so probably he reckoned that together with his wife, unmarried daughters, married daughters and their husbands, as many as ten could be found in Sodom who could be accounted righteous. Hence, starting at fifty, and descending to forty-five, forty, thirty, twenty, he stopped satisfied at ten. The next chapter shows that even ten were not to be found.

Though Abraham knew such liberty in the Lord's presence we find him, like all others who really have to do with God, deeply sensible of his own sin and nothingness. We hear Job saying: "Behold, I am vile;" Isaiah saying: "I am undone;" Peter saying: "I am a sinful man, O Lord;" Paul saying: "I am chief" of sinners. Abraham says, I "am but dust and ashes," and, as far as the Scripture record goes, he heads the list, the first to condemn himself in the presence of God.

And he who thus condemned himself is the man called the friend of God. In both these respects are we following in his train?

# THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

A. J. POLLOCK.

(Continued from our last issue)

## CHAPTER 7.

We come now to what a few years ago was rightly looked upon as a most important chapter in the Bible, a chapter that speaks of a great inward conflict between two natures, the old and the new. It used to be said that it mattered not what Scripture was under consideration at a Bible reading, that it always ended in Romans 7. It would be good if it were so now, for in past years there were tender consciences and exercised minds as to practical Christian living. Alas! today things, we fear, are more superficial.

The chapter begins with an illustration of a woman married to a husband, and the husband dying, and leaving her free to marry again. It is used to illustrate that the believer has died to the law by the body of Christ, and being dead as to the claims of the law, is now free to be for another, even Christ raised from the dead. Again we note how the Apostle Paul insists upon the believer's identification with the death of Christ, that we have died in His death, and are now free from all that held us in bondage, so that we are free for Him.

Then there follows the description of a terrible conflict between the two natures — the flesh and the new nature the believer has of God. We read the agonised cry of the soul in this dire conflict. He says, "We know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not:

for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (verses 14, 15). The chapter is full of I, I, I, I — self-occupation. In utter despair of any improvement of his own encompassing, he cries out, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" using an illustration known in the Roman army, that a soldier guilty of very grave offence was tied to a corpse, till death should free him. Note the cry is not, **What** shall deliver me? but, **Who** shall deliver me? Instantly comes the answer, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ is the great Deliverer. It has been truly said that the chapter does not give deliverance once and for all, as some wrongly teach, but that in every need a Deliverer is available for us. The flesh remains with the believer, till death takes him out of the body, or the Lord shall come to take His people where there will be no more sinning.

## CHAPTER 8.

The introduction of fresh words is always significant and instructive. This is the great chapter of the Holy Spirit. Only once in the previous seven chapters is the Holy Spirit mentioned, and that in chapter 5: 15, where the Spirit is given to shed abroad the love of God in the heart of the believer. In the first sixteen verses of this chapter the Holy Spirit is mentioned no less than 15 times. This is very arresting. What is the great thought in the gift of the Spirit? Our Lord Himself connects the thought of

power with it. We read, "And behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." (Luke 24: 49). So in this chapter the believer is made free from the law of sin and death by the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. As the believer walks not after the flesh but after the Spirit, the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled in him, though he is not "under the law" as a means for maintaining himself before God on the ground of works, which no one can do. In having the Spirit the believer is spiritually minded. Moreover the indwelling Spirit is a pledge that the believer will share in the power of the resurrection of Christ Himself, when He comes to raise His sleeping saints, and quicken the mortal bodies of those that are alive on the earth. Christ was raised by the power of the Holy Spirit, and that same Power is given to dwell in the believer as this glorious Pledge. This wonderful chapter begins with "no condemnation," and ends with no separation from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To place this section before the eye of the reader the following may help.

Chapter 5: 12-21. — The New Head — Christ.

Chapter 6. — The New Master — righteousness.

Chapter 7. — The New Husband — Christ.

Chapter 8. — The New Power — the Holy Spirit.

In Chapters 5, 6 and 7 the blessings are objective, and found alone in Christ. Christ is made unto us righteousness. (1 Cor. 1: 30). In chapter 8 the gift of the Holy Spirit is subjective; that is, He is given to indwell the body of the believer as bringing Divine power into his life, and enabling him to enter into the meaning and apprehension of the truths set forth in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

#### CHAPTERS 9, 10 AND 11.

These chapters are deeply important, setting forth God's sovereignty in blessing the Gentiles, and His ways in government in setting Israel for the time being aside as having nationally rejected their Messiah and King, crucifying the Lord of glory. Note in chapter 9: 22 it is careful not to say that God fitted "the vessels of wrath" to destruction. They fitted themselves by their sin. But verse 23 tells us how gloriously God exercises His sovereignty in making known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, **which He had aforetime prepared unto glory.**

It may be remarked that God's sovereignty is always shown in blessing man. God blesses man, does not destroy him. Man destroys himself by his sin. We read, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help." (Hosea 13: 9). Men and nations destroy themselves, and then God comes in to destroy, that is, to carry out righteous government in relation to man's sin. The law puts a murderer to death, but only because he has committed a crime punishable by death. In truth the

murderer destroys himself, though the law passes a verdict of guilty, and carries out the sentence.

Though this section tells us that "blindness in part is happened to Israel;" that is, judicial hardness of heart is their portion consequent on crucifying their King and Redeemer, yet chapter 10 stands out pre-eminently as setting forth the Gospel, which does not set aside the Jew. "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." (Chap. 10: 12). Not till "the fulness of the Gentiles" is complete — that is, this present dispensation of God, which marks this church period — will the hardness of heart of Israel pass away. The day is coming quickly when "the spirit of grace and supplications" shall mark Israel, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and receive Him at last as their true Messiah. (Zech. 12: 10).

No wonder that the Apostle closed this section with an outburst of praise — "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

#### CHAPTER 12.

Now begins the hortatory part of the Epistle. The believer is exhorted by the mercies of God to present his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, not to conform himself to the world, but be transformed by the renewing of his mind. Then there follow a few verses that take into account the order of the assembly in a very interesting way. This, we take it, is from

the aspect of the House of God. It begins with the highest expression of spiritual activity, that of prophecy, then ministry, teaching, exhorting; then it comes down to the ministry of giving, of leading in the assembly, of showing mercy with cheerfulness. Then follow exhortations to divine love, abhorring evil, cleaving to good, distributing to the necessity of saints, given to hospitality, etc.

#### CHAPTERS 13, 14 AND 15.

We have here exhortations as to the Christian's attitude to "the powers that be" seeing they are "ordained of God;" to render to all men their dues; to owe no man anything, save love, which cannot be repaid, save in responsive love. Then the believer is exhorted to be tender with his weak-minded brother, who might be stumbled by his actions, lawful and according to God though they might be. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak. Then the Apostle comes to speak of himself as the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, and how he sought to carry out this ministry. Finally he speaks of wishing to visit them in person whenever he took the journey he wished to take into Spain.

#### CHAPTER 16.

He begins by commending Phebe of Cenchrea, who was the messenger to carry the manuscript of this wonderful Epistle to the great metropolis of the world, that they should receive her as becometh saints. He sends his salutations to a number of the saints in the assembly at Rome, including four

of his own relatives in the flesh, and to quite a few sisters by name. He warns them against divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine they had learned, and to avoid those, who would bring these things about. Then he sends the salutation of the whole of the Corinthian assembly, mentioning specially by name a few, who were with him at the time.

Finally, the last three verses of this remarkable Epistle are of rare value. They link on the preaching of the Gospel of the grace of God with the revelation of the mystery

of God, of which we read in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. This shows how all truth is co-related, how the Gospel leads on to assembly truth, the truth of the Church, blessing going out to the Gentiles, the mystery hid from all ages, now to be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. So if the beginning of this Epistle gives us the foundation, the end of it indicates the top-stone of the great edifice of God.

So the Epistle ends, "To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

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## PEACE AND GODLY ORDER

W. KELLY

(1 Timothy 2: 1-4)

**I**T is not here the counsels of God in all their immense extent and heavenly glory, but rather what is consistent with the nature of God revealed in Christ and published everywhere by the Gospel. Such is the character of our Epistle, and is the ground on which the Apostle insists upon a spirit of peace on the one hand and of godly order on the other. In accordance with this he exhorts that the saints should be marked by a desire of blessing for all mankind: the very reverse of that proud austerity which the heathen bitterly resented in the later Jews.

It was the more important to press this gracious attitude, inasmuch as it is of the very essence of the Church to stand in holy separateness from

the world, as a chaste virgin espoused to Christ. With light or harsh minds this separation easily degenerates into a sour self-complacency; which repels from, instead of attracting to, Him whose rights over all it is the prime duty of the Church to assert, whose glory and whose grace ought to fill every mouth and heart with praise. From a misuse of his privileges a Jew was ever in danger of scorning the Gentile, and not least those in high place, with a bitter contempt for such of their brethren as served the Gentile in the exaction of tribute, the sign of their own humiliation. In their national ruin they had more than all the pride of their prosperity, and judged their heathen masters with a sternness ill-suited to those who had lost their position, for a time at

least, through their constant yielding to the worst sins of the Gentiles.

The Christian is in no less danger. For on the one hand he is entrusted with a testimony of truth far beyond what the Jew had, and, on the other, his separation does not consist so much in external forms. Hence he is in continual danger in making good a separation to God, not in the power of the Holy Ghost in truth and love among those who cleave to the Lord, but in peculiar abstinences and prohibitions, in an effort to differ from others, and so in a claim of superiority for themselves. This evidently exposes the unwary to self-deception, as it tends to build up that which is as far as possible from the mind of Christ — a bitter though unconscious sectarianism.

Here we see how the Spirit of God guards the saints, so that their separation, however holy, may savour of God's grace and not of man's pride. Supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, are to be made for all men. It is not only that they ought always to pray and not to faint; nor again that they should only pray for all saints and especially for those identified with the testimony of Christ. But here we find an exhortation to every variety of prayer on the broad basis of God's relationship with all mankind. The saints have to answer to this if they would not be false to the truth. They, too, have a corresponding relation. The very Gospel by which they were saved should remind them of it; for if the Church in its union with Christ, or rather, if Christ and the Church be the special witness of divine counsels, the

Gospel is no less the standing witness of God's grace to the world. The saints therefore, knowing both, are responsible to bear a true testimony to the one no less than the other. And in practice it will be found that exaggeration in one tends not only to lose the other, but to corrupt that which becomes the exclusive object. For Christ is the truth; neither the Gospel nor the Church has a right to our love undividedly, but both in subjection to Christ. And we are called to bear witness to "the" truth, as we are sanctified (not by this or by that truth but) by "the truth."

Such is the danger today as it was of old. Saints like other men are apt to be one-sided. It looks spiritual to choose the highest line and stand on the loftiest point, and fancy oneself to be safe in that heavenly elevation. On the other hand, it seems loving to steer clear of the church question so constantly abused to gratify ambition, if not spite and jealousy (and thus scattering saints instead of uniting them holily around the Lord's Name), and to devote all one's energies, in the present broken state of Christendom, to the good news, which wins souls to God from destruction. But this is to surrender the nearest circle of Christ's affections and honour. The only course, that is right, holy, and faithful, is to hold all that is precious in His eyes — to love the Church with all its consequences on the one hand, and on the other to go out to all mankind in the grace that would reflect the light of a Saviour God. As in Ephesians and Colossians, the former truth is most prominent, so the latter is here. Let us seek to walk in both.

# BOTH "ARM" AND "SERVANT"

F. B. HOLE.

**I**N Isaiah, chapters 40-66, we have a series of prophecies concerning the Lord Jesus Christ of a very striking character; the most remarkable, we think, in the whole range of the Old Testament. In them He is presented to us in a twofold way: firstly, as "the Arm of the Lord"; secondly, as "My Servant"; that is, "the Servant of the Lord."

As the "Arm" He is the mighty Executor of all Jehovah's pleasure, whether in grace or in judgment. As the "Servant" He stoops to suffer in order that He may lay the righteous basis on which the structure of Jehovah's pleasure is to be reared. He was seen as the "Servant" at His first Advent. He will be manifested at His second Advent as the "Arm."

As Jehovah's "Arm" He is particularly referred to in chapters 40: 9-11; 51: 4-16; 52: 13—53: 1; 59: 16; 63: 5 and 12.

Taking a rapid survey of these passages, we learn that by His "Arm" the Lord God is coming not in weakness but in strength, not to suffer but to rule and to give reward. There will be reward in judgment for the wicked, but the same "Arm" will be gracious, acting in the tenderness of a shepherd for the smallest and weakest of the true sheep of the Lord.

Then again, on that "Arm" the godly may safely trust, for it will awake and put on strength as it did in the days of old, when it smote Egypt (Rahab) and divided the Red

Sea. But now far greater purposes are in view, as enumerated in the latter part of verse 16 (chapter 51). The heavens are to be planted; the foundations of the earth are to be laid; Israel in Zion is to be acknowledged as God's people.

In the present age God is preparing to plant the heavens, by calling out saints, by forming the Church, which will have its seat in the heavens when the age of glory has arrived. Then God will set His hand to the laying of the foundations of the earth in a moral and governmental sense — in the sense indicated by the Psalmist, when he declared "all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Psa. 82: 5).

So they are! That is just what is wrong in the earth today and a complete relaying of the foundations is needed. Recognizing this, many politicians want to smash everything up and begin all over again. Should they succeed, the result would be worse evil, for they have no use for "the Arm of the Lord," who alone can accomplish such a work that, instead of lawlessness and evil, righteousness shall reign. Then lastly Zion will be acknowledged and Israel find her proper place, so that righteousness indeed may reign. But to bring all this to pass God's holy "Arm" will act in drastic judgment as we see in chapters 59 and 63.

But another line of things is presented to us when we consider the passages which deal with the "Servant" of the Lord — particularly

chapters 42, 49 and 53. There is now before us One who comes in lowly grace and humiliation, and suffering; who appears on the surface of things to fail in His mission, but who nevertheless will carry it to a triumphant issue.

He is introduced to us in chapter 42, and we are at once told that though He will not come like political agitators amongst men, and will not break bruised reeds nor quench smoking flax; that is, not deal in judgment with such false and offensive people as the Pharisees were (see, Matt. 12: 14-21); yet He will ultimately bring forth judgment unto **truth**, and that will be **victory**. It may look as if He fails, when He thus comes the first time in grace, but He will not fail, nor will He be discouraged. Moses failed, and Elijah was discouraged because he appeared to fail, but this Servant will accomplish His appointed task to perfection.

Now in chapter 49 the same feature appears, and we hear the Servant Himself speaking in prophetic strain. He says, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." We turn to the Gospels and we see Him standing, the hour of His passion and death just ahead; and what was the apparent result of all His labours? Why, just a little handful of very humble folk: a few fishermen from Galilee's lake-side, a few women who followed Him, and here and there received Him into their homes. In high-class and intellectual circles they were conspiring to arrest Him.. They could ask in contemptuous tones, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him?" There could be no doubt

about it: on the surface His mission had failed.

But to all this the response of this perfect Servant was, "Yet surely My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God." In chapter 53 we read, "He was taken from prison and from judgment," which in Acts 8 is rendered as, "In His humiliation His judgment was taken away." In condemning Him, men violated every principle of right judgment, but He was content to maintain silence before His judges and remove His judgment to the highest Court in the universe. He knew that His vindication in the presence of Jehovah was sure.

Therefore was He able to say, "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and My God shall be My strength." Let us take note of that! Man's thought and judgment is completely cancelled by God. The humbled Man — the discredited Prophet of Nazareth — as He trod His way to Calvary in the midst of the rabble throng, forsaken by His disciples, and the derision of men, was simply glorious in the eyes of Jehovah. He was about to lay the foundation for the superstructure of glory yet to be.

And we are permitted in this chapter to have a glimpse of the Divine purposes. To raise up Jacob's tribes and restore a godly remnant of Israel was a comparatively small matter. Wider and weightier things were in view. What were they? To be a light to the Gentiles and to be set as God's salvation to the ends of the earth. Ultimately Israel will be gathered, as we know, but here is predicted what God is doing today, and into

this light and blessing have we been brought by the grace of God, for now is the accepted time and the day of salvation.

But we are not allowed to forget that this day of salvation is to be followed by the day of judgment, when the humbled Servant, once despised by men, shall be honoured and magnified. The great ones of the earth shall rise to their feet and do homage before Him.

This theme is renewed in the closing verses of chapter 52, which really are the opening verses of the great 53rd chapter. Jehovah's Servant is to be exalted and extolled and be very high, but the chapter proceeds to predict that He also is to be despised and rejected and brought very low. Now how are these two things to be reconciled? Gazing upon Him humbled and rejected, who is going to believe this unexpected report of His approaching exaltation and glory? Who perceives that the humbled "Servant" and the glorious "Arm" are one and the same Person?

This has never yet been perceived by Israel. Yet in their own history there was an incident that foreshadowed it. In Genesis 35 we read how the coming into the world of Benjamin was associated with death. Hence a double name was called upon him. "The son of my sorrow" and "the son of the right hand" were one and the same person. Who then sees the glorious Arm of Jehovah in the Man of sorrows and the grief-acquainted One? Do you? Do I? We answer, Yes, thank God, we do.

The rest of this marvellous chapter predicts how it all was to work

out. Israel was indeed like dry ground — nothing fertile, nothing fresh, nothing living — but out of it sprang this root of all blessing, this tender plant. In the eyes of men He had no form nor comeliness — or lordliness — and hence He had not the kind of beauty that captures unconverted men. Many years ago now, the German Kaiser rode into Jerusalem in pomp, mounted on a white charger. That was the way to do it, if it is desired to impress men, and not riding an insignificant young donkey, as did our Lord.

Hence the men of His day hid as it were their faces from Him. They despised Him and thought His sorrows were an infliction from God, because He was an impostor. But a day is coming when the day of atonement, spoken of in Leviticus 23: 27, will find its fulfilment, and there will be national repentance in Israel and much affliction of soul as the truth dawns upon them, and they exclaim: "But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

We anticipate that time and appropriate these words as applying to ourselves, but that is because He has been set as a light to the Gentiles and God's salvation to the ends of the earth. We turn the "our" into "my," and the "we are" into "I am;" and we cannot be too simple about it. Like good old Dr. Valpy, of a century or more ago, who wrote as his dying confession simple lines which have been used since to the blessing of many:

" In peace let me resign my breath,  
And Thy salvation see;  
My sins deserve eternal death,  
But Jesus died for me."

So do we say with all our hearts,  
for we are amongst the sheep that  
had gone astray.

As we read down the chapter we discover how the prophet foresaw His death and burial. It is a remarkable fact that in verse 9, the word is literally "deaths," rather than "death." Remembering that "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more," this might seem extraordinary. But we are told that according to Hebrew idiom the plural was used to express greatness and majesty. The prophet foresaw a death of such majestic proportions — ten thousand times ten thousand deaths rolled into one — that he used the plural of majesty to express it under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Such indeed it was, and Joseph of Arimathea was specially born into the world that the words, "He was with the rich in His death," might be fulfilled.

On that majestic death will hang for eternity the glory of God, and the blessing of the uncountable millions of the redeemed.

It was not what men did as regards His death that was of such supreme importance, but what Jehovah did, as verse 10 makes so plain. Men put Him to grief, but the marvellous thing is that Jehovah did it, **making His soul an offering for sin**. There was truly the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, as we read in Hebrews, but here is something even more profound, the depth of which we shall

never fathom, but out of which flow glorious results.

He is to prolong His days in resurrection. And then He will "see His seed" — His spiritual progeny — who are, in the language of John 12, the "much fruit" produced by the dying of the single "corn of wheat." Moreover all the pleasure of Jehovah will prosper in His hand. In His risen glory He will bring to pass everything that is delightful to the heart of God.

In all this He will have His own peculiar joy. In accomplishing the pleasure of Jehovah, He will see the fruit of "the travail of His soul," and it will fill up the cup of His satisfaction to the brim. A very little will satisfy us, for we are creatures of small capacities, but it will take an infinity of joy to satisfy Him. It shall all be His in that day for which we long.

This we may speak of as His **private** portion. Verse 12 speaks of His **public** portion. These are those accounted great. The once despised Servant of Jehovah is to be amongst them — chief and foremost — for "the spoil" is His, and He divides it with those who have proved themselves strong in serving Him during the time of His rejection.

But we must not fail to notice the first word, "Therefore." When He comes forth thus in splendour, it is **because of** His previous suffering in humiliation. Men might think that His sufferings were wholly contradictory, excluding any hope of His glory; whereas they prove to be the imperishable foundation on which His glory securely rests for ever and ever.

No wonder that the first word of

chapter 54 is "Sing." Barren Israel is to break forth into singing. In chapter 55 a Gospel call goes out to **everyone** that thirsts, and this includes Gentiles.

While we wait for the glorious consummation it is for us Christians to maintain the song, and sound out the Gospel invitation until He comes.

## INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION

J. B. MARSHALL.

Read Isaiah 51: 1 — 52: 12.

**I**F we are instructed in 1 Corinthians 10, that Israel's failings are recorded for our admonition, we should also be ready to learn from their obedience. In Isaiah 49, we see the introduction of a faithful Servant in Israel; and in verse 3, the Lord addresses Him as "Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Thus He begins a new nation in Him, who was born under the law, to redeem them who were under the law, according to Galatians 4: 4, 5. One gladly sees in this not only a new nation, but an indication of a new race of men "in Christ."

Isaiah 49: 6, looks on to this truth, for in this chapter we get the rejection of Christ and God's answer to it in salvation to the ends of the earth, which takes us on to the restoration of Israel and the Gentiles blest under His sway. In chapter 50 we get the humiliation of Christ in his pathway, with again God's care over Him. Then in the last three verses of chapter 52, and the whole of chapter 53 we find His atoning-work. Between His humility and rejection in chapters 49 and 50, and his expiatory work in chapter 53 — the two beautifully blending — we have the moral recovery of the remnant of Israel. By way of application is this a guide to us in

these closing days?

The thrice repeated "Hearken" and the thrice repeated "Awake, awake," coupled with verses 11-12 at the end of chapter 52, give us seven aspects of this recovery that should be helpful.

The first is to those who follow righteousness and seek the Lord. In this they are told to look to their Creator who formed them in His image out of the dust of the earth, verse 1, then to the promises of God Almighty in verse 2, and in verse 3 to the grace of God according to His purpose.

This leads to salvation and righteousness in the second "Hearken" or listen, and goes much beyond the first, bringing in Christ as the Arm of the Lord to establish these two great blessings.

The third "Hearken" is addressed to "ye that know righteousness" — the overcomer, verse 7.

In the first they seek, in the second they find, and in the third they know righteousness.

In the first "Awake, Awake," they cry unto the Lord, remembering their previous deliverances, verses 9-10, and it would seem that as the call to hearken revealed His righteousness, now each "Awake"

brings before us a different aspect of His deliverance, the first being from their enemies, and the view retrospective, Rahab (or Egypt) coming before the Red Sea. Both witness to the power of God over their enemies and also to the Lord clearing a way for His people. The wilderness and their failures are passed over. So they awake to the remembrance of His power to deliver, He Himself confirming their cry and declaring He had put the words in their mouths.

The second "Awake" is from judgment; governmental in their case, and their deliverance is based on the Lord pleading their cause (verse 22); He being the Justifier of the weak and helpless. In this they are told to **stand up**, who were **bowed down** in chastening.

The third "Awake" is to put on strength and garments of beauty; firstly, delivered from flesh and uncleanness, then from the bondage they put round their necks at Sinai, so that they might be servants to

Him. They went down into Egypt, but "**I am**" delivered them for His service. Their feet were to be for peace, which had been swift to shed blood. Their watchmen were to sing, who cried alarms.

In verses 11-12 they are to separate from the nation who has crucified their Lord. Be ye clean that bear the testimony and fear not the slavery of the world and the power of its might, for the God of Israel goes before you and behind. They were not to be like Achan, who defiled himself and the people, for the Lord is now judging the nation.

Is not the full application to us of all this found in the first eight chapters of Romans? We follow righteousness and seek the Lord; the Lord sends forth His salvation and righteousness, we learn and know His righteousness.

He delivers from our enemies, from judgment, the flesh, the world, the law.

May the Spirit lead us into the liberty of life in Christ Jesus.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 19: 1 — 21: 33).

**A**BRAM had remained, interceding before the Lord, not so much for the guilty cities of the plain as for the ten righteous that, as he hoped, were to be found in Sodom. Two "men" of the three had turned their faces toward Sodom and as we start chapter 19 we find them arriving at the gate of Sodom, and now they are plainly disclosed as "two angels." As they approached, Lot sat in the gate of Sodom; which signifies, of course,

that he had accepted magisterial office in that exceedingly wicked city. This enables us to understand more fully how he "vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds," as recorded in 2 Peter 2: 7, 8. He not only saw and heard fearful evils as a private person but came into contact with it all as a magistrate.

Bearing this in mind, our chapter is full of the most solemn warning

for us all. He may have regarded his election as a judge as an elevation; it was in truth a sad fall, entailing dire consequences. We saw him at first pitching his tent toward Sodom. Then he dwelt in it, and shared in its defeat, as recorded in chapter 14. Now he has become a leader in it. And with what effect? Has he prevailed to clean up its degraded morals, to improve its ethical standards? Not in the least! He has, as we shall see, only involved himself and his family in its evils.

He had preserved however patriarchal politeness and hospitality, as we see in verses 1-3. He too entertained angels unawares, but with a very different result as compared with Abraham. As night came on his house was besieged by godless men, bent on monstrous evil. Lot's attempt to pacify them by the sacrifice of his two unmarried daughters shows how low in his own mind he himself had sunk by reason of Sodom's contamination. Lot's position as judge now counted for nothing, indeed they flung it back at him as though he had been a mere usurper of the office. If he had flattered himself that he could exercise an influence for good, he was now undeceived.

As the contest reached a climax the angels intervened and took charge of the situation. Blinded by angelic power the evildoers were baffled for that night, preliminary to their destruction on the morrow. Having disposed of them, the angels plainly told Lot that Sodom was to be destroyed, and he was given opportunity to get out together with his family and all that he had. In this a full answer was given to the intercession of Abraham earlier that

day. The contrast between Abraham interceding as a friend with God on the heights, and Lot, defiled and impotent in the worldly cities of the plain, may well be thoughtfully considered, and sink into all our hearts.

Lot now saw everything in a very different light, and went forth to his sons-in-law to warn and deliver them. But to them he seemed "as one that mocked." Notice, it does not say that they mocked him, but that they thought he was mocking or making sport of them — that really he was joking. Having come into Sodom and invested all he had in it, they could not believe he was serious, when suddenly he declared the whole place was to be destroyed in a moment. His previous course of life wholly contradicted his present testimony. We shall do well if we each ask ourselves this question — If I testify that the second Advent of Christ draws near, involving the judgment of the present world system, will they take me seriously, or will my manner of life lead them to think that I am joking?

The judgment was not going to slumber, so escape was urgent, and without the married daughters and sons-in-law the angels constrained Lot, his wife and two daughters to flee; such was the mercy of God to this true saint, who nevertheless had fallen so low. Moreover his request to be allowed to shelter in the fifth and smallest city of the plain, instead of fleeing to the mountain, was granted. Sodom would have been spared if only ten righteous persons had been in it. Zoar was spared because only one righteous man entered it. Such is the abound-

ing mercy of our God, and His slowness to judge.

The word of the angel in verse 22 is worthy of note, "I cannot do anything till thou be come thither." Why, "cannot"? Not because power was lacking to act in judgment, but because it is a fixed principle of God's ways that penal and eternal wrath is never to touch His people. The judgment of these cities was not merely a matter of governmental wrath, for penal wrath also was involved, as we see in Jude 7. The "vengeance of eternal fire" could not possibly touch Lot, since he was a righteous man, though a misguided one.

Lot having been withdrawn, the judgment fell from heaven. Those who have examined that region, in the light of modern discoveries as to oil and bitumen-bearing sites, tell us it is quite easy to visualize what happened. Perhaps so, but the miracle consisted in fire from the Lord out of heaven starting the mighty conflagration and eruptions that blasted these four cities out of existence, and left their sites to this day as "an example to those that after should live ungodly." (2 Peter 2: 6). The thought of the evil and its judgment has persisted, for the word "sodomy" is found in our language as designating sin of a specially vile and unnatural sort. This judgment, moreover, was a sample of what is yet to come on a much greater scale in "the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3: 7).

Four persons came out of Sodom, practically dragged out by the angels, as we saw in verse 16, but only three entered Zoar. Lot's wife evi-

dently left her heart in Sodom, and her eyes following her heart, she looked back, became involved in the disaster and perished under a deluge of salt. One of the shortest verses in the Bible records our Lord's words, "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17: 32). We may well remember, and let the lessons of her end sink into our hearts. She was married to a true saint, she was prayed for by an eminent saint, Abraham, she came under the constraint of angels from heaven; yet she was lost. She had the unclean nature that loved the filthy garbage of Sodom. What vexed Lot evidently had attractions for her.

Verses 27-29, shows us that Abraham was a man who watched unto prayer. He did not just ejaculate his desires and think no more about it. He resorted the next morning to the spot where he had prayed, and saw that God had fulfilled His word. Presently he was to learn that God had remembered his prayer, and though ten righteous persons had not been found, Lot had been delivered. The fervent prayer of a righteous man does indeed avail much, and it had been answered though not in the way he hoped and expected.

Lot's faith was very feeble. Though Zoar had been spared for his sake, his fear was such that he forsook it for the mountain region that formerly he had dreaded. There he found a cave and in it, having lost all his substance, he dwelt with his two daughters. We take a sad farewell of him in the closing verses of our chapter. The two daughters were saved physically but were lost morally, for we are permitted to

know that they had become infected with the immoral ways of Sodom. They brought dishonour on themselves and on their father, and brought into the world both Moab and Ammon, both of whom gave their names to peoples, who in after days became opponents of the people of God.

The failures of God's saints are not hidden from us in the Scriptures, as we have just seen in very pronounced fashion as to Lot. We pass on to chapter 20, and we get a glimpse of Abraham on a very much lower level than he was in chapter 18. He moved to Gerar and before Abimelech the king he resorted to the same device as he employed years before in Egypt. This time it was even more serious for Sarah was just about to bear the child of promise. Abraham's defection might have compromised what God had promised and was about to perform. Hence God took what we may call drastic action to protect Sarah, not dealing with Abraham, who had failed, but with the heathen king.

When faced by Abimelech with his deception, Abraham confessed that fear for his own safety, in a place not marked by the fear of God, had led him into it. In result however the fear of God was more marked in Abimelech than in Abraham. It was a definite rebuke to Abraham that God, who so frequently had appeared to him, should now pass him by and deal with the king in a dream, exposing the true situation to him direct. Abraham was a prophet and an intercessor in prayer, as the king is told, yet in this matter he is ignored by God.

Responding to the word of God, Abimelech acted very rightly, and as regarded Abraham, very handsomely; rebuking him in this fashion. Sarah too came in for his rebuke, as verse 16 records. Speaking of Abraham as her "brother" added a touch of irony to his rebuke. It is a sad situation when an upright man of the world can rightly rebuke the saint of God. But it is a state of affairs all too often reproduced. Abraham evidently accepted the rebuke and, as God had said, he prayed for the king and his household, and the hand of God, which had been upon them in His government, was removed.

After this lapse on Abraham's part, God fulfilled to him and Sarah the promise of a son. That which humanly was impossible came to pass and Isaac was born, as we may say, on the principle of resurrection: a living child springing from parents, who from a reproductive standpoint were dead. Now Sarah could laugh indeed, and feel that all others would laugh with her. This time her laughter had in it nothing of incredulity, but was rather a note of triumph in that which the power of God had brought to pass.

The sign of the covenant — circumcision — was duly put upon Isaac, and when he was weaned a great feast was made, which to Ishmael was a subject of mockery. This led to the casting out of the bondwoman and her son, which has an allegorical significance as we learn in Galatians 4. Four centuries had yet to pass before the covenant of law was established at Sinai, and many more centuries later the basis on which the new covenant of

promise rests, was laid in the death of Christ. But thus early in the world's history do we get presented in an allegorical way the supplanting of the former by the latter. The law only produced bondage, since it addressed itself to the flesh; that is, man's fallen nature, which is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it be. The son of the free-woman came into being by an act of God in grace, and therefore aptly typifies the new covenant. We believers are "the children of promise," as Isaac was.

The initiative sprang from Sarah, and to cast out Hagar and Ishmael was very grievous to Abraham. This feature too we may apply to ourselves. To give up all hope of blessing on the ground of law, and to dispossess the flesh is not something that naturally pleases us, but the reverse. Still it is the course that is according to God. Sarah may not have had much thought of God in her demand, nevertheless God endorsed it. God said in effect to Abraham, You have got the promised seed in Isaac so let not the departure of Ishmael be a grief to you. We see the same thing in principle in 1 Samuel 16: 1, where the prophet is bidden to stop grieving over Saul, whom God had set aside, for there was a far better king in view, even David. God takes away the first, "that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10: 9). If Christ the Second Man fills our vision, the first man and the covenant of law, that applied to him, are set aside.

Bidden thus by God, Abraham acted with decision. Early in the morning he rose up and dismissed the bondswoman and her son, giving

them bread and water for the start of their journey. True to her name the poor woman became a wanderer in the wilderness and soon all their slender resources were gone, and the lad was brought almost to the point of death. The Apostle James tells us in connection with Job, that the Lord is "very pitiful, and of tender mercy." We see it exemplified here. Though Hagar and Ishmael had this unhappy allegorical significance, and personally belonged to the world rather than the house of faith, they were needy creatures, and as such objects of mercy.

Years before an angel had been dispatched for her succour. Now again poor Hagar is at the end of her resources and weeping in her misery. A second time God intervenes by an angel for deliverance. It is rather remarkable that while the record runs that she "lift up her voice and wept," it adds that, "God heard the voice of the lad." Ishmael must now have been about fifteen years old and he had raised his voice for help, since he was dying for lack of water. The deliverance came in a simple yet unexpected way. God opened Hagar's eyes so that she saw a well of water. It was there all the time but she had not had eyes to discern it.

Is there not in this a parable for today? Ishmael was dying of thirst within a stone's throw of the life-giving water. There are many today going down to spiritual death with the means of spiritual life right before them. The trouble is they have no eyes to see it. God opened her eyes and immediately the need was met. We need to pray for men, that no longer may the god of this world

blind their minds to the light of the Gospel, as indicated in 2 Corinthians 4: 4.

Thus Ishmael was granted life in spite of the fact that his descendants would be inimical to the people of God. And not only that, but God was with him, enabling him to maintain himself in the wilderness by his skill as an archer. His mother came from Egypt, and out of Egypt she took a wife for him. In this we see the stamp of the world rivetted upon him.

In the latter part of our chapter Abimelech again appears, and once more we behold him in a favourable light. He was a man of discernment and he perceived that God was with Abraham in all that he was doing, in spite of the fact that his doings in Gerar had not been right. When our first contact with a man is unfavourable, it takes some discernment to see him subsequently in a favourable light. Abimelech and his chief captain had evidently been watching Abraham very closely, and this was the conclusion they had come to. Let us remind ourselves by this incident that thoughtful men of the world do observe very narrowly the professed saints of God, and we may well desire that the conclusion they draw may be as favourable as in this case. Too often, alas, it is otherwise.

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Paul realized happy victory. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." He may have seemed a victim, but he was a victor. Appearing before Nero, he may have looked a failure, standing there alone amid the glory of Roman imperialism. But it is not without significance that today we call our dogs "Nero" and our boys "Paul"!

In result a covenant was drawn up, and the well, Beer-sheba, was made sure to Abraham, a well that in later days became famous as the southern boundary of the land. There for some years Abraham made his dwelling, and there he called on the Lord as the everlasting God. When the promise of Isaac was given, God made Himself known as the Almighty. Now that the promised heir is born and the promise redeemed, Abraham recognizes Him to be the Everlasting as well as the Almighty. Abraham had to wait for the promise to be fulfilled, and man being a creature of brief years, this waiting is to the flesh a very trying business. But to God as the Everlasting One, time is not of prime importance. He moves, with deliberate yet certain steps, to the accomplishment of that which He has counselled and promised.

In the Psalms we hear the godly man more than once crying out, "How long?" How long shall the wicked flourish; how long before righteousness be vindicated? We in our day may cry out "How long?" as we desire the promised advent of the Lord Jesus. But with Isaiah we have to know that, "the everlasting God . . . fainteth not neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding." (40: 28). His way and time is perfect. With this let us be content.

# THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS

A. J. POLLOCK.

(Brief Notes of an Address at St. Andrews on 2 Kings 6: 1-7, with 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11; 14: 3).

**M**Y aim is to say something that may be of help to my younger brethren. I recall a remark made to me years ago by one of my sons. He said, "You know, father, I am where I am, because you are where you are." He had been brought up in the meeting where I found fellowship, and there received a good deal of Scriptural instruction. He added, "If you had belonged to such-and-such a church or a meeting, I suppose I should have belonged there too." I felt there was a deal of truth in what he said, and it brought to my mind what we have read as to the sons of the prophets.

In every great spiritual movement there is a very deep effect produced in the minds of those, who **first** come under its influence, so that they are marked by a good deal of spiritual energy, and often they make very considerable sacrifice in following out what they believe to be the mind of God for their pathway. It was not at all a popular thing when over a century ago a number of saints turned their backs upon the then accredited religious bodies in order to gather to the Lord's Name in simplicity, and in the practise of what is laid down in 1 Corinthians 12-14. But when the next generation came along, the tendency was that the initial force of the movement was lessened, and we see an illustration of what is akin to this in the sons of the prophets, in contrast to the prophets themselves.

Now I may consider myself as a son of a prophet. What I mean is,

that my father and mother, before they knew each other, in different parts of the country, under deep exercise, found themselves gathered in simplicity to the Lord's Name, so that I was brought up in such a meeting from my earliest years. By degrees I found out, however, that I could not stand in the faith of my parents, but should stand on my own feet, and in my own faith and conviction as to the truth of God. There are a good many here, who, like myself, have been brought up as I was, and I desire that you too may be exercised in like manner.

I would remind you of what took place on the great Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2. As the result of the atoning death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and His entry into heavenly glory as our Representative, the Holy Spirit was poured upon the believers, and each was indwelt by Him. Thus the church, the one body of Christ, was formed, and Christian fellowship began, the power of which is love.

Then, in 1 Corinthians 12, we have outlined for us the action of the Holy Spirit, as manifested at the beginning of things. Let me particularly emphasize verse 11, "All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally **as He will.**" The Spirit of God then should be supreme in the Christian assembly. That truth has been largely disregarded by Christendom. Perhaps the most insidious attacks of the enemy were seen when, shortly after the apostolic era, cer-

tain of the believers were set apart as ministers over congregations, and thus believers were formed into two classes — clergy and laity. This special clerical class once being formed, we find special buildings, special ritual, special hierarchy, far removed from the teaching of the Word of God. Thus came about the refusal in Christendom of the truth, we have been considering, that the Holy Ghost is the Divine power that divides to every man severally **as He wills**.

With one man thus in charge of a congregation it does not matter who in that congregation may have a gift, or may feel an urge of the Spirit of God to take some part, according to 1 Corinthians 14; rather all must be suppressed in favour of the one man. I trust we have a distinct judgment as to the very serious wrong of this, and have grace to refuse this distinct affront to the Holy Spirit, and His leading among God's people.

But now on the other hand, when we do find ourselves where the truth is recognized that all believers are priests, and liberty of ministry is practised, we find two classes. There are the forward people, too ready to take part, whilst there are others who are too backward, and remain on their seats even when moved by the Spirit of God. Both bring in weakness, and it is a sad thing when it is so. In regard to the assembly **edification** should be the great feature, and if all were under the influence of the Holy Spirit this surely would be the happy result.

It has been remarked, "Of course we, brothers, have a right to take part in the meetings." I reply,

"No brother has any **right** simply as a brother: he has the **privilege, but only if moved by the Spirit of God.**" It appears that the Corinthian believers, being carnal, were seizing upon the spectacular gifts, such as tongues and healings, and misusing them. The Apostle Paul rebuked this tendency, telling them to covet earnestly the best gifts — gifts marked by edification of the church. And even, as if that were not enough, he showed them **the more excellent way of Divine love**, as unfolded in 1 Corinthians 13. If that love filled our hearts how beautifully we all should behave ourselves. Love "doth not behave itself unseemly . . . Love never faileth." (1 Cor. 13: 5 and 8).

The fourteenth chapter follows on that. If the Spirit has His way, we shall not all be rushing in with a psalm, a doctrine, a tongue, a revelation, an interpretation, for God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace in all the assemblies of the saints. When we are under the guidance of the Spirit, we find things shaping themselves as we could not shape them. The Holy Spirit may lead this brother to take part in praise and worship, and that brother to take part; this hymn and that hymn may be given out, and this Scripture read. The whole assembly will note with joy the leading of the Holy Spirit, now all that is done falls into one delightful harmony.

Now to turn to 2 Kings 6. The prophets were no doubt men of great spiritual character. Whether "the sons of the prophets" meant just a school of the prophets, or whether they were actual sons, does not very much matter.

The strong impression that marked the prophets was weaker in a second generation. This is evidenced by their complaints, "The place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us."

Can we not find the counterpart of this in modern speech and ways? We hear remarks that things today are too narrow. We ought to advance with the times. We want more singing, more music, more oratory — something more entertaining, more of this, more of that, till things have degenerated into a more or less worldly entertainment. You may say, "We must hold the young people." Yes, but hold them for what?

So the sons of the prophets went off to make a new place for themselves, and plied their axes. But one axe-head flew off, and disappeared in the water. Then came the distressed cry, "Alas, Master! for it was **borrowed.**"

Making a free application of this, I believe we may say there are people like that today. What they have is borrowed. They have not grasped the Scripture in power, and their souls have not made it their own. If their knowledge of Scripture is only in their intellect, and not affecting heart and conscience, such will speak without unction and power, more like a gramophone turned on. In 1 John 2, we read of young men, who were strong and had overcome the wicked one, but that was because the Word of God abode in them, held them in its grip and not merely in their heads — Scripture abiding in them, influenced them in their own lives, and thus came with power when it was

spoken. There was nothing borrowed about it, to use the illustration.

Elisha, the man of God, met the situation by cutting down a stick, and casting it into the water, when the iron did swim. Does this not teach us in symbolic language that the living Lord had to go into the waters of death to bring life to us? When all that this means takes possession of our hearts then that which was merely borrowed, and not our own, becomes ours, and can be used in power for blessing, just as the axe-head did swim and became available again.

So I urge upon us all that we ought to see that "the iron did swim." That is to say, that we are so really in touch with the Spirit of God, and so held by the Scriptures in their living power, that we can go on in a testimony that is pleasing to God, and helpful both in the preaching of the Gospel and in ministry to the Lord's people.

We do indeed need a revival of spiritual power, rather than of adventitious aids to secure spiritual blessings. We need to be faithful to Scripture. If the lessons of 1 Corinthians 12-14 were learned in our souls, we should have no difficulty in saying, "**I am where I am, because the truth of Scripture puts me where I am.**"

Thank God, for Christian parents and all the early impressions they made on our minds in the formative years when we were children, but thank God, we trust that we all may be led to stand in our own faith, in convictions borne in upon us by the Word of God itself.

# THE MIND OF CHRIST

H. MOYES.

(A Brief Summary of an Address at St. Andrews on Philippians 2: 5-11)

**I**T has already been said that **all** Scripture has great importance for us. Gospel preachers often take the wonderful verse, John 3: 16, as their theme. But then we believers often refer to this portion and enjoy its glorious truth, just as also we can enjoy the sweet and precious portion that we have now read.

When we gather together to remember our Lord in His death, how often these verses come before us, and sometimes we hear them read. They appeal to us because they bring before us that which the Lord desired us to remember, even His death and sufferings. We remember that which He accomplished when He was amongst us as a Man amongst men, but they take us back to that glory in which He was before the world existed, and they carry us on to the time when, having been glorified, He shall be manifested in power. All that is included in this portion of Scripture.

Going back into the eternal past, He was the One who thought it not robbery to be equal with God. In this He is contrasted with Adam, who fell by grasping after that which was not his, desiring to be as gods with authority and power. There was no grasping after Godhead with the Lord Jesus, for it was His by right. He is the One of whom we read in John's Gospel, who was with God and who was God. How wonderful then that being this He should take upon Him the form of a servant and be made in the likeness of men.

But thus it was, and we accept it as the proof of how He loved. We remember that in Proverbs 8 He is presented as the One who was daily the delight of Jehovah, but He could also say that His delights were with the sons of men. In our Scripture we find proof of that. He who was with God and who was God took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men that He might come and reveal the Father's heart and express also His own love. He came, not only in obedience to the Father's will, not only to reveal the Father's love, but because His own delights were with the sons of men.

So now we can enjoy the wonderful truth that He was willing to set aside the glory belonging to His original estate, though He never gave up His Godhead. When on earth it was proved time and again that He was still God. Three instances have already been pointed out to us. He raised the dead, thus manifesting the power of God. He said to the paralytic, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Some present raised the objection, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" True indeed; but then He was God. Then again His Godhead was manifest when in the great storm on the lake both wind and sea subsided into a great calm in an instant at His word.

So He was very God. Yet in taking the form of a Servant He set aside His outward glory that He might be here doing the Father's work. Now notice, it was after He had taken the form of a Servant that

He humbled Himself even unto death. His whole pathway was one of increasing humiliation until death, even the death of the cross, was reached. There He, who was the holy and spotless One, was made sin for us. And now His humiliation even unto death has found its answer from God in His exaltation.

All the blessing that we have received is founded upon this, and we rejoice in the knowledge that He is now highly exalted with the Name that is above every name, and that presently He will be publicly honoured when every knee shall bow to Him.

But there is a verse in this portion that sometimes is overlooked: verse 5. We must not overlook it now. The mind that was in Christ Jesus is made known to us in these verses **in order that it may be in us.** You remember His call in Matthew 11 — "Come unto Me . . . and learn of Me." Now we are to have the mind that was in Him. It committed Him to a life of service in humiliation, and we are to be committed to a life of the same kind. He was always about His Father's business, always willing for service, and while we can enjoy worship and ministry we are to enjoy service also, delighting to do His will.

When we take up any service or work for the Lord, do we put our hand to it because we feel we have to do so? It is well to realize that we owe the service, but we should be sensible how great is the privilege of being allowed to take up any work for the Lord, and how great is the constraint of His love.

Shortly after we came home from the Belgian Congo I was invited to speak to a group of Sunday School

workers; so I took as my message verses in John 21, where the Lord was dealing with Peter after his fall, and recommissioning him. His special work was to feed and shepherd the sheep and lambs, but He asked, "Lovest thou Me?" Notice He did not say — Do you love the sheep? and if you do, go and feed them. No! It was, "Lovest thou Me?" Peter did love the Lord, and because he did he was to feed the sheep and lambs.

When we engage in service we must indeed have in our hearts love for those to whom we go. We should love men and have compassion for their souls. We should love our brethren and have desires for their growth in the things of Christ. But this will only be as we have the mind of Christ with the love of the Father abiding in our hearts.

Not far from where I have been stationed in Africa is a leper colony, where a Christian nurse has been looking after 300 families. I have often visited them and preached there, and it is not a pleasant place to go to. Someone had seen the devotion of this nurse and was complimenting her on her work, saying, "How you must love the lepers to be able to go on working amongst them in this way!" She said, "Yes, I do love them, but my love for them would not be enough to bind me here. **It is because I love my Lord.**"

That is the motive power in all true service. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," and remember that the mind in Him was to serve in lowliness and humiliation. Remember too that His word to us as well as to Peter, is, "Lovest thou Me?"

# "OCCUPY TILL I COME"

J. S. BLACKBURN.

(Brief Notes of an Address at St. Andrews on Luke 19: 12-27).

I AM going to ask you to view things from the standpoint of these ten servants of the certain nobleman, who had gone into a far country to receive a kingdom and to return, and who had endowed them with sufficient to fulfil his commands. It seems that the Lord Jesus put this parable in such a form as would bring to the minds of His hearers, by way of contrast, some recent and well-known history.

The Herod, who slew the infants at the time of the birth of our Lord, was a cruel and blood-thirsty tyrant. He left his kingdom to his son, who soon proved himself equally bad. But in those days Judah was ruled from Rome, and Archelaus, of whom we read in the closing verses of Matthew 2, had to go to the far country of Italy to get the kingdom confirmed to him. While there with the issue hanging in the balance the protest had been raised, "We will not have this man to reign over us."

What a contrast between Archelaus and the One who uttered the parable! The Lord Jesus was full of grace and truth: He was truly the "Nobleman" of the parable. He possesses the most excellent name of the Son of God. In Him God has spoken to us. He has by Himself purged our sins and has taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the appointed Heir of all things. He has been hated and rejected by the world, yet He is presently coming forth to take His kingdom. Meanwhile He has here in the world not

ten but tens of thousands of His servants, whose hearts have been won by His love. He has equipped them to obey His behest, "Occupy till I come."

To each servant is given a pound. We all remember that there is another parable in Matthew 25, rather similar, yet differing in that there each servant was given talents according to his several ability: to one five, to another two, to another one. The ability was not the talent. Natural ability does not enable for service, but the gift of God is bestowed according to ability, and so each servant is differently endowed and is held responsible for his gift. But in our parable it was not thus, but that each servant, whatever his ability, received a pound with the injunction, "Occupy till I come."

Some of you, I expect, wish to ask the difficult question — What is this pound? Well, I can only suggest to you one or two things that we all have in common. For instance, is it not a blessed thing that we all have that precious treasure, of which the Apostle speaks in 2 Corinthians 4, "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This treasure is ours now, for we have it in these "earthen vessels."

You remember the captive maid in the land of Syria. She and she alone had the treasure that could meet the need of Naaman, in that she had the knowledge of Elisha, and of Elisha's God who could meet that need. Now you and I have in

our hearts the priceless treasure of the knowledge of God, revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the only answer to all the world's need. Oh, that we might rejoice in it more and more! so that when we meet the sick, the sorrowing, the suffering, the broken-hearted, we can present the One who can bind up all wounds, and who, when He comes, will put the world right, and bear its government upon His shoulder.

Another great gift we have in common — the gift of the Holy Spirit. He indwells us and He will never leave us. He is the power, and the only power that enables us to conduct our Lord's work while He is absent, and until He comes again. Every other kind of strength will betray us if we lean upon it. When the Lord's promise to His disciples was fulfilled, and they were baptized with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, the power was theirs.

Now when these servants had received each his pound, they were told what to do with it. Here we come very definitely to the point. If we have to wait a little yet for the coming of our Lord, what are we going to do? He says, " Occupy [that is, **Trade**, or **Do business**] till I come." One of the ten took the pound and wrapped it up in a napkin, put it out of sight and thought no more about it until his lord came again. Is that what we are going to do with what the Lord has given us? If so, our loss will be great in that day.

Several figures are used in the New Testament to set forth the Christian life. You have all been moved, I am sure, by the Scripture

that likens our lives to warfare. We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the powers of darkness, and have to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Other figures are used, but here very distinctly our life is likened to trade or business. Now business in the world often comes into disrepute because of dishonourable dealings, but the fact remains that in the honest conduct of trade there are many good things. As we engage in the business of the world let us see that we conduct ourselves worthily of our Lord. It is in this good sense that trade or business is presented in the parable as a fitting metaphor for the Christian life, for the word, " occupy " comes to us direct from the language of the market; saying, Get on with the business. We are called to get on with our Lord's business until He comes again.

What can we do with what we have received, even in meetings like this, to carry out our Lord's command? In the first place we need to " pray it in." Years ago there fell into my hands a paper entitled, " A yearly cycle of Bible prayers." It had for each month of the year a Bible prayer with the suggestion to take each of these prayers and pray them with meditation and intensity of desire before the Lord. This might greatly enrich us. Think of the Apostle's prayer in Ephesians 3, and what it would be to have Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, and to be filled with all the fulness of God.

In the second place, the Lord's command will make us workers. We remember our Lord's words that the

fields are white already to harvest; and that we are to pray the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth labourers into His harvest. On occasions like this before now the Lord has given the word that has decided some young believer that henceforth his life is to be devoted to service for Him, perhaps in some distant land. But there is one thing we can be sure of, the Lord would have us return to the assemblies whence we came, diligently to surrender ourselves to Him, to further His work and get on with His business, until He comes again.

What would be the response of our Lord, do you think, if we were to say, "Things are rather poor these days. There is not much response to our efforts, and even the believers themselves have grown cold"? But did He say we were to get on with the business so long as it is easy to do it? — so long as everything is flowing along sweetly with no difficulties? No, whatever the circumstances we are to occupy till He comes. In this way the hope of the Lord's return is highly practical. A slothful servant is a servant who has forgotten that his Lord is coming back again.

Now the end of the parable refers, without a doubt, to what will take place at the judgment seat of Christ. When the Lord Jesus has called us all to be with Himself, and we stand in His presence as His servants, then He will enquire how much we

have gained in our service for Him. We need the stimulus which is given by the expectation of the judgment seat of Christ, though we know that nothing short of the constraining love of Christ can enable us so to serve that we have commendation in that day. In 2 Corinthians 5, the Apostle Paul contemplates the judgment seat, which will bring the terror of the Lord to men who know Him not, but he shows that it is the love of Christ that constrains us, and, if it does not, our service will be nothing worth.

I find comfort in the thought that in that day there is no word of commendation for **success**. Success is not guaranteed to us and we cannot ensure it. We cannot be sure that God will grant us great success, but still we may gain the thrilling word, "Well, thou good servant;" and again, "Thou hast been faithful in a very little." Faithfulness in good service is what He will reward. The age-old conflict between the Seed of the woman and the serpent still goes on, and faithfulness to the Lord and His word is highly valued.

We need to have our hearts absolutely overpowered by the constraining love of Christ, and we need to have constantly in mind that shortly we are to be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, the One who has called us to be His servants, and who still says to us, "Get on with My business until I come again."

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Where the rights of Christ are considered, and He is loved and honoured and adored, the Object of the hearts of His saints and the Theme of their praise, the soul-hunger of His people will be met. He multiplies the provision; His people eat and have enough and to spare.

# THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

J. HOUSTON.

**S**OME Christians have difficulty in distinguishing between the Kingdom and the Church. Others see no difference between them, and have, in consequence, confused thoughts as to both. It is desirable that we should have the thoughts of God, as revealed in Scripture, clearly in our minds, and seek to propound the word of truth with clearness to others. This is "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2: 15), the thing we are exhorted to do. Hair-splitting differences, and fine definitions, of things that are unimportant, may well be deprecated. Little, or no, good will come from them. On the other hand, two very important subjects, such as the Kingdom and the Church, which cover so large a part of New Testament teaching, ought to be held, and taught, with due discernment and distinction, **for they are very different things.**

From the remotest times, the Kingdom was known. Enoch prophesied of it, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment" (Jude 14, 15). This prophecy refers to the Kingdom, as is seen in Revelation 19: 11-16, where Christ comes as "King of kings and Lord of lords." Jacob prophesied of Judah, that he was to have the sceptre (Gen. 49: 10). In this, we have a prophecy of Christ, as Lion of Judah, establishing His kingdom in power. So in all the prophets, whether pre-exilic, or post-exilic, the kingdom was always held up, as the hope of Israel. Daniel too, the exilic prophet, to say nothing of Ezekiel, gives most

glowing prophecies of the kingdom. Now, in no part of the whole of the Old Testament, do we find **one word** about the Church. It was "the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16: 25, 26).

When the Lord was on earth, He taught His disciples to pray for the kingdom. "Thy kingdom come," was the central petition of the disciples' prayer (Matt. 6: 10). When He sent them forth to preach, their message was the kingdom — "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10: 7). This hope was held by the disciples, right up to the time of the Lord's ascension. "Lord," they said, as He was about to be taken up in the cloud, "wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1: 6). Up to this time, we find nothing of the Church, except the one mention of it in Matthew 16: 17, 18. It was **to be built in the future**, after His death and resurrection.

As to the character of the kingdom, it was as first announced essentially Jewish. The disciples preached the kingdom to Jews, and not to Gentiles (Matt. 10: 5, 6). The Jews are called "the children of the kingdom" (Matt. 8: 12). Gentiles will be brought into the kingdom, but they will still be Gentiles. They never merge into the Jewish nation. Prophecy makes this clear. "Rejoice, ye Gentiles **with** His people" (the Jews). Again, "Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles: and laud Him, all ye people" (the Jews). Paul cites these Scriptures in

Romans 15: 9-12. His object was to show there were **national** differences; and when both Jews and Gentiles were brought together in the Church, a spirit of gracious forbearance was to characterize them, as believers in Christ. This, of course, views the kingdom in its moral aspect.

Another thing that marks the kingdom is that it has to do with earth, and not with what is distinctly heavenly. In saying this, we fully acknowledge that it has a heavenly side as well as an earthly. For instance, God's people, who looked for "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. 12: 28), and assumed a place on earth, as having **nothing** there — "strangers and pilgrims" — will have a **heavenly portion** in the kingdom. Needless to say, it is with this side, the Church is occupied, because it is **heavenly**, as contrasted with what is **earthly**. Both Peter, in his first Epistle, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, are insistent on this side of the kingdom, and yet neither is occupied with what is distinctly of the Church. The reason for this is that Peter's Epistle was written to dispersed believing **Jews**, and the Hebrew Epistle was addressed to believing **Hebrews**.

Now, keeping this heavenly aspect of the kingdom clear in our mind, we come to what is definitely characteristic of it, as **being set up on earth**, and properly speaking, **has to do with earth**. When the Lord taught His disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come," it was **to earth** it had to come. And when set up on earth in power, God's will would "be done on earth, as it is in heaven." When thus established,

the nations will come from far and near, and give homage to Christ, the King, just as the Queen of Sheba came to King Solomon, and gave him gifts. Now it is in strict keeping with the hope of Israel, that the kingdom should come to earth. The Jews are an earthly people, and will have an earthly kingdom. Such is their calling of God.

Coming now to the Church, the first thing we learn is that it has nothing to do with either Jews, or Gentiles, though formed of an election gathered out of both. In fact, we find all three brought together, **as existing separately and distinct one from the other**: Jews, Gentiles, and the Church of God (1 Cor. 10: 32). Jews, when brought into the Church, cease to be Jews; Gentiles, when brought in, cease to be Gentiles. Both form one body in Christ; both are essentially one in Christ; all national distinction is removed (Ephes. 2: 11-22).

Next, the Church is heavenly in origin, calling and destiny. It is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world. Both in the millennium, and the eternal state, it retains its heavenly character. It is seen as "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God" (Rev. 21: 10, 11). It will reign over the earth in the millennium with Christ, in His heavenly glory; it will pass into the eternal state in its same heavenly character. Never do we find it **on earth**, not even in the kingdom on earth, for it is essentially heavenly, and maintains always its heavenly character.

Further, the Church springs from the eternal counsels of God. It was chosen in Christ "before the found-

ation of the world " (Ephes. 1: 4). The kingdom was " **from** the foundation of the world " (Matt. 25: 34). The Church, in the eternal counsels of God, has a place altogether unique; it is Christ's body, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Individuals, in the Church, are members of His body. Those, who are in the kingdom, are subjects of the kingdom and have their portion in the kingdom.

Finally, the hope of the Church is to meet the Lord in the air. It waits for Him to come in the air, and rapture it to heaven. On this occasion, He will never set foot on earth. It is **in the air**, where He receives the Church. When He comes to His kingdom, He will descend to earth. The difference between the Church's hope, and that of the Jews, in the kingdom, is, the former looks for "the bright and morning Star"; the latter, for the "Sun of righteousness," with healing in His wings for the Jews and the nations.

When we lose, or even obscure,

this heavenly character of the Church, and the freshness of the hope of being taken to heaven in a moment of time, meeting the Lord in the air, and adopt an earthly order of things, such as we have in the kingdom, which is to be established on earth, do we not seriously affect our general outlook, as the body of Christ, and fall into that which **drags us down to earth**, rather than **lifts us up to heaven**. While we have an interest in everything that concerns Christ's glory, whether it be in heaven or on earth, we should retain the heavenly character and hope of the Church, so that our whole conduct may be in the light of these precious things.

The Church says, with heavenward look, "Come, Lord Jesus," thinking of Him, as "the bright and morning Star." Israel says, "Thy kingdom come." Surely there is a vast difference. May God give us to be heavenly in our walk, intelligent in our service, and ardent in our hope to meet the Lord in the air!

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 22: 1 — 24: 6).

**T**wo episodes in the life of Abraham stand out with special prominence. The first, when against all natural hopes, he "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 3). In the second he was, "justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar" (Jas. 2: 21). To this second great event we come in Genesis 22.

"After these things," we read, God put Abraham to the test, and this is ever His way. Peter speaks of "the trial of your faith," and declares that it is "much more precious than of gold that perisheth" (1 Pet. 1: 7). At the outset Abraham's faith laid hold of God as One who was able to raise the dead. Under test he was now to demonstrate that such was his faith,

in a way that would be apparent to any thoughtful observer. He showed his faith by his works.

If considered typically the chapter has remarkable significance. Here we get father and son both going up together to the sacrifice. In a figure the son is sacrificed and raised from the dead. We have already seen the death of Christ typified (1) as atonement, covering the guilty sinner, in the coats of skins (chapter 3); (2) as the basis of approach to God, in Abel's sacrifice (chapter 4); (3) as the ground of acceptance, in Noah's burnt offering (chapter 8). Now we find a fourth and fuller type in the offering up of the son, and this brings in not only death but resurrection also. Consequently we find in this story details of very striking significance.

In verse 2 Isaac is mentioned as Abraham's "only" son, which is rendered in Hebrews as, "his only begotten son" (11: 17). This makes it abundantly clear that Isaac was a type of our Lord, and further, it sheds light on the meaning of the words "only begotten" as applied to Him. Ishmael indeed sprang from Abraham but being after the flesh he did not count in the Divine reckoning, and Isaac was quite unique. So our Lord Jesus Christ was Son of God in a perfectly unique sense.

It was God who declared Isaac to be Abraham's "only" son, and He also added, "whom thou lovest." Now this is the first time that love is mentioned in the Bible, which is remarkable, seeing it prefigures the love in the Godhead of the Father for the Son. Not until we reach the New Testament and

such a statement as, "Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world" (John 17: 24), do we get that love fully revealed; but now that it is revealed, we can better understand the great statement that, "God is love." How fitting that the first mention of love should be typical of that supreme love, which is the fountain from which flows all true love of which we have any knowledge.

The command of God was that this only son of Abraham's love should be offered by him as a sacrifice upon a mountain, chosen of God in the land of Moriah. He was to deliver to death the son, in whom all the promises were vested. This was indeed a tremendous test of faith, as is made so plain in Hebrews 11: 17-19. That he did not fail under it was due to the fact that he believed that God was able and prepared to raise him from the dead.

The spot chosen for the sacrifice was that whereon, centuries after, the temple was built, and where Jewish sacrifices were made at the altar of burnt offering. Though Abraham cannot have known it, the circumstances were divinely arranged to complete the typical picture. What we do see in Abraham is the energy with which he responded, rising up early in the morning, and the preparation he made to act in obedience. He departed with son, servants and wood for sacrifice.

On the **third day** Abraham saw the chosen spot; this was significant, for in after days he would look back to it not so much as the place of sacrifice as the place where in figure he received him as from the dead —

the place of resurrection, in fact. That the faith of Abraham embraced resurrection is borne witness to by the closing words of verse 5. The sacrifice of Isaac was contemplated as "worship," and the lad as well as his father was to "come again." Abraham's confidence as to this coming again is the more striking as he carried both a knife and the fire, as the next verse records. The wood was laid on Isaac. We may see in this a foreshadowing of that which is recorded in John's Gospel — "He, bearing His cross, went forth into a place called . . . Golgotha."

The sacrifice commanded was to be a burnt offering, hence to the eyes of Isaac the fire and the wood were perfectly natural, and the only question raised in his mind was, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham's answer, though he may not have known it, was prophetic of something far beyond his own days: "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." No lamb that ever died on any altar, patriarchal or Jewish, was other than provisional, and in view of that which was to come. The question, "Where is THE lamb?" was unanswered until John the Baptist was able to declare, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Abraham, however, was fully persuaded that God would provide the lamb for this occasion, and in that faith both father and son went together.

Verses 9 and 10 relate how full was the measure of Abraham's obedience. Nothing was lacking up to the point where the death stroke would have taken place. At the last possible moment the Angel of

the Lord intervened. His obedience had been tested to the full and had stood the test. He had not withheld his only son. This not only proved beyond question that he believed in God as the God of resurrection, but also furnished a foreshadowing of the infinitely greater moment when God "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all."

Though not stated in the narrative, we must not fail to notice the submission of Isaac. No word of remonstrance on his part is mentioned. He typifies the One of whom the prophet testified, "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53: 7). His experience must have typified that which our Lord passed through, in infinitely greater measure, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The voice from heaven arrested the death stroke that was to have fallen on Isaac, and now Abraham's eyes were directed to God's immediate provision; not a lamb merely but a ram. If we desired to have the strongest and most vigorous specimen from among the sheep, we should have to select a ram. This one moreover was caught in the thicket by its horns, symbolic of its strength, and it was offered as a burnt offering "in the stead of his son." Though the actual words, **substitute**, or **substitution**, do not occur in our English Bible, here we have exactly that which the words mean. A substitute is one who stands in the stead of another.

So in this incident, which presents to us the fourth type of the death of our Saviour, we have before us salvation by a **substitutionary** sacri-

vice. And further, since the ram was detained to be the sacrifice by its horns, the strongest part of its frame, we may see how our blessed Lord was held to His sacrificial work by the strength of His love. No nail that ever was forged could have detained him on the cross. What held Him there was love to the Father, and love to us. (See John 14: 31; 13: 1).

Abraham recognized the wonderful way in which God had provided the lamb for a burnt offering, and signalized it by naming the place Jehovah-jireh, meaning, "The Lord will provide." And out of that sprang a saying which was still current when some four centuries later Moses wrote these things: "In the mount of the Lord **it shall be seen,**" or "**shall be provided.**" That was the language of faith, for another four centuries, or so, after Moses, there stood on Moriah the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and years after that Solomon's temple was built there, and so it became the place for Jewish sacrifices. That to which all these sacrifices pointed took place "without the gate," for the Lord Jesus was the rejected One.

The first call out of heaven had acknowledged the completeness of Abraham's obedience: the second call pronounced great blessing, confirmed by an oath. This is the occasion referred to in Hebrews 6, when God, "because He could swear by no greater," "swore by Himself." The extent of the blessing might well have staggered Abraham. His seed was to be multiplied (1) "as the stars of the heaven;" (2) "as the sand which is upon the

sea shore;" it was (3) to "possess the gate of his enemies;" and in it (4) "shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." It is not surprising, therefore, that God reinforced His bare word by His oath, that there might be "two immutable things" on which to rest.

The ancients knew but the stars that are visible to the naked eye. Only in our day has it been discovered that they are literally as numerous as the grains of sand on the sea shore. But we think we may see in (1) his spiritual seed, whose destiny is heaven (see, Galatians 3: 7); in (2) and (3) his earthly seed who, born again and redeemed, will enjoy millennial blessing and victory; and in (4) a prediction to be fulfilled in Christ, who is the Seed — in the singular, as Galatians 3: 16 points out — in whom all nations shall be blessed. All this blessing is guaranteed by the mighty oath of God.

All this accomplished, Abraham returned to Beer-sheba, and there he dwelt. That was the place of the oath between Abraham and Abimelech. Was it now to be connected in Abraham's mind with the vastly greater oath to which he had listened at Moriah?

The closing verses of our chapter give us a little further genealogy, and that evidently for the purpose of introducing Rebekah, of whom we are to hear in chapter 24 as the bride of Isaac, who is now in type the risen seed. Before we reach that point, however, we have to see Sarah disappear from the picture.

When we start chapter 23 we are carried on about twenty years from

the events of chapter 22. Abraham was at Hebron when Sarah died, an event which also has typical significance. In the next chapter Isaac, the risen seed, is to find his bride, typical of the church, who is to be united to the risen Christ. But before Christ takes His church, Israel, out of whom He sprang according to the flesh, is set aside. The death of Sarah is a type of this severing of the earthly links for a time. This severance is expounded for us in Romans II, as also the fact that a redeemed and renewed Israel will come into blessing when the church period is over.

The details as to the burial of Sarah take up the whole of this chapter, and we may be inclined to wonder why the story should be given us at such length. We believe it to be with the object of impressing us with the fact that Abraham was truly a **stranger** and a **sojourner** in this land which was to be his according to the promise of God. In verse 4 Abraham claims to be this, and makes it his plea, supporting his request for a burying-place in the land.

This was indeed a remarkable fact. It was stated in very concise fashion by Stephen, as recorded in Acts 7, when he said that God "gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on," and that, though God had "promised that He would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him." But though this chapter makes the fact so clear, what is not divulged here, nor anywhere else in the Old Testament, is the spiritual understanding given of God, which enabled him to take such a course.

We have to travel on to Hebrews 11: 9-16, to get light on that point. There we discover that he had expectations connected with a scene which lay, not only outside the land of promise, but outside the earth altogether. "He sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country," but that was because "he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We further read that he desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly." These facts, which only come to light in the New Testament, disclose to us that these patriarchal men of faith received from God the knowledge of heavenly things, which in their day were not the subject of public revelation.

In Old Testament times, and up to the cross of Christ, man was under probation, and that trial was in its earlier stages in patriarchal days. The test was as to whether any man could prove himself to be exempt from death as the wages of sin, and thus establish his title to live on the earth. The test reached its conclusion in the rejection and death of Christ, when all men were proved to be lost. The Lord Jesus had come, speaking of "heavenly things" as well as "earthly things" (John 3: 12), and it was when "His life was taken from the earth" (Acts 8: 33), that the heavenly things came into full revelation. To have made **public** disclosure of the heavenly things before the earthly test was completed would not have been according to the Divine order.

Abraham had left a city of no mean standard of civilization, when he turned his back on Ur of the

Chaldees. He was now but a stranger and a sojourner in the very good earthly country that had been promised to him. This was possible because he was looking for a city that God would build and a country that, being heavenly, was better than any earthly country could be.

The contrast between verses 4 and 6 is very striking. The man who confessed himself to be a stranger and sojourner is acknowledged by the children of Heth as "a mighty prince." Notice too, that they said "among us," and not "over us." Abraham moved among them but as a stranger he did not meddle in their concerns or interfere with their politics. Just because he did not, his moral greatness was fully apparent to them. As the friend of God he possessed something to which they were strangers.

Having so favourable a reputation, he was able without difficulty to negotiate the purchase of the burying-place for Sarah. All was concluded in the presence of witnesses according to the customs of that land at that time: and subsequent history shows that the transaction was respected and made sure. In all this Abraham may well be an example to us, as is indicated in 1 Peter 2: 11, 12. If we, as "strangers and pilgrims" have our "conversation honest among the Gentiles," we may, by reason of the reproach of Christ, be spoken against. Yet beholding good works, they will eventually "glorify God" in the day of visitation. There is clearly an analogy between this passage in

Peter and this incident as to Abraham.

Sarah died when Isaac was thirty-seven, predeceasing Abraham by thirty-eight years; and since Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah (25: 20), only about three years can have elapsed between the incidents recorded in chapters 23 and 24. At the age of 140 Abraham was old. Also he was "a mighty prince," for the Lord had blessed him in all things. It was a day when His blessing was largely expressed in earthly things, and thus it was with Abraham, though he had been given some knowledge of things lying outside the earth. Isaac was his heir in whom the promise was vested, and it was most important that his marriage should be rightly arranged.

The first six verses of chapter 24 show that two things were stipulated: first, that the wife should not be taken from among the Canaanites, then in the land; second, that though she should be of his own kindred, the union should not be allowed to lure Isaac back to the land whence he had come out. The chosen woman must be willing to share the stranger position which Isaac occupied, and come to him. He was not to go to her.

If in our day every Christian contemplating marriage were to observe carefully the principles underlying these two things it would make for spiritual prosperity. The breach of them has brought about untold disaster, as is too often painfully manifest.

# HIS GREATNESS AND HIS LOVE

J. T. MAWSON.

From Notes of an Address on Revelation 1: 5-8; 22: 16-21.

**N**OTHING could be of greater importance than to have brought before us the greatness of our Leader. Unless we are acquainted with Him, realizing something of His greatness, we certainly shall not press on in the pathway of faith. We may begin well and walk separately, but we shall very soon tire of the difficulties of the way, and they will be too much for us, unless we have before our souls very definitely His love and His power. And these are very superficial days. So many young Christians are fed on choruses that do not exalt the Lord Jesus as they ought. Some are very blessed and very full, but others tend to make us forget the greatness of the Saviour. We need to have emphasized by the Holy Spirit the majesty, the power and the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us read the book of the Revelation more often with this one thing in view. It is right that we should become acquainted with the events that are shortly to come to pass, but let us not miss the greatness of the Person who is to take in hand the sword and the sceptre and bring everything in the universe into subjection to God. How great He is! If He becomes real to us, we will not tire; we will find in Him strength for every step of the way.

It is very beautiful to see how He is introduced to us in the beginning of this book from which I have read. Jesus Christ, rejected of men and despised, is the faithful witness. If He had been less faithful He

would have been more respected of men. He was absolutely faithful to God, and because He trod that path of absolute obedience He was despised by men, but He was the faithful witness. What a joy it must have been to the heart of God to look down upon One in this world who did His will completely: absolutely here for God, and making God known in the midst of the darkness. He had a right to everything. He was the Messiah and might have claimed everything in the land, and yet He possessed nothing. But He had God, and He bore witness to the fact that God was better than all beside. And so He bore witness to God's character. God was made known perfectly, but that life of perfect witness ended in death, and that the death of the Cross.

This was apparent defeat. "I have spent My strength for nought, and in vain" seemed to be written across His life and death. But see! — He is "the first begotten of the dead." The mighty power of death had to confess His supremacy; death that had triumphed over every man except just two. Apart from those two death had triumphed over the greatest and the best. One after the other they fell beneath the stroke of death. Death was master. But at last death was mastered. Who mastered death? Jesus Christ, your Saviour and mine. He has triumphed over the grave. He has broken the bands of death, He is the first begotten from the dead. Oh, He is great; great in His power.

Death, the greatest power man had known, is subdued by Him.

Then not only is He "First begotten of the dead," but, "Prince of the kings of the earth." Think of His majesty, though not yet is it manifested. We see not yet all things put under Him. This is the "not yet" period, but faith is assured that God's Word will be fulfilled and even now recognizes Him as the Prince of the kings of the earth. The kings of the earth are going to unite under the Beast, the leader of the revived Roman Empire, to make war on the Lamb. But the Lamb will overcome them, for the Lamb is King of kings and Lord of lords. The crucified Lamb, He is the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Consider His majesty, for you may be sure of this, that in this present time He has His eye upon things. God has said to Him, "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool." Things will not go beyond His permission in this period of time. While men are striving, spending their days and nights in endeavouring to find solutions for their great difficulties and to save themselves from disaster, God is over all and they will not be permitted to go beyond His will. We may be sure that their self-will will eventually be made to glorify God and bring about their own shame. Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth and there can be no peace, no righteousness, no rest for the nations, until He takes His place. And He is going to take it and all will look to Him for wisdom and He will have all control and the whole universe will be subject to God by

Him.

As the story is told, there is an interruption. There are hearts that cannot be silent and the church bursts out in praise, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." Oh, let us consider what He must have thought about us; since the One who has conquered death has loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And not only this, but has brought us into this place of near relationship to God, as kings and priests. His own blood has done it, the blood of the Lamb. Let us consider more and more what that means — the value of the blood.

I was talking to a dear old clergyman not long ago and he said to me, "You cannot imagine the contempt with which many of our brethren clergymen look upon us, who preach the precious blood of Jesus." That is the way Christendom is sweeping: despising the blood. Why, that blood is the only thing that could wash our sins away and bring us to God, and into this place of nearness, as kings and priests. Oh, the value of that precious blood!

And then the announcement: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." He is coming as Judge. He is coming as the One who is going to subdue all evil. Think of His greatness and power in that respect. The One who has saved us is the One who is going to

judge those who refused to obey Him. How great indeed He is. We might well, with John the apostle, fall down at His feet as one dead. And then He closes the book with these simple words: "I Jesus." Now it is right that we should be impressed with His greatness and glory. The way that He presents Himself to us at the end will be all the sweeter to us if we read through the book and are impressed with His splendour and majesty.

But at the close He presents Himself as **Jesus**, and the Name comes home to us and moves us. Why, that Name means salvation, tenderness, meekness, longsuffering, grace. It is the sweetest Name our ears have ever heard. There is something greater than the crowns; something greater than kingdoms, powers and dominions; and what is that? It is His love, and while you bow down before Him in His greatness, He wants you to draw near to Him and know His love.

"I, Jesus, have sent mine angel." Don't miss that. Jesus commands the angels. He is their Lord. And if He commands the angels, oh, surely, He shall command us. And while we rejoice in His Name as He speaks to us and says, "I, Jesus," we bow down and say, **Lord Jesus**. "Who art Thou, Lord?" asked Saul of Tarsus. "I am Jesus," was the answer. Then said Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" You see how it works? The revelation of His love to our souls prostrates us in subjection at His blessed feet. We are not right unless we are fully surrendered to Him. The weakness in our Christian living is this; we are not

surrendered to Him. And why? Well, there is only one thing that can subdue us and that is His love.

"Just as I am, Thy love I own  
Has broken every barrier down;  
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine  
alone,  
O Lamb of God, I come."

Then He says, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David." There He lays claim to the kingdom and its glory. He is the Root of David—the One who made all the promises to David. He is the Offspring of David — the One who is going to bear the glory, fulfilling every promise. He is going to put the earth right. But He is something more, for He adds, "and the bright and morning Star." The Old Testament closes with the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings. But before the Sun of Righteousness arises the Morning Star appears. It is thus that He will appear to us. Has He already arisen in our hearts? Are our eyes on the lookout for Him? He is going to fulfil His word, and He Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout. Oh, what joy that will be. Every saint of God on earth will answer immediately and those that have died in Christ will come forth from their graves fashioned like unto Himself.

Why will He shout? He has been waiting in patience for His Bride for nearly two thousand years. At last the moment arrives when He is to receive His Bride, all glorious, and His shout is the shout of pent up love. At last! The work is completed, and He is satisfied, for in that day He will say the prize is

worth the price that He paid. We, beloved Christians, are part of that church that is going to yield such joy, such gladness to the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When He presents Himself in this way as the bright Morning Star there is a worshipping response. The Spirit says "Come." We can understand that. What a joy it will be to the Holy Ghost when that day arrives, since He has been labouring unweariedly for two thousand years in this world to prepare the church altogether suited to Christ. The Spirit says, "Come," and the Bride says, "Come." There is a longing in the heart of the Bride for the heavenly Bridegroom, so in unison with the Spirit the Bride says, "Come."

Then, "Let him that heareth say Come." That is each individual of us. The Bride, who says, come, will be made up of individuals. What of the individuals? What about your heart and mine? Are we saying, "Come"? Are we each one of us in that way really moved by bridal affection as we think of the Lord Jesus Christ as the coming One?

Then, "let him that is athirst come." You may drink freely of the water of life. Who is the Fountain? Why, Christ Himself. He is the Spring of all true joy and blessing. The waters spring up pure and free and you may drink of Him. We can say to the unconverted sinner or the blackslider, that word is for you. "**Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.**" May God revive our desire for the blessing of souls. It has been said

that the Gospel day is past. But no, not so long as that verse is in the Bible. Until we see our Lord Jesus Christ, this word "whosoever" should be upon our lips, and if we are revived in our heart's desire to see Him you may be sure that we shall be earnestly seeking that others should know Him too. This last evangelical appeal in God's Book should be very precious to every one of us.

"He that testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." He will come suddenly of course, but He says, "Behold I come quickly" — He will make haste about it. But how could that be, since all this time has elapsed? Why, that is what is in His heart. It is as though He said, Nothing will satisfy Me until I have you with Myself. It is His love that makes Him say that, and so words like that have to be interpreted not with the head but with the heart and with the understanding. I understand why the Lord Jesus Christ said that. It is His love that made Him say it, and He expected that such words would produce a response in our hearts. Do they? From the heavens there sounds this great "Amen," and then, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Then we will reach maturity; then our worship and our praise will be perfected, and throughout all eternity we will receive into our hearts His love without measure, and respond to it without reserve. Then the church will be as faithful to Christ as Christ is to the church, and for ever the church will satisfy His heart.

Now, while we wait for that glorious moment when we shall hear His

shout and respond to it, the Spirit of God adds His benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all the saints" (New Trans.) The last word of inspiration is "all the saints." Our thoughts are carried back to those words, "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." That grace is still active and all-sufficient, and the Spirit of God says, May that grace be with you all until you reach the glory. And grace begun will end in glory, and we shall see the face of our glorious Lord.

## GOODLY WORDS

J. MCBROOM.

**W**E have in this world eloquence in the pulpit and on the platform, the Bench and the stage. Then there are the literary productions of many great and skilful writers. But in the pages of the Bible we have both eloquence and literature of quite a different order. There the platform is heavenly and spiritual, and the Speaker is Divine. When we take the writings of the prophets and apostles, the attempt to **compare** must of necessity fall into **contrast**.

It has been remarked that the literary possessions of our ancestors were completed in three books; the Holy Bible, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and Foxe's Book of Martyrs. The second of these is a noble allegory drawn from the Bible, and the third is an awful history of the persecution of lovers of the Bible. But it all goes to prove the divine dignity and power of the Bible.

In the Bible we have both inspiration and revelation; and where its truth is received the result is both illumination and transformation. Men love the tragedies of the stage, but in the Bible we have recorded the greatest tragedies the world has

ever seen, and they are truth and not fiction. A great stage actor was asked by a preacher why it was that he could hold the people while the other could not get their attention. The answer was, "I speak fiction as though it were truth, but you speak truth as though it were fiction."

But to return; do not the first pages of the Holy Book show us a tremendous tragedy in relating the fall of man? We see the entrance of the traitor, who is the author of both lying and murder, as seen in the seduction of our first parents and in the death of Abel. Then what awful tragedies are related in the Flood, the judgment on Sodom, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea. But let the reader come in thought to Calvary. There he will see the tragedy of eternity. All this is not the mere spinnings of the imaginations of the creature, but the description of the awful conflict of good and evil, which still rages in God's fair creation.

Then again, the beginnings of the sciences are all in this blessed Book. Things that are known today were on record there before our creature

research discovered their existence. And why not? It is the Book of God, wherein the Creator has graciously condescended to stoop to make Himself known. Confessedly there are in it difficulties and mysteries to our minds. How could it be otherwise? We have but to read Psalm 104: 1—4, and we realise how far He is beyond us. But this is the God who reveals Himself to us in the Bible, and it is one of the greatest wonders that He should stoop to do so.

As touching the language of the Bible, where could anything be found to compare with the addresses of Moses in the book of Deuteronomy and his valedictory song in chapter 32? There is not only the subject-matter as giving a prophetic sketch of the nation's history through the ages into millennial blessedness, but the beauty and felicity of the language has such a holy charm that even the enemies of the truth have to admit it. Then compare the blessing of the tribes by Jacob in Genesis 49 with the blessing on the nation pronounced by Moses in Deuteronomy 33. There is great wealth here for those who can appreciate it.

But now do not miss the song of Moses and Israel on the banks of the Red Sea. Read the early verses of Exodus 15. The dignity, purity and nobility of language used here is unsurpassed, and truly none but the Spirit of God could have given it. This leads us to other songs of Scripture; those of Hannah and Deborah will appeal for their simplicity and beauty. The former has its links with that of Mary, the blessed Virgin, and that of the latter with

the victorious majesty of God.

It is in the Book of Psalms, however, that we get the anatomy of the human soul laid bare. Here we travel from the depth of sorrow and distress to the heights of joy, delight and ecstasy. Here the Spirit of Christ is at work in the singers; and not only that, but our Lord is seen there as the Speaker again and again — see, Psalms 16; 22; 40; 69; 102.

There can be no comparison between the Bible and all other literature. McCheyne wrote of, "Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page." We truly find simple words in John, but conveying the profoundest truth. Isaiah has left us language of rugged and transcendent grandeur, such as we find, for example, in chapter 40: 12. But the same prophet gives us language of beauty and tenderness, both as to our Lord Himself and His people. Chapter 53 must ever stand alone as giving us the sacrificial sufferings of our Lord, and based upon it the words of richest mercy and blessings for both Israel and the Gentiles, as seen in chapters 54 and 55.

Has the reader ever been touched with the pleadings of the heart of God over His poor, wandering, failing people? We know of nothing in the Old Testament that leads us into the knowledge of our God like this. He puts Himself before us in the opening chapters of Jeremiah, and in Hosea, the prophet of the heart of God, in pathetic language like a sorrowing parent, weeping over the wilful ways of disobedient children, who have brought upon themselves the contempt of their neighbours and their own destruction.

But perhaps as wonderful as anything in the Old Testament are the prophetic effusions of Balaam in Numbers 23 and 24. A man, a poor, deluded mortal trafficking with Satanic powers, yet seeks Jehovah, hoping to be allowed to curse His people. In his endeavours to curse, the Spirit uses him to bless, and his unwilling lips are made to pronounce language as rich and fine as ever came from mortal tongue. All four pronouncements should be carefully read and weighed for they are unsurpassed in depth of meaning as well as beauty of language.

Nearly all that has been said is but calling attention to the beauty of the structure of Scripture, and this we can assert with confidence, "even our enemies themselves being judges" (Deut. 32: 31). But when we come to the New Testament it will be necessary to go inside and beneath the surface, for "the revenues of the ages" are now shown to be brought to us. Those ages ran their time and are necessarily the subject of the Old Testament. The ancient oracles unfold to us the working out of the time ways of God in manifold scenes of mercy and government, attesting in the fullest way that while God stooped to adapt Himself to the fallen creature, yet in holy government He maintained the honour of His name and glory. But in the New Testament there comes to light His eternal plan and purpose. If in the Old we are permitted to see the "back parts" of our God (Exod. 33: 23), in the New we are fitted to stand before Him and behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

the ages"? The answer to this question will take us to the inside of the structure. God, who created the world, formed the ages in His dispensational ways, each of which is marked off from the others and blessed with a different revelation of Himself. For example, the righteous, who lived between Noah and Abraham, had a fuller revelation of and from God than those who lived between Adam and Noah. The same holds good through all the succeeding ages or dispensations of the Old Testament. Referring to the early dealings of God, it is said in I Corinthians 10: 11, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types]; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends [revenues] of the world [ages] are come." What could be more wonderful than to see God's own thoughts, plans and purposes underlying all His dealings with the fallen race from Adam until Christ came?

The blessed Son of the Father came here as the answer to all the promises, types and shadows; as the fulfilment and the filling full of all that was foreshadowed in the previous provisional ways of God throughout the whole history. That history in its onward march was clearly and definitely leading on to our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the filling up of these ages, our God in His wisdom and resource was bringing out in a little nation like Israel, and in a small part of the earth — the land which He had chosen — that which in its immensity will fill all eternity. It was foreshadowed there in the tabernacle and temple with their minis-

But what are "the revenues of

tries and services, in the moral code and the ceremonial observances, in the covenants and even in their calendar. There indeed He deposited His oracles, which indicated the things which in their fulness must develop until they fill both heaven and earth.

In the six days of Genesis 1, we have not only the ordering of creation, a scene of vastness and variety, but also how it was fitted for its inhabitant, the head of a race in which the predilections of the great Creator were centred. The sons of God shouted for joy and the morning stars sang at its creation, for it was to be the theatre wherein would be wrought out both His time ways and His eternal purposes. God will carry into eternity a redeemed company for His own everlasting delight. In that eternity, based upon redemption, will be other families, in the midst of which the Church will take her place as the body and bride of Christ, as the "Eve" for the "last Adam." The formation of the man and the woman at the outset foreshadow the eternal pur-

pose of God for Christ and the Church. This is surely something of the revenues of the ages.

It has often been said that the New Testament is enfolded in the Old, and the Old is unfolded in the New. This is confirmatory of what we have been saying as to the revenues of the ages. It recalls also a statement, made long ago, that when we come to the New Testament we find a Man, a blessed, glorious Person, the Son of God, around whom all Scripture pours its treasures. All the wealth of creation, providence, government, redemption and glory are found in Him.

"All hail the power of Jesus'  
Name,  
Before Him prostrate fall!"

We certainly have to come back to these ancient oracles, as it pleases the Lord to open up to us these things. It is impossible to open any part of Scripture without finding Christ, the blessed Son of the Father, as its Centre and its Theme.

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## DOCTRINE AND MANNER OF LIFE A. J. POLLOCK.

**T**HERE are many, who will tell you that it does not matter what a man believes, that what matters is what he does and how he lives. But is this so? In truth it matters a great deal what a person believes. Here is a lad brought up in a Christian home, attending the Sunday School from his tender years and believing the Gospel. Is he not likely when he grows up to be very different

from the lad brought up in a slum, going nowhere on a Sunday, his parents quarrelling, drinking, gambling seven days a week?

Take the case of the great Apostle Paul. He could bear witness to his "doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience." (2 Tim. 3: 10).

Was not the great apostle a

shining proof that conduct does depend on and spring from what we believe? Look at him, as Saul of Tarsus, before he was converted. What did he believe? He believed that our Lord was an impostor, that His reported resurrection was a lie, that His body lay somewhere corrupting in the grave.

And what were his actions? Did not his beliefs influence his conduct? He tells us that he verily thought that he "ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26: 9). He tells us, that at that time of life he was a blasphemer, a persecutor, injurious, that his conduct constituted him "the chief of sinners" in God's sight; that in him God showed forth His whole longsuffering. (1 Tim. 1: 13-16). This was the manner of life resulting from his beliefs at that time.

But Saul got gloriously converted. The chief of sinners was snatched as a brand from the burning. The vision of the ascended Christ on the road to Damascus, when the light above the brightness of the sun struck him down; and the voice of the Lord, which could not be mistaken, asking the searching question, "**Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?**" (Acts 26: 14), revolutionised his mind and beliefs instantly. What a changed life was his! Was there ever a more consecrated life? The love of Christ constrained him from the moment of his conversion. He henceforth did not live unto himself, but unto Him, who died for him, and rose again. (2 Cor. 5: 14, 15).

Likewise was not Abraham's life

very different, once the God of glory appeared unto him? (Acts 7: 2). He was changed from being an idolater to being the friend of God, a stranger and a pilgrim, pursuing a life of faith in this world. Instances can be multiplied by the million.

The same thought is enshrined in what is said of the converts on the great day of Pentecost: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts 2: 42).

There would have been no apostles' fellowship, if there had not been the apostles' doctrine. It is surely true that what we believe determines the life we live.

On the other hand there is something very seriously wrong when what we profess to believe does not rightly control our lives. In that case there is something wrong with how we believe what we profess to believe. If right beliefs are only held **intellectually** they affect nothing; nay, often they affect the life of the shallow mind in a sad way. Take for instance the plain teaching of Scripture as to separation. If the doctrine of separation is only held superficially in the mind, it will work untold evil. It may bring, and has again and again brought, division into the church of God. It may breed hard intolerant men, men of the Diotrephes type. The best truth can be turned into a danger, if not held rightly in the soul. It has been well said, "A wise policy of separatedness to safeguard Christian conduct from the influence of pagan contacts can become in process of time less a safeguard of purity than sanction for

exclusive pride, and fierce race hatred."

The fact is, no one really knows more truth than that which he practises. To grasp this undeniable fact is to give us a great pull-up. Doctrine and manner of life cannot be separated, when doctrine is rightly held. Apostolic doctrine, rightly held, leads to apostolic fellowship. It is the old story that no **objective** truth is held rightly, save as it produces a corresponding **subjective** result in the life.

Photography illustrates this. The sensitive plate is adjusted in the camera, and as the distant object falls on its surface there is a corresponding result on the plate.

We read of the young men in the family of God, that they were strong and that the word of God abode in them. (1 John 2: 14). Note carefully, it does not say what we have often suffered from, viz., that by the help of a good memory, and a certain amount of brain power, they

were able to glibly unfold doctrine, but that, abiding in them, **the truth held them**; that is, the truth was manifestly seen controlling their lives. The writer remembers many years ago being shocked by an old brother speaking at a great conference on the subject of grace in a most ungracious manner, showing that the truth did not hold him. His address only repelled.

Christianity is eminently practical. And unless we are practical Christians our profession of Christianity will only be a stumbling block. May the truth of God in its beauty and power so grip our souls, that we may become like Him, who said, "I am . . . the truth." (John 14: 6), and so we may indeed be epistles of Christ, known and read of all men. (2 Cor. 3: 2). It is humbling but salutary to say to oneself, "**You** only know what **you** practice."

**How** much do **you** know? It is a good thing to be honest with ourselves.

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## "BE NOT . . . ASHAMED"

W. KELLY.

(2 TIMOTHY 1: 8).

**I**T is only ignorance of self which makes it to many difficult to understand why Timothy should be thus ashamed. When the tide of blessing is at the full there is little or no room for shame. It is far otherwise when the ingathering is small and when the love of the many waxes cold, when the world becomes more hardened and contemptuous and the saints cower

under its reproaches. Faith alone keeps the eye upon Christ and the heart warmed with His love in an atmosphere so chilling. His reproach (for it is Christ's assuredly) becomes then glorious in our eyes; and "in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. 8: 37). For the testimony, though it may seem to fail, is none the less the testimony

of our Lord, and the suffering witness under the unjust hand of human authority is His prisoner. "Be not therefore ashamed," is the word. Grace identified the witness, who may not be perfect, with His testimony which is absolutely so. Why should we ever stand for that which is less than divine? We are not called to suffer or to bear shame for anything but Christ. He has still His objects, precious in His eyes, here below. Be it ours to find our lot only there, and let us not be ashamed in a day of grievous departure.

But more; Timothy was called to "suffer evil [hardship] along with the gospel" as an object assailed and involved in all possible trial. It is a grievous blank where a servant of God has only the gospel before his soul, lacks heart for the glory of Christ as Head of the church, fails in faith to enter into the mystery of Christ and His body, and takes the scantiest interest in the joys and sorrows which those blessed relationships entail. It is wrong to be absorbed even with the gospel, so as to abnegate our part in these high and heavenly privileges and consequent duties, so near to Christ and inseparable from God's counsels and Christ's love. But there is the opposite error, which though more rare is at least as dangerous and even more dishonouring to Christ because it is

more pretentious and seductive — the danger of occupying the mind and life with the truth of the church and its wondrous associations to the depreciation of the gospel and the despising of those who faithfully addict themselves to this work. The apostle, to whom we are indebted more than to any other inspired instrument for the revelation of the church, not less strenuously insists on the all-importance of the gospel. Christ is most actively and supremely concerned with both, and so should His servants, though one might be neither a teacher on the one hand nor an evangelist on the other. Still more responsible, because of the grace given to him, was Timothy, being both an evangelist and a teacher. He is here enjoined to suffer evil with the gospel, but according to the power of God. Nothing can show more forcibly the deep interest in it to which he was called. When worldliness enters, suffering hardship disappears. When the church becomes worldly, one gains honour, ease, emolument; and so it is with the gospel when it becomes popular. If the gospel and the church engage the heart and testimony according to Christ, suffering and rejection cannot but ensue. Timothy, therefore, was called to take Christ's part in the gospel; and God's power would not be lacking, however he might suffer.

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A SAYING ATTRIBUTED TO J. N. DARBY:—

"The next most wonderful place to being with Christ in the glory above, is to be with Him in the gutter below."

# BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 24: 7 — 25: 34).

**T**HE opening verses of our chapter show us that Abraham remained true to the call of God, that had originally reached him; and that, not only for himself but for his children and household after him; thus justifying the Lord's estimate of him, as expressed in chapter 18: 19. Verse 7 supplements this by showing the full confidence he had that the Lord would support this faithful adherence to His word. Twice in these verses does he speak of the Lord God of heaven. Heaven has been mentioned several times before, but this is the first time God has been so designated. In the light of what is revealed in Hebrews 11, it is not surprising that Abraham knew God in this way, especially as Stephen has informed us that it was "the God of glory" who appeared to him at the outset.

The God of heaven is far above all the little storms and frustrations that fill our small world. He does as He pleases, and so the servant is sent forth with the assurance that direction would be given by God's angel, leading him to the suitable wife for Isaac. The mission was only to fail if the chosen woman was not willing to follow the servant to the waiting bridegroom.

It is worthy of note that the first oath recorded on God's part is that of chapter 22: 15-18, which was fulfilled in the raising up of Christ, the promised Seed. The further oath, which is before us here, is connected with Abraham's servant, who is a type of the Holy Spirit, sent forth to secure the bride for Christ,

the true risen Seed. We may be sure that His mission will be carried to a more successful and perfect issue than that of the servant in the story before us.

The servant departed, fully equipped by his master since he had control of his master's goods. It is evident how this suits the type we have indicated. Moreover, the servant addressed himself to his mission in a prayerful spirit, though the way he addresses God, as recorded in verse 12, shows that his knowledge of God was of a second-hand nature. He knew Him as Abraham's God rather than as his own. In this he fails from the typical point of view.

And this leads us to remind readers that no type is perfect in all its particulars. Hebrews 10: 1 would lead us to expect this, for what it states is as true of patriarchal days as of the time of the law. We have not the very image of the Antitype but only the shadow of Him or it. Now a shadow gives us but little in the way of detail. We get an outline and can discern, for instance, whether a shadow is that of a house or a tree, without knowing where are the windows in the former or the branches in the latter. If we recognise this limitation in the types we shall be saved from the effort to force meanings into small details connected with the person or incident forming the type, which so often ends in what is fanciful and imaginary.

But in spite of this feature in the servant's prayer, it was of a most

intelligent nature, and it met with a remarkable and immediate answer. He was confident that the God-provided damsel would be of a gracious and willing spirit, as evidenced by her response to his request, and so it came to pass, and that at once.

The answer came before he had done speaking. Rebekah arrived and acted with all the grace he had specified. Moreover she was a "chaste virgin," such as Paul desired the church at Corinth should be for Christ, and such as the completed church will be by the work of God when she meets her heavenly Bridegroom in the air at His coming. The answer was complete as well as immediate. She was of the right kindred and there was accommodation in her father's house. The servant had just to bestow on her golden ornaments, as an earnest of what was to come, and then bowing his head he worshipped the Lord.

Laban now comes into view. For some reason Bethuel, though the father, does not take the prominent place that was customary. He was alive as verse 50 shows, but retired into a secondary place. Presently we hear more of Laban in his dealings with Jacob, and his self-seeking character comes clearly to light. But a trace of it is at once revealed here. His effusive welcome of the servant was connected with his sight of the costly gifts already bestowed on his sister. But over all this rested the hand of God, pursuing that which He purposed.

The servant, however, was true to his master and full of his errand. He would not even eat before he had delivered himself of his charge.

He had only one thing before him. He had not come to enrich Bethuel's house or to improve conditions in Mesopotamia, but to take out of both a bride for Isaac. Here we see a striking type of the Holy Spirit and His mission, which is not to improve world conditions but to take out of the Gentiles "a people for His Name" (Acts 15: 14).

To this end the servant retired into the background. He confesses, "I am Abraham's servant." In verse 37 he speaks of Abraham as "my master," and in verse 65 we find him saying to Isaac, "It is my master." So both the father and the son were master to him; and his mission was to extol both. In verse 35 he speaks of the greatness and wealth of Abraham. In verse 36 he speaks of the son, and as to him he testifies that the father had given to him "all that he hath." This at once reminds us of John 3: 35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." At this point in the story Isaac typifies the risen Christ, as we have already said.

Consequent upon the resurrection and ascension of Christ comes the mission of the Holy Spirit, which the Lord Jesus described in anticipation in John 16: 15, "All things that the Father hath are Mine; therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." How all this is typified in the chapter before us is very plain.

Having recounted the greatness of his master — both father and son — the servant related how his way had been opened up and ordered of God. This was evidence that, "The thing proceedeth from the

Lord," as both Laban and Bethuel recognized, and hence they gave their consent to Rebekah's departure and left the final word to her, though they pleaded for delay.

Before the ultimate decision was made, but in the certainty of it being made, the servant bestowed on Rebekah gifts, which were an earnest of the wealth she was going to inherit as the wife of Isaac. Her relatives also were made to experience the bounty of Abraham. All this was also a seal upon her betrothal to Isaac, so that we may see here a type of the Holy Spirit as both Seal and Earnest — the Seal securing us for the Divine calling and purpose, and the Earnest being the pledge of the inheritance yet to be ours in its fulness in the coming age.

Verse 54 shows that the servant's mission was of a character that permitted no delay. On the day of arrival the betrothal took place: on the morning of the next day he would be off to his master. For Rebekah the new link was established, so the old link with kindred and country was at once to be broken. This is a wholesome reminder for us that, being linked by the Spirit to the risen Christ, our old links with the world are broken. It is a sad fact that all too many Christians attempt to hold on to Christ with one hand and yet grip the world with the other, but it can only be done for a little while and at very heavy cost and loss.

Rebekah's relatives pleaded for delay, and so often do the relatives of believers today, and if we have no relatives to do this our own foolish hearts will do it even more effectively. The servant, however,

would brook no delay, so the question was put to Rebekah, for the ultimate decision rested with her — "Wilt thou go with this man?" Was she prepared to entrust herself to the servant, who was acting on behalf of Isaac, and to do so at once? Her answer was simple and decisive — "I will go."

Here again we may see a type or analogy that may very well search our hearts. Believing the gospel of our salvation, we have been sealed by the Holy Spirit, but have we made such a committal of ourselves to Him as is indicated in the story before us? Happy is that Christian who at conversion, or very soon after, is so committed to the leading of the Spirit, who indwells in order to glorify Christ, that the old links with the world are thoroughly broken, and to reach Christ in His glory becomes the goal. The spirit of this we see exemplified in Paul, as he has put on record in Philip-pians 3. May we all go in for this so really that everybody may see that we have made the great decision, "I will go."

Rebekah's decision made, her relatives released her with their blessing. "Thousands of millions" sounds somewhat exaggerated, but we understand that "ten thousand" would be a more exact translation than "million." With that correction we have to admit that their blessing has come to pass, but only as the fruit of her going forth to Isaac under the leadership of the servant.

It has often been pointed out that the journey across the desert, however long it took, is related here as though it had been all accomplished

within a day. Verse 54 speaks of "the morning," when the journey started; verse 63 mentions "the eventide," when the journey finished, and Isaac met his bride. It is worthy of note that he did not receive her, seated in state in his father's tent, but as one who had gone forth to meet her. The servant recognized the lonely man, walking in the field so meditatively, as his master, and this knowledge he communicated to the bride, who thereupon veiled herself, that hidden from other eyes she might be presented to him.

All this very strikingly befits the type we are considering. At the end of the church's pilgrimage the heavenly Bridegroom will come forth into the air to meet her, and then introduce her into His Father's house. At that glad moment she will be veiled in the all-resplendent light of His glory. Every eye will be upon Him rather than upon her. Later, as we know, the saints will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and at the present time the church is not veiled but in the place of witness as the pillar and ground of the truth. But at the end of the journey the Bridegroom will be everything, and the present mission of the Holy Spirit will be brought to a perfect conclusion.

The last verse of our chapter tells us that in acquiring his bride Isaac forgot the sorrow occasioned by the death of his mother. Sarah here typifies Israel, out of whom Christ came as concerning the flesh. At the present time Israel is disowned nationally, but the blank thereby created has been filled, and more than filled, by the calling out of the

church under the hand of the Spirit.

As we commence chapter 25, the typical character of the history ceases. We are permitted to know that Abraham had other wives and many sons, no one of which had anything like the importance of Isaac, or even of Ishmael, who had much earlier been dismissed. All the others were sent away into the east country, out of which he had been called. Evidently he realized that the call of God had been personally to himself and to his seed after him, and did not extend to his other children. All that he had was given to Isaac as the son of promise. Beyond this fact we are not told anything of his closing years. In this he stands in contradistinction to Jacob, as we see in Hebrews 11. The man whose life was poor and chequered ends with a striking display of faith on his deathbed. The man who walked habitually with God testified by his life, and needed no such bright display at the finish. We only know that he lived 175 years, and he was buried in the purchased field at Mamre by his sons Isaac and Ishmael. The line of faith continued in Isaac, and upon him the blessing of God rested.

Another of the divisions of this book begins at verse 12. The "generations" of Terah began in verse 27 of chapter 11, and have continued to this point. Ishmael represents the rejected line and his generations are related first and with great brevity, for the generations of Isaac start with verse 19. His years were 137, and his sons became princes of some renown, since some of their names became of note and occur again in Scripture. Yet eight verses suffice for his story since he typifies

the first man who has to be removed for the introduction of the Second. We shall notice the same feature when we come to Esau and Jacob.

The main line of the history is resumed when we come to the generations of Isaac. He was not nearly so striking a character as Abraham, yet he knew the Lord for himself, and when Rebekah proved to be barren he entreated the Lord for her and was answered in the birth of twin sons. Rebekah also had learned to turn to the Lord for an answer to her question. In the reply that the Lord gave her we find enunciated another great principle that characterizes God's purpose and which runs all through Scripture. It is that of **election**. The principle had operated from the outset, but here it comes fully to light. God declares His choice before the children were born, or had had any opportunity of doing either good or evil, as is so plainly declared in Romans 9: 10—12.

Esau and Jacob, not yet born, were declared to be two nations and also "two manner of people," and the elder was to serve the younger. When born the prediction was clearly verified. They were entirely different in physical appearance, in habits and mental make-up. The one a skilful hunter, a lover of the open air; the other a plain or homely man, fond of tent life. All this would have been obvious to the ordinary onlooker, but it is the incident at the end of the chapter that discloses the real rift between them, that the onlooker might never have discerned.

Of the two Esau was the elder by a mere matter of a few minutes, still the birthright would naturally have

been accounted his. The birthright became the great test, and in their attitude to it we can see they were indeed two manner of people. Jacob coveted it and Esau despised it. What was involved in the birthright? The one who possessed it was in the direct line, moving on toward that "Seed," in whom all nations were to be blessed. The birthright led to CHRIST.

So here we have in typical form the first intimation of the truth expressed in the well-known lines,

"What think ye of Christ is the test,

To try both your state and your scheme."

though we must not suppose that either of the two young men fully realized what the birthright meant. Still they knew that it carried with it a blessing from God. This Jacob greatly desired, whilst to Esau it signified practically nothing. He was willing to barter it for the transient satisfaction produced in a hungry man when he has devoured a good meal of pottage. The bargain was struck and thus Esau despised his birthright and lost it. But even on Jacob's side the deal was not a creditable one. It was a case of seeking a right thing in a wrong way. He did not get the blessing then. Later he did get it from his father, but he only got it **from God** when subsequently he was brought face to face with Him, as recorded in chapter 32: 29.

In a word, Esau despised the spiritual and chose the material. Jacob desired the spiritual. The majority of the men of the world agree with Esau and follow Him. We Christians agree with Jacob in desiring the spiritual.

# THE COMING OF THE HEIR

J. MCBROOM.

**I**N Luke 2: 1 we read, "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." This decree had a result of which he had no conception. It has been said that, "In whatever conferred dignity and power he had no rival and no check;" and again, "Whilst in enjoyment of this pre-eminence, the Roman Emperor was unconscious that in a village in Judea, in the lowest ranks of life, among the most contemned tribe of his dominions, his Master was born. By this event the whole current of the world's history was changed."

How different are the ways of God from the doings of man and the world! An event which stands alone in the world's history came to pass; the eternal God came into it as an Infant (see Isaiah 9: 6). He was unnoticed and unwanted, and there was no room for Him in the inn. All heaven, the very throne and heart of God were moved. The events in time, connected with it, are given in Matthew and Luke, but the activities and bearing of it in the eternal world are given in such Scriptures as Psalm 40: 5-8; Hebrews 10: 5-8; John 1: 1, 14; 10: 36. All heaven was astir, and the angelic celebration, recorded in Luke 2, shows how far-reaching its effects: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men" (New Trans.) The Son had passed by all the hierarchies of the heavens to become Man.

But what of the lower, infernal part of creation? There was undoubtedly consternation, and a malignant opposition, which is pictured in Revelation 12: 1-5, and

which found its channel of expression on earth in the massacre of the infants, recorded in Matthew 2. Previously the malevolence of Satan had attempted to hinder the fulfilment of the promise by cutting off the royal line (see 2 Kings 11: 1-3), but, now that the Heir was here, the activities of evil were held in check till the moment when the exercise of all its hatred was permitted at the cross. It was impossible that the incarnation of the Son of God should pass as an ordinary event. Though fallen men knew little of it and cared less, the vast arena of heaven, earth and hell was in commotion.

The one great event towards which all the events of this world's history were directed, was the Incarnation. This shows Divine omniscience and omnipotence, and also the perfection of inspiration. The whole history of our Lord is outlined in the Old Testament, and it should be observed that if His coming had in view man's necessity as a sinner, it had also in view the necessity of the heart of God in connection with His eternal plan and purpose. We have been created by Him and for His pleasure, and while the death of our Lord was for us, it remains true that we were created for Him and have been redeemed by Him. All was foreseen long ere time began; creation and the permission of sin was not an accident, but the fruit and outcome of an eternal plan, which emanated from the heart of God.

The holy body of our Lord was prepared for Him by the Father and formed by the Holy Spirit. This

answers to the fine flour and oil of the Meat Offering. His words and works were the fruit of the gracious activity of the whole Trinity. Entering upon His ministry, the Spirit came upon Him; all His works were by the Spirit, and when He had gone on high, who but the Holy Spirit could record the story of that wonderful life?

The interweaving of events as they came out in that life, was not only the work of a "Cunning Artificer," they also remind us of the four ingredients that were used in the composition of the holy incense. "Thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy" (Exod. 30: 35). It is clear that the Spirit alone could recount in proper and perfect order the life of the Man Christ Jesus here on earth. "Behold Thy King," is fitting as a heading for the Gospel of Matthew, as "Behold My Servant" is for Mark, and "Behold the Man" is for the Gospel of Luke; but with John it is, "Behold your God."

Again, the word most suitable for Matthew might be drawn from Romans 15: 8; "Jesus Christ was a Minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." For Mark the words most suitable might be, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him." For Luke we might well bring forward the words of Titus 2: "The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared" (margin). With John it is different: he gives his own headline in his

golden preface, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth." In all this we have the weaving of the Skilful Artificer and the compounding of the Divine Apothecary.

Eternity itself will never exhaust the fulness of that blessed Man, who is excellent in dignity and glorious in power. "There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

Matthew and Luke give the birth and pedigree. The former traces His lineage to Abraham, and the latter to Adam. Mark and John record no genealogy; in the former He is presented as a Bondman, and it is not expected that the pedigree of a bondman should be traced. With John it is different. He goes back into eternity, and speaks of Him, who is without father or mother and beginning or end of days, the eternal One.

But the Bondman of Mark's Gospel is Jehovah, as the opening verses, taken from Isaiah 40, prove. John the Baptist came saying, "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah." Yet it is in this Gospel that we read, "He could there do no mighty work . . . and He marvelled because of their unbelief." Here also it is that we find Him disclaiming knowledge of the day and hour of His second advent; yet in the previous verse we hear Him saying what would be blasphemy on the part of the highest created being, "Heaven

and earth shall pass away; but My words shall not pass away" (13:31). And also in chapter 6, where there is something He could not do, He in Godhead power feeds five thousand men besides women and children with five barley loaves and two fishes.

Observe too, that Matthew and John omit the ascension. With the former it is the King Messiah, and it closes with a little picture of millennial glory and His earthly people worshipping Him. The closing words are, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This is proper for the Gospel where what is dispensational and administrative is prominent. In John we have what is above and beyond all dispensations, He is God, and wherever He is, there is heaven.

Passing over details we come to the Transfiguration. John, who certainly was a witness of it, does not refer to it, for what he was given to write is of a still deeper and richer character. Matthew speaks of the Son of Man coming in His kingdom, and he gives us the title "Son of Man" more often than Luke, and yet that is the setting of Luke's Gospel. Mark speaks of the kingdom of God come with power. How fitting are these words in this Gospel where our Lord is presented as a Bondman. In Luke, who writes for Gentile believers, three great things come before us — the kingdom of God, the Cross and the Shekinah glory cloud. Stress is laid upon His death: Moses and Elijah were communing with Him of His decease which He would accomplish at Jerusalem. On four different occasions the Lord spoke to His disciples about His approaching death, but

not one of them could take it in. We learn here that if it could not be taken in by His own on earth, it was a well known theme in that world of glory.

The transfiguration was the Father's answer to His completed service. He came down from the mountain to die, setting His face to go to Jerusalem. He knew that the elders, — the aged, — the chief priests, — the ministers of God — and the scribes, — the learned — of that nation, which had so long been the scene of His care and culture, would put Him to death. All three Synoptic Gospels give the Shekinah, from which the Father's voice was heard, proclaiming His own thought of His beloved Son. This links itself with the heavenly and eternal relationships within the ever-blessed Godhead, which were given to John to bring out. There is the administrative order of blessing in the kingdom of God, revealed in the Son of Man, which for us begins with forgiveness of sins and goes on to new creation, as setting us in Christ before God for His pleasure. But this is linked together with the relationships and affections proper to the Father and the Son, into which we are brought in family relations with Divine Persons: our home the Father's house for ever.

In Matthew and Mark the disciples are seen more as the remnant from the nation, who clung to Him as the Messiah in His rejection. This should be noted in connection with the progress in the testimony, recorded in Acts, chapters 1-12. There we see that remnant being transferred consciously from Judaism to Christianity. This transition had become necessary by the new

circumstances and relationships, brought about by the ascension of the Lord and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

With Luke all this is different, for he laboured with Paul and wrote for Gentile believers. Hence, after the transfiguration, he is led by the Spirit to recount a long course of the Lord's ministry, wherein He is seen turning from the nation that rejected Him and from earthly blessing, and bringing into view a new company for heaven. In this way we get the blessing of the heavenly company indicated in Luke, chapters 10-18. The ministry of Paul began from the glory; that is, from the ascended Lord, and had in view the Gentiles, the "other sheep" of which the Lord had spoken. So we see Christianity coming out anticipatively in the Gospel, and then established and progressing in Acts, chapters 13-20, through the labours of the Apostle Paul.

Coming back, let us dwell a moment on the differences of statement in these holy Gospels about the amazing scenes of Gethsemane and Golgotha. John gives neither the sweat of blood in the garden nor the cry of abandonment on the cross. Our suffering Saviour and Lord is seen here as the great I AM. The scene surpasses all. A multitude come to take Him with swords and staves. Stepping forward, He said, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I AM," was His answer. They all went backward and fell to the ground. Therein had burst forth His majesty supreme. Nor was it different at the cross. "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is

glorified in Him." These words from John 13 cannot be divorced from the cross, for never was He more glorified than when He was hanging there.

But if the sweat of blood with all its agony is in Luke and not in John, it is absent also in both Matthew and Mark. How deeply important it is for us to trace these differences. It was in the garden that the whole power of him, who had the power of death, was met anticipatively, but, while that was so, it in no way lessened the awful load, that had to be born in actuality at the cross. It was there that the full weight of Divine wrath had to be borne, and that it was that drew out the cry of abandonment. This is what both Matthew and Mark give, as recording His death in the light of the sin and trespass offerings — "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The distance, the darkness, with its mystery and magnitude; its infinite height morally, and its measureless depth — all are so amazingly great, that we are left in our own littleness to worship and adore.

Could anything touch the chords of our hearts like this?

*"Hark! ten thousand voices crying,  
'Lamb of God!' with one accord;  
Thousand thousand saints replying,  
Wake at once the echoing chord."*

As with burning hearts we listen, do we not realise that,

*"Loud and far each tongue partaking,  
Rolls around the endless song."*

If there were vibrations and perturbations through the whole creation at the birth of our Lord, what must there have been at His death, when the sun was darkened, and the

veil of the temple was rent in the midst from the top to the bottom, and the earth did quake and the rocks were rent?

Truly,

*"Earth shuddered as He died,  
God's well beloved Son."*

and we may apply the words of Psalm 18: "The earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because He was wroth . . . He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under His feet."

## THE PROMISE OF CHRIST'S COMING

J. HOUSTON.

**T**HERE are two things that mark the last days: the presence of false teachers within (2 Peter 2: 1), and of scoffers without (2 Peter 3: 3). The former seek to undermine our most holy faith; the latter, to rob us of our glorious hope of Christ's coming again. Peter is not occupied with the "damnable heresies" they bring in; nor does he say much of their mockery about the promise of Christ's coming. He tells us of their **terrible judgment**. Their "judgment now a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." When we know their end, and that this is near, we need not be alarmed, either at their presence, or the wickedness they commit. The judgment will be in keeping with the majesty and glory of God, whom they have outraged by their lawlessness.

The argument the scoffers present, to give ground for their denial, that Christ is coming in glory, is the **stability**, and **continuance**, of all things, since the beginning of creation. God had never intervened in the order of creation at any time, so they say, and why should one suppose He should alter the order

in the future? If there was no such thing as the coming of Christ in glory and power in the past, why should it be supposed that there should be such a thing in the future? By an unalterable law in creation, all things go on, **in continuity**, and it is altogether impossible that there could be change in any manner whatsoever. Creation is governed by unalterable laws: past, present and future are one; and run into each other in one **continuous** stream of time. This is materialism.

This argument rests upon **continuity**, which cannot admit of **interruption**, **intervention**, or anything to **break** its even flow. Of course, the believer would say, What about the deluge? Was it not an interruption in the order of creation? Was it not a clear intervention of God, to judge the old world? The apostle gives the answer: "For this they willingly are ignorant of." If, then, it is willing and intentional ignorance, they are without excuse; and we must leave them to their terrible judgment.

The same word of God that

judged the old world, will also judge the present one. The believer looks back on the past judgment; and looks forward to the coming one. The past one was by water; the coming one will be by fire. What evidence there is, in the creation as it now stands, of the alteration of its order by the deluge, it is not our business to discuss here. We simply rest on what Scripture says, and are not concerned about what it does not say. In fact, we are taught by **what it says**, and not by **what it does not say**.

The past has its word to us — the deluge. The future has its word to us — the judgment of fire, which will be final. The present has its word to us — the longsuffering of God to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. We stand between two judgments: the past, and the future; and are in the time of God's longsuffering. The judgment of the present world is not our hope; it is rather a warning, so that we

may know what manner of persons we ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness. Our hope is in His promise, looking for "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

The promise of Christ's coming is, of course, our immediate and proper hope. We look for Him to come for us, and then to come in glory, with all His holy angels. This is the event on which our eye ever rests, and towards which we hasten with diligent steps. This will secure everything for God's glory; everything for our eternal blessing; everything for the deliverance of suffering mankind; everything for the long-promised millennium; everything that will go into the eternal state, where God shall wipe all tears from His people's eyes, where there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. (Rev. 21: 4).

Peter looks on to the day of God. The coming of Christ will bring that day; and what a day it will be!

## "WHEN HE IS COME"

W. H. WESTCOTT.

(From Notes on John 14, 15, 16).

**I**N the fourteenth chapter of this Gospel, we have recorded for us the beginning of the Lord's last discourse with His own, before He went to the Cross.

So soon as He refers to His returning to the Father, He announces the coming of the Holy Ghost — the Spirit of Truth — in His office of a Comforter who will abide with His own for ever. Throughout the dis-

course given to us in chapters 14, 15 and 16, the Lord opens up the various activities of the Holy Spirit amongst His own, when He is come.

He, the Holy Spirit, is one with the Father and the Son. He is God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and He has come to:—

"Teach you all things."

"Bring all things to your remembrance."

- " Testify of Me."  
 " Guide you into all Truth."  
 " Show you things to come."  
 " He shall glorify Me."

And He adds that He will not speak of or from Himself.

In chapter 16: 12, the Lord says, " I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Because of the limitations of the understanding of His disciples, the Lord was shut up, in His teaching, to making known that which was really only partial, but — in contrast — when the Spirit is come there would be **full** revelation; no longer partial teaching, but unre-served communications from the Father and the Son, through the Spirit and hence, unlimited fulness for us. As the Lord said, He does not come to speak of Himself, but as He receives from the Father and the Son, that which He hears, He will speak and guide us into **all** truth. He has indited the Holy Scriptures, and He remains to guide us into an understanding of that which is therein recorded.

He will show us things to come, opening up to us that which is coming on this earth, and that which will be established in the heavens. These things we have particularly unfolded to us in the Book of Revelation, as also the Epistles. The reading of the Revelation, prayerfully and carefully, would liberate our hearts from the ensnaring effect of present things, for we should see all in the light of God's judgment of them.

From chapter 16: 14, we learn that He will show us the things of Christ. " He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and show

it unto you." He comes from a living Man in the glory of God and delights to bring Him and all He has, before our hearts, thus delivering us from the allurements of man's glory and the men of the earth. The bosom of the natural man swells as he hears of the prowess of his fellows here. The bosom of the Christian swells as he learns of Christ's incomparable virtues and glories, which have been opened up for us in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. What a joy it is to the heart and how stabilising to our souls, when we read Scripture as bringing before us, by the Spirit, the glories of Christ Jesus our Lord, the Father's beloved Son, rather than merely dwelling on our own blessings. Much as we have to praise and give thanks for, we lose so much, if we fail to see the things of Christ and His glory.

In verse 15 of the same chapter, the Lord states " all things the Father hath are Mine," indicating that the whole sphere in which He lives and moves embraces the plans for the Father's glory. We know that in those plans the Son has the central place by His — the Father's — will. The Holy Spirit delights to take us back in spirit into that beginning, before anything was that has been made, and to open to our wondering and worshipping hearts the counsels and plans of the God-head, in which the Son does all for the glory of the Father and the Father does all for the glory of the Son.

When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come He will guide you into **all** truth. He **is** come, and He ever delights to open up to us the truth

as it is in the Father and the Son, and if we follow where He leads, our hearts will go out in praise and worship to the Father and the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He will also enable us to read in all the Old Testament Scriptures; in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets and in the Psalms, the things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ — the Son of God — for this is included in the truth.

It is to be noted, He will not speak of Himself. He will not primarily occupy our minds and thoughts with Himself, but with that which comes from and concerns the Father and the Son. May our hearts ever be open to receive His blessed communications, so that there might be with us that true worship "in Spirit and in truth" so precious to the Father and His beloved Son.

## "MY BRETHREN"

J. F. ENGLISH.

**WE** often dwell upon the preciousness of the wonderful statement, "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God." (John 20: 17). It announces to us the relationship into which we have been brought and in which now we stand, as the result of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Cross of Calvary.

But there must have been a very special joy in His heart as He pronounced this message to Mary. Never before had He said, "My brethren." They had been His disciples, His followers, His servants and His friends, but now, standing as He did with all the years of toil and sorrow behind Him, past Calvary, death and the grave, He could regard those, chosen by the Father and given to Him, as amongst the many sons of the Father, whom He was bringing to glory.

He was no longer alone; He now had companions whom He owned

as "My brethren," alive with Him in His resurrection life; His joy and delight before the Father and to whom He would make that Father known.

And so He says, "My Father and your Father." How much lies behind those words. None will ever know what the Father was and is to the Son, or comprehend in all its fulness the mutual love existing between the Father and the Son. He ever walked in communion with His Father, the Father's love was His stay and joy in His pathway of rejection and sorrow on earth and it must have been very great joy to Him to say, "My Father and your Father." For it is the Father's love He would have us share with Him, and it is His joy to make Him known to us. "All that He is to Me," He would seem to say, "He will now be to you. All that I have known Him to be in My pathway, you are now to enjoy. My Father's House your Home; all that in which I live and rejoice, your life and joy."

What pleasure all this means to the Lord. Surely He was contemplating something of the travail of His soul as He visualized that vast company, each one loved by the Father with the same love with which He loves the Son; each heart enjoying that love and rendering responsive love and praise to "**My Father.**" This is part of the answer to His suffering and death on the **Cross**, and must rejoice His blessed heart.

But He not only brings us to share His part with the Father in love. As still in our pathway on earth, He gives us to know the Father as "**My God and your God.**" What does this mean, but that God, whom He ever trusted, obeyed and served, and who ever cared for and preserved Him as Man — that God known by Him in the spirit of Psalm 16 — that God is to be our God. His providential mercies are for us in our pathway, as for Him. We can be confident, as the Lord was, that there is no power that can prevail against us, except it were given from above. His God shall be our God; He is our God to trust, obey and serve. He brings us into the

same place of simple dependance and obedience as He Himself followed in His pathway. The Apostle Paul — a man of like passions to ourselves — truly learned to know "**My God — your God,**" and he was able to say, "My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 10). We too can come to know Him and prove Him as did the Lord Jesus in His pathway.

Truly we have been brought into a wonderful place and portion, and we know it is the Lord's joy to bring us there with Him. He has said, with regard to each one of us, "rejoice with Me, for I have found My sheep which was lost." The Father has spread the love feast and the joy and merriment has begun in heaven and in our hearts. It all began on the morning of His resurrection with this great announcement to Mary of Magdala and continues eternally for all His own, who join the singing that He leadeth.

As we ponder over His words, there will be drawn out our responsive praise and worship in His Name, who has brought us into such a blessed place of nearness.

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## THE SEVEN MEN OF SCRIPTURE

J. W. FAIRBAIRN.

**O**NE of the interesting things about the Bible is the simplicity and directness of its language; the Holy Spirit uses great plainness of speech and avoids many of the abstract words of philosophers and thinkers. The Lord Jesus did not speak to Nicodemus of "the Divine benevol-

ence towards humanity," but stated simply and directly "God so loved the world." Hence we find profound truths contained in simple expressions which we need to expand in order to bring out their latent meanings; of such a character are the terms "old man" and

“ new man;” the “ first man ” and “ second man;” the “ spiritual man;” the “ natural man;” and the “ carnal man.”

#### THE OLD MAN AND THE NEW MAN.

These two expressions are used in Ephesians 4: 22-24, and in Colossians 3: 9-11. Besides these verses the “ old man ” is mentioned separately in Romans 6: 6, and the “ new man ” separately in Ephesians 2: 15. What are we to learn from these passages of Scripture? Firstly, it is a **racial** thought; we “ put off ” and we “ put on,” rather as a refugee from Poland may put off his Polish nationality and put on British nationality, but of course in a far deeper way. What then have we put off? Not humanity, for we are still and always will be **men**, but to use more abstract terms we have put off **fallen humanity**. Just as the term “ the flesh ” describes the evil principle in the individual, so the “ old man ” describes the evil principle in the human race.

The “ old man ” is “ corrupt according to the deceitful lusts:” it is marked by “ anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication,” and though we may not see these awful outgrowths in a particular individual (such as a decently behaved neighbour) they are manifest enough in the human **race**. These awful tendencies are in each individual but they are only fully **displayed** in the race.

Well, thank God! we have put him off; and not by any process of self discipline or education, but by the Cross — wondrous Cross of

Christ Jesus our Lord. Take every believer on earth today. Before conversion we all contributed our quota of evil works in this world and the total was **our** old man; it was somewhat less in quantity (if we can so speak) than **the** old man. But now, praise God, “ our old man is crucified with Him ” (Rom. 6: 6) — by His death that awful past is wiped out and the fallen nature that produced that past is judged, and so we put off the “ old man ” and we put on the “ new man,” which is “ created in righteousness and true holiness ” (Eph. 4: 24). Adam was created in **innocence** but here is a more solid foundation for a fairer race.

And if righteousness and holiness are the foundation, what of the fair graces built upon them? All is patterned “ after the image of Him who created him ” (Col. 3: 10). This truly is the truth as it is seen in Jesus; the blessed Man who was so utterly different from all other men. Not only is it the truth that **was** seen in Jesus, but it still **is** in Jesus — signifying that by His risen life we are of His race or nationality, and we, too, can manifest these noble features. What a wonderful nationality we have put on! — a nationality that wipes out all human distinctions as stated in Colossians 3: 11, and makes of two peoples, who in the flesh are poles apart, “ one new man ” (Eph. 2: 15).

Ought there not to be seen in this world a practical response to all this? On this earth over which the “ old man ” has sprawled his awful violence and corruption there should stand out this **pure and beautiful** company, the “ new man.” As we

at one time contributed to "our old man," can we not now, by the Spirit, contribute our quota of the lovely features of Jesus — the pattern of the "new man."

### THE FIRST MAN AND THE SECOND MAN.

The Bible makes it very clear (1 Cor. 15: 45-49) that the first man is Adam and the Second Man is Christ. Each is the head of a race so that we are still dealing with a racial thought. Verse 48 speaks of these two races "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly such as they also that are heavenly."

The idea of the new man is connected with the renewing of the spirit of our mind (Eph. 4: 23), whereas the idea of the Second Man connects itself with the renewing of our bodies. Our bodies are more than "a complicated integration of complex molecules of matter;" they express our personality and individuality, as will our spiritual bodies in a coming day. God is not going to populate Heaven with spirits, but with men.

What then of the first man and his earthy race? Here is a race of persons — weak and sinful but, nevertheless, originally the creation of God and endowed with many of the attributes of God; personality, judgment, ability to plan for the future, prescience, etc. Alas, this image and likeness of God has been sadly marred. At times the race seems to be all "old man." But are there not traces of a pristine nobleness and beauty? Yes! does

not the Holy Spirit note it? What of the pagan Julius who "courteously entreated Paul" (Acts 27: 3), and of the rich young man whose earnestness after spiritual good drew out the Saviour's affection? (Mark 10: 21).

Wartime specially accentuates the difference between these two aspects of the human race. What dreadful "old man" deeds have been perpetrated under European skies these last 25 years; what a flood of evil and corruption pours out when the restraints of peace give way to the recklessness of war. And yet at the moment that man is seen at his worst, some of his pristine beauty gleams out in acts which fulfil the Lord's word, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15: 13).

But in Christianity we are on entirely new ground; as is the Heavenly such are the heavenly ones. The very best of the first man has no place before God, for if any man be in Christ, there is new creation: old things have passed away. What a lesson to learn. We are glad to give the cold shoulder to our indecent relative, the "old man;" he is so shockingly filthy. But what of this decent and respectable first man? Are we not tempted to listen to mere human judgment in our assemblies? Are we not inclined to value a brother for his natural charm or intellectual abilities rather than for his spiritual? We must see that the only standard in the church is likeness to Christ, the Second Man, the Lord out of Heaven. The natural graces of the first man are not evil, but God has

superseded them. Oh! that we might cultivate the heavenly graces of the Second Man: might value **everything** only in proportion as it

bears **His** stamp.

We must refer to the spiritual, the natural and the carnal man in a further article.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 26: 1 — 28: 9).

**W**HERE faith exists in any of us, it is ever God's way to test it, as we have seen very clearly in the case of Abraham. The faith of Isaac, though less robust than that of his father, must now be subjected to a test. Canaan was watered with rain from heaven, and if the rain was withheld famine supervened. Egypt was watered by its famous river, and usually was the land of plenty. So when famine again descended on Canaan, Isaac's steps would naturally turn towards Egypt. But the word of the Lord to him was that Egypt was forbidden. He was to stay in the land and in spite of appearances God would bless him there and fulfil all that had been promised to Abraham. So Isaac descended to the coastal region, inhabited by the Philistines, and there for a time he dwelt.

But settling down amongst these people, there came the same test as confronted his father, and he met it in the same way, by subterfuge. Now subterfuge, practised by men of the world, may have considerable success; practised by a saint of God it always ends in failure, sooner or later. In Isaac's case it seemed to answer for a considerable time, but at length the Abimelech of those days discovered the truth. Consequently we find again a man of the world, marked by a considerable

measure of uprightness, rebuking the saint of God — a sorrowful sight! But one which has often been repeated from that day to this. Let each of us be careful lest it be repeated in our own history.

Nevertheless God did not forsake Isaac because of this lapse on his part. He had obeyed the instruction not to descend into Egypt and hence, in spite of the famine, God blessed him abundantly in his sowing, his flocks and herds and servants, so much so that he had to depart from the Philistine's land. In those days the Philistines were not numerous, since Abimelech, their king, had to confess that Isaac's large household had become mightier than they were. But one thing they had done to Isaac's disadvantage, as verse 15 records; they had filled the wells with earth.

In that land everything depended upon the well-springs, that made the rain of heaven available; hence the well becomes symbolic of the source of life and fertility, and ultimately of the Holy Spirit, springing up into life and blessing. The wells had been dug through Abraham, the man of faith, but the Philistines had stopped them with earth. Presently in Scripture we hear a great deal about the Philistines, who became numerous and powerful, and they

have undoubtedly a typical significance. In these earliest mentions of them that significance becomes manifest.

They were a people who got into the land of promise, without being called into it by God. They were not like the Amorites, the old inhabitants of the land, mentioned in chapter 15: 16, but they were a people who had got into God's land without being God's people, and therefore typical of the religious world rather than of the worldly and irreligious world. Now the religious world, whether nominally Jewish or Christian, has always concentrated on a purely earthly order of things. Stopping the well-springs of divine and heavenly blessing has always been a favourite occupation of the Philistine, whether literal or typical, and earth and its things have ever been the material they have handled. The Apostle Paul had the typical Philistine in view when he penned Philippians 3: 19, and even when he wrote Colossians 3: 2.

Isaac had to dig again the old wells, but he called them by their original names for they had not changed their characters. He also dug new wells and some of these the Philistines claimed. The well, Rehoboth, however, he retained, for he left his case in the hands of the Lord, who made room for him. We may see an analogy to this in church history. Many a well of apostolic days was filled with earth as the centuries passed and has had to be dug again. But when dug it has the same old name. Luther and his co-workers in other lands dug again an important well. It had the old name of "Justification by faith."

With the well Isaac connected the thought of fruitfulness, as we see in verse 22. This fits in with its spiritual significance. We are only fruitful as we abide in Christ and He in us, as stated in John 15: 5, and of this we have knowledge, "by the Spirit which He hath given us" (1 John 3: 24). Isaac now returned to "The well of the oath" where his father had dwelt, and there again God appeared to him and renewed His promises, and there we see Isaac at his best, for there he pitched the tent of his pilgrimage, and there he had his altar of sacrifice and communion, in addition to the well.

There too the Philistine king and his servants approached him, and confessed that they had seen that the Lord was with him, and this in spite of the fact, of which Isaac reminded them, that they had disliked him because of his prosperity and had sent him away. They now wished that there should be an oath and a covenant of peace between them, and this was established. Isaac could now pursue his pilgrim way without further interference from the Philistines, and we can see how his course illustrates the injunctions of Romans 12: 17-19. Isaac had not recompensed evil for evil, nor sought to avenge himself, but as much as lay in his power he had lived peaceably with all men. May the same spirit be ours as we go through the world.

The two verses that close the chapter show us that at the age of forty Esau had developed a mind altogether opposed to that of both Abraham and Isaac, who made no alliance with the Canaanite. Esau established the most intimate connection, that of marriage, with two

Hittite women. He thus brushed aside the thought of taking a wife from their own kindred, and linked himself with the people of the land, whose iniquity was rising until their judgment fell some three to four hundred years later. Previously he had despised the birthright, now he despised a restriction that had Divine sanction. The call of God was nothing to him. It was a grief of mind to his parents and a challenging of the purpose of God.

In chapter 27 we see the governmental result beginning to manifest itself. Isaac does not now appear in a very favourable light, nor indeed does Rebekah. Both were marked by partiality, as had been stated in verse 28 of the previous chapter, and were governed by their own special fancies. Isaac's loss of sight made him anticipate death a good many years before it came to him, and he was anxious to bestow the blessing on Esau, in spite of the fact that before birth it had been indicated that he was to serve Jacob. He was thus attempting to defeat the purpose of God, and the chapter reveals how his effort failed.

Rebekah, on the other hand, knew what God's purpose was, but in her anxiety for the blessing of her favourite she resorted to a calculated course of deceit in order to trick her blind husband. She instigated the deceit and Jacob practised it with success. Later episodes in Jacob's life reveal him to us as a man who was a master of artful and even underhand designs. It is a solemn thought that he got the earliest recorded lesson in this kind of thing from his mother. His bartering with Esau as to the pottage and the birthright was sharp practice, but had not

in it the element of deceit.

Mankind is endowed with five senses, as we all know. One of the five was lacking with poor Isaac. **Sight** being gone, he was shut up to the other four, and this striking story shows that all the four were exercised. Rebekah's clever cookery presented the flesh of the kids as though it were venison, so his **taste** was deceived. Her production of Esau's garments, putting them on Jacob, was effectual in deceiving his sense of **smell**. Her plan of covering Jacob's hands and neck with the hairy skin of the slain kids was equally successful in deceiving his powers of **feeling**. One sense remained, that of **hearing**, and Isaac recognized the voice as that of Jacob. It was a case of three senses against one. Three senses declared that the son he could not see was Esau, and only one declared that it was Jacob. Isaac accepted the verdict of the majority and blessed the son he could not see.

Yet the majority verdict was wrong, and only the testimony of his ear was right. We see in this an allegory, illustrating a very important principle, namely that God-given faith comes by **hearing**. Faith is not sight, as we know. But there are many who seem to think that it comes by feeling; and that, not only among those who are desiring assurance of salvation, but also among those who are saved. Such would like to be guided by feelings or other natural senses rather than by simple faith in the word of God. We are living in an epoch in which God is addressing Himself, not to sight or feeling, but to the hearing of faith. We may safely trust His voice, even if all our natural senses

contradict.

The deceit which Jacob practised, as instigated by his mother, was reinforced by a direct lie on his part, when he declared that he was Esau. Fully deceived, Isaac blessed him. Verses 28 and 29 give the terms of it, and we notice that it was all concerned with earthly things. He was to have plenty to eat and drink, and be served by his brethren and other nations, who would themselves be cursed or blessed by their attitude to him. There was no word as to God being his shield and reward, as we find with Abraham. Still, such as it was, it indicated the blessing on earth that was to be his. His descendants have forfeited it, as we know, but it will all be made good to them in the coming millennial day.

Our thoughts are now turned to Esau, who had been forestalled in this fraudulent way. Yet, as is so often the case, man's evil is overruled to work out the purpose of God. The great trembling of Isaac would seem to indicate that he was convicted of having tried to defeat God's purpose, and that having failed in this, and having been used to pronounce on Jacob what he intended for Esau, the thing was irrevocable. As for Esau, he at once recognized that here was the sequel to the wanton way in which he had sold his birthright. In regard to him we might summarize the whole sad story as:— The birthright: the barter: the bitter cry. The birthright was gone, and the bitter cry remained.

In Hebrews 12: 16, Esau is designated, "profane person," and coupled with a "fornicator." The

appropriateness of the connection is apparent when we remember that this latter sin is used figuratively for unholy connections between the believer and the world; whilst the profane person is one who lives wholly for this world, and shuts God and His world out of his thoughts. Esau had not only done this but also had despised what was of God. Now when people go to the length of despising God and His blessing they perish, as is stated in Acts 13: 41. In our day and in our land there are multitudes slipping into that great sin in regard to the Gospel, and they stand on the brink of destruction.

Esau was now a pitiful sight. He wept. His tears could not undo the past or recover the birthright, but they did draw forth a blessing from Isaac, though not **the** blessing. And in uttering what he did in verses 39 and 40, he spoke doubtless as a prophet. For many a long century the yoke of Jacob has been off the neck of Esau.

But the feud between the two brothers remains to this day, and is one of the greatest forces provoking discord in the earth. The beginning of it and the root of it come before us in verse 41. But again we see that in all his thoughts Esau had not God before him, otherwise he would not have imagined he could defeat God's purpose by slaying his brother.

He miscalculated in thinking that his father's death was impending, when it did not take place for a number of years. His threat however reached Rebekah's ears and stirred her to a further plan on behalf of her favourite son. There was

in it again, we think, an element of subterfuge. To explain to Isaac his sudden departure to Laban, she complained of the annoying behaviour of the Hittite wives of Esau, which doubtless was quite true, and insinuated that Jacob might follow this bad example. Really, however, she only anticipated that Jacob's stay with his uncle would last for "a few days," and then, Esau's anger having evaporated, she would have her favourite son back again.

The incident that fills this chapter relates some sordid details, but contains some searching instruction. We see how God maintains His purpose and at the same time exercises His disciplinary government. Everybody suffered; Esau and Isaac, and finally both Jacob and Rebekah, since the parting lasted for many years, rather than "a few days," as she anticipated. Further, Jacob went forth to be deceived by others and Rebekah was left to the unwelcome society of the daughters of Heth. She dwelt upon her weariness as a reason and an excuse for sending Jacob off to her brother, but doubtless the discord between them was very real, and she was left to face it without her favourite son.

That Isaac was satisfied with Rebekah's explanation is evident as we read the opening verses of chapter 28. Indeed at this point we see him in a much more favourable light, and speaking as a man of faith. He charges Jacob to go to Padan-aram and find a wife among his own people, and he blesses him in a way that surely indicates that he now accepted the purpose of God as to his two sons, which overruled and cancelled out his own natural

inclinations. He calls upon God to give "the blessing of Abraham" to him, for that particular blessing, which carried with it the coming of the "Seed," in whom all nations should be blessed, was the very essence of the coveted birthright.

We notice further, that the possession of this blessing entailed the ultimate possession of the land of promise, but for the present strangership in the midst of it. This has a remarkable voice for us, since we read in Galatians 3: 14, of "the blessing of Abraham" coming "on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." In receiving the Spirit we have the Earnest of the heavenly portion that is ours, but for the present we are left as strangers in the place where we are. Our portion lies **there** in the age to come. Our strangership is **here** in the age that is.

Verses 6-9, are sadly illuminating as to the mind of Esau. He not only contracts a further marriage that was bound to displease his parents, but that also would contravene the purpose of God. In the previous chapter he appears as a prospective murderer: now he is again revealed as a deliberate and high-handed despoiler of God and His word. We saw this contrary spirit characterizing him at the end of chapter 26; we now see it breaking out even more decisively and flagrantly, so that it is not difficult to understand the statement in the last Old Testament book, "I hated Esau." As yet the history of Jacob has not furnished us with any clear reason why God should say, "I loved Jacob."

# THE SEVEN MEN OF SCRIPTURE

J. W. FAIRBAIRN

## II.

### The Natural, the Spiritual and the Carnal Man

**I**N a previous article we saw that the terms "old man" and "first man" were **racial** thoughts, which described two aspects of the human race, and that now in Christ both are superseded since the Christian company has put on the "new man" and belongs to the heavenly order of "the second man." By way of contrast the terms, "natural man" and "spiritual man" are **individual** ideas; they speak of the **attitude of mind** each man possesses, rather than the **moral character** of the human race as expressed in the old man and the first man. The natural man's mind is illumined by human wisdom; the spiritual man's by the Holy Spirit. It is not so much a question of our walk or behaviour, but what is the light that illumines our lives.

Though these expressions only occur in 1 Corinthians 2, this chapter gives us quite a lot of information about these two men. Intellectual ability has always been highly esteemed among men and no more so than among the Greeks, to which race the Corinthians belonged. The ultimate goal of all this mental activity is the How, Why, Whence and Whither of this Universe, and all the thinking of natural man has produced no satisfactory answer: today, as always, man is ever learning yet never coming to the knowledge of the truth. He learns by two routes, viz., observation — as in the sciences — and contemplation

— as in philosophy. In 1 Corinthians 2: 9 Paul speaks of these two avenues of human knowledge — "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard [observation], neither have entered into the heart of man [contemplation], the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Here is knowledge which is beyond the range of the greatest human intellect — for the natural man receiveth not these things. But God has revealed them unto us by His Spirit — the light which illuminates the mind of the spiritual man. We may not be able to answer all the problems of life, but we possess the secret of the universe; Jesus Christ the Power and Wisdom of God! The light of this great secret pours into your mind and mine by the Holy Spirit; we have the mind of Christ. Does not such grace fill us with humility and an earnest desire to search all things, yea, the deep things of God?

We cannot but be impressed by the great edifice of human knowledge which towers above us today; so vast that no single mind can contain even a smattering of every one of its branches. And yet, in the light of His presence; in the light of that mystery which "God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Corinthians 2: 7) and "in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge" (Colossians 2: 3, N. Tr.) this human edifice turns out to be a mere ant-hill, destined to crumble and perish as the Day of God dawns. Oh! that we might increasingly value these "deep

things of God;" that we might ever remember we are spiritual men and that the wisest man among us is the most spiritual who refuses to be governed by anything less than a **spiritual** approach to every problem of life.

We may approach the things of God from a **scientific** angle, in questions relating to the Bible and science; maybe the **philosophic** approach, which tries to square up Biblical teaching with the works of a Socrates. Some Christians study the Word from a **theological** point of view; divine truth is parcelled out and systematized in rather the same way in which a scientist systematizes natural truth. All these studies have a place, but it is a very small place when compared with the **spiritual** approach. This latter requires humility and affection for Christ and the mind must be made the servant of the heart; but it is the only way to apprehend what is eternal. Science, philosophy, theology make a far greater appeal to the human mind (even in the Christian) but little of these things will withstand the fire; the gold, silver and precious stones are what the Spirit builds in us and by us. The pages of a magazine like this may never have contributed much to "theological thought," but if they have built up Christ in the hearts of the readers they have done very well. Let us put spirituality at a high premium — higher even than gifts and ability.

### The Carnal Man

(1 Corinthians 3: 1, 3)

This "man" has no opposite number, but is an anomaly in the spiritual world, — a man who has

been born again, possessing the mind of Christ by the Spirit, yet walking as a natural man, as though he had never been enlightened. Paul says of the Corinthians that he could not address them "as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Note, this is not chapter 5 — a carnal man is not necessarily one who wallows in fleshly lusts. The Corinthians were carnal because they treated the things of God like the natural man would, and formed schools of opinion around famous names. Let us beware, lest we be carnal and babes. We must listen with respect to what gifted leaders have said; we must not despise prophesying, but we must prove all things and hold fast that which is good. It is a sign of babyhood to think that any man's writings are beyond criticism, and a sign of spiritual growth when we perpetually examine and re-examine all we have heard and read in the light of Scripture.

Further, let us not think that the simple or uninstructed believer is necessarily a babe or carnal. Many such may breath out a deep devotion to Christ which we might all envy. The most gifted teachers of the Word have profound desire that all ministry should lead to Christ being all in all. True ministry is not necessarily expository, but it is always devotional, and our response to it is a measure of our spiritual stature. Against this measure the intellectual and gifted Corinthians were shown to be but babes and carnal. How different is God's judgment and man's!

Seven men of Scripture. What lessons they teach us! Of man, the puny, foolish and corrupt being that

has filled this tiny page of eternal history. Of Man, the Second Man and His race, about whom the whole of eternal counsel centres and with which every page of the ages to come will be filled. God shall dwell with men and God shall be all in all.

Now, if these things are true of

us, if these things shall shortly come to pass, what manner of men ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Surely we ought to walk as the man God has planned us to be according to "His workmanship" (Eph. 2: 10), so that all who know us may see coming out the character and ways of the Second Man, and not the first.

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## THE SACRIFICIAL GLORY OF OUR LORD

J. MCBROOM

**I**F we think of the Cross in relation to the holy nature of God and His place as Governor of the universe, and to the whole question of good and evil, it may be helpful, as widening our thought and outlook, if we meditate a little on the sacrificial glory of our Lord, as seen in the offerings and their laws, set before us in the early chapters of Leviticus. There were five altogether; one of which — the Meat offering — was bloodless. The Burnt offering, the Meat offering, the Peace, or Prosperity, offering were voluntary. The Sin offering and the Trespass offering were compulsory.

It may help us to look a little at this distinction. An offering for sin could not be voluntary, nor could a free-will offering be the result of a command. When sin is in question our God is a consuming fire: the Cross was therefore an absolute necessity. Propitiation being a work no creature could accomplish, what could be done? God's resource was to send forth His Son. What lay behind all was the eternal purpose

of God. In obedience to the Father's will, the Son came forth to die as the sin-offering. This met the holy nature of God and vindicated His character with regard to sin. The submissive obedience of our Lord was perfect.

But the voluntary offerings bespeak on the part of our Lord the free offering of Himself. In the celestial chambers above the voice of the Son is heard, saying with regard to the provisional system of sacrifices, "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire: ears hast Thou prepared Me. Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not demanded. Then said I, Behold, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me — to do Thy good pleasure, My God, is My delight" (Psa. 40: 6-8, N. Tr.) It is to be noted that this was said long before He came down, and it was repeated in Hebrews 10, some time after He had gone on high, in virtue of having accomplished that work, which combined **both free-will offering and submissive obedience.**

To these words may be added,

“Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph. 5: 2). It is thus we get the true Nazarite, and the greatest of all vows. For other vows, see Psalm 22: 25. Although it was in the place of sin-bearing that He offered Himself, we are far from the thought of sin here. It is Himself in all His pure, holy, intrinsic excellence, as appreciated by the Father, even at the extreme moment, when He was bearing our guilt.

It should be observed that all the five offerings meet in our Lord upon the cross. God begins from His own side with the burnt offering and comes to the meat and peace offerings. We begin with the trespass and sin offerings, and meet our God in the peace offering of Leviticus 3. This is the great communion offering; a study of its place in the consecration of the priests shows its import. It is that aspect of the death of our Lord which represents our God as making a feast at His own expense, namely, the death of His Son, at His own house. He brings us to it in the good of reconciliation, so that in moral suitability to Himself we can share His delight in His well beloved Son, and in all that He has done. In virtue of it, the whole heavens and earth will eventually be placed before God on the basis of redemption, to His eternal praise.

We have listened with chastened feelings to the utterances of the Son to the Father at His coming down into time and man's world; shall we now dwell for a moment with the same awe and reverence on some of the most touching of all communings

that are bound up with His death. In Psalm 102, we may hear the deep breathings of the heart of both the Father and the Son. In the words, “I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days,” we have the utterance of the Son.

Then comes the answer of the Father, which is quoted in Hebrews 1, “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands; they shall perish; but Thou remainest.” Again He says, “Thou art the Same [a name of absolute Godhead], and Thy years shall not fail.” Then further, there was the Father's voice from heaven in answer to His soul's distress, as recorded in John 12: 27, 28. And in Hebrews 5 we have recorded His strong crying and tears in Gethsemane, and He was heard “in that He feared,” or, “for His piety.”

But there came a time, when He was upon the cross, in which there could be no answer to His cry of abandonment. This brings us back to consider our holy Lord as the sin-offering, when He was forsaken of God. This brought to light the dreadful malignity of men, who took advantage of the Divine silence to assume that they had God on their side against the holy Sufferer. What a moment it was in the history of eternity, when our blessed God, in spite of the yearnings of His heart towards His Son, the Beloved of His bosom, had to hide his face from Him in the moment of His extremity and remain silent!

Many passages give us God's estimate of His Son in that dark hour, but there is also His estimate

of man — the creature that nailed Him to the tree. There Man is seen, in the Person of our Lord, to the delight of the heart of God, while on the other hand, man, the creature, is seen at his darkest and worst. This most amazing thing is seen there; man, the creature of God's predilection, the being that, renewed in Christ, will stand with Him at the very heart of His eternal plan for blessing and glory, perpetrating the most awful deed in the history of eternity.

To crucify was to put a person to a death of unending shame and ignominy. The Jews could not crucify: stoning was their way of execution according to the law. Nor could the Romans crucify a Roman citizen. This mode of execution was for slaves and foreign criminals. Hence the deep meaning of that cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Not only must He die but His death must be accompanied by ignominy, execration and shame never to be lifted, as far as man was concerned.

But now note the solemn meaning of all this under the eye of God. The curse and death rested upon man as departed from God. Living in his guilt, he was under death as God's original sentence, and under the curse of a broken law. And, after four millenniums of Divine dealings and culture, the crucifixion of the Son of God became the crowning act of his guilt. As a Substitute the blessed Lord was bearing the guilt, the curse, the shame and the death, so that the lower He went as a voluntary and sinless Sufferer the clearer is seen not only the completeness of His work of propitiation but also God's estimate of man in the

flesh. In the cross the long history of man's probation came to a close, and the words of our Lord to the fig tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever," find their proper explanation. No fruit can ever be found for God in fallen man.

How sad it is that there are many who still claim that there is something good for God in fallen man. Sadder still it is to find even Christians who do not bow to the truth that man is no longer under probation, but is proved to be wholly lost. The death of our Lord has settled that question once and for all, and now the One who died lives triumphantly in glory as the Head of a new order of man, which is for the eternal pleasure of God.

In the retributory ways of God such an act could not go unpunished, for no greater insult, which developed into such a terrible assault, could be launched forth upon the Creator. Marvellous to say, that in the midst of all this devilish activity, the holy Sufferer made a way of escape for His very murderers. In dying He said, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."

In keeping with these words the Gospel of God is sent to the race that crucified His Son. Had His death been reckoned as an act of deliberate murder, God would have been compelled in His righteousness to judge us all and commit us to everlasting woe. Under the law there was a remedy provided for the manslayer — the man who killed another without intent. Even so, in the death of Christ, a means of escape was provided, so that the grace of

God in salvation can righteously flow forth to all. Those who receive that grace are secure, for they have

“ fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us ” (Heb. 6: 18).

## THE TRUE GOD AND ETERNAL LIFE

A. H. STORRIE.

(Read 1 John 1: 1-10; 2: 1-2).

**T**HE very grandeur and nobility of John's opening words arrest our attention; and these qualities are but in keeping with the glory and greatness of the writer's theme. Like a true teacher, the apostle hides himself and makes the teaching prominent.

Could any greater or more blessed subject engage our thoughts? The manifestation of eternal life here upon earth is what is presented to us in these verses. Such is “ the beginning ” of which John writes; that which was first heard, then seen by the apostles. They heard the Baptist's testimony: “ Behold the Lamb of God; ” then “ they came and saw where He dwelt. ” Then we have the Baptist's word, “ And I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. ” Was ever such a sight beheld by mortal eyes? Or ever such words heard by human ears?

By common consent that which is seen and heard also handled by a number of true witnesses cannot be denied. We read: “ And the life has been manifested and we have seen, and bear witness, and report to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us. ” (New Trans.) This it is that the apostles reported to

other believers that these too might have fellowship with them, whose fellowship was indeed with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

It is thought that John was the latest of the New Testament writers. At the time when he wrote a measure of unfaithfulness and failure had already marred some of the churches; but the fellowship of which this epistle treats is untouched by ecclesiastical failure, so notwithstanding it he states, “ These things write we to you, that your joy may be full. ” Have these words not a familiar ring? “ I have spoken these things to you that my joy may be in you, and your joy be full ” (John 15: 11). Thus He spoke on the night of His betrayal. The unspeakable sorrow that lay immediately before Him neither disturbed nor diminished the joy that He characterized as being His.

John treats of what abides, of life and nature, of relationship — vital and everlasting. Unlike Paul he never speaks of sons (*huios*) but always of children (*teknia*). What fulness of blessing then is ours! — even fellowship or communion with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

The declaration that God is light

is rather more relative than the statement that God is love. It is in relation to darkness: "And in Him is no darkness at all." The loving and gracious John can be very blunt: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practise the truth." Are any of us saying one thing and doing the opposite? On the other hand, how blessed to walk in the light as He is in the light! Thus we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from every sin.

The simple meaning of the word fellowship or communion is that we share things in common (compare Acts 2: 44). John's use of the term thus connotes immortal blessedness — a matter more for meditation than for interpretation. Yet we know something of its blessedness, even communion with the Father and the Son in the light, and made fit for the light inasmuch as the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin. Such is the property that belongs to the blood. Nevertheless, we must not

say that we have no sin. What Scripture calls "our old man" (Romans 6: 7, 20) is in us still.

Then follows what is blessedly true for saint and sinner at all times: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And it avails no one to say that he has not sinned, for God's Word declares that all have sinned (Rom. 3: 23).

The first two verses of chapter 2 really belong to chapter 1. The Christian ought not to sin, and will not if he heeds the Word of God. Alas, sometimes he does sin; but what a comfort it is to know that in such a case "we have an Advocate (*paracletos*) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"! And He is the propitiation for our sins, also available in that capacity for the whole world. The word "paraclete" is of great beauty and means "one alongside to help."

May we have an ever increasing appreciation of these precious truths.

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## THE COMING AND THE APPEARING

A. J. POLLOCK.

**T**HE second coming of our Lord consists of two parts. First His coming FOR His heavenly saints, including the Old Testament saints from Adam downward — "they that are Christ's at His coming." (1 Cor. 15: 23). After that He will come WITH His heavenly saints to set up His earthly kingdom with world-wide dominion.

These two parts of the Lord's coming we believe to be separated by the events that are foretold in the Book of the Revelation, as narrated from Chapter 4 — the breaking of the seven seals, the blowing of the seven trumpets, the pouring out of the seven vials, the time of the Great Tribulation, and ending up with the great Battle of Arma-

geddon (Rev. 19: 11-21).

Seeing that the word, **coming**, is used in Scripture in reference to both parts of the second advent, to make clear, which we are considering, we will refer to the first part as **The Rapture**, and the second part as **The Appearing**. To point out the differences between these two wonderful events will help us to understand both in their proper settings.

The Rapture is described in 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18, and 1 Corinthians 15: 51-58; the Appearing with much detail in Matthew 24: 27-42, and other passages.

The contrast is plainly seen in several particulars.

At the Rapture the Lord **Himself** comes **for** His heavenly saints (1 Thess. 4: 16). At the Appearing the Lord sends **His angels** to "gather together His elect [His earthly saints] from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt. 24: 31).

The Rapture has to do with Heaven. The Appearing with the Kingdom of Heaven, which will be established **on this earth**. Read the seven parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, as set forth by our Lord Himself in Matthew 13. There will be no tares in Heaven, no "children of the wicked one" in Heaven, there will be no "leaven" in Heaven — "leaven" always in Scripture symbolic of evil, and alas! found on this earth.

Then again those, who are caught up at the Rapture, are taken for  **blessing**, those who are left — Christless professors and others —

left for  **judgment**. The Appearing is just the opposite. Those  **left** are left for blessing, to enter into the blessing of the millennial reign of Christ; those  **taken**, taken for judgment.

We have several instances of this in Scripture. The antediluvian world was  **taken** in judgment, Noah and his family  **left** for blessing. The inhabitants of Sodom were  **taken** in judgment. Lot  **left** for blessing. Indeed, our Lord uses both these cases as illustrations of what will obtain at the time of the Appearing.

There is a further case in point. At the judgment of the nations in the last days we read of their being separated into sheep and goats, symbolizing those who receive the testimony of the King coming to reign, and those who refuse the testimony. Those who refuse are taken for  **everlasting punishment**; those left, for  **life eternal**. (Matt. 25: 46).

Matthew 24 tells of two men in the field, the one taken for judgment, the other left for blessing; of two women grinding at the mill, the one taken for judgment, the other left for blessing; Luke adding two men in bed, the one taken for judgment, the other left for blessing.

Incidentally, these few verses intimate that the earth is a rotating globe. When the Bible was written, the universal idea was otherwise.

But how could two men in bed — night-time; two women grinding their corn — breakfast time; two men in the field — mid-day — all be affected by one instantaneous event, even the Appearing of our Lord? How this could happen, we

can now easily see. When the European side of the globe is bathed in sunshine, the Australian is enwrapped in night. How Scripture bears the marks of Divine inspiration, generally signified in few words without any elaborate explanation, as in this case.

Another difference between the Rapture and the Appearing is that the Old Testament prophesies again and again the Appearing, as the time of peace and happiness for this sadly troubled world, but says not a single word as to the Rapture. Indeed, the New Testament, referring to the Rapture, says of it, "Behold, I show you **a mystery**" (1 Cor. 15: 51). It is a mystery since the place of the church of God in the eternal counsels of God was not revealed in Old Testament times. We read in this connection of, "The mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1: 26). Here we have, as it were, a mystery hidden in a mystery, neither revealed till New Testament times.

As to the Appearing, it is foretold again and again in the Old Testament. See Zechariah 13 and 14; Malachi 4: 2; Ezekiel 36: 24-38, etc., etc. We have very glowing language as to what will be the condition of the earth when our Lord comes to reign, "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Habakkuk 2: 14). Again we read, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the **Lord**: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them,

saith the Lord." (Jer. 31: 34). The last verse of the prophecy of Ezekiel ends up with supreme satisfaction, "The **Lord** is there." Here is the consummation of the Appearing.

Referring to the Appearing we read, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only." (Matt. 24: 36). This does not refer in any way to the Rapture. There is no reference whatever as to the time when that event will take place. Foolish and worse are those, who have dared to fix a date in the face of this Scripture.

Another difference between the Rapture and the Appearing is that the former carries with it nothing but joy and comfort; whereas at the Appearing we read, "All the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24: 30). Again we read, "Behold He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen." (Rev. 1: 7).

No signs are connected with the Rapture to prevent the Christian expecting the Lord at any moment. But before the Appearing takes place the Jews will be assembled in their own land again, but in unbelief; the Roman Empire will be revived; and the Antichrist will appear in Jerusalem. Of all these signs there are at this present time significant indications which show that we are not far off from the time when our Lord will come **with** His saints to reign on the earth. The Rapture is prior to the Appearing by some

time, so that, if the signs tell us that the Appearing is nearing, we may be sure that the Rapture is nearer still.

We should like to make still plainer the difference between Heaven and the Rapture, and the Kingdom of Heaven and the Appearing. Heaven is a matter of God's sovereign grace. His righteousness in showing grace is based on the atoning death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not one of us, not even the most devoted of the servants of Christ, will get to Heaven save by the wonderful grace of God, and nothing else. It is written that, "of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and **righteousness**, and sanctification and redemption." (1 Cor. 1: 30).

To put it in another way, the Rapture has to do with sovereignty, and not responsibility. The Kingdom of Heaven has to do with responsibility, rather than with sovereignty. Never is the believer told that he will rule over five or ten cities in Heaven, but he is told in our Lord's parables of the talents and the pounds, that faithfulness and devotedness in the interests of Christ will find their reward in the coming Millennial Kingdom of our Lord, which is the Kingdom of Heaven in manifestation.

An illustration will help to make things clearer in our minds. Suppose a manufacturer employing thousands of hands has several sons. Naturally he takes them into his business, and these sons get positions according to their several ability. But a day comes when this manufacturer invites his sons and their wives, his daughters and

their husbands, and all the grandchildren, to his home for a great family gathering.

Think of the difference between the home and the factory. Home is their father's house. Every member of the family, whether son or daughter, is there on an equal footing. They are there to share the father's love and bounty. The factory is the place of business, where each son employed has his special position according to his ability and trustworthiness. The family gathering is over, the sons go to their appointed tasks at the factory, their father is their employer, and they have to give account of their activities to him for either praise or rebuke.

Have we Christians not got the Father's house, which is ours for all eternity through the sovereign favour of God, and as a result of the atoning death of our Lord upon the cross? Is not Christ Himself our **righteousness**? We can stand in no other.

Are we Christians not in the kingdom of God on earth? Will it not depend on our faithfulness and devotedness in serving the interests of our Lord, as to our reward in the coming Kingdom of Heaven? So we read, "He that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hath been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." (Matt. 25: 20, 21).

Just as we distinguish between the family gathering and the discipline and administration of the factory, so we may distinguish between Heaven and the Kingdom of Heaven.

While as to title each believer has a place in the Father's House on high through sovereign grace, and through the atoning work of our Lord on the cross, yet it is likewise true, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12: 14). "We are made partakers of Christ,

if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." (Heb. 3: 14).

Thank God, the precious blood gives us title to be with the Lord, but along with that there must be moral suitability for us to be happy there. In the Tabernacle there was the bloodstained mercy seat, giving the priests title to go into the sanctuary, but there was also the brazen laver, where the priests could wash their hands and feet that they might be clean as to their actual condition.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 28: 10 — 31: 55)

**I**N spite of all his defects Jacob's action in going forth to Haran was consistent with the purpose of God, and hence by a dream encouragement was ministered to him. At the time of Babel men sought to elevate themselves to heaven by a tower of their own construction, and it ended in scattering and confusion. But God has established a link between heaven and earth, indicated by the ladder of his dream, and this link in those days was made good by angelic administration. Jehovah Himself was at the top of the ladder and poor Jacob, the fugitive, at the bottom, needing a blessing and getting it.

Three things stand out clearly in this divine communication. First, though Jacob was running away from the land of promise, it was confirmed to him and to his seed, which was to be greatly multiplied and spread out in all directions. Second, there was the promise of blessing for all the families of the earth in him

and in his seed. Third, the promise of the Divine presence and preservation in all his wanderings, and his ultimate restoration to the land which was his according to purpose. He may have some bitter experiences under Divine government but God's purpose will stand.

It may be that when the Lord uttered the words recorded in John 1: 51, He alluded to this incident. If so, we have to notice an important difference. In the coming age the Son of Man will not be a mere "ladder," but rather the administrative Centre of all things. Being Lord of all, angels will ascend and descend as He directs. The heavens and the earth will be brought into harmony and unity under His sway.

Verses 16-22 show us how Jacob responded to the dream. In the first place, it awoke him to the realization of the presence of God. That we may be in the presence of God, and yet quite unaware of it, is a solemn

thought. To Jacob it was not merely solemn; it was **dreadful**. But that was because he had no assured standing before God on the ground of redemption. Only when the death and resurrection of Christ were accomplished facts could believers say, "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," having received the reconciliation. For us the presence of God is not dreadful but delightful.

Then again, Jacob recognized that where Jehovah manifests His presence, there is the house of God. Right through the Scriptures runs the thought of the house of God in its various forms and aspects, but here is the first mention of it. It is remarkable moreover that Jacob connected "the gate of heaven" with "the house of God." The first mention of a gate is in Genesis 19: 1, where Lot sat in the gate of Sodom, and this shows that the word is used not only to designate the place of entrance and exit but also the place where men of age and wisdom sat to execute judgment. In other words, gate has a figurative as well as a literal meaning, and where God dwells in His house, there is the place of Heaven's administration and judgment.

And further, Jacob's action in taking one of the stones that had served him for a pillow, and anointing it as a pillar, and identifying it thus with God's house, is remarkable and significant in the light of 1 Timothy 3: 15. In ancient times pillars were used for support, as we see in Solomon's Temple. But they were also set up as witnesses to certain facts. Three times do we read of Jacob rearing pillars; here and in chapters 31 and 35, each time as a

witness.

It is in this sense, we believe, that the word is used in 1 Timothy 3: 15. The Church of the living God is the house of God and the pillar and ground, or basis, of the truth. The "church of the living God" is being built by "the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16: 16-18), and it is at the present time the standing witness to the truth in the power of the Spirit of God. It is worthy of note that in our chapter Jacob poured oil upon the pillar, which we may take as a figure of the anointing of the Spirit of God. His action originated the name, Bethel, which means, house of God.

But, though Jacob did all this, the ground that he took in his vow was about as selfish as ever to be found in a true saint of God. It came to this:— If God will be with me, and look after me, and do for me what I desire, then He shall be my God, and I will yield to Him a tenth of all that He gives me. A bargain such as this is barely above the level of a decent man of the world. Yet God bore with him and evidently accepted his feeble vow, and did for him all that he wished, and more also.

In chapter 29, we find Jacob resuming his journey, and the merciful hand of God, directing him and opening up his way, is at once manifested. His steps are guided to the very well where the sheep of Laban, his uncle, were watered and where he met his cousin Rachel. Into the house of Laban he was received with an effusive welcome, but only to find himself there in the hands of a man who was his equal in duplicity.

After Jacob had sojourned there

a month, serving Laban, the question as to his wages was raised and, loving Rachel, he agreed to serve seven years for her. The story of how Laban deceived him at the end of the seven years is given to us in verses 23-30, and Laban had a plausible excuse for acting as he did. We cannot fail to see in this the working of the government of God and an illustration of our Lord's words, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." It was Jacob's turn now to complain of being beguiled.

Moreover, there was discipline from the hand of God. Jacob's love was centred on Rachel and in comparison with her Leah was hated, so it was ordered of God that, while Leah bore children, Rachel was barren. The closing verses of the chapter give us the birth of four sons and their names. It is worthy of note that in each case the name was given by the mother, and was related to her own circumstances and feelings. Jacob does not appear as having any say in the matter. During this period of his chequered career there is no record of his having an altar of sacrifice and communion. Being out of touch, he had no guidance as to the names of his children, and we shall see that this was the case with all his children except the last. Then, though Rachel named him, his father also named him, and Jacob's name prevailed.

The rather sordid story of Jacob's children, and of the devices of both Rachel and Leah, as they endeavoured to gain sons and thus establish themselves in his favour, is related in the first 21 verses of chapter 30. Here we have the origins of the

tribes in these sons, who were named by Leah and Rachel. The handmaids did not name their own sons, and the four tribes descended from these do not appear to have made any particular mark in the subsequent history of the nation.

When we reach verse 22, we find God begins to act, and we leave behind us the scheming of the two wives, though still it is Rachel who bestows the name of Joseph. Yet clearly here is a son who was born as the fruit of God acting in response to Rachel's prayers, and the story is lifted to a higher level. The son appears, who is to play a great part in the history of the nation, and who is to become a striking type of Christ, perhaps the most striking that the Old Testament affords.

In verse 25, we find that the birth of Joseph helped to lift Jacob himself to a higher level and, as a consequence, his mind turned to the land that was his according to God's purpose, and he desired to return thither. We may take it as axiomatic, and true in every dispensation, that when the saint enters into communion with God, the Divine purpose becomes to him all-important. Jacob freshly realized that there was a country that he could call, "mine own place."

Laban, however, intruded into the question and ultimately his thoughts prevailed, and he delayed Jacob, as it turned out, for six years. Laban was a shrewd man and recognized that Jacob's presence with him had brought blessing. He wished to retain that blessing, and was prepared to allow Jacob to settle his own wages. As a result there ensued a further battle of wits, and this

time Jacob and not Laban gained the advantage.

Jacob bargained that all the spotted and speckled cattle should be separated and put under his sons, while he tended the others. Then, if these others produced young of the spotted and speckled sort, they were to be his, and added to his flocks. The closing verses of this chapter reveal the device that he employed to increase his flocks at the expense of Laban's. We observe how true he still is to his name — meaning, Supplanter.

In reference to this matter, Jacob had said to Laban, "So shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come," which would seem to indicate that he had rather a low idea of what is right in the sight of God. It was quite clear that in time past Laban had taken advantage of him, but to employ counter-devices, in order to reverse the situation, while quite according to the way of the world, is not according to God. It is true of course that Jacob did not walk in the light of God fully revealed as we do.

The effect of all this is seen in the first two verses of chapter 31. The sons of Laban saw that Jacob had largely despoiled their father of his flocks, and Laban himself began to regard him with disfavour. The situation became critical, and the Lord Himself intervened to end it. Back to his own land and kindred he was to go. In breaking the news of their impending departure to his wives he related how Laban had dealt crookedly with him, and how God had acted in his favour. We are now permitted to see how God had intervened and caused the agree-

ment as to the spotted and speckled cattle to work in his favour. In the light of this our reflection would be that if he had rested with confidence in God, and not used the devices related in the last chapter, the end God purposed would have been reached, and his "righteousness" would have answered for him in a much more convincing way.

From all this we may draw a practical conclusion. We have no need nor right to resort to plans of our own, as though we could help God to achieve His purpose. If, on the other hand, God instructs us by His word to act, it is our duty and our wisdom to do as He says. Jacob asserted that Laban had changed his wages ten times. This, if a fact, was great provocation, but to have relied upon God would have saved him from actions also open to question.

In calling him back to the land of promise, God revealed Himself to him as "the God of Bethel," reminding him of the pillar he anointed and the vow that he made. Thus he was called back to the beginning of his direct dealings with God. Such is ever God's way with His people. We may wander away, but back to the original spot, whence we departed, we have to come. The point of departure proves to be the place of recovery.

Rachel and Leah altogether supported Jacob in his determination to return. Their attitude shows that they were convinced of their father's dishonourable and callous conduct, and furnishes us with further evidence of how Jacob had suffered at his hands. Their advice in the emergency could not be bettered —

“ Now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do.” Complete trust and obedience to God is the only right thing. It reminds us of the words of Mary, the mother of our Lord, recorded in John 2: 5. God alone has the right to demand such unquestioning obedience.

But in the manner of his departure we again see the character of Jacob revealed. Instead of dealing openly with Laban, meeting him face to face, and then departing with due notice, he stole away unawares while Laban was absent, shearing his sheep. In so doing he presented Laban with fresh ground of complaint, for he had submitted himself to being in the place of a servant, working for wages, though son-in-law to his master. Under those circumstances the parting ought to have been arranged by mutual consent.

A critical situation had been created, so critical that God intervened, speaking this time to Laban, who had no direct knowledge of Him, for he speaks of Him to Jacob as “ the God of your father.” In a dream Laban was warned not to overtake Jacob with violence of speech or action and, having regard to this, he adopted an attitude only of remonstrance, with a note of reproach in it as to the stealing of his gods. Verse 19 had told us that Rachel had stolen the “ images,” or “ teraphim ” of her father. Laban regarded them as his “ gods.”

Teraphim were small images, used for purposes of divination. The incident furnishes us with a sidelight as to the way in which spiritist practices had spread. These little

“ household divinities ” were revered and valued, and oftentimes especially so by the women, hence Rachel’s anxiety to have them in her possession as they travelled away from her old home. Heathen practices are very infectious. Of Rachel’s action Jacob evidently knew nothing, so the accusation, correct though it was, stirred his anger and led to a statement of his case.

His words to Laban at last were very vigorous, and he told him to his face of the hard conditions of service that he had imposed. He attributed God’s warning to Laban as not merely a considerate intervention in regard to himself but as a rebuke to Laban, and so indeed it was without a doubt.

Verses 43 and 44, would indicate that Laban himself was conscious that this was the case, and so, while asserting his fatherly rights, he adopted a different tone altogether, and suggested that a covenant should be agreed and established between them. This was accordingly done.

Again we find Jacob raising up a pillar of witness and also a heap of stones, according to the custom of those primitive days. Jacob undertook to deal rightly by Laban’s daughters, and both agreed not to pass beyond the stones of witness to harm each other. We do not read on this occasion of the anointing of the pillar, but we do find that Jacob solemnized the occasion not only by an oath but also by sacrifice. The name of God was invoked, as we see in verse 53, and that as the God of Abraham and of Nahor, since both those patriarchs would have been venerated by Laban as well as by

Jacob. In addition Jacob swore by the fear of Isaac his father. Such was the esteem accorded to parents and ancestors in those far-off days — very good in many ways. But there was the danger of the fear of

Isaac, whom he could see, supplanting the fear of the God, whom he could not see. Hence the reminder of the unseen world that he got, as we find in the opening verse of chapter 32.

## “ SOUND AN ALARM ”

(JOEL 2: 1-14).

**W**E have a most graphic description of the Assyrian Army . . . No doubt in this remarkably nervous sketch, where an unparalleled army is supposed to come up against the land, the prophecy goes beyond what then assailed the Jews. That is, we must take in the whole prospect, the binary star (what is past now prominent, the future still graver behind it), in order to meet the full strength of the divine expressions. The Assyrian then was a most formidable array, yet after all their vain-glorious insolence destroyed so completely in a single night, that Sennacherib returned in disgrace, evidently, consciously, confessedly beaten. But the future day will behold a far more appalling host.

Let me say here that according to Scripture there cannot be the slightest doubt that Russia is reserved to play a most important part in this great future crisis. For the policy of that vast modern empire affects the same objects as the Assyrian of the last day. Russia from its position in the north-east is known to seek the lead as suzerain over the

eastern powers, acquiring influence politically, so as to be able to mould and guide those vast hordes of central Asia down to the south. It is my conviction that western influence will ere long be completely annihilated in the east, and that the dominion of our own country in India is destined to be short-lived. But this is merely by the way, which if true serves after all to show the importance of having a Scriptural judgment on these matters, and how they prepare the mind for what, when it comes, will shake, if not paralyse, those who have not believed it; whereas, on the contrary, the development of facts, which prepare the way for the immense changes of the latter day, falls in with the faith of those who believe the word of God. They are not moved from their steadfastness by these things; they are prepared to expect them, instead of being surprised.

W.K.

*[From Lectures on the Minor Prophets, first published over three-quarters of a century ago].*

# RETROSPECT AND PRESENT STATE OF PROPHETIC ENQUIRY

(In 1834)

... **V**ERY few Christians are really aware of the principles which were set in action by the revival of prophetic study; and it is here proposed to take a retrospect of that enquiry, both for the purpose of demonstrating its importance as well as showing its effects . . .

It is not pretended here to fix any precise era for the revival of prophetic enquiry; or to deny that there have always been in the Church those who had given heed to the testimony of the Spirit to the glory of Christ, as well as to His sufferings. Modern research has brought out of their hiding-place many neglected and valuable treatises on prophetic subjects; which, however they might have excited an ephemeral interest, were never thought worthy of a place in standard divinity . . . And only about ten years ago, when prophetic enquiry was again forced on Christians, it was considered almost too superficial a thing even to provoke controversy; . . . The inquiry was looked upon as theoretical — it might or might not be true; but it was in no wise considered as part of the glad tidings of God. Those who searched the prophecies were thus thrown entirely on the word, which they received as the word of God, and marvellously were they led into the discovery of its unbroken unity. The pressing of the simple testimony of God's word on men's minds, had the effect of leading to the discovery that the word was made of no effect by the tradition of man.

A most vicious method of allegorizing Scripture had been resorted to, pleasing the imagination, but leading to most unwarrantable expectations, and tending to puff up the Church rather than to humble her. The inspiration of the Scriptures was thus discovered to be held very loosely indeed, and the insidious encroachments of German Neology to have taken the place of sound criticism . . . One very blessed result of prophetic study has been the assertion that the Bible is the word of God, i.e., verbally inspired; — “Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” So long as the study of prophecy therefore shall continue a subject of interest to the Church, we have security for the plenary inspiration of Scripture being held. But experience has proved that when the Church has slumbered in self-complacency, and ceased to search the records of her future hope, the definiteness of the word has been lost sight of.

Prophetic inquiry led necessarily into the question of the destiny of the earth in which we are, and of man originally constituted its lord; and hence the large scriptural prospect of yet coming glory to Israel, and that glory connected with the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of Man, sitting on the throne of David. This naturally tended to the question of the Lord's proper humanity; and as many of reputation had been found unsound on the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the re-

sult of the controversy proved them not to hold the orthodox faith, touching the person of the Lord Christ. True indeed it is that many of the assertors of the proper humanity of the Lord Christ were first driven into unguarded statements, and then into fearful heresy. Such is the subtilty of Satan that he watches with a jealous eye every approach towards the truth, and when they are beginning to throw off the doctrines of men in order to get at it, his aim has been to drive them into extremes, as if the opposite to error was truth. This was clearly the case in the controversy raised on the humanity . . .

Yet whilst we have to lament over our common weakness in seeing the fall of our brethren, and are afresh instructed in the necessity of child-like simplicity and meekness of wisdom, some profit has been mercifully afforded from the controversy, because it has exposed the error on the other side touching the person of the Lord. It proves that the humanity of the Lord was a truth greatly lost sight of by the majority of teachers, and in many instances not distinctly held at all. It formed not a topic in teaching the Lord Jesus Christ. The value of His atoning blood as resulting from His real and proper divinity was almost exclusively regarded. But the way in which He also glorified the Father as the obedient Man, the real glory of His humiliation, His presenting everything in man perfect unto God in His own person, and learning obedience through sufferings; this, in which all the moral glory of the Son of God was displayed, in a manner to be apprehended by us, had no prominence given to it.

And yet how important are the consequences of soundness in the faith respecting the humanity of the Lord. As Man He left us an example that we should follow His steps. In Him as the Holy and Just One, we see suffering to be the portion of righteousness in this world. In Him as the obedient Man, we are taught that subjection of will to the will of God is the only true blessing now or hereafter, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me." But what is of most importance is, that it is in reference to Him as Man, that we learn what the church is, what its glory, what its present portion. We learn too the world's standing and its portion; because, "He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." Now His name as the eternal Word, as the Son of God, was **not given**, it was His rightful name; nor the honour due unto it; it was the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. As Lord too, He was always the Jehovah — the I AM. The name therefore was given to Him as the Son of Man — even the name, Jesus — His proper name as Man. It was the subject of sense to those who were conversant with Jesus in the days of His flesh, that He was very Man. Faith saw in Him, whilst manifested as the Son of Man, the SON OF GOD. This was the matter of divine revelation, which flesh and blood could not attain unto, that He was, "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

A further result of benefit to the Church arising from prophetic in-

quiry, has been the discrimination between the dispensations of God, the confusion of which leads to the most disastrous consequences . . .

But the most important result of prophetic inquiry remains yet to be noticed, even that which is the great burthen of prophetic testimony — the glory of Jesus yet to be revealed — His glory as the SON of MAN. (Dan. 7). Till that period He is an expectant — “expecting until His enemies be made His footstool.” This present period is to the world the period of God’s long-suffering, and at the same time “gathering out a people for the praise of His glory from the Gentiles,” which is “the mystery hidden from ages and generations.” As to earthly glory, that of Jesus is identified with the Jews, “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, the seed of David and the Son of David, to sit on his throne.” But His associates in the heavenly glory are the saints, they are now “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things.” Here is their portion; and the revealer of this, and the pledge of it is the presence of the Comforter. As to the acting of Christ now, it is in and through the Church. That is His witness until every eye shall see Him. As soon as the true portion of the Church was discovered, and its proper function as the body of Him who filleth all in all, then its leanness and poverty, as well as madness in having gone to the world for help, was made manifest. It was seen that nothing but its own portion — the abiding presence of the Comforter — would suffice its need . . .

A principle was then forced upon men’s consciences, and has been

more than once practically exhibited — that every existing establishment goes on the principle that the Spirit of God has suspended His functions, save in quickening sinners. This is the principle of an establishment of order in the flesh — man’s order; so that if we allow the Spirit’s abiding presence in the Church as that which makes it the Church, if we allow that He is sovereign, distributing to every man severally as He will, we must also allow, that in an establishment the Spirit of God cannot exercise His ministry, save in disorder. There is no stopping short of truth without direct disobedience to God. The question which has arisen from prophetic enquiry now, is not the principle of Scriptural interpretation — it is not the Second Advent of Christ; on these points we have hundreds of witnesses; these are now as much axioms of Christianity in the minds of many, as simple faith in the blood of the Lamb . . . The differences of interpretation among the students of prophecy on some points of detail, are loudly urged as a reason for the neglect of the subject altogether. But there is one great principle in which they are agreed — judgment, not glory, for the professing Church. The next acting of God on the Church, is casting the vine of the earth into the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God.

But the present practical question is the duty arising from the light vouchsafed to us, in the discovery in the state of the Church. And here comes the cross and the trial; here the word is piercing even to the dividing asunder the joints and marrow. Many would say, here we will stop; to pursue truth further

breaks in upon all our associations, and would upset every goodly fabric the wisdom of man has devised for disseminating the truth of God. Such is the point to which we are now arrived . . . Wrongness in practice has been traced to deficiency in principle; want of success to the use of carnal weapons. The Spirit of God which has led on the way in this inquiry, now claims our simple dependence on Him as our only strength. Our sin has been, that we have grieved Him, and what is repentance but permitting Him to act? It is not for us to say how He may please to act, but to disconnect ourselves from that with which He cannot act. Here is the great value of the recovery of the principle of the Spirit's presence being the abiding portion of the Church . . . One duty is clear on discovery of the state of the Church, and that is humiliation — "Be zealous and repent, remember from whence thou art fallen." . . . Few of the Lord's people know their real lack of spiritual power, by being encompassed with so many things which can attract the flesh. Nothing is so hard as to be made to feel that we have but little strength, and yet it is the place of safety. . . .

On looking back now on the prophetic question, we find that we have been insensibly led on to the discovery that a great revolution has and is taking place in the minds of

the Lord's people. That there is a craving awakened both for spirituality and communion of the saints, which existing systems, whether from their worldliness or exclusiveness, cannot meet. That there is a growing cleaving to the word of God, as the word of God, and only balance of the sanctuary. . . . That the high standing of God's elect Church, as the light of the world, is being practically asserted in separation from the world, and that a Christian can only be a Christian in any time, place or circumstance. In a word, it may truly be said, that the controversy is again renewed between Christ and the world; it is not doctrines but practical holiness which the world hates. . . .

One word to those who have separated from any existing establishment; let them remember that obedience is their only security, even keeping the word of the patience of the Lord; let them be content to remain weak and learn what it is by **patient continuance** in well doing, to seek for glory, honour and immortality. If any have acted on impulse and not principle, the trial of their faith will soon force them back to the leaning on men. It is most important to know that separation from evil is separation into felt and acknowledged weakness, that which is so contrary to the flesh. But their little strength is real strength, because of the Spirit. . . .

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**A**RE you where God wants you? God told Elijah to go to Cherith and hide by the brook, and added, "I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there." He did not say, "Ramble over the countryside anywhere you like, and I will feed you." It was limited to **there**, the place of God's will. God provides only where He guides. The place of His purpose is the place of His power and His provision. But we must be **there**.

# THE MIDNIGHT CRY

J. HOUSTON.

**T**HE parable of the virgins, in Matthew 25: 1-13, presents a solemn lesson to us, in watchfulness, in waiting for the Lord's return. It is given in a form calculated to apply to all God's people; whether it be Israel, waiting for their Messiah, to set up their long-expected kingdom; or the Church, waiting for the Lord, to descend in the air, to rapture it to heaven. Christ is in heaven; His people are on earth. He has promised to return to earth, to fulfil all the promises given to Israel; and He has promised to return, to take the Church to heaven, so that it might be for ever with Him in glory. Now, it is on the Church, in this waiting attitude, we would like to say a little.

Since it is a parable we have before us, we must bear in mind the language is symbolic. The virgins present the thought of love and purity, and are a fitting representation of the Church, as Christ sees it. The bridegroom is Christ, as Head of the Church, His body. The lamps are the emblem of testimony, which the Church gives to the world (see Matt. 5: 14; Luke 12: 35, 36; Phil. 2: 15). Light, in general, is testimony. The night is the time of the Lord's absence; and the vigil is kept in view of His proximate return. So we see the whole cast of the parable has a fitting application to the Church, while due allowance is made for appropriate application to Israel.

The virgins went out to meet the bridegroom. In going out, they left all behind them; just as Rebekah did when she left kindred and home to go to meet Isaac (Gen. 24). This,

at once, points to the hope of the Church, and the position the Church has taken in reference to that hope. The heavenly Bridegroom is coming; the Church has left all to go to meet Him. The more carefully we examine the primitive state of the Church, and the outside place it took while it waited for the Lord's return, the more clearly we shall see how that "blessed hope," as it is called, held it in its affections, inspired it in its service, and kept it in the path of practical sanctification. (See 1 Thess.; 1 John 3: 1-3).

The bridegroom tarried. Hope, therefore, was deferred; and faith tried. The delay had a cooling effect on the heart; and, in the end, the Church slumbered and slept. First, it gave way to slumber; then it fell asleep. This changed the scene. The Bridegroom had not come; the Church was asleep; the lamp of testimony was extinguished; the world lay in total darkness; the "blessed hope" was lost!

"At midnight there was a cry made." This was not a mere noise, to awaken the sleeping Church; it was an intelligent message, communicated to it. "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him." The Church, pictured by the wise virgins, arose, trimmed the lamp, and went forth the second time to meet the Bridegroom. It met Him, and "went in with Him to the marriage." Thus the scene closed. We might say it was raptured by Him into glory, for He is "the hope of glory."

Soon after the Church left its pristine state, it fell into a deep

sleep. The "blessed hope" was lost. For centuries it lay in that state, particularly in the dark Middle Ages. There was an awakening at the Reformation; afterwards another awakening, well over a century ago, in which there was a recovery of the lost hope. We do not pretend to know that this latter was the midnight cry; much less to affirm it. Facts remain, that the hope was then revived, and that an awakening took place, such as had not been known since the days of the Apostles. The effects of that movement are still with us. And may it please God to keep the hope of Christ's coming ever warm and bright in the hearts of His people!

Some have asked, Will there be a revival before the Lord comes to take the Church home to glory? So far as our parable goes, there was

only **one** awakening. No mention is made, nor is there any hint, of a **second** awakening, or revival. We believe that awakening **has taken place**, and the Church **is now in earnest expectation of Christ's return**, as a result of it. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, between the Church and the rapture, which takes place, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We are not looking for a revival; we are looking for Christ, at His coming again.

Everything shows how near is His coming. We feel that the **next** thing is our rising to meet Him in the air. It would be well with us if we lived daily, nay, hourly, in that constant hope. His **last** word to the Church is: "Surely I come quickly." Oh, may we answer: "Even so, come Lord Jesus."

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## "THE END OF THE LORD"

A. J. POLLOCK.

**D**ID ever man get such a stripping in one short day as Job did? He arose one morning "the greatest of all the men of the east" (Job 1: 3); by nightfall his vast wealth was gone — seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she asses and a very great household. But worst of all, his heart was swept desolate, for seven sons and three daughters were destroyed at one single stroke. And how did Job react to this gruelling time? We wonder with amazement as we read his words, "Naked came I out of

my mothers' womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." The divine comment on this is, "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly" (Job 1: 21, 22).

Yet it was GOD, who allowed these shattering blows to fall. When we follow the whole history of Job, we see how it all worked out up to "the end of the Lord," being reached, and the discovery made, that the Lord "is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5: 11). Be-

neath a wonderfully fair exterior God saw that the furnace of affliction, through which Job passed, was necessary to show to him what he was in God's sight, and in arriving at this point to make the wonderful discovery of the goodness and wisdom of the Lord. It was not for nothing that God described Job as His servant, "None like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil" (Job 1: 8).

And yet more terrible blows were to fall. Satan was allowed to wreak his animosity against God by attacking Job **physically**, only short of encompassing his death. Behold Job afflicted "with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown" (Job 2: 7). See him sitting in anguish of mind and body, scraping himself with a piece of broken earthenware, every nerve in his body an avenue of intense anguish and intolerable pain.

Job's three friends, Eliphaz, the Temanite; Bildad, the Shuhite; and Zophar, the Naamathite; came to mourn with him and comfort him. But when they saw him they failed to recognise their friend, such ravages of mind and body had terribly altered his appearance.

Yet evidently they thought that Job, after all his fair exterior, and the wonderful position he had arrived at in the east, yet now stripped of everything, wealth, family, health, must be after all a hypocrite; that something in his life must have been carefully hidden out of sight, thus earning God's displeasure, and bringing upon him all these sorrows. They could not understand his lamentable circum-

stances in any other light.

Job laments in eloquent language his sorrow that he had not died at his birth. Eliphaz is the first to break the silence. Nor is he slow in attacking his friend. Hear his charge, "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled" (Job 4: 3-5). It is when such things happen to us, that it is seen how far we can practice in times of testing, what we preach in times of health to others, and how far the talk of our lips was real. This is a test for us all.

The following quotations will show how far Job with all his piety and irreproachable life had a strong element of self-satisfaction and self-justification in him. For instance we read, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job 13: 15). These words are indeed wonderful, but the continuation of the quotation runs as follows, "But I will maintain mine own ways before Him." So we have first supreme confidence in God, yet accompanied by a strange confidence in himself. This was his weak point, as with us all, alas!

Again Job exclaimed, "My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; not for any injustice in my hands: also my prayer is pure" (Job 16: 16, 17). Thus further does this note of complacency and self-justification appear. We read Job's words, "But He [God, Hebrew EL, the

mighty One] knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23: 10). Evidently it did not cross his mind that there might be some dross amongst the gold. In the light of his subsequent confessions, made doubtless to his own intense surprise and astonishment, it will be seen how his statements were far removed from the truth.

At last the wearisome speeches of Job's three friends ceased. With an eloquent outburst, upholding his own righteousness, goodness and benevolence, Job protested that he did not eat his morsel alone, but shared it with the fatherless, that he saw none to perish for want of clothing, and that he had warmed the poor with the fleece of his sheep, that he had not made gold his hope and fine gold his confidence. He fiercely expressed a wish that his enemy should write a book about him, that it could only result in his justification, for his enemy could not find any wrong doing to charge him with. He ended triumphantly, exclaiming, that if he had done wrong, "Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended." (Job 31: 40).

At this point a younger man, Elihu by name, a listener to the speeches of the older men, who had kept silent till they had ceased speaking, opened his mouth. He fared no better in convicting Job than the three friends, though his speech covers one hundred and sixty verses in our Bibles. Lastly God addressed Job personally. He rained question after question upon him. Some seventy of them came in bewildering array. These were

mostly within the compass of a man to answer, whilst some spoke of God's power and majesty as the Creator, beyond the power of any man to comprehend. The Lord's words ended with the question, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it." (Job 40: 2).

Under this withering bombardment of questions Job quailed, and when finally challenged he exclaimed, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" (Job 40: 4). Job had silenced his friends. Then God silenced him. What a vastly different key! Self-justification disappeared. What a discovery Job made! Happy for him, even if the naked truth was unpalatable to the last degree. Does it not remind us of a similar discovery the self-satisfied Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus, made? He could boast that he was blameless "touching the righteousness which is in the law," yet he discovered in the light of the revelation of a triumphant Christ in glory, that he was "the chief of sinners." In his case God's whole longsuffering had been shown.

By these examples the writer and readers of this article are solemnly warned of the awful snare of complacency and self-justification. Daniel Rowlands, a notable Welsh preacher of the 17th century, well said, "Self-merit is like a man's shirt, the first garment he puts on, and the last he takes off." We shall now see how Job was divested of this garment of self-justification.

Jehovah responded to Job's con-

fession that he was vile, and that he would put his hand to his mouth, by asking out of the whirlwind more questions. This time He stressed particularly His own majesty, asking Job if he had an arm like His, or thunder with a voice like His. Then he was invited to behold the behemoth and the leviathan, colossal creatures, far exceeding puny man in size and strength. The magnificent description of these creatures emphasises the Creator's greatness and man's littleness. At last Job responds fully, showing now that "the end of the Lord" in his heart was reached. Hear his confession, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear [signifying **distance**]: but now mine eye seeth Thee [denoting **nearness**]. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job 42: 5, 6).

We see clearly now that when Job was in affluence, his possessions untouched, his family round him, he had no true idea of himself, and therefore little true idea of God. At last he learned a lesson, utterly surprising to himself, discovered through the furnace of affliction through which he had passed.

God now came in and blessed Job, restoring to him double the possessions he had lost, giving him again seven sons and three daughters. Would Job have been without this experience? We are assured he would not. He doubtless learned the lesson that waited for centuries before it found a place in the inspired page of Scripture, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: **nevertheless AFTERWARD it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised**

**thereby.**" (Heb. 12: 11). "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12: 6).

The tables were turned. Jehovah addressed Eliphaz, telling him that neither he nor his friends had spoken aright of God to Job. They were instructed to bring seven bullocks and seven rams, that Job might offer a burnt offering to God on their behalf, and Jehovah would accept his prayer, lest they should be dealt with according to their folly.

It may be asked, Why should Job's possessions, sheep, camels, oxen, asses, be **doubled**, and not his family doubled? Surely it carries an intimation that whilst the cattle and the asses had ceased to exist, the soul of man is immortal, the death of the body not carrying with it the extinction of the soul. It is evident that Job was deeply concerned about the spiritual welfare of his children, even before he was bereaved of them through the malice of Satan. We read that when the sons and daughters of Job feasted and drank in each other's houses, and the feasting was over, Job sanctified them, offering up burnt offerings according to the number of them all. This did Job continually, saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts" (Job 1: 5). May we not cherish the hope that, whilst Job was blessed on earth after his time of testing, with seven sons and three daughters, he was likewise blessed with seven sons and three daughters **in heaven.**

The Book of Job has been a wonder to many. Its imagery, its

poetry, the revealing of a soul to itself, the method used to bring this to pass, the happy and blessed sequel to it all, make a deeply informative picture. Let us rise from this brief study of it with a stronger spiritual conviction that, "all things work together for good

to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8: 28). We learn that Christian character is not formed by lying on beds of roses under blue skies and in warm sunshine, but rather under gloomy skies and passing through stormy seas.

## "MEEK AND LOWLY IN HEART"

J. B. MARSHALL

**O**UR Lord alone could rightly say He was meek and lowly, and yet we can see these attributes in others who have been in contact with Him. In the Old Testament also they can be readily found in men who had dealings with the Lord.

Moses was said to be the meekest man on the face of the earth, and it is interesting to read in Numbers 12 the circumstances when this was said of him. Miriam (her name is first) and Aaron spake against Moses because he had married an Ethiopian woman; also they said, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath He not spoken also by us?" They would rob him of both natural and spiritual rights; and yet Moses did not defend himself. With true meekness he left his justification with the Lord.

David also manifested this trait when cursed by Shimei, recorded in 2 Samuel 16. David's nephew denounced him as a "dead dog," and wished to "take off his head," but David's meekness said, "let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him." Afterward the Lord avenged David through his son, Solomon.

We may also see the Lord's meekness borne witness to by three men in Philippians — Paul, Timotheus and Epaphroditus, and maybe the whole assembly in this place, for Paul said, "Be followers **together** of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an **ensample**." Paul's meekness is strikingly displayed in chapter 1: 12-19. Of Timothy he says, he had no man likeminded who would naturally care for their state, for "as a son with the father [a remarkable expression] he hath served with me in the gospel." A meek man, who evidently said little, but walked in obedience; neither is it recorded that he wrote anything.

Epaphroditus laboured to maintain the testimony, and Paul calls him, a brother, a companion in labour, a fellow-soldier, a messenger and a minister to Paul's own wants. For the work of Christ he was sick and nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to carry on the service. A meek man, who was content to suffer to see the work for Christ prosper.

If all this can be said of a poor man, what should be said of Him who is the source of every grace?

In Matthew 11, we see the meekness and lowliness of our Lord, not in measure as in others, but in all perfection. His rejection was complete, and He upbraids the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, for the law, prophets, His forerunner, His word and works are all refused. It is then he turns to the Father, not as we might suppose, with astonishment, but with thankfulness. " I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." For surely they were unworthy, and He meekly gives thanks that the revelation of the Father was hid from them — but revealed unto babes.

He will take nothing but what the Father gives Him, and none knoweth the Son in His perfect excellences but the Father, whom the Son will reveal to those given unto Him. Who was suited to have the babes but the One who was meek

and lowly in heart? Who could make known the love of the Father but the One who was daily His delight?

None of us would put an aggressive person in charge of our children; neither does the Father. So at the end of our chapter He invites the burdened to rest, and then in order that we should be like-minded to Himself, He says, " Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Babes need nursing, cleansing, teaching and guiding, and no qualification is more needed than meekness and lowliness for this happy service, as we see so strikingly expressed in 2 Corinthians 10: 1.

May the Lord grant us His grace, which will produce in us the meek and lowly mind.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(Chapters 32: 1 — 35: 29)

**T**HUS far, many blemishes have marred the history of Jacob. His desire at the outset for the birthright and the blessing of God, which accompanied it, was right: the way he schemed to obtain it altogether wrong. God had been but little in his thoughts, and when, fleeing from Esau's vengeance, in a night vision he discovered the house of God, he felt it to be a dreadful place. One of our hymn writers, describing his soul's journey, began with, " All of self and none of Thee." If it was not exactly thus

with Jacob, it had certainly been, " Nearly all of self and very little of Thee."

Now however the time had come when God would deal more directly with him, and the first move was that he should encounter an angelic band. Jacob was migrating with wives, children, servants and many animals, thus forming a large band. He now became conscious that there was a second band, standing on his behalf. Even this did not free him from the fear of Esau, and his

approach to him, as given in verses 3-5, though very diplomatic, bears traces of the working of a bad conscience.

Verse 7 again bears witness to this. The tidings that Esau, at the head of four hundred men, was coming to meet him, awoke his keenest fears. In spite of having seen the angelic band, he assumed at once, as the fruit of the working of his conscience, that Esau was on his way to take vengeance and, true to his nature, he at once worked out an elaborate scheme to placate his brother and secure himself. All his possessions, starting with flocks and servants and working down to wives and children, were to meet the brother he feared before he himself had to face him.

But this did not altogether exclude God from his thoughts. In verses 9-12, we have his prayer recorded. God had intervened with him previously and Jacob had registered a vow, but this is the first actual prayer of his that is put on record. It does not breathe the spirit of communion and intercession, such as marked Abraham in chapter 18, it was simply a plea for preservation, while acknowledging God's mercies to him in the past. Yet we notice how rightly he took a low place, though not as low as Abraham, who said, "I . . . am but dust and ashes" (18: 27). Jacob says, "I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies," which was indeed true, though it did not go the whole length. It is a fact in all dispensations that one's sense of unworthiness and nothingness deepens as nearness to God increases. As an illustration of this see Psalm 73: 17, 22.

Jacob's plan was to appease Esau with a present, as verse 20 records. All — even wives and sons — were sent over the brook at the ford Jabbok, and he was left alone, well to the rear. Not a very dignified or courageous proceeding! Yet God was in all this, for being left alone, the moment had come for him to be brought face to face with God Himself, that he might have an experience, the effect of which he would never lose. Up to this point his life had been mainly one of scheming against and wrestling with men. Now God by His Messenger was going to wrestle with him.

"There wrestled a man with him;" such is the record, and doubtless at the start of this incident the unknown Stranger was to Jacob but a mere man. Who was Jacob to give way to another man? Hence it put him on his mettle to resist. The Stranger strove to break him down and until breaking of the day he resisted. Then the supernatural nature of the Stranger was manifested by the powerful touch which crippled him at his strongest point.

Then at once Jacob's attitude changed. Instead of wrestling, which now had become impossible to him, he took to clinging to his Conqueror. He ceased his striving and took to trusting, realizing that the One who had overcome him had done so for his blessing, and that he was in the presence of God. The Name of the Stranger was not revealed, but the blessing that Jacob had desired from his youth was bestowed upon him then and there.

"He blessed him there," in the place of solitude with God, and when his natural power was crippled and

laid low. The vital blessing of God did not descend upon his head when he struck that crafty bargain with Esau, nor even when his blind father, deceived by his impersonation of Esau, pronounced the patriarchal blessing on his head. No, it was when God dealt with him personally in solitude, and broke his stubborn will. In all this we may see a picture of how God deals with our souls today, though the grace into which we are called is so much richer than anything that Jacob knew.

By naming the place Peniel — “The face of God” — Jacob disclosed his deep sense of having been brought face to face with God and that the outcome was preservation and not destruction. Here was good reason for him to revise his earlier thought that the house of God and the gate of heaven was a “dreadful” place.

In this incident we see foreshadowed several striking things. First, that in order to deal fully and finally with man, God Himself would stoop into manhood, since it was as “a man” that Jacob saw God “face to face.” Second, that God’s thought towards us, even the most wayward of us, is blessing. Third, that human struggling and wrestling achieves nothing, and that surrender or submission, and honesty in confession, is the way of blessing. Fourth, that it was when clinging to the One who had vanquished him, and confessing to his name of Jacob — meaning Supplanter — that his name was changed to Israel — meaning Prince of God — and he was told that he had power not only with men but with God, and he had prevailed. By changing his name

God claimed Jacob as belonging now to Him.

Thus a great moment in his history had been reached, and as he realized that he had seen God face to face, with salvation as the result, the sun rose upon him. An experience of this kind in the history of any soul does indeed mark the dawning of a new day. In Jacob’s case the experience was memorialized for his children by a simple prohibition in their eating, as the last verse of the chapter records.

But as yet Jacob was hardly equal to his new name, so we do not find it used by the inspired historian until much later in his story. All his old characteristics come into display in chapter 33, carried to a high degree of obsequiousness. The bowing down of himself and wives and children could hardly have been more complete and his proffered gifts were large, having made up his mind to “appease him with the present.”

The attitude of Esau was however not what he had anticipated. His anger had cooled off during the intervening years, and he had become the leader of hundreds of men and thus a man of influence and of large possessions. Though ultimately accepting Jacob’s present, he at first declined it saying, “I have enough,” or more literally, “I have much.” In verse 11, we find Jacob saying, “I have enough,” but he used a different word, meaning, “all.” That word he could use because he was able to say, “God hath dealt graciously with me.” The man of the world may be able to say, “I have much,” it is only the saint, consciously blessed of

God, who can say, "I have all." This is what the Apostle Paul said in Philippians 4: 18.

Jacob called his gift "my blessing," but in spite of this he was by no means anxious to have Esau's company on his further journey. His plea, recorded in verse 13, was doubtless a genuine one. It lends itself to an application amongst the people of God today. There are always to be found those who are young and tender, who must not be overdriven. Those who have reached the stature and activity of full-grown men must remember this, and not force the pace of their weaker brethren to their undoing. Many a young and tender believer has been damaged by this kind of thing.

Having declined the proffered help and Esau having departed, Jacob again reveals the crookedness that seems to have been his natural bent. Having said to Esau, "I come unto my lord unto Seir," he promptly journeyed to Succoth, which lay in an entirely different direction. Moreover, having arrived there, the record is that he built an house and made booths for his cattle, which indicates that he had a mind to settle down in the land rather than maintain the character of a stranger, following in the footsteps of his grandfather Abraham.

The next step recorded is his removal to Shalem, across the Jordan and in the centre of the land. Here, though he had a tent and an altar, we can again discern that his separation from the people of the land was becoming impaired. He pitched his tent close to the city, and then bought the land where he had encamped. Further the very name

he gave to his altar tells a similar story. The name El-elohe-Israel means, "God the God of Israel." He did indeed use his new God-given name and not his old name of Jacob, yet even so he connected God with himself instead of connecting himself with God. In effect he was saying, "God belongs to me," instead of, "I belong to God."

There may not seem to be much difference between these two sentiments but there is a gulf between the practices they induce, as we may soon see in our own histories. We may recognize that as, "born of God," and, "in Christ Jesus," we have a new name, yet if we bring God down to connect Him with our new name, we may easily assume that we may connect Him with our things — things by no means worthy of His call or of His glory. On the other hand, to recognize that He has called us to link us with Himself, at once searches our hearts, and lifts us above many a thing that would entangle us.

The whole of chapter 34 is occupied with the unhappy results that sprang from the lowering of Jacob's separation from the world, which we have just noted. Its effects for evil were not manifested in Jacob himself but in his family. The tide of evil runs in two broad channels: violence and corruption. They are first mentioned in Genesis 6: 12, 13: they are personified in "the evil man" and "the strange woman" of Proverbs 2: 12, 16. The world is just the same today; and how often we have to hang our heads in shame and confess that a bit of world-bordering on our part, as Christian parents, has led to sorrow and even disaster in our families.

In our chapter the corruption comes first. His daughter, Dinah, wanted to enjoy the companionship and pleasures of the other young women of the land, and in result got entangled and defiled, and this aroused great wrath amongst Jacob's sons, which was not appeased by the action of Shechem and Hamor in the way of repairing the damage done. The anger came to a head in the atrocious violence of Simeon and Levi, which was never forgotten by Jacob, nor indeed by God. When at the end of his life Jacob spoke prophetically of his sons, foretelling the future of the tribes and uttering certain blessings, he denounced these two sons, cursing their anger, as recorded in Genesis 49: 5-7.

Thus the shameful story of chapter 34 not only caused Jacob "to stink among the inhabitants of the land," — a dreadful position for him, seeing he was the only man in the land possessing the true knowledge of God — but it brought a judgment upon the two who were the promoters of the violence. It is of interest to note that in later days the tribe of Levi so acted as to gain a special blessing, and in consequence we are permitted to see how God can turn that which was originally a curse into a blessing. The word had been, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (49: 7). They **were** divided; but it was by Levi being called to special service and scattered throughout all the tribes.

The first verse of chapter 35 shows us how God intervened when things had reached this sorry pass. He called Jacob back to the place where first God had made Himself known to him. There he was to dwell and

there his altar was to be. At Bethel, as we saw in chapter 28, God declared what He would be for and to Jacob, without raising any question as to Jacob's response or behaviour. Now God is always true to Himself and to His word. Before the giving of the law through Moses, God was dealing with these patriarchs on the basis of His promises in grace, and those promises abide.

God deals with us according to grace in the Gospel today. Hence we read of, "this grace in which we stand" (Rom. 5: 2), which is equivalent to saying that our dwelling before God is in His grace or favour. As we dwell in the sense of His favour so shall we be led to approach Him in the spirit of worship, and to have done with all that is displeasing to Him.

So it was with Jacob as we see here. Immediately God called him back to Bethel he realized that there were evil things to be found in his household, even strange gods. In chapter 31 we saw how Rachel had carried off from Laban the "gods," or "teraphim," that he valued, and there is no record of Jacob taking exception to them at that time. But with God before him, he at once became alive to the evil of them. They were to be put away, and there was to be personal cleanliness, extending even to the garments they wore, for the presence of God demands a purging which covers even to that which surrounds us: an important lesson that we all need to take to heart.

So far all was well with Jacob but a defect soon appears. The unclean things were not destroyed but only hidden away. They had con-

siderable monetary value and it looks as if he hoped to resume possession, or at least realize their value, in a future day. The tendency of our foolish hearts is just the same. Let us see that we do not act in similar fashion with defiling things of the flesh and of the world that would naturally attract us.

As Jacob went to Bethel God restrained the peoples of the land from taking vengeance on him and his household because of the violent action of his two sons; and so he safely got there, and built his altar. The name he gave it stands in contrast with that which he gave to his former altar, as recorded in the last verse of chapter 33. There he connected God simply with himself. Here he recognized Him as the God of His own dwelling-place. The altar, El-beth-el, demanded from Jacob a higher standard of conduct than did the altar, El-elohe-Israel.

Arrived at Bethel, things began to move rapidly forward. The first recorded event is the death of Deborah, who had been nurse to Jacob's mother. A break with the past is thus signified. Then, the promises of God were confirmed in a fresh appearance of the Almighty. Jacob's new name was confirmed, and the land was made sure to him. This moved him freshly to set up a pillar of witness and anoint it, as a response to the revelation. But, as is so often the case in God's ways, this fresh grace from God is followed by fresh losses on the human side.

Leaving Bethel, Rachel was over-

taken in childbirth and died. Thus he lost his favourite wife, though in her death he gained a son. As we before noted this was the only occasion when Jacob himself had to do with the naming of his sons, and the child became known by that name, rather than by the name his dying mother gave him.

This blow was succeeded by the disgraceful sin of Reuben, so that at this point sorrow succeeded sorrow. Yet we cannot but think that there is a typical significance in the way these things are brought together: Rachel typifying the nation out of whom the Messiah was to spring. He was to be the "Son of Sorrow" in His rejection, which would mean the setting aside of the nation from whom He sprang. Ultimately the "Son of Sorrow" would be manifested as the "Son of the Right Hand," not only of Jacob but of Jehovah Himself. But until that time, and while as a nation Israel lies spiritually dead, the Gentiles come into prominence, just as the sons of Leah and the concubines are prominent in verses 23-26.

The closing verses put on record one more loss, in the death of his aged father, Isaac. Though he went blind many years before and anticipated his death (27: 2), it did not actually take place till he had lived 180 years. The division of Genesis entitled, "The generations of Isaac," began at chapter 25: 19, and it extends to the end of chapter 35. Under it has come all these many details as to the earlier history of Jacob.

# “NOTHING AT ALL BESIDE THIS MANNA”

(Numbers 11: 6).

Extract from C. H. MACKINTOSH

**H**ERE the poor human heart lets itself thoroughly out. Its tastes and its tendencies are made manifest. The people sigh after the land of Egypt, and cast back wishful looks after its fruits and its fleshpots. They do not say aught about the lash of the taskmaster, and the toil of the brick-kilns. There is total silence as to these things. Nothing is remembered now, save those resources by which Egypt had ministered to the lusts of nature.

How often is this the case with us! When once the heart loses its freshness in the divine life — when heavenly things begin to lose their savour — when first love declines — when Christ ceases to be a satisfying and altogether precious portion for the soul — when the word of God and prayer lose their charm and become heavy, dull and mechanical; then the eye wanders back toward the world, the heart follows the eye, and the feet follow the heart. We forget at such moments what the world was to us when we were in it and of it. We forget what toil and slavery, what misery and degradation, we found in the service of sin and of Satan, and think only of the gratification and ease, the freedom from those painful exercises, conflicts, and anxieties, which attend upon the wilderness path of God's people.

All this is most sad, and should lead the soul into the most profound self-judgment . . . Do we always find **our** heavenly manna sufficient for

us? What means the frequent inquiry raised by professing Christians as to the right or wrong of such and such worldly pursuits and pleasures? Have we not even heard from the lips of persons making the very highest profession such words as these, “How are we to fill up the day? We cannot always be thinking about Christ and heavenly things. We must have some little recreation.” Is not this somewhat akin to Israel's language in Numbers 11? Yes, truly; and as is the language, so is the acting. We prove, alas! that Christ is not enough for the heart, by the palpable fact of our betaking ourselves to other things. How often, for example, does the Bible lie neglected for hours, while the light and worthless literature of the world is greedily devoured. What mean the well-thumbed newspaper [or, the much-used radio — Editor] and the almost dust-covered Bible? Do not these things tell a tale? Is not this despising the manna, and sighing after, nay, devouring, the leeks and onions?

We specially call the attention of young Christians to that which is now before us . . . No doubt we are all in danger, but the young amongst us are peculiarly so. Those of us who are advanced in life are not so likely to be drawn away by the frivolous pursuits of the world — by its concerts, its flower shows, its pleasure-parties, its vain songs and light literature. But the young will have a dash of the world. They

long to taste it for themselves. They do not find Christ an all-sufficient portion for the heart. They want recreation.

Alas! alas! what a thought! How sad to hear a Christian say, "I want some recreation. How can I fill up the day? I cannot be always thinking of Jesus." We should like to ask all who speak thus, How will you fill up eternity? Shall not Christ be sufficient to fill up its countless ages? Shall you want recreation there? will you sigh for light literature, vain songs, and frivolous pursuits there?

It will perhaps be said, We shall be different then. In what respect? We have the divine nature; we have the Holy Ghost; we have Christ for our portion; we are brought to God. "But we have an evil nature in us." Well, are we to cater for that? Is it for that we crave recreation? Must we try to help our wretched flesh — our corrupt nature — to fill up the day? Nay, we are called to deny it, to mortify it, to reckon it dead. This is Christian recreation. This is the mode in which the saint is called to fill up his day. How is it possible for us to grow in the divine life if we are only making provision for the flesh? Egypt's food cannot nourish the new nature; and the great question for us is this: Which do we really mean to nourish and cherish? the new, or the old? It must be obvious that the divine nature cannot possibly feed upon newspapers, vain songs and light literature; and hence, if we give ourselves, in any measure, to these latter, our souls must wither and droop.

May we have grace to think of these things — to think seriously.

May we so walk in the Spirit that Christ may ever be a satisfying portion for our hearts . . . If we really walk with God in this wilderness world, our souls shall be satisfied with the portion which He gives, and that portion is, a heavenly Christ. Can He ever fail to satisfy? Does He not satisfy the heart of God? Does He not fill all heaven with His glory? . . . Is He not the one grand subject of everlasting counsels and purposes?

What answer have we to give to all these queries? What but a hearty, unreserved, unhesitating **Yes**? Well, then, is not this blessed One, in the deep mystery of His Person, in the moral glory of His ways, in the brightness and blessedness of His character — is He not enough for our hearts? . . .

Dost thou really find Christ insufficient to satisfy thy heart? Hast thou cravings which He does not fully meet? If so, thou art in a very alarming condition of soul, and it behoves thee to look at once, and to look closely, into this solemn matter. Get down on thy face before God, in honest self-judgment. Pour out thy heart to Him. Tell Him all. Own to Him how thou hast fallen and wandered—as surely thou must have done, when God's Christ is not enough for thee. Have it all out in secret with thy God, and take no rest until thou art fully and blessedly restored to communion with Himself — to heart-fellowship with Him about the Son of His love.

We call the reader's attention to an expression full of weighty admonition for us: "And the **mixed multitude** that was among them fell a lusting; and the children of Israel also wept again." There is nothing

more damaging to the cause of Christ or to the souls of His people than association with men of **mixed** principles. It is very much more dangerous than having to do with open and avowed enemies. Satan knows this well, and hence his constant effort to lead the Lord's people to link themselves with those who

are only half and half; or, on the other hand, to introduce spurious materials — false professors, into the midst of those who are seeking, in any measure, to pursue a path of separation from the world. We have repeated allusions to this special character of evil, in the New Testament.

## INCORRUPTIBILITY

A. J. POLLOCK.

**T**HE very great accuracy of the translation of the Holy Scriptures from the original into the English language is a matter of deep thankfulness. In this we see the good hand of our God. Especially is this so, when we realise that the translators in the time of King James I, with a very thorough knowledge of Greek, were not all of them presumably equally deeply taught in the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures. Many a minister today does not know much about the truths of the Scriptures, as we all know. Be that as it may, there are a few instances where mistakes have clearly been made. This is seen in the use of two words,

### IMMORTALITY

(Greek, **athanasia**, deathlessness),  
and

### INCORRUPTIBILITY

(Greek, **aphtharsia**, incorruption).

The Greek word, **athanasia**, immortality, only occurs three times in the Scriptures. First, as to God Himself. He only hath immortality, in the sense that it is inherent in Him, not bestowed, not acquired, but His, as in His own nature and being (1 Tim. 6: 16). The other two cases

(1 Cor. 15: 53, 54) have to say to the saints **alive** upon this earth when the Lord comes, as having mortal bodies, that are capable of death, and liable to death, yet if the Lord comes such will by-pass death altogether, and mortality will put on immortality. Blessed triumph! Happy prospect! We wait for it with eager anticipation to be with the Lord, like Him, and for ever.

Unfortunately the translators have not clearly differentiated between immortality and incorruptibility. The former word applies to those who are mortal, yet never die, as our Lord said to Martha. He who proclaimed Himself as "the resurrection and the life" said of those, who will be **alive** on the earth when He comes to claim His own, "Whosoever **liveth** and believeth in Me shall never die." (John 11: 26).

The latter word, incorruptibility, is applied to saints, who will have gone through the article of death, but who at the Lord's coming will be delivered from that condition, and find themselves in incorruption. Christ has brought life and incorruptibility (not immortality as wrongly translated in our English Bibles) to

light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1: 10). In the other Scripture, we are now about to quote, and which led to the writing of this article, the same mistake is made in the translation of **aphtharsia**. We read of a class of men, "who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honour and immortality, eternal life." (Rom. 2: 7).

This should read **incorruptibility** and not immortality. The Revised Version and Darby's translation both render it correctly as **incorruptibility**.

Hebrews 11, that grand chapter of faith, and of those, who ran the race of faith, gives us a good list of some of these seekers. They sought for glory when in a world of shame and sin. They sought for honour where in this life everything turns to dust and ashes. They sought for incorruptibility as they faced death with its subsequent corruption.

The body of the saint is sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption. Sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. The word, **sown**, is a triumphant word. It reminds us of the farmer, who sows to get a suitable harvest. It remains for the summoning shout of our Lord to show His mighty triumph, when that which is sown in corruption, dishonour and weakness rises to a condition of incorruption, glory and power (1 Cor. 15: 42, 43). The word, **sown**, is indeed a triumphant word when we commit our loved ones to the cold grave.

To deal with Rom. 2: 7 after the manner of arithmetic it means glory + honour + incorruptibility = eternal life. It would never have

done for the word, **immortality**, to have remained in Romans 2: 7, for a dying saint within a few hours of death might have said, It is all very well to hold out the hope of immortality to the living saint, but does the door of hope close on those, who pass through the article of death, and leave them in hopeless despair? Ah! no, a thousand times no. It is the departed saints, who will feel the power of the summoning shout of our Lord **first**, then in a moment the dead saint raised, and the living saint changed will all be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air. (1 Thess. 4: 16, 17).

It is very happy to see that every word of Scripture is weighed and considered; and we do well to study minutely the word of God, not bringing our ideas to the word of God, but learning the truth from God's own infallible word. Just as articles of man's manufacture cannot stand the test of minute examination without disclosing faults, and what comes short of perfection, as, for instance, the finest needle under a powerful microscope looking like a jagged piece of steel, Scripture on the other hand can stand the closest scrutiny. Thus there shines forth the inspiration of Holy Scripture in irrefragable splendour. How good it is that all the attacks of Modernists and infidels on the word of God only recoil to their own confusion, as the waves dash themselves against the impregnable rock, and fall back broken into the seething sea.

How encouraging is that word of the Apostle Paul, "We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." (2 Cor. 13: 8).

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TESTIMONY

J. MCBROOM

**I**N considering the resurrection of Christ it cannot be too clearly seen that the whole sin question was met at the Cross: every claim of the Name, throne and majesty of God was settled there, and resurrection became a new beginning. Observe that God's beginning works out in a threefold way. First, in the birth of Christ, leading to the beginning of the ministry of reconciliation in His service. Secondly, in His resurrection, when further developments took place. Lastly, in His ascension, which introduced the Spirit's day, and the saints became the dwelling-place of God by the Spirit. Resurrection is a key truth of the Bible. It becomes for us the door out of our ruined condition into that which is for us a new order, though the oldest of all, being eternal.

“ Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept ” (1 Cor. 15: 20). Thus the Lord entered into the place marked out for Him in the purpose of God. It was needful for Him “ to enter into His glory ” (Luke 24: 26). Being a key truth, resurrection runs right through the Scriptures. We have it **literally**, as in our Lord, and presently in His people. But in the Old Testament it is found **typically**, as in the case of Aaron's rod that budded, or at the deliverance of the Red Sea. We have it in a dispensational and **prophetic** way in the vision of Ezekiel 37; the dry bones brought to life. In a moral and **spiritual** way we have it in saints today by the operation of the Spirit — see, Ephe-

sians 2: 5, 6; Colossians 2: 12. It provides a new platform for the working out of God's purpose as in a new world. Thus new creation is entered today in faith; a stainless, sinless order, where Christ is everything and all things are of God.

During the forty days that elapsed between the resurrection and the ascension there were many important transactions, all linked up with the Gospels, but looking forward to the Spirit's day. Yet finality in the ways of God, as combined with His purpose, could only be reached by the risen Man taking His place at the right hand of God. During this interval He brought His own into the same relationship as Himself before the Father, and, by breathing on them, linked them up with Himself in risen life. He opened their eyes and their understandings and then opened up for them the Scriptures. But for them to be united to the Man in the glory the Holy Spirit must come down, for only thus could this mighty transaction be brought about.

It is important that we should apprehend this beginning, which starts from the combination of the **revelation** of God and **approach** to God in one and the same blessed Person, who is now at His right hand. Surely this gives completeness to the whole divine scheme of blessing. Although there was much to be done, much that has been going on in the power of the Spirit ever since, still the two grand thoughts, that link together the ways of God

in time and His purpose in eternity, are seen in the Son of His love, the Man Christ Jesus. The One who went to the lowest depth of darkness and sorrow is now in the place of nearness and deepest joy, and from that point, God begins to work out all to eternal fruition, for His own glory and the good and blessing of man.

How remarkable it is that the Spirit in His coming passed by the Temple and its ritual, and took up His abode in the little company gathered in one place. There and then were formed the Kingdom, the House of God and the Body of Christ. These things were not known by the disciples at the moment but were opened up to them and apprehended as they became conscious of the transition then going on from Judaism to Christianity. This new, heavenly order had been planted, and was gradually developing, while Judaism, in the forbearance of God, was gradually fading out. Gradual transition from one order of things to another marks God's dealings; and, as the immediate coming of the Lord is sensed by believers today, who knows but we may have reached the beginning of transition from Gentile Christianity to the resumption of dealings with the ancient people of God?

The overlapping of the dispensations covered forty years; that is, the time between the Cross and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. All that time God was bearing with the apostate nation and graciously leading the converted remnant into the greatness of the heavenly and eternal system, proper to the Spirit's day. God was now dwelling here, and His voice would

now go out from His house to the ends of the earth. A new fellowship was formed, a new community, which had become the vessel of the Spirit of God, and although small and insignificant to man and the world, it sprang from the eternal purpose of God, and would prove to be His masterpiece. Even in its early stages its enemies had to admit that its messengers had turned the world upside down.

Let us follow for a moment the advance of the testimony in these early years. The book of Acts traces its progress from Jerusalem to Rome. Two other important cities come in as landmarks in the journey, Antioch and Ephesus. The former at the close of the ministry of the Twelve, as voiced by the Apostle Peter, and the latter when the public ministry of Paul drew to a close. Chapters 1-12, give us the progress of the testimony from Jerusalem to Antioch. In this period two gifted men outside the apostolic band become prominent, Stephen and Philip. The advance from Antioch to Ephesus, which has especial interest for us as being Gentiles, is given in chapters 13-20, and shows the labours of Paul among the Gentiles.

In the earlier section, the remnant of the Jews, with which the church began, links it with the Gospels of Matthew and Mark: in the later section, the Gentile converts, fruit of the ministry of Paul, link up with the Gospel of Luke. All this is morally fitting, since the first two Gospels set our Lord before us in Messianic position, while to Luke it was given to set Him before us as the Son of Man. It is confirmed too by the way that Luke accompanied

Paul in many of his labours.

To refer again to "the ends [revenues] of the world [ages]" (1 Cor. 10: 11); it will be recalled that the Laver, called "the great sea," which Solomon made for the temple, sat upon twelve oxen with their hinder parts inward and their faces outward; three to the north, three to the west, and the others looking to the south and to the east. It is remarkable that the march of the testimony under the control of the Spirit, as recorded in the Acts, agrees with this. The city of Antioch was the capital of Syria to the north, and there an assembly was formed by the labours of simple Christians. From thence Barnabas and Saul were called by the Spirit to carry the Gospel to the west. The water of the great laver ran through the body of the oxen and came out, it is said, through their mouths. If so, how it fits in with the words of our Lord, "He that believeth on Me . . . out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7: 38).

Paul's arrest brought to an end his public ministry as an apostle. The closing section of the Acts gives his two years' imprisonment at Caesarea, then the voyage to Rome, and another two years' confinement there. Meantime the wave of power seen in the early part of the book had begun to wane. It broke on the shore of man's inordinate degeneracy and the backwash was seen in the rise of the Gnostics. This was a system composed, it is said, of a mixture of effete Judaism, Grecian philosophy, Roman imperialism and superstitions from the east. It spread over the whole profession,

and threatened to strangle the infant church. This may be looked upon as the time when men slept and the enemy sowed tares.

The book of Acts covers a period of over thirty years, and carries us nearly to the time when both Paul and Peter were martyred, and Jerusalem destroyed in A.D. 70. Later came the time when the Apostle John became the vessel of the Spirit to write that which would meet the developing evil, while linking up with what had gone before. Here we get that which abides; the glory, power and majesty of God from eternity to eternity, against which the forces of evil will be for ever broken to pieces, as shown in the book of Revelation.

This book John wrote in the Isle of Patmos as a prisoner for the truth, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. It has a peculiar connection with the book that has been before us, for the Acts is the link with the Gospels and all that has gone before, whilst the Revelation links the present dispensation with the future right through the millennium and into eternity.

John thus connects with Paul's finish at Ephesus in a double way. First historically, as bridging the gap between the time when the ministry of Paul had reached its highest point and the beginning of the descent which began at Ephesus in the departure from first love. Its awful depth was reached at Thyatira, when "that woman Jezebel" dominated the professing body, and right down to the God-defiant condition of Laodicea. Secondly, while the Divinely-given unfoldings of

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians stand out in the height of their grandeur as characterizing the whole Christian age, the Apostle John is brought in to link with it what is, if possible, even richer and deeper — the very heart of God Himself.

But we must not put one against another where all is so infinitely

blessed. It must suffice us to say that the Spirit gave through John something of supreme moral excellence — that display of God Himself, as He is revealed in Christ — which met the necessity of the moment. What He thus gave stands out in its rich and heavenly grandeur for all time.

## PASTORAL CARE: ITS JOYS AND SORROWS

J. HOUSTON

IT is frequently said, that the servant that cares for the souls of God's people, will find a great deal that will cause sorrow to his own soul. This may be true. But, at most, it is only part of the truth, for he will find also much that will cause him joy, which more than compensates the sorrow, because it is a joy in the Lord.

Take one example. The Apostle Paul was greatly distressed about the state of the Corinthians. He says: "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears." This was to remind them of his love for them. Through this spirit of humiliation, the product of unselfish love, he reached the conscience of the Corinthians, and led them to deep heart-searching, contrition and repentance.

Seeing this work of restoration, he was greatly cheered in the Lord. In fact, his joy knew no bounds. He was able to open his heart to them, with a freedom and expansion, that he had never previously experienced among them. When he wrote his Second Epistle to them, he soared

into exalted heights of joy, through the Spirit, having left behind, and even forgotten, all the sorrow. In fact, it is a moral law, that out of the bitterest sorrow, the sweetest joy springs forth.

He opens his Second Epistle with an outburst of praise, which clearly shows the exultant state of his soul. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." A fitting expression of his great joy! The heart that sorrowed over the state of the saints at Corinth, is now uplifted by mercy, and filled with comfort. "Father of mercies" is a title that shows He was the source of mercies. From Him they flow. Being mercies, they take account of all the failure of God's people, and minister succour to those who have been distressed and sorrowful, on account of that failure. "God of all comfort" is a title that shows how God is ever ready to comfort His tried and sorrowful servants. He knows how to draw near to them with the healing balm of His consolations.

It is precious to think of Him as

the "God of all comfort," coming near to downcast servants, with that touch of love, which heals all wounds, and pours into the soul the oil of joy, through the Spirit. It is ever-ready in its application, and never-failing in its remedy. It is the comfort of God. How worthy He is of our life-long service! Who could find a Master so kind, gracious, tender and loving with His servant? The Apostle found his joy in serving Him amongst His saints, in his day. May we find our joy in serving Him amongst His saints in our day! He is the same God, and His mercy and consolation have not changed.

Some servants turn aside from their service, because of the difficulties and trials they have to face in it. Such never taste the sweet comfort of God, as overcomers. They know not what it is to be lifted up from the depths, and set on high. Much they miss, by turning their back on duty and privilege, for the comfort of God, in all the tribulations and trials that can possibly come upon them, is one of the sweetest experiences of the soul in service for Him amongst His saints.

Self-sacrificing love would have no path, but that of devoted service to the Lord. And where could such love find better scope and joy, than amongst the saints? They are the objects of the Lord's love, and where could love spend itself better, than amongst such? Love has its objects, for whom it sacrifices itself; and life is never better employed than when laid down in the service of these. "Lovest thou Me," said the Lord to His restored servant; "Feed my lambs;" "Feed My sheep" — in this Peter's love would

well show itself. So it is with all the Lord's servants, in any dispensation. Our love to Him is shown in service to His own.

Was there ever a day, in which service of this kind was more necessary? Are there not hungry lambs and sheep everywhere, crying out for pastoral care? Shall we pass them indifferently, when we know the Lord's will concerning them — yea, and we know too we shall have to meet Him, and give an account of our stewardship to Him?

But it is not fear of consequences that should move us to serve the Lord amongst His saints; the sole, impelling power should be love, such as is seen in the Apostle Paul. Here is the spirit in which to serve them: "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, **because ye were dear unto us**" (1 Thess. 2: 7, 8). When the saints are dear to us, we shall serve them, and serve them well.

And in this service, we do not need to go far afield; we have the Lord's saints everywhere. We can feed His lambs, and His sheep, in the very localities where we live. The service need not take the form of public ministry, where gift is used in large gatherings; but in a simple and perhaps unnoticed way amongst the "twos" and "threes" that are gathered together to Him. Even a cup of cold water, given to His own, for His sake, will surely bring its reward, as the Lord Himself has plainly told us.

## PRIDE

THE life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ are a standing rebuke to every form of pride to which we are liable. Take for instance:—

1. Pride of birth and rank —  
“Is not this the carpenter’s son?” (Matt. 13: 55).
2. Pride of wealth —  
“The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head” (Matt. 8: 20).
3. Pride of place —  
“Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1: 46). “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2: 23).
4. Pride of personal appearance —  
“He hath no form nor comeliness” (Isa. 53: 2).
5. Pride of reputation —  
“He made Himself of no reputation” (Phil. 2: 3).
6. Pride of independence —  
“Many others, which min-

istered unto Him of their substance” (Luke 8: 3).

7. Pride of learning —  
“How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned?” (John 7: 5).
8. Pride of position —  
“I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22: 27).
9. Pride of popularity —  
“He is despised and rejected of men” (Isa. 53: 3).
10. Pride of ability —  
“I can of mine own self do nothing.” (John 5: 30).
11. Pride of retort —  
“The chief priests accused Him of many things: but Jesus answered nothing” (Mark 15: 3-5).
12. Pride of sanctity —  
“This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them” (Luke 15: 2).

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## THE PLACE TAKEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

“WHEN He is come, the Spirit of truth, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak from Himself; but whatever He shall hear He shall speak” (John 16: 13).

It is not said, as some think, that He shall not speak **about** Himself; for the Holy Ghost does speak, and tells us much concerning Himself

and His operations; and never so much as under the Christian revelation. The fullest instruction as to the Spirit is in the New Testament . . .

The fact is, that the Authorized Version gives rather obsolete English. The meaning is, that He shall not speak of His own authority, as if He had nothing to do with the

Father and the Son. For He is come here to glorify the Son, just as the Son when here was glorifying the Father. And this explains why, although the Holy Ghost is worthy of supreme worship, and of being, equally with the Father and the Son, personally addressed in prayer, yet, having come down for the purpose of animating, directing, and effectuating the work and worship of God's children here, He is never presented in the Epistles as directly the object, but rather as the power, of Christian prayer. Therefore, we find them praying **in**, and never **to**, the Holy Ghost.

At the same time, when we say "God," of course we do mean not only the Father, but the Son, and the Holy Ghost too. In that way, therefore, every intelligent believer knows that he includes the Spirit and the Son with the Father, when he addresses God; because the name "God" does not belong to one Person in the Trinity more than to

another. But when we speak of the Persons in the Godhead distinctively, and with knowledge of what God has done and is doing, we do well to remind ourselves and one another, that the Spirit has come down and taken a special place among and in the disciples now; the consequence of which is, that He is pleased administratively (without renouncing His personal rights) to direct our hearts thus towards God the Father and the Lord Jesus. He is thus (if we may speak so, as I believe we may and ought reverentially) serving the interests of the Father and the Son here below in the disciples. The fact we have noticed, the administrative position of the Spirit, is thus owing to the work He has voluntarily undertaken for the Father and the Son, though, of course, as a question of His own glory, He is equally to be adored with the Father and the Son, and is always comprehended in God as such.

W.K.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 36: 1 — 39: 23).

THE section entitled, "The generations of Esau," begins with the first verse of chapter 36, and continues to the first verse of chapter 37. As in the case of Ishmael and Isaac, so again here the rejected line is mentioned first, but with brevity, and chronology is not pursued in connection with it. The selected line comes second and then sufficient dates are given to enable us to fol-

low the passing of the years. Thus is foreshadowed the fact, stated so clearly as a principle of God's ways, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second" (Heb. 10: 9).

The chapter shows us that Esau was prospered in earthly things so that the blessing of his father was fulfilled to him (27: 39, 40). He occupied his own territory, became

quite independent of Jacob, his descendants multiplied and became chiefs and notorious. They not only became "dukes" but even "kings," and that before any king appeared in Israel's line. In earthly greatness and power the children of this world have always taken precedence over the children of God.

The chapter also shows quite clearly that Esau, Edom and Mount Seir are to be identified, when we find these names mentioned in later Scripture. Otherwise the many names mentioned may convey but little to us. The New Translation prefers in verse 24 the reading, "found the warm springs in the wilderness," rather than "the mules." This was doubtless at that time a memorable discovery, but what spiritual significance this may have for us we do not know.

The generations of Jacob begin with verse 2 of chapter 37, and this is the last of these divisions of the book, continuing to the end. The first verse has told us that he **dwelt** in the land in which his father had been a **stranger**. In this he was moving ahead of God's purpose and hence presently God permitted circumstances to move him and his sons into Egypt, and thus all came to pass that had been predicted to Abraham in chapter 15: 13, 14.

Here we may see a type of many a trying experience that intrudes itself to our Christian lives. God intends us to be strangers in the world that exists today. If we settle ourselves down and become dwellers, we may very easily find ourselves carried down into a spiritual Egypt and enslaved therein. So let us take the warning of this Scripture to heart.

The generations of Jacob are mainly occupied with the doings of his sons, who sprang out of him, and more especially with Joseph, to whom at the age of seventeen we are introduced in verse 2. It has been said that in him we have the most perfect and complete type of the Lord Jesus that we have in the Scripture, and we believe it to be true. In keeping with this we shall see that no sinful or unworthy action of his is put on record. Thus the value of his life is enhanced as a type, though he was a sinful man like the rest of us.

At the outset he is presented to us as the son specially beloved of his father on the one hand, and as dissociated from the evil ways of his brothers on the other. The former fact was signaled by the "coat of many colours," and the latter by Joseph bringing to his father the evil report of the doings of the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah. Thus is foreshadowed the unique Sonship of the Lord Jesus and His refusal of and separation from the evil ways of men.

As a result a complete breach supervened between Joseph and his brethren. Knowing human nature, it is just what we should expect in such a situation. The more it was manifest that he was specially beloved of his father, the more they hated him. To begin with their hatred affected their speech — they "could not speak peaceably unto him." Later their hatred flared up into wicked action. But we see at once a type of the One of whom Psalm 69 speaks prophetically, "They . . . hate Me without a cause;" and again, "I am become a stranger unto My brethren, and an

alien unto my mother's children."

Next there follows the record of Joseph's two dreams. Now it is remarkable how large a part was played by dreams in his history, since, before the climax is reached, no less than five are recorded, and every one of them contained a prophecy. Each of them therefore was produced by the finger of God touching the unconscious mind of the sleeper, and marked a Divine intervention, and indeed a revelation of secret things.

Both his dreams were prophetic of his coming eminence and glory, so clearly so that his brothers, and his father too, saw at once their meaning. The general drift was the same in both cases, but only the second suggested that his father and mother as well as his brothers would be bowing down to him in a future day. There was the further difference in that sheaves are connected with an **earthly** harvest, whereas sun, moon and stars are **heavenly** objects. The sun is a symbol of supreme authority, the moon of derived and associated authority, and Jacob saw at once how applicable this was to the place of father and mother in his large patriarchal family.

The recounting of these dreams fanned the flame of hatred greatly, as we see in verses 5, 8 and 11. His father rebuked him, under the impression that such an event as that indicated by the dream was impossible. Yet it is recorded that he "observed the saying," which shows that he could not dismiss it from his mind, and he recognized that there was more in it than he had thought at first. He had faith in God, even if it was weak; whereas the brethren had none.

The application of all this to the great Antitype, our Lord Jesus, is very striking. The Jews, His brethren according to the flesh, hated Him without a cause and rejected Him when He came amongst them, yet the day is coming when they will bow down before Him. But not only this: He is to be the central Object of worship to the heavens as well as the earth, for that which had been secret is now revealed, and we know that God's purpose according to His good pleasure is to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. 1: 10). How happily therefore we can sing,

"Firstborn of many brethren,  
Thou!

To whom both heaven and  
earth must bow."

Joseph's two dreams therefore not only foretold his own glorious future in Egypt, but also foreshadowed the supreme glory of Christ.

With verse 12 a fresh episode begins, in which we see Joseph sent by his father on a mission of kindly interest in his brethren. He sought them and found them in order to express his father's love toward them. Their response to this was not only hatred but premeditated murder; their crime to be hidden under cover of a lying report. They thought his dreams were but an idle fancy, which they could easily dissipate. They had to learn that they were a revelation of the purpose of God which they could not overthrow.

God defeated their evil project by touching the hearts of two of the

brothers, Reuben and Judah. Of the two, Reuben appears in the better light. His purpose was to deliver him ultimately to his father again. Joseph was stripped of the coat which expressed the special place he had in his father's heart, and cast into a pit in which was no water. Judah supported Reuben in this, but during his absence took the lead in selling him to the Midianite merchantmen for twenty pieces of silver. Thus, though he did not actually die, Joseph went down into the pit, and was sold as a slave.

It is not difficult to see the typical value of all this. As we pass further into the Old Testament we find "the pit" becomes a symbol of death and destruction. In Psalm 69: 15, we find prophetic words, applicable to our Lord, "Let not the pit shut her mouth upon Me." The same figure is used in regard to the future deliverance of a godly remnant of Israel, when the prophet said, "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (Zech. 9: 11). In the same prophet also we read the prophetic words, "They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver" (11: 12).

Verses 31-35, recount the crafty way in which Jacob was led to jump to the conclusion that Joseph had been killed and devoured by some evil beast. His brothers avoided the telling of a plain lie, they only inferred it, and Jacob fell into their trap. In chapter 27 we read how Jacob by wearing Esau's garment deceived his blind father, Isaac. Esau's garment is called "goodly raiment," and as he was the elder it may have been something very

similar to Joseph's "coat of many colours." By goodly raiment Jacob deceived his father: by goodly raiment his sons deceived him. As he meted out so it was measured to him again. God's government of His people works with great precision.

Meanwhile Joseph had been carried down into Egypt, just as though he had been some article of merchandise and again he was sold. His purchaser was Potiphar, the captain of the guard. Thus he was brought into a place of considerable danger, on the one hand, but of nearness to Pharaoh, on the other. Things began to work together for his ultimate good, though by no means apparent at the time.

We have the story of Joseph completely interrupted by chapter 38. In chapter 39 it is resumed and the great temptation that faced him is immediately recounted. It would seem that we have the deplorable story of Judah recounted in order to heighten the effect in our minds of the way Joseph stood firm under temptation of a similar kind. Judah appears to have been amongst the better behaved of the sons of Jacob, yet the practices that marked him and his family were evil, and evidently accepted as nothing very unusual. We need not dwell upon this, save to remark that the Tamar of this chapter is the first of the women mentioned in the genealogy of our Lord, recounted in Matthew 1. Of the four women mentioned, only Ruth had a clean record from the moral point of view, and she came of an accursed race. Such names would never have appeared in the record had it not been for the

grace of God — the grace that triumphs over human sin.

The first verse of chapter 39 picks up the thread from the last verse of chapter 37. Potiphar was an Egyptian, as is specially mentioned. This might have seemed to us a quite unnecessary remark did we not know that at that time the ruling class in Egypt and even Pharaoh himself were an alien race. For several centuries Egypt was dominated by these "Shepherd Kings," or "Hyksos," much as China for a long time and until early this century was dominated by a Manchu dynasty. Potiphar was of true Egyptian stock, and was greatly prospered by the service of Joseph.

We are given the explanation of all that happened — "The Lord was with Joseph" — and, that being the case, all that he did prospered, and even what looked like disaster proved to be only a stepping-stone to something much better. Verses 3 and 4 lead us to remark the striking way in which Joseph's "hand" is mentioned in the story. The Lord being with him, He "made all that he did to prosper in his hand." The consequence of this was that he found favour with his master, and "all that he had he put into his hand." Naturally this was so. Though he did not know the explanation of it, Potiphar found he had made a first-rate bargain when he bought the young Semitic lad, who displayed such skilful powers coupled with God-fearing uprightness and integrity.

And not only this ease of mind as to the ordering of his household was enjoyed by him, but extra-

ordinary good fortune marked all his affairs, both "in the house and in the field." Consequently everything was left, "in Joseph's hand." Joseph moreover had developed into a specially fine specimen of young manhood.

Then came a time of fierce and prolonged testing, and we see how great is the contrast with Judah's action in the previous chapter. There the sin was committed at once and was hardly recognized as sin. Here the testing met him day after day, and he was only preserved by his fear of God and recognition of the great wickedness of the seduction laid before him. Whether young or old we do well, as we pass through this defiling world, to have continually in our hearts this question, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Had he complied he would have sinned against the woman, against Potiphar and against himself, but the controlling and saving thought was "against GOD."

By his steadfast refusal he enraged the woman, and she with cunning artifice concocted a story against him, which, believed by her husband, landed him into prison. But we are going to see in Joseph's history a striking exemplification of that word written by the Apostle Peter in his First Epistle, "If, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (2: 20). He was abased for a moment, but only that he might be exalted in due time.

In the first place we notice that he was put into that particular prison "where the king's prisoners were bound." This proved to be a

link in the chain of circumstances that connected him with ultimate triumph. Had it been another prison he would never have met the butler and baker who had offended the king.

Then, in the second place, the Lord was with him as much in the days and place of his adversity as He had been in the days of his comparative prosperity in Potiphar's mansion and estate. In result He showed mercy to him, which took the form of bringing him into the favour of the keeper of the prison, who evidently wielded autocratic power within his own limited sphere.

So, in the third place, we find everything in the prison "committed to Joseph's hand." The extraordinary statement is made that, "whatsoever they did there, he was

the doer of it." The young man cast in as a prisoner becomes the super-efficient deputy of the jailor, and ends by controlling the whole place! We wonder if a situation approaching this has ever been seen in a prison since that day. The keeper was relieved of all work and anxiety. He doubtless took the salary, and Joseph did the work.

He had now tasted the bitterness of both pit and prison. Taken both together they foreshadow Christ going down into death as a result of the malice of man. But there the power of His hand was felt. The skill of Joseph's hand in the house of Potiphar may remind us of the mighty hand of Christ in His matchless life. But in the closing verses of our chapter we see typified the power of His mighty hand in the dark domain of death.

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**"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 Jesus will God bring with Him." (1 Thess. 4: 13, 14).**

It is remarkable that the consolation which he gives to those who surrounded the death-bed of a Christian, is their friend's return with Jesus, and their mutual meeting. It is customary to say, "Be content: he is gone to glory." This was not the way with the apostle. The comfort which he proposes to those who are mourning the death of a believer is, "Be content: **God will bring them back.**" — J.N.D.

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In John 17: 15-18, the disciples were reminded that they were not to be taken out of the world, rather they were to remain in the world as those who had been sent by the Lord Himself. It is indeed true that, "The place of the ship is in the sea, but God help the ship if the sea gets into it." God calls neither for recluses nor for worldlings. He seeks for men who, like the Son of God, will be the friend of publicans and sinners, and yet at the same time holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

# THE WORKINGS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

J. MCBROOM.

**T**HE full blaze of the Lord's glory could not be manifested while He was on earth. A glimpse of it was seen both by Peter and Thomas (Matt. 16: 16; John 20: 28), but how could the disciples, or even those in the home at Nazareth, have lived had they known that the eternal God was amongst them in that lowly One? It began to come out immediately after the Spirit had come. Speaking of the Pentecostal gift, the Lord had said, "When the Comforter is come . . . He shall testify of Me," and again, "He shall glorify Me" (John 15: 26; 16: 14).

This immediately began to be fulfilled in the new-born assembly, as the early chapters of Acts reveal. The One whom ye crucified, says Peter, God has made both Lord and Christ. Then the Apostles show from the Scriptures, which as illuminated by the Spirit, they can now use with holy freedom, that He is the King, the Son of David, the Prophet greater than Moses, the Priest greater than Aaron, till in chapter 7, Stephen beholds Him in glory as the Son of Man.

There is progress in all this, bespeaking the official and mediatory glory of our Lord, yet immediately Saul of Tarsus was converted he began to preach Him as the Son of God. This is personal and shows His place with the Father and the Spirit. The assembly had been constituted as the vessel formed by the Spirit to contain and carry on these things. This involves for the believer the transfer, in his soul's

consciousness, from what he is in the flesh and in nature to what he is "in Christ."

That the Gospel embraces a racial question is made clear by the way the Spirit goes back to Adam in Romans 5. The death of Christ is the divinely ordered way out of all our ruined state as in Adam, and a new creation began in the resurrection of our Lord. Both the life and the relationship and the associations belonging to that life, come out in John 20: 17 and 22. As a moral being, placed in the conflict between good and evil, man cannot be lifted out of one world into another as a mere material object. Time and growth is called for, linked with the inner springs of the soul. It is a most searching process, reaching to the deepest depths of our being.

That this might be simplified for us, the Apostle Paul is led to show it as personified in himself. On the one hand he could say that concerning the law he was blameless, but on the other hand he had to learn that the sting of the law was in its tail, and that the last of the ten commandments claimed him, so that he had to say, "Sin revived, and I died." That really is the way we must all go if we are to participate in the blessedness of the new creation. If a man must be born again, it proves that all that precedes in our natural state is of no avail for God. Education, reformation, refinement, or whatever else may be named, all are ruled out, and man as born into this world, with the heritage of a fallen nature,

called in Scripture, "the flesh," is incapable of pleasing God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be.**" What then? Christ as our Substitute has died, and if we accept His death as ours all becomes clear, and we come out of the dark tunnel of introspection into the light of being in the risen life of our Lord. It should be noted that no mere mental acquisition of these things will do: having the light of deliverance apart from the deep soul-searching that it involves is the cause of much of the superficiality and unreality that is so manifest today.

When this important landmark in the history of a soul is reached, the individual becomes conscious that he has a new spiritual being and he begins a new spiritual history. Though still in the body, where still sin resides, he knows that in the eye of God he has made the journey from Adam to Christ; he knows what it is to be "a man in Christ," so that he traces up his spiritual pedigree to Him as his Head in heaven. How perfect and admirable are the ways of our God! Oh, what a change it would bring about in the lives of countless multitudes if this transfer was accepted.

We are now intelligently on the ground of the purpose of God, and able to enter into and enjoy the precious and heavenly things that belong to this new order. There is not only our individual blessing but also that which is collective, as embracing family affairs. The saints are the assembly of God, and they are living stones in a spiritual house, the house of God where heavenly treasures are found.

Here again we may be enriched by "the revenues of the ages," for in the typical house we read of treasures, both the dedicated things and that which was taken as the spoils of war. (See 1 Chron. 26: 20-28). We may take the spoils of victory, which were found there, as typical of the way in which the whole circle of truth is available for us today, much of it having been won by men of God through many a conflict. The energy of Luther and many others may be recalled, as well as the labours and conflicts of men used in the recovery of truth well over a century ago.

But there were also the dedicated things, and these we may take as typical of such spiritual realities as we have recorded in Ephesians 2. Here all is the fruit of Divine workmanship, for both Jew and Gentile are made one in a new economy of grace and glory with the middle wall of partition broken down. The distance is gone, and now there is the intimacy of nearness in Christ Jesus, and all is righteously established in His shed blood. Next comes the new man, followed by the truth of the body of Christ, in the full light of reconciliation. Then crowning it all, and in the light of the Holy Trinity, we have through the Lord Jesus access to the Father by the Spirit. And there is still more, for the saints are seen as the household of God, as a growing temple, and last of all as a habitation for God by the Spirit. Here surely we are in the midst of the accumulated treasures of God's house.

How infinitely blessed is all this! Surely Christianity is a faith system and above all our senses, for God has by His Spirit revealed to those

that love Him things that eye hath not seen nor ear heard, and that have not entered into the heart of man. Now we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is God, "that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2: 9-12).

From the group of things, mentioned in Ephesians 2, the Spirit takes the church as the body of Christ and dwells on it in a long parenthesis, which occupies the whole of chapter 3. The mystery, or secret of God, which was hidden throughout the ages, includes Christ and His church, but it is now revealed to His holy Apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This secret made known to faith, which has been spoken of as "the masterpiece of God," is defined in verse 6, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ;" and the way into it is "by the Gospel."

The wealth of that Gospel shines in verse 8 — "the unsearchable riches of Christ." The administration of the mystery comes next, and here we see its connection with the heart and purpose of God from all eternity, for it is "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

In these closing days there has been a ministry of the place of the church as the house of God and the body of Christ, which has brought blessing to many. The house is where God dwells and where His voice is heard, as we see in Acts 5: 3, 4; 13: 2; 1 Timothy 4: 1; Ephe-

sians 2: 22. It is where God rests, and consequently salvation and blessing are found there, along with the holy joy that belongs to the place, as we have prophetically announced in Psalm 132: 13-16. In the New Testament we find it to be marked by both elevation and illumination, for, "The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it . . . the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Rev. 21: 22, 23). Truly it is the place,

"Where all His brightness God  
displays,  
And the Lamb's glories dwell."

Our Lord said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." If we read Scripture in this way we shall not think of God's present house otherwise than as a living structure, composed of the saints who form Christ's assembly. It was formed by the Holy Spirit for God Himself, and will be His dwelling-place to eternity. In it shall be glory to God by Christ Jesus to all eternity, as we see in Ephesians 3: 21.

Nothing more clearly shows the sovereignty of God and His predilection for man, as distinct from all other of His creatures, than the fact that He dwells with and in man. It was ever His desire, but the entrance of sin, and the conflict between good and evil, was allowed to hinder. But even this He has overruled to accomplish His great end, by the redemption wrought out by His Son. God Himself is the Architect of this house; Christ is the Builder; the Holy Spirit we may with reverence liken to Cement, for He binds all together. Redeemed

men are the material; Christ being formed in them, they are living stones. They were given to the Son by the Father in past eternal ages, and He presents them in His own acceptance with the Father, and in His own relationship as sons.

With this in view we are already blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and made holy and without blame in love before God, and all this for His own pleasure. Truly then the house of God is a great and blessed reality. The reason perhaps why it is not better understood and enjoyed is our tendency to materialism. But when Scripture speaks of "the house of Israel," or "the house of David," we think immediately not of a material building or fine furniture but of living people. So ought we to think of the house of God.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer is a truth commonly acknowledged, but often it is but little understood how we are trans-

ferred from Adam to Christ, so that created anew we are united to Christ and linked up with that world of glory of which He is the Head and Centre. We belong to a new race, forming the family of God, and as His household are to be representative of Him in this world; but how could this be if we did not know Him?

God's presence is our home, and we are taken there with a nature and relationship suited to Him. Thus we have fellowship with the Father and the Son in the holy intimacy that belongs to the Divine nature, the blessedness of which is beyond words to describe.

"O boundless grace! what fills  
with joy  
Unmingled all that enter  
there,  
God's nature, love without  
alloy,  
Our hearts are given e'en  
now to share."

## THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST A. H. STORRIE.

**A** RIGHT understanding of this subject can only be arrived at by carefully considering all the Scriptures that deal with it.

Let us first turn to Romans 14: 10-12. In the previous verses believers are taught not to judge one another in such things as eating and observance of days. The weak brother is not to judge the strong in these matters, nor the strong despise the weak, "for we shall all be placed before the judgment seat of

God" (verse 10, N.T.) The citation that follows from Isaiah 45: 23, makes it clear that the apostle has all mankind before him in making his statement about the judgment seat (the Greek word often translated "tribunal"). It is equally clear that if each one of us is to give an account of himself to God, the account must cover the whole period of our lives whether we are believers or not. As another has written: "If I give an account of myself to

God, I must do it completely or I should lose something of the goodness of Him who has called me and saved me. Paul lost nothing in saying, 'Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on Thee.' (J. N. Darby, Letters, Vol. 3, p. 439).

Although 2 Corinthians 5 is a chapter full of rich spiritual teaching, the part that treats of the tribunal, or judgment seat of Christ, is not always understood. Let it be noted, in the first place, that judgment is not spoken of in the passage (verse 10). It is the thought of **manifestation** that is prominent; all must be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ whether saint or sinner, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done whether it be good or evil.

As to the use of the word "we" in verse 10, the context shows that the writer has men in view, not believers only. Thus the same two points are established as in Romans 14: 10-12: all men are in view, as is also the whole period of our lives. The view has sometimes been put forward that it is only the believer's life after his conversion that will come into review, but, clearly, we are "in the body" both before conversion and after. The receiving the things done in the body will take place just as will the giving an

account of ourselves to God. As the apostle thinks of what the judgment seat will mean for the unsaved, he adds: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men."

Thus we see that the believer's deeds will be manifested at the judgment seat of Christ. His person will not be judged because, as John 5: 24 tells us, he will not come into judgment, for he has already passed from death unto life. In view of the believer being manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, the apostle desired that the light of God should fill his life now, that he should be manifested to God as a matter of present experience, and manifested also in the consciences of his brethren.

The day referred to in 1 Corinthians 3: 13, is evidently the same day of manifestation — when the believer's works shall be made manifest. There is only one foundation on which the believer can build, namely, Jesus Christ. May we live and serve in this day in the light of that day; thus shall our work abide and the reward be sure.

It remains to be noted that, for unbelievers, the judgment seat of Christ will be the great white throne of Revelation 20: 11-16. And for the living nations, at Christ's return to set up His kingdom, it will be as set out in Matthew 25: 31-46.

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**T**RUE wisdom is shown by a course of life spent in meekness, which is the attribute of wisdom. For a man to boast of wisdom when his heart is full of bitter emulation and party spirit is a lying vaunt, and not the heavenly wisdom of the Christian. The wisdom which evinces itself in party spirit leads to unhallowed chaos and every contemptible practice.

# THE SECRET OF TRUE CHRISTIAN LIFE

I. FLEMING.

**T**HREE Scriptures have been suggested as giving the secret of victory over the power of sin within and around, and of a happy useful life of service for our Lord. They are these:—

1. "Ye are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3: 3).

2. "So also ye, reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 6: 11, New Trans.)

3. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Cor. 4: 10).

In the first we find the fact stated. In the sight of God the believer **has died with Christ**. In His death not only the sins of the believer have been blotted out, but the believer himself, as to what he was in Adam fallen, has been brought to an end in judgment. As another has said, "When Christ went to the cross the Christian went also." This fact is to be received in all simplicity. It presents the matter as seen by God and is stated for faith to receive and act upon. It is not a matter of feeling. No one could feel dead. No, it is God's view in grace, and we are called to see ourselves as He sees us.

In the second passage the exhortation comes to believers to reckon **as God reckons**. And again it is not a matter of feeling but of faith; counting, as led by the Spirit of God,

that as Christ has died unto the sin with which He came into contact on our behalf, and lives again free from it, so the believer is to reckon himself to be "dead indeed unto sin," no longer a slave to obey its behests; but "alive unto God in Christ Jesus," and so henceforth free to do His will.

In the third portion **it is the practical carrying out of the truth**, which is spoken of by the Apostle. He had seen himself as having died with Christ when Christ died upon the cross. Faith had laid hold of it at or since his conversion on the way to Damascus. And now day by day the truth was applied to his whole course in order that nothing of self might be displayed but only the life of Christ shine out.

A beautiful incident is told of one who knew and valued the truths spoken of, and who sought to carry them out in his life, following in the Apostle's steps. G. V. Wigram was journeying from Australia to New Zealand in his happy service of carrying the gospel and in ministering to the children of God. With a fellow Christian, the captain of the ship, he had just left the vessel, when he suddenly remembered that he had left his Greek New Testament under the pillow in his berth. The captain went back for the book and asked the officer in charge if the volume had been found. The officer replied that it had, and added, "There never has been a man on board like him." "Why? Did he have anything to say?" "Not much," he replied, "but he was just

like Jesus." The life of Jesus was being manifested in his body.

So should it be with every Christian, and so it will be with those who keep near to Christ in communion

with Him, and walk in the power of the Holy Spirit day by day, refusing to allow the flesh in any of its forms, and sowing to the Spirit by prayer and meditation day and night.

## THE SIXTEENTH PSALM

J. HOUSTON.

**T**HIS psalm might well be called **the resurrection psalm**, for it is quoted twice in Acts of the Apostles, to establish the fact of Christ's resurrection (Acts 2: 25-28; 13: 35-37). Prophetically, it looked on to that, and spoke of it, as "the path of life," affirming that Christ's soul was not left in hades, nor did His body see corruption. This went beyond the experience of David, as Peter makes clear; His sepulchre, with His body, was still present; but, as a prophet, he announced that God "would raise up Christ to sit on His throne."

The first thing we see, is Christ's confidence in God. "Preserve Me, O God; for in Thee do I put My trust" (verse 1). As dependent Man, He always trusted in God. Even His enemies knew that, and mockingly said: "He trusted on the Lord, that He would deliver Him: let Him deliver Him seeing He delighted in Him." (Compare Psalm 22: 8 and Matthew 27: 43). To unbelief, His faith seemed vain, for the cross was the witness of His abandonment and death. To faith, however, the cross made way for God's intervention, in delivering power, in resurrection. And oh! how precious to see His unswerving trust in God, in life and death.

lent in whom was His delight, were the Jewish remnant; called elsewhere His "brethren," His "fellows," the "children," whom God gave Him (see Psalm 22; Hebrews 1 and 2). In Hebrews 1, it will be seen that He is **above** them; in this psalm He is **under** them, in lowly grace, their Servant. In the former, He is God; in the latter, Man. What endears Him so much to us is to see how He could, in surpassing grace, identify Himself with the poor of His people, and be their Servant! He came, **not to be served, but to serve**, and give Himself a ransom for many. This is the place He assumes in lowliness and meekness, in perfect dependence on God, as it became Him, as Man identified with the spared remnant of Israel. How precious He is! How our hearts are drawn to Him!

Idolatry had been the besetting sin of the nation. But He would not offer to God "their drink offerings of blood"; nor would He take "their names" into His lips. He was the **separate** Man, as well as the **dependent** Man. He was here for God; when all the nation had become idolatrous, the **faithful** and the **true**. What deep perfections there are in Him! What a portion He is for our souls!

The saints in the earth, the excel-

The Lord was the portion of His

inheritance. The lines had fallen to Him in pleasant places. There is an allusion to the land, where Israel is to be blessed. The remnant had this blessing, in anticipation, by faith (1 Peter 2: 9). So we see Him, in this place of dependence, identified with these saints, in the earth, owning God, as the portion of His inheritance. This is just what the spared remnant had, **God, as the portion of their inheritance**, before the nation is blessed in the land, according to the purpose of God.

God was the portion of the **faithful** at all times, when the mass of the people had forfeited their blessing through apostasy. It is no less true today, when the Church, as a whole, has departed from the faith, and only a few spared ones are left to maintain a witness for God. In such place of weakness and reproach, God is the portion of their inheritance. And truly, the lines are fallen to them, in pleasant places!

We now come to the secret of **stability**, when all was **shaking in the earth**, and **faith alone could stand** (see Hebrews 12: 25-29). Tottering thrones, agitated nations, tumultuous uprisings of kings and leaders, might well show the instability of those things in which men trust (compare Psalm 2; Matthew 2: 3). God was speaking; man in the earth was greatly perturbed. This was true when the Lord was here; it will be so in the last days, when the voice of God will shake heaven and earth. When these foundations are shaken, what can the righteous do? Turn to God; have Him before the soul, as the object of faith. Christ, the Author and Finisher of faith, set the Lord always before Him. Be-

cause the Lord was at His right hand, He was never moved.

If we would be steadfast and immovable, we must have God before us as the sole object of faith. The day of complete ruin in public testimony is contemplated. Faith cannot rest in that. It turns away from it, and rests in God Himself. Nothing can shake God; nay, it is He who shakes everything. Nothing can shake the one who trusts in Him, solely and exclusively. How perfectly we see this in Christ, the dependent Man! God was always before Him, therefore He was never moved.

And we must remember He said this when He was facing death. He could, therefore, look beyond death to resurrection. Hence He speaks of gladness and rejoicing, and resting in hope. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace" (Psalm 37: 37). How true this was of Him! His end was joy and peace. His work was finished; God was glorified; and God glorified Him in His presence, where there is "fulness of joy," and at His right hand, where "there are pleasures for evermore."

The passage in Hebrews 12: 2 is an allusion to this. For the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Our race is before us. Let us run with patience. May the Lord ever be before us! This will give us stability, when all is shaking around us. So that, as He finished His course, and ended in glory, we may follow Him, and end our course with Him in glory. (See Revelation 3: 21).

# “NOW LEARN A PARABLE OF THE FIG TREE”

A. J. POLLOCK.

(MATTHEW 24: 32).

**T**HERE are two outstanding allusions to the fig tree in Scripture — the one historical, Matthew 21: 17-22; the other prophetic, Matthew 24: 32, 33 — the fig tree being symbolical of Israel, the Land of God's choice, the earthly centre from which flow God's designs of blessing for a sinful world.

The historical allusion occurred in the last days of our Lord's life on earth. Returning to Jerusalem, after resting all night at Bethany, and being hungry, He looked for fruit on a fig tree by the wayside, and finding nothing but leaves, and no fruit thereon, He proceeded to curse the fig tree, and it began to wither away. This incident has been the occasion of a good deal of adverse and irreverent criticism. Our Lord's miracles were indeed many and beneficent, but here was a solitary exception. Why this exception? The answer is, That thus symbolically the Lord set forth the condemnation and the setting aside of the Jewish nation, who, called of God for His glory, ended by sinking to the lowest depth of an absolutely empty profession with no fruit whatever for God.

Not only have we the incident of the Lord cursing the fig tree as recorded in Matthew 21 and Mark 11, but we also find our Lord uttering a parable concerning a fig tree in Luke 13: 6-9. This latter throws further light on the subject before us. When the owner of the vineyard, who had planted a fig tree among the vines,

came to seek fruit, he found none. Addressing himself to the dresser of the vineyard, he pointed out that he had come for three years seeking fruit and had found none, the time had now come to cut down this fruitless tree. The dresser of the vineyard pleaded for the trial of the fig tree for another year. He promised to dig around it, and dung it, and if it bore fruit well and good, but if not let it be cut down.

Did not our Lord in this parable draw attention to His own public ministry for three years in the land of Israel, of His widespread proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, of the ceaseless flow of miracles that poured forth as He met the sick, the blind, the deaf, the leprous, even to the raising of the dead to life again? And what was the response to all this stream of beneficence? Nothing but leaves, nothing but an empty profession, no fruit for God whatsoever! The chief priests, who should have been the first to acclaim their promised Messiah with joy, were His bitterest and most relentless foes. In the end in complete violation of justice and righteousness they encompassed His death. It is no wonder that our Lord, knowing all their rancour and the plotting of His death, should symbolically curse the fig tree, as setting forth how God stood in relation to them, how they stood in God's displeasure.

But a further chance was given to Israel. As it were the fig tree was dug around, dung was given to feed

it, and help it to bear fruit for the owner. When the news of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and His ascension to glory got to the ears of the chief priests, did it bring about repentance as to the part they took in encompassing His death? What then was the response to this testimony? It was seen in the martyrdom of Stephen. As the stones battered the Lord's servant to death, the Jewish nation was practically sending the message to heaven in defiance, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." (Luke 19: 14). They killed the King. They stoned His servant. They crucified the Lord of glory. They battered to death Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

We can now see how the fig tree withered away. The Jews were dispossessed of their ancient land. They became aliens among the Gentile nations, subjected to much persecution, and continued so for nigh two thousand years. For the moment Israel is set aside. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel." (Rom. 11: 25). Yes, **judicial** blindness at the hand of God is their portion. "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell [**the Jewish nation**], severity, but toward thee [**the Gentile**], goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shall be cut off." (Rom. 11: 22). This is a matter of history and indisputable.

But let us pass on to the prophetic allusion to the fig tree found in Matthew 24: 32, where we read, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things,

know that it [**the coming of the Lord to reign on the earth**] is near, even at the doors."

Are there any signs that the fig tree is shooting forth leaves? In other words, are there signs of fresh life in connection with the Jewish nation? We answer, there are assuredly many and manifest signs. Within living memory the fig tree has indeed been putting on leaves. A change most remarkable and startling has taken place. After nearly two thousand years of wandering here and there among the nations, a hunger for Palestine has arisen in the hearts of God's ancient people. Zionism, as a movement to meet this hunger, is very striking. Hundreds of thousands of Jews have again entered that downtrodden and stricken land. This is the fulfilment of prophecies lying scattered on the Old Testament page. See Ezekiel 11: 17; 28: 25; Amos 9: 14, 15, etc., etc. Under the British Mandate a new phase of prosperity was entered upon. Latterly circumstances led the British to give up the Mandate, and leave Palestine. The day before this took place, the Jews without asking support from any, with immense courage, proclaimed a sovereign Jewish State. If anyone had prophesied fifty years ago that Palestine would become a sovereign state, he would have been written off as prophesying the impossible. The impossible of fifty years ago is a fact today.

All this is fulfilling prophecy in a most remarkable way. We have long noted the wonderful prophecy of Daniel 9: 27, that the seventieth week of his prophecy would see the head of a revived Roman Empire (call it the United Nations of

Europe, or by any other name), making a treaty with the Jew in the land of Israel. It is clear that Israel, if still a mandated territory, would not be in a position to make any treaty over the head of the country which held the mandate. But once it becomes a sovereign state, it would be in a position to make treaties with other powers.

Our Lord prophesied the capture of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple, and the dispersal of the Jews among the Gentile nations (Luke 21: 24). All this has happened, and is happening, as far as the scattering of the Jews is concerned, before our very eyes today. But now a remarkable change has taken place. The Jews finding themselves without a mandate, and in sufficient numbers, felt competent to set up a Jewish Republic. Our Lord prophesied, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, **until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.**" (Luke 21: 24). No longer is Jerusalem fully under the power of the Gentiles. The Jews have asserted their independence, as far as a large part of the land is concerned, and refuse to share it with the Arabs, and none can say them nay. The Gentiles, which have dominated

Israel ever since the time of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, to this present time, are releasing their grasp. It looks as if **the times of the Gentiles are nearly over.**

This is a startling pronouncement, and it speaks loudly that this troubled age is drawing to a finish. Before long the Church will have been raptured to meet its Lord in the air, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. On earth God's severity will be known as the judgments of the Lord fall more and more on apostate man. The seals, the trumpets, the vials, will follow one after the other. Finally the Head of the Roman Empire will treat his solemn treaty of seven years as "a scrap of paper," for in the middle of it, he will cause the Temple service to cease, and set up an image of himself to be worshipped, "the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the Prophet" (Matt. 24: 15). Then will burst forth the great tribulation, followed by the great battle of Armageddon, our Lord finally setting up His kingdom, and to reign for a thousand years.

We may well learn a lesson of the fig tree.

## BIBLE STUDY—GENESIS.

F. B. HOLE.

(CHAPTERS 40: 1—42: 24).

**T**HE history of Joseph was introduced by the record of the two prophetic dreams that were granted to him. Chapter 40 puts on record two further dreams of a prophetic nature, and their fulfilment. Though not given to him, yet in the provid-

ence of God they had a very distinct effect upon his future.

Both the chief butler and the chief baker of Pharaoh had offended their lord. Nothing is stated as to the nature of their offence, but bearing in mind the fact of Pharaoh being

of an alien race and therefore likely to fear an attempt upon his life by poison, it is not surprising that both the chief custodians of his drink and his food had fallen under suspicion. Pending a decision in the matter, they were confined in the same prison as Joseph, and put in his charge. The first link in the Divinely ordered chain of events was that Joseph should be put in the place where the king's prisoners were bound. The second was that in due season these two men should be placed there too.

The third was that both men in one night should have dreams of a peculiar nature and yet marked by certain resemblances, and the effect on their minds should be such as to make them look sad and attract the notice of Joseph. They felt that there must be a hidden meaning in their dreams and they desired an interpreter. Joseph's reply was virtually an offer to interpret, while he acknowledged that all power to do so came from God.

The butler told his dream. Its salient points were: (1) that the vine had **three** branches, which produced the ripe grapes; (2) that Pharaoh's cup was **in his hand**, so that he could press into it the ripe grapes; and (3) that the cup of grape juice passed **into Pharaoh's hand**. The interpretation was simple. Within three days Pharaoh would restore the butler to his place. Having declared this, Joseph very naturally asked the man to remember him when thus he was prospered, to the end that he might be taken out of prison.

Emboldened by this favourable interpretation, the baker told his

dream. Its salient points were: (1) that the baskets of bakemeats were **three**; (2) that the baskets were **on his head**; and (3) that the bakemeats were **devoured by birds** and never reached Pharaoh. Again the interpretation was simple. Within three days Pharaoh would lift up his head, hanging him on a tree, so that the birds should devour his flesh. His dream had an exactly opposite meaning to that of the butler.

The event proved that Joseph's interpretations were given of God. Pharaoh's birthday was on the third day, and he acted as the dreams had indicated. Yet the chief butler in his renewed prosperity forgot about Joseph, and has become a standing monument of human ingratitude. Nevertheless, as we believe, the hand of God was over even this. Had the butler remembered, Joseph's deliverance from prison would have been the result of thankful and perhaps respectful human arrangement. God intended to take him out, reviving the butler's memory, in a far more striking way. And not only take him out but also exalt him above the chiefest of butlers and bakers. How God brought this to pass chapter 41 reveals.

Again dreams enter into the story; this time in connection with Pharaoh himself. In our last article we spoke of **five** dreams but we should have been more correct had we said **six**, since, as it was with Joseph at the beginning so now, Pharaoh's dream was in duplicate. The general drift of both dreams was the same, and that both should have occurred in one night was very impressive. Sheep were not popular in Egypt

and cattle provided the flesh food, and corn gave them their bread. The river Nile was the basis of the prosperity of both.

Pharaoh was troubled for he must have had a vague sense that evil was indicated in both these directions. The magicians and wise men of Egypt were helpless. Their evil trade depended upon their being able to prognosticate **good** things for the kings that they served (see 1 Kings 22) and evidently both dreams portended some kind of **evil**. In this predicament the memory of the chief butler revived and, remembering Joseph, he narrated to Pharaoh the wonderfully accurate way in which he had interpreted the dreams of both himself and the chief baker no less than two years before. What a test those two years must have been! No wonder it says of him in Psalm 105: 19, "The word of the Lord tried him." The word of the Lord by his dreams had indicated his future glory, but how long he had to wait for it. A trying experience indeed!

May we not see here a forecast of the fact that though the sufferings of the Christ are to be followed by His glory in public display, there is a period to elapse between, in the which He is hidden from the eyes of men: a period which is characterized as, "the patience of the Christ" (2 Thess. 3: 5, New Trans.) Thus it was in a small way with Joseph. He remained hidden and forgotten in the prison, and the affairs of Egypt moved on without him.

Now however his hour had struck. Desperately anxious to find out the meaning of his peculiar

dreams, Pharaoh ordered Joseph to appear before him, and having prepared himself, Joseph did so. His answer to Pharaoh's enquiry reveals his simple confidence in God. He disclaimed any power or wisdom in himself but declared that God would give an answer of peace. It is a mark of a true servant of God to say, "It is not in me." The same spirit we see in Paul, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves but our sufficiency is of God" (2 Cor. 3: 5).

Pharaoh, in recounting his dreams to Joseph, added one detail omitted in the earlier account. Having eaten the seven fat cattle the seven lean ones were just as bad as they were before. It is easy to see how this feature suited the interpretation which Joseph proceeded to give. The two dreams were but one in their significance, just as Joseph's two dreams were one in their meaning.

Again the dreams were prophetic. God was revealing what He was about to bring upon the land of Egypt. First, seven years of very great abundance, but these to be followed by seven years of grievous dearth and famine, both depending upon the waters of the Nile. At the end of the seven years of famine all the fatness of the good years would have disappeared. In the figurative language of the dream the seven lean cattle would be just as they were at the beginning. Moreover, the dream was doubled to Pharaoh that he might realize that the thing was determined, beyond any hope of revocation, and God would shortly bring it to pass.

Joseph not only interpreted the dreams but he indicated to Pharaoh what should be done since these things were impending, and that what was needed was the man of wisdom who should be entrusted with the carrying of them out. Joseph was really speaking on God's behalf and he indicated that on the human side all that was needed in the presence of these acts of God, was A MAN.

As a ruler of men, Pharaoh had doubtless acquired a measure of discernment, and he at once saw that in Joseph the man for this emergency was found. It was indeed the Spirit of God who was speaking and acting through Joseph, though Pharaoh, being an idolator, only thought of "the spirit of the gods." Still he recognized at once that here was superhuman wisdom and executive power. In result he straightway appointed Joseph as administrator of all Egypt with authority only second to his own.

Once more, in verse 42, Joseph's hand appears. Its power and skill had been manifested in Potiphar's house, in the ordinary affairs of life, and then later, amid scenes of much humiliation in the prison. Now amid the splendour of the palace, the ring from the very hand of Pharaoh (doubtless carrying the great seal of the kingdom) was placed upon the hand of Joseph. Power of a practically autocratic nature was his. Step by step he had gone down into the valley of humiliation. Now at one mighty bound he had ascended into power and glory. The typical nature of all this is very evident. In Philippians 2 we have detailed the downward steps

of our blessed Lord, even to the death of the cross. But this is followed by one mighty uplifting to the glory, where to Him every knee will have to bow.

So, in verse 43 of our chapter, we see Joseph arrayed in fine linen, with a gold chain about his neck, in the second chariot of the kingdom, and "Bow the knee!" is the cry as he rides through the streets. Moreover a new name is given to him. It is said that Zaphnath-paaneah would have meaning whether it be read as Hebrew or as Egyptian. In the former it would mean "Revealer of secrets," in the latter, "Saviour of the world." We may happily accept both, and see in this double meaning a further type of the One whom we adore. In Him both **revelation** and **redemption** have reached their climax and full accomplishment, to our eternal blessing.

Then again, it was while Joseph was thus separated from his brethren and exalted among the Gentiles that a bride was given to him, and she was of Gentile stock. Two sons were born to him before the years of famine came, and while he was employed in collecting and laying up the produce of the seven years of plenty. The names of the sons are significant. Manasseh means "Forgetting," and Ephraim means "Fruitful." The name of the elder was negative in its bearing, for it commemorated the fact that he had been severed from all his old family associations, as well as the toil and sorrow of his early years. The name of the younger had a more positive significance, commemorating the fruitfulness that was produced from his former afflictions.

And so it has been with our Lord Jesus, only in a far larger and more striking way. His afflictions did not stop short of death itself, and out of His death springs eternal fruitfulness, as the Lord's own words, in John 12: 24, declare. Moreover that fruitfulness at the present time is being produced mainly among the Gentiles, while His links with Israel as a nation are broken. In our chapter we see a **typical** forecast of this great two-fold development. In Isaiah 49 we have it **prophetically** announced. It was declared that, even if Israel were not gathered, the Servant of the Lord would be glorious in the eyes of Jehovah, since the raising up of the tribes of Jacob was a light thing, and He was to be a light to the Gentiles and God's salvation to the ends of the earth. The **historical** fulfilment of both type and prophecy we find in the Acts of the Apostles.

The closing verses of chapter 41 record the complete fulfilment of Pharaoh's dream. The resultant famine was of exceptional severity, extending over the habitable earth. When the people cried to Pharaoh for relief, his reply was simple: "Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do." We are immediately reminded of the words spoken by the mother of our Lord on the occasion of His first miracle, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it" (John 2: 5). Does a conscience-stricken sinner cry out today for salvation? The answer in three words is, "Go unto Jesus." All God's grace and bounty flows through Him.

The scene changes as we begin to read chapter 42, and we are carried back to Canaan, to Jacob and to

Joseph's brethren. He was now highly exalted among the Gentiles and acting as saviour of the world, but his brethren needed his bounty as much as others. They had, however, by their own wicked actions, shattered all the links that once bound them to him, and those links could not be rightly restored save by severe dealings of a nature very painful, yet calculated to work in them a real repentance. The terrible famine, whatever else it might do, was designed to play a part in bringing to pass that desirable end.

All his brethren except Benjamin were dispatched by Jacob to buy corn in Egypt, and in result we begin to see the fulfilment of Joseph's dreams. Joseph was the governor, and the brethren bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. They did not know him though he recognized them, and started at once to deal with them in such a way as to test them and arouse their consciences. Accusing them of being spies, he drew forth from them the family details he wanted, including mention of Benjamin and of himself; for he was the one who "is not." How mistaken they were in this! They were presently to discover that Joseph "IS," and that their very lives are in his hand. The careless world to-day acts as though Christ is not. They have yet to learn that He is the Master of their lives, for He is the great "I AM."

The men, however, were speaking the truth as far as they knew it, and their confession gave a good opportunity to put them to the test. Benjamin was a son of Rachel, as Joseph himself was, and therefore specially beloved of Jacob. He

would demand that Benjamin should be taken from his father's side, and until he was produced, one of them should be held as a hostage. How would the brethren react to that?

The point of this struck home to the brethren. They had robbed their father of Joseph, and now he is to be deprived of the younger son on whom his affection was specially set. It stabbed their consciences into action, as we see in verses 21 and 22, and this was their first step in the right direction. Moreover it was the first indication to Joseph of a change taking place in them. He had spoken to them roughly, as indeed they deserved, and he understood their language, though they knew not the Egyptian dialect in which he spoke.

The effect upon Joseph of this first sign of repentance was very striking and beautiful. He turned from them and wept. They were evidently tears of thankfulness. Now we shall see, before we finish the story of Joseph, that no less than seven times is it recorded that he wept. Never once is it recorded that he wept for his own sorrows in the days of his affliction. Every occurrence was during the days of his

glory, and was an expression of his love and interest in others.

His tears were not of the merely sentimental kind, as verse 24 shows. He did not allow his deep feelings to hinder his further action, still of a severe nature, for he had Simeon bound as a prisoner before their eyes. The workings of conscience, which lead to repentance, had only just begun and that work needed to be greatly deepened. Thus it is that God deals with us. He permits His hand of chastisement to be heavy upon us until the work is carried to a completion. Then afterward the blessing is reached.

We think then that we may speak of Joseph as the man of **the mighty hand** and of **the tender heart**. The power of his hand is emphasized in the earlier part of his history: the tenderness of his heart in the later part. But in both he is a fitting type of the Lord Jesus, in whom power and grace are perfectly blended, though not expressed in just the same order. His grace came fully into manifestation at His first advent, and of that grace we have received abundantly. We must wait until His second advent for the full display of His power.

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**I**T is a well attested fact that times of affliction, persecution and trial, far from destroying the power and testimony of the Church of God, have in the end only strengthened and established it. This fact has been so patent in history that it has been signalized in the proverb, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Moreover it accords with that word, "The God of all grace . . . after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (1 Peter 5: 10).

We quote an example taken from a recent paper on China:— "Competent statisticians have stated that the direct results of missionary work during the first ten years after the Boxer rising far exceeded those of the entire preceding century. In face of wars, famines, hostile propaganda, and other obstacles, progress has been maintained."

We are living in difficult times and the hearts of men are failing them for fear. But let us not as Christians be fearful. The God of all grace will perfect and strengthen us by the very trials and difficulties we may have to face.