

# BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME N11

by Unknown

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*A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume N11, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.*

122 Chapters

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## Bible Treasury Volume N11

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## Brief Notes on 1 Peter 1:13-21

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It may sound a truism to say we are not left here to please ourselves. There are many influences around to which we are in danger of succumbing, but if they are not of God we are not to yield to them.

“Gird up the loins of your mind,” etc. (ver. 13). This is a privilege and a duty for every one of us, and we have to guard the outflow of our thoughts, feelings and judgments, especially in this day. One wrote, “things are not what they seem.” If the poet could say what is really true, how much rather we!

Is there no reality in this world? Yes, everyone of us is a reality of the grace of God, which has taken us up in sovereign mercy. We know it, as it is said in ver. 18, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things,” etc. There was a time when difficulties and fears possessed us, but they are gone. The same grace which gave us to rest in the Savior removed them. We are called to sobriety of thought, feelings and words. It is not always wise to let out our thoughts, or to go to a brother and give him “a piece of our mind,” as people say. It may be a great relief to one’s spirit, but may not be “the fruit of the Spirit.” “Speaking the truth in love” —our confession of Christ should be both in word and deed, ever in consistency with “love in the Spirit.” That does not mean we are not to be firm. We are supposed to have all our spiritual senses. A minister who went round the various congregations of London some years ago was struck by, and gave to the readers of a paper, a prayer of our dear departed brother of Blackheath, in which was the expression, “Lord, separate us from the evil that looks fair.” How often are we ensnared by fair appearances! ‘Oh!’ you say, ‘I did not know ought about it!’ Did you not inquire? We ought to know what we are doing. We ought not to be children, or as dumb driven cattle, but be heroes in the strife, and earnest contenders “for the faith once for all delivered to the saints.” The truth of God does not change. It is firm and abiding, but our knowledge and apprehension of the truth ought to grow. Some, who seem never to advance, perversely think the child knows as much as the man. That does not say much for the man at any rate. We are called to grow in His ways, and in the knowledge of Christ. A mother’s love may forget, but there is One Who can ne’er forget, who never fails, and Whose patience never fails. All this is for you and for me. Amid the things which are shaken and will be shaken yet more, we have nevertheless to do with the One Who abideth faithful, and is ever the same— “I change not.”

“Hope to the end,” etc.—was it not grace at the start? Is it not grace all the way? Yet that is not all, it will be greater still at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is not when we are caught up to meet the Lord that we have the completion of things. The apostle, when speaking of walk or service, goes on to “the day of Christ,” when everything will be manifested, and each have praise of God. At His coming He will not forego, or leave one of His own behind. It will not be a question of our faithfulness, but “they that are Christ’s at His coming.” Sovereign, unmerited grace. We deserved no place. And this is what the increasing knowledge of Himself gives us to realize. But the Savior has redeemed us, and will come for all His own. Yet the Lord does take knowledge of whatever is

done in His name, done because of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. A sister once said, she felt it the greatest honor to be allowed to clean the saints' shoes! All labor is dignified if done to Him. The best is but little. If we don't know as we ought we don't do as we ought, nor as we might. We cannot flatter ourselves that we have done excellently. Every worker should value a "curtain lecture" and consider how he might have done things better. Still, faith works by love.

We are called to obedience. It may be a difficult lesson for us to learn, but we are "children of obedience," and therefore called to walk as such always. It could not be said that Israel was obedient, yet the apostle, characterizing the believer, says, "children of obedience." This is a character which the law was powerless to create; but it is the cardinal duty of a Christian—the essence of Christianity—to obey. To this we are converted at the start of the Christian life, and never get to the end of our obligation. Nevertheless there are difficulties, and so the need of exhortation.

"And if ye call on Him as Father, Who, without respect of persons, judgeth according to each man's work." Relationship brings with it a corresponding responsibility. So here. All our work is subjected to the Father's scrutiny. Oh, how deep the interest the Father takes in His children! and because we are His children! Can we then be careless, or indifferent? Are we responding to this love and care, that we grieve Him not. We are "born again" into this new condition. We are set apart to the obedience of Christ—that is the sample. He had "commandment" to lay down His life. His was not only the obedience of One who so knew the Father's mind that He received no commandment. Have you and I thought that we had got beyond commandments? Are there no contrary motions within us? Have we no will of our own? I sometimes hear careless people say, "I am dead." Unguarded words soon come to show the man does not know what he says. We need to be careful how we take up the words of Scripture. You may say I am giving it a force you have not before noticed. Does Scripture say, I have died "in Christ"? Yet we ought to be careful how we say "with Christ." This truth cuts at the root of many things. You professed it in your baptism; look to God for grace to walk in the power of it. It is not What harm is there in anything? but Is it Christ? Are we here for Him? We are poor specimens I admit. Who can say, we have answered to what is expected of us? Are we living Christ, whatever may be the practice of others? May God grant that the character of Christ be formed in us, and seen in all our ways from day to day.

"But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" —in all kind of walk. When people go away for a holiday sometimes they think, "Well, if I was at home I should go to the meeting as usual, but no one knows me here." That's the world. It is not to put on a cravat on the Lord's day, and to put it off every other day. The Lord would have Himself always before us that we should be consistent every day and be holy. Does God qualify His holiness? He cannot give a less standard than Himself.

Do you call on the Father? It is not Jehovah. We do not know Him in that character of relationship, but as "Father," and the force of this is "If ye call on Him Who as Father judgeth." If a child comes to his father with his copy book, what a value it has in the eyes of the father! You have to do with your Father and He takes an interest in all you do. The Father takes appraisal of all our work. He judges the work of each one. The Father judging the work of His own child! Does not the child appreciate it? Not long ago, in a house I was visiting, a mother said to her little boy, 'Show Mr.—your book,' but the child ran away, and shut the door! I was not his father. But here is the Father,

“My Father and your Father.” In the back-woods of America, in the busy haunts of life, His eye is on us. Are we seeking to please Him whom we know as Father?

“Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” Why? For fear, after all, you may not be His? It does not say so. “Because ye know (ver. 18) ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things... from your vain manner of life.” People say, You cannot expect me to give up what I have been brought up in! But a better thing has been brought in now that we have Christ as our life, and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. So it is said, “that we should serve in newness of spirit.” Therefore we ought to walk in the way of the Father Who has made us His children.

Ver. 21. What did Christ not go through? But glory is in store for you and for me. Is not this meant to be a great cheer to us? We have to do with the invisible God— “as seeing Him that is invisible.” We are called to obey, to walk in the knowledge of how great is our redemption, and that we are sons of God; and I do desire we may have this sink into our hearts—that we are called ever to obey.

## Brief Notes on 2 Peter 1

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The First Epistle begins, "Peter an apostle"; here it is "Simon [or, Simeon; Peter.]" Is the Apostle taking a lowlier place here than in the former, by thus using the name that recalls all that he was as "Simon"? The subject of the epistles is different. Yet in both it is the government of God; but while everything is referred to God in the First Epistle, here it is to the Lord. So it is appropriate that "Simon" should be used here, as his personal name, because he has in view the life of our Lord when here on earth.

We have "obtained like precious faith" "through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." The words "our God" are associated with "Jesus Christ." It is not His personal righteousness, nor what we have in Romans 3:21, 22, which is "God's righteousness, by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe," but what is referred to about Abraham—His faithfulness to His own promises, as in Romans 15:8.

The force of the phrase "our God and Savior" is "our Savior who is our God." But for Him there could be no obtaining by us of "like precious faith." He is not merely the ground of it all, but its effectuating power—not alone laying a righteous basis, but bringing it all about. There is one Person before the mind, and through Him the word is confirmed to us, and made good in our souls. It is He who is faithful to God and to the word promised to Abraham.

How fervent Peter is! Paul is content with grace and peace, "but Peter desires these multiplied." If difficulties are multiplied as in ch. 2, so too is grace for the meeting of them.

"Through the knowledge [lit., full knowledge] of God" not a smattering. We ought to be growing in it. We know God and are known of Him. But of the Son it is said, "No one knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." The Father reveals the Son. People talk of God's love, but they don't know it till they see it in the cross. You must "see and believe"; believe God's love, and know Christ's work.

The perfectness of Christ's work gives us to rejoice in God's nature. It is not the thought of the Father—that is relationship: but through the perfect work of Christ we have God's nature.

The Old Testament saints knew God; but now we have the work as well as the Person, and we cannot separate the two. We glory, or boast, wonderful to say, in God (not here the Father), in the very One of whose glory we had come short. Yet it almost makes one blush to read the expressions in the Psalms of exultant joy in God, but that joy was not stable. And more, it is the experience of the remnant in a future day. No one can know God now except by the Son.

The "life" in ver. 3 is the new life, that which is "really life," as Paul calls it in his letter to Timothy.

"Godliness" is a word often misapplied. It is not a person's mere kind or unworldly life, but do they value Christ? or are they going on with that which dishonors Him? If the latter, they are not "godly."

“Virtue” here means courage. “Glory” is presented as an object, and courage is necessary to pursue it. We are “called by His own glory and excellency.” When you speak of valor, or courage, you apply it to man, as in ver. 5, but you cannot apply it to God. “Excellency” is the better word all round. If a man was cowardly there was no excellency in him in the eyes of the Greeks.

If these things come by the growing knowledge of God, how can we get that knowledge? By feeding on Him, the Living Bread come down from heaven. We got life by having eaten of it, and we must sustain that life by constant feeding on it.

Ver. 4. We are sometimes apt to forget these “exceeding great and precious promises.” What are they? If you have ■5,000, you don't want to know if it is all in separate pounds or bank notes. “All the promises of God in Him are yea and in Him amen,” and Christ is ours.

The promises belonged to Israel, not to Gentiles. As sinners we do not rest on promises—there are none for us; we rest on the performance as in Romans 4:24, 25. Abraham had a promise and believed it, and this belief was reckoned unto him for righteousness; we believe what God has done—raised Him from the dead who had been delivered up for our offenses.

Ver. 5. Diligence is a point much pressed by Peter. How can you expect to grow, who only read the Bible as a duty, and never expect to get anything from it? The world has got its lures, but “if any will be a friend of the world he is the enemy of God.” The great preventative is our growing in grace and knowledge. “We have escaped” the corruption.

My experience is that if you try to get out of a trouble the Lord sends you, He will send it after you.

We deceive ourselves if we think because we are in a right path we shall have a smooth one.

We shall have all against us. Go to the church of Rome, surrender your conscience to the Pope. Then how happy! No exercise before God! no progress for the soul! but an awful succumbing to the power of evil, and sailing with the stream, with no power to overcome, like a dead fish! But what of the live fish? Look at the salmon leaps! Baffled again and again they try till they overcome every obstacle. What a lesson for us!

He who wrote this was a courageous man naturally, but how sadly he broke down! A man who is naturally courageous, when he comes to know himself is very timid, because he knows it must be God's strength and not his own. “Add in your faith,” etc. It is not something outside you. It is the natural outcome of what you lay hold of. You lay hold on faith, there is confidence in God, and that involves courage. “In your faith, add (or supply) courage; and in courage, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness, and in godliness, brotherly kindness; and” (for we must not stop at brotherly kindness) “in brotherly kindness, love.” For “love” is of God, and goes far beyond love of the brethren, which might even hinder us from carrying out His will if they were the end before our eyes rather than Himself who is supreme. Here then we have divine addition, and how blessed it is! Let us then “give all diligence” to these additions.

## Address on John 13-14

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

Not "supper being ended," but "supper being come," or "during supper" (Ver. 2). The thought of betraying the Lord had already been instilled into Judas' heart, but Satan had not yet taken possession of him. What a contrast between Peter's love at the beginning, and his love at the end of this chapter! Poor, impetuous Peter!

What a break-down must ensue when pressure is brought to bear, if we are trusting to our own love! But there was all the difference between Peter and Judas. The latter was an apostle and a disciple, but he was not born again. Peter, on the contrary, was truly born of God, besides being an apostle; and as he had, so have we, a nature with the character of righteousness and true holiness.

What a wonderful display of grace we get in vers. 3, 4. This action of the Lord was typical; they did not understand it then, but He intimated they would know hereafter, not when they got to heaven, but when the Spirit of truth came who should guide into all the truth. To most of us it brings Philippians 2 to mind. For the Lord Jesus never gave up His Godhead, but He did lay aside His glory He unrobed Himself. Is it not the Servant we see here? And does not love delight to serve? It does, and He makes it manifest.

Vers. 5-8: The Lord was here, and in His marvelous grace had part with the disciples; but now He was going to be the absent one, and He wanted them to have part with Him; and (as often with us also) Peter's mistakes are used to bring out truth. Vers. 9: I understand three words are translated "washing"; one having reference to inanimate things, nets, robes, etc.; another, to bathing of the whole person; and the third, to washing a part of the body, such as the hands or the feet. The first word here is "bathed." This is the action of the word by the Spirit of God in cleansing us from sin's defilement. "Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." This is not expiation, which is by blood, but purification; and, thank God, we are clean, every whit, through the operation of His precious word when we were born again. But walking through this world our feet are exposed to defilement. Our blessed Lord, on the contrary, was "the undefiled One in the way." Also, we are often defiled in our walk, and we need the service of that blessed One, "Who loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word; and that He might present it to Himself a glorious church without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." There we have His love, past, present, and future. Meanwhile, He desires that we have part with Him, and this is communion, to be enjoyed day by day. What interrupts communion is defilement contracted down here. The Lord's service as Priest is to hinder our sinning; but His advocacy is for us should we have sinned. We need Him as both, and we need to have our feet

cleansed constantly. Only One can do it, and He does it in His own wonderful love.

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

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

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

Verses 19, 20: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." We should not have had this if the Holy Ghost was not here. We are in that blessed One up there: "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." Before the world it is "I in you"; and that is the secret of our being able to say in any little way, "for me to live is Christ."

## Advertising

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Vol. XI. (1916, 19 x7), Cloth, 6/6 „ (7/- „ „ )

## The Advocacy of Christ (Duplicate)—1

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### Lecture on 1 John 1, 2

The distinctive character and object of Christ's priesthood has been already set out. In scripture it stands in relation exclusively to those who by the work of Christ are brought to God. It is therefore in no way an association of the Lord with the world or those of it. Its aspect is not to the wants of the sinner as such, but rather to those of the sanctified, whom He is not ashamed to call His brethren. For God's design by it is not to give a standing, but to sustain and succor those whom grace has already brought nigh to Him by the blood of Jesus. This makes the matter sufficiently plain for the priesthood of Christ. Grace would thereby maintain a holy people according to that nearness which He has already given them; and hence therefore in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as we saw, it is assumed that they have free access to God, a privilege never taken away from the saints.

We are brought to God by Him Who "suffered once for sins," by Christ's one offering. This nearness the Christian never loses. We may fail and act with grievous inconsistency; and it is most sorrowful when we do. But for the believer access to God (being founded, not on legal conditions, but on Christ's blood) remains, and this too of a kind quite absolute, because its measure is the value which God puts upon the work of His own Son; and it is impossible that God could slight that sacrifice. In virtue of it then He acts in our favor, according not merely to our thoughts but to His estimate of what the Lord Jesus has done for us in His sight. Hence, we who believe being thus brought nigh, its efficacy abides unchanged ever-more, as scripture carefully and clearly insists.

It is possible indeed, as we are warned, that some who have confessed the Lord, and been sanctified too by His blood, might give Him up (Hebrews 10). Such is the solemn admonition to those who from among Hebrews had been baptized; and a like danger of course applies to the Gentiles also, as we hear in 1 Cor. 10. Evidently, however, not failure is here in question, but abandoning Christ. It is apostasy, though no doubt the Holy Spirit speaks to check the incipient tendency to turn aside, pointing out the awful result. The renewed man heeds the word of God; whereas the warning is lost on the unconverted man, perhaps only attracted by the novel and intrinsic beauty of the gospel as an intellectual scheme; and so much the more in those days when it was first heard by the Jews so long inured to Rabbinical traditions—dry as their parchment rolls, as Gentiles were to the clashing vanities of Greek philosophy.

We can readily understand what refreshing power was in the facts of the Son of God come in flesh, His life, His death, His resurrection and His ascension—facts as wondrous as the heavenly principles of Christianity, which could not but exercise an immense charm on candid minds as minds. But this of itself never lasts; neither, if alone, does affection touched by the sound of God's mercy, unless it lead to repentance. Nothing abides short of a new nature, when the conscience is reached by God's Holy Spirit, Who brings in a man before God as nothing but a sinner, to find his one resource, remedy, and deliverance in the Lord Jesus. Where this is laid hold of by faith, nearness to God is given by the blood of Christ. And the priesthood of the Lord Jesus is that office

of divine grace which is carried on by the Lord risen, living, and interceding for us at the right hand of God; whereby His word is applied to keep us up, and to lead us on, in the face of all trial, difficulty, opposition, and suffering, as well as of our own weakness. This is contemplated and provided for by God in giving us such a Priest as His Son in His presence on high, so that we may see it to be sustaining and seasonable mercy. It is that which perfectly meets and keeps, but keeps us a holy people in the midst of dangers as great as our weakness.

Again, we must never confound infirmities with sins, or call sins infirmities. The essence of sin is self-will, not necessarily transgression of law. Whether there be known law or not, self-will is sin; it is acting without a divine motive; if not against the authority or will of God, it is independence of Him and His word as that which prompts the action. When we do not even seek Him, are we not acting without Him and pleasing ourselves? All this is sin, it matters not how fair our ways may seem in the eyes of men. This is not what the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ was meant to meet, but the need of those who suffer in striving against sin.

When we suffer for His name or for righteousness, when we are tried just because we seek to follow the Lord, we do need His sympathy and comfort. We shrink from trial and cannot but suffer from it, sometimes with mixed feelings. Our blessed Lord ever felt it holily and perfectly. Not an atom of sin was in His sorrow and suffering, and all His path was full of it; for He was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. So with Christians in their measure. It is quite right that we feel the contrariety of things here to God. We wrong Him and yield to the enemy whenever we seem to make up our minds to the awful state that surrounds us now, as if it were any adequate reflection of God, or of His moral government. For, though He does govern in secret providence, and this most wisely and righteously too, carrying on His will in the face of the subtlest foes and of apparently insuperable difficulties, and in the conflict of circumstances, yet is the actual state of the world as far as can be from a due manifestation of God's government. In the midst of such a condition His own must suffer; for there is our weakness, and a hostile world, and a malignant foe, the accuser of the brethren and the deceiver of the whole world. Here it is that the priesthood of the Lord Jesus applies to us—as a people holy, but feeble and persecuted—who feel what is around, and are tried by it, and suffer through it; but the priesthood of Him, Who is all-competent, is established on high to carry us through in spite of all.

But now we have to look at another part of the subject. May we not sin, although we are a holy people? And when “we” is used, the family of God is meant—none the less or more; that is, all saints are those who now bear the name of the Lord Jesus, and love Him in incorruption; all that call out of a pure heart. And may not such fail? May they not slip through unwatchfulness in such a way as to grieve the Holy Spirit of God? Most assuredly. “In many things we all stumble.” This is sin. Call it not infirmity but rather sin. Do not use “failure” in such a way as to imply something between infirmity and sin for what is really sinful. Call things by their true names. Grace emboldens us to be thoroughly truthful and upright, to be honest with God and man, and above all to hold the right and title of God against that nature which (whilst ourselves are held for dead to it), not being treated as utterly evil, has been allowed to work out to God's dishonor.

Should one sin, what is the resource according to scripture? The advocacy of Christ. Therein is just the importance of these two dealings of divine mercy and living grace in our Lord Jesus, now at the right hand of God; for they belong to Him there, and they are both viewed as reaching us

here. But they are not the same office; and to confound them is to lose the characteristic power of each of them; and as is always the case when you muddle together truths which are distinct, both are enfeebled if not lost. You may have perhaps a general vague sense of them both, but you have not the precision and full comfort of either. Yet the Lord freely gives us both, as we need both.

In John 2 we find to what the advocacy of the Lord applies, and what it assumes. We are not merely brought into the presence of God, but have communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. We have a new life or divine nature, and along with the possession of this previously unknown spiritual being, given us by divine love in and through the Lord Jesus, there is the enjoyed fellowship with the Father and the Son. Evidently, when we speak of communion, we have before us that which is very delicate and sensitive exceedingly. For we have only to reflect a moment, and we must see that God the Father could have no communion with sin, or with us in it.

We who understand the gospel know that our being the most wretched of sinners did not hinder God from applying the blood of Christ in all its efficacious power to us. It was for such that His Son shed His blood; nor would there have been sufficient ground for it except for such. The sin-offering of the Lord Jesus supposes our utter vileness and distance from God. But now we are through that one offering not only sanctified but perfected forever. This has been done by His death; and once done, the work forever stands. But it is quite another thing when you speak of communion in the practical sense. Confound these, and you destroy either confidence as to your soul, or enjoyment of God, if not both.

What then is the basis of our communion? It is Christ; but this being so, whatever is not of Him, whatever is of self, whatever is of sin, interrupts the enjoyment of communion. And what restores it when broken? The advocacy of Christ. It is not therefore, observe, the ministration of that which strengthens, consoles, or gives courage to a holy people who are brought into absolute nearness to God, while walking in a world where all is counter to Him and to them, because they are His; for it is not yet in fact under His sway, but rather under that of His enemy. Here it is a question of the practical state of our souls. And this is just as true in its place, and of the greatest possible moment for the saint. For you will find that the persons who merely dwell on such truth as is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, or rather on that part of it which discusses the effect of atonement (as the early part of Romans does our justification), and make this, momentous as it is, to be the sum and substance of Christianity, are apt to be indeed a cold set of people, in danger of becoming formal and dry doctrinally, as well as deficient in sensitiveness of heart and conscience for the glory of God.

The work of Christ is not all. When we rest on it, the priesthood of the Lord Jesus applies to our need day by day. If I am brought into holy nearness with God, Christ's ministration of grace does not fail to act, so as to conciliate my practical condition with my standing by grace in Christ before God, to maintain me here according to such a title of holy access to Him there. But may I not sink to, or even allow, what is positively evil—be betrayed into bad feelings, bad thoughts, bad words, bad ways? It is too true. And what then? Am I to despair because I have sinned after baptism, as a child and saint of God delivered from the guilt and power of sin? Am I to quiet my conscience with the plea that I must sin, as being still in the body and the world? Neither the one nor the other would be according to God.

This let me add, dear brethren: knowledge in itself does not preserve, but rather, when alone, it endangers; and the Christian who is most liable yea sure to slip, is he who knows most, but least seeks to walk in dependence on God. No position is more critical. Indeed we may say he who ceases to walk dependently is morally ruined already. What worse therefore than when a vast deal of truth is taken in without the continued exercise of conscience before God? We need that self-judgment continually go on, and this too in the sense of weakness and waiting on God. For as the essence of sin is the desire to be independent, so also that on which godliness turns, and of which it practically consists, is the spirit of constant reference and subjection to God in things small or great. Without waiting on Him, acceptable obedience cannot be; and when that is found, obedience surely follows; and obedience is of the very essence of the walk to which we are called and sanctified. So the apostle Peter says, "Elect through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." That is, we are the chosen of the Father as well as sanctified by the Spirit for the purpose of obeying as Christ obeyed. We have all the comfort of His blood-sprinkling and washing us clean from every spot; and we are sanctified to obey, not like Israel under law, but sons under grace as He obeyed.

W. K.

(To be continued)

## The Advocacy of Christ (Duplicate)—2

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When the soul enters into this, tenderness of conscience will be cherished, distrust of self, and watchfulness before God, with a spirit of prayer, which is the simple expression of our dependence on God. But one may be easily unwatchful; then open sin ensues ere long. Therefore says John the apostle, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." This is the word of God to the Christian practically. I speak of His word now, of course, as the ordinary rule of our daily ways. His servant writes, "that ye sin not."

But then, if all are warned against sin, the Spirit of God fully provides for any one that may stray; not as if evil were coolly looked for, but with guarded terms and careful regard to holiness; "And if any man sin." He does not say, "If we sin." How could he say of the family, "If we sin"? Had it been said, "And if we sin," it would be as good as allowing the thought that all must sin. Never does the Spirit of God say any-thing of the sort. And if any man—any one— "sin," it is a lamentable alternative to the Spirit of God; but still such a fact may be. It is, alas! in the believer's history what one has to face and feel and humble one's self before God for. "If any man sin, we have an advocate." He does not merely say "he," but "we." How perfect is His word, even in that which to a Grecian would be sure to sound an irregular or peculiar phrase! Can one doubt that they of old criticized John's words, or Paul's, just as much as or more than anything that we poor creatures might write now? This clause would have sounded harsh enough to Attic ears. Yet the men who flatter themselves that they understand writing so well, know but little about the divine accuracy of scripture. Let us delight in the perfection of that sentence, and maintain against all comers the accuracy of what the Spirit of God has written there. Not all the world could improve on it; and the very singularity too, which embarrasses them—which they count so strange in the structure of it—seems to be one proof of its perfectness.

An ordinary man of letters, if writing the sentence, might have said, "If any man sin, he has an advocate with the Father;" or if he had intended "we have," he would have changed it to "If we sin." But no; the Spirit of God has exactly given the right thing; because by saying "If any one sin," He makes it a sorrowful individual case. He keeps up the sense that it ought never to be. It is a contingency that may be, and it is always to be regarded as a most painful humiliation for our own souls, the sense of which we ought to maintain undimmed in no way making light of sin, or treating it as if it were a common thing that we must all do sometimes. We may fall, doubtless; and we should never lose sight of the danger. On the other hand, we have an Advocate with the Father. There He is; and we have Him as Advocate: that is, Christ belongs thus to every Christian. He acts thus in the presence of God. It is the fullness of love which has given Him there to meet this great and distressing need of the soul. But still we have, not merely he has. If it had been said, "he has," this might have given the idea that it was his need that created the office, so to speak, or that it was this, which set Christ to work as an advocate. No; He is always there, not simply as Priest with God, but as Advocate with the Father. "And if any man sin, we have an advocate." He is the common portion of all in the blessed fullness of the grace that takes up the deepest want of any created by sin. And this is exactly what is expressed best by the language of the Holy Ghost in the

sentence— “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.”

Now observe how he goes back to the language of grace. He introduced the coming down of divine love in the person of the Lord Jesus, the Eternal Life which was with the Father before the world was, to spend Himself upon us, to give us what He alone possessed, what was peculiar to Him; for no man, nor angel, had it. Neither Adam, fresh created, nor the archangel, had that eternal life: only the Son of God. “In him was life,” and “he that hath the Son hath life.” Communion with the Father and with the Son was the consequence. “And these things write we unto you, that your joy might be full.” It is not merely a question of peace with God, nor anything which only tends to that end, as we have said, but the great and blessed truth of a communion which flows out of having Christ the Son of God, and eternal life in Him.

Thus, whatever in our conduct may be inconsistent with the action of divine life, Christ, as Advocate, takes up. Nor is the result uncertain. The effect is revealed to us. So absolute is the grace that the apostle says, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.” If any uninspired Christian had written such a sentence as this, can one hesitate to affirm, that men would have called it downright antinomianism? I am persuaded that the only thing which shields many a word of the apostles from such a calumny is because most are as yet unprepared openly to speak ill of the Bible. There are men that so much the more do so, and not a few, and they are growing; and in this country, as in others, they lose shame and become bolder. In some neighboring lands, Romanist and Protestant alike, they are practiced in modern forms of the skepticism once rampant here, but abashed till of late; alas! now it spreads, the reaction from ritualism—this the religious, that the profane, enemy of the gospel; and you must be prepared for it and far greater abominations than these.

Many godly people then, but, if godly, not established in grace, are just such as find most difficulty in the fullness of God's provision. Incredulous minds are not troubled in general by such things, being rather glad to fasten on any inspired words which might seem to give them a loophole and excuse for sin; for so it is that they wretchedly pervert the scriptures to their own destruction. I speak now of such as love the Lord, but have never been brought to naught in their own eyes, nor to rest only in the grace of God; and such are apt to be particularly tried by what exceeds their measure.

For instance, take such a word as this, “Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace.” What can they make of it? For their part they had been diligently trained to think, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or any others, that, saved by grace, they were now put under that very law as a rule to live by. This the apostle declares they are not under; yea more, because they are not under law but under grace, that sin shall not have dominion over them. As it never occurs to them to suspect the prevalent tradition, they are thereby incapable of understanding this scripture. So, lack of appreciating the fullness of redemption hinders souls from attaching any intelligible idea to that great privilege of the Christian— “no more conscience of sins” (Hebrews 10:2).

It is the same here again: “If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father.” Wondrous way of God, in such a connection to tell us that we have Christ in all righteousness, making good our cause with the Father! There is precious assurance of communion in John 14; 15 to such as walk in obedience; but here it is, “If any man sin,-not if any man adhere to the good and holy and

acceptable will of God. "If any man sin," says the apostle; not even "If he be made sensible of his sins;" nor yet, "If he spread it out, and humble himself for his sins." It cannot be that the holy and true God could lessen one's moral horror of evil: how comes it then that He should set forth our having an Advocate with the Father, and such an Advocate— "Jesus Christ the righteous"? There is a confessor of Christ who, we will suppose, has fallen into some deed of unrighteousness: what then does he need? "Jesus Christ the righteous;" not the miserable idea of substituting His perfect ways for his own evil ones.

Most precious truth in its own place is the scriptural doctrine of Christ's substitution, the true Azazel, on the cross. Viewed as a sinful man, I have my substitute in Him there, suffering for my sins, not sympathy then. Even He must suffer for them to the uttermost—Just for unjust. God forbid that any one should look for sympathy in his sins! There we have the Substitute. And there, in my sorrow and trial and suffering, I have that blessed Priest Who Himself suffered, and is "able to succor them that are tempted." But now, after God's grace to me, is found a sad practical contradiction to my place as His child and saint. Here is that with which God can have no fellowship—sin. I have sinned, and in the most bitter sense too, sinning against His grace, because I failed to walk watchfully and humbly in prayer and self-judgment, and so fell to the Lord's dishonor. "If any man sin"-not "he must begin again;" nor "he has lost his blessing;" nor "let him apply afresh to the Savior for life eternal." Nothing of the sort: "we have an advocate with the Father."

Thus, it is not the poor thought of comforting us because He was righteous, wherein we were all wrong. This is not God's way; but "we have an advocate with the Father." It ought to be plain that the Puritan notion of substituting His rights for each wrong of ours would act as a continual destruction for the conscience. No; "we have an advocate with the Father." We have One that takes up all our business, One that acts for us where we could not, One that enters thoroughly into the case with the Father. Men know what it is to have in court a man of business worthy of all confidence in what they might compromise through many causes, and what would certainly be for them a source of the greatest possible perplexity. Here you, a Christian, are in exceeding trouble through your own fault; and you hate yourself the more, because you know His love against Whom you have sinned. Yet oh, the comfort of grace! He tells you of One in Whom you have the fullest trust, Who, knowing all your history, state, and heart, is entirely identified with you, and gives what is more—the perfect certainty that, as He is all-prevailing and righteously so before God, so surely He will extricate you to God's praise, if to your humiliation. This, and no less, is what our Advocate is; and this He is too, not "with us," though He does wash us every whit clean, but "with the Father."

It is not said "with God" in this case, as if it were a question simply of our justification. But is all hope of communion gone after such failure? after having so disgraced His name and our own confession of it? No; "we have an advocate with the Father." It is for the restoration of the communion that had been interrupted. For though the sin of the believer in his walk may not destroy his nearness to God (his access to God being made good by the sacrifice of Christ on which he rests), it does interrupt the enjoyment of communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and it is the very Son Himself who does set Himself as Advocate to enter into this otherwise hopeless necessity of the soul. Nothing shall separate from His love.

“We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” How blessed! His advocacy is as perfect to restore the saint's broken communion, as His blood to cleanse the once guilty sinner. But it is not simply the fact that He is my righteousness, which remains most true, unimpaired, and unimpeachable. The evil is dealt with, not spared. Not only does the Father feel that His child has so sinned, though there was grace to have kept right through, but I judge myself. And, in point of fact, this is the way in which the advocacy of Christ works. He is an Advocate with the Father; but then He deals with my soul also. It is not merely an exercise of what He is for me, though this is quite true and important, nor can one be too firm in holding fast one's standing. This abides according to its own perfection through Christ's work; but then it is not His advocacy. So here we have the standing supposed in “Jesus Christ the righteous,” in whom, as Paul tells us, we are made God's righteousness. Even as advocate He probes the wound, and in very love to my soul does what makes me feel, more truly and hence acutely, my failure; for He heals me by the Spirit as well as manages my cause with the Father. He is Patron or Advocate no less than the Propitiation for my sins, and this too abides intact. The work is done by which the sins of the believer are effaced. But such riches of grace only, cause the soul, where there is living faith, and so divine life, to feel the more anguish and shame for the sin against God; not because one dreads His judgment of ourselves, but just because we know His love so true and faithful, spite of unfaithfulness.

It remains that I should seek to show a little how truth stands in the application of Christ's advocacy of the saint. We have seen the main fact, the doctrine, and its relation to the truth of Christ our righteousness and of the propitiation, into which, of course, we need not enter now. It is a subject which is more or less familiar to all here. Let us then endeavor to adhere to the special truth that claims a somewhat fuller illustration just now, that is, Christ's advocacy; and now not only the truth in itself, but in its application to the soul. This too we find in the writings of the same apostle John. It is not doubted that we find the principle elsewhere, but we are indebted to the apostle John for its brightest presentation. Just as Paul lets us best see the priest, and in this connection with our being a sanctified, purged, and perfected people by virtue of the blood of Christ, so here we have the advocacy of the Lord Jesus for those who, having eternal life, are brought into communion with the Father and His Son.

Here let me direct your attention more particularly to the Gospel of John, chap. 13, where it is said of the Lord Jesus, when He was about to depart out of this world unto the Father, that “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” What blessed comfort for the needy! He loved them unto the end. Even when He goes out of the world, it is only to work for His own in another way. On the one hand we have the enemy in all the malice of his activity against the Lord Jesus. He had put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him. On the other hand, we have the Son of God in all the fullness of divine love to His own, spite of defiling influences, “Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,” etc. Thus it is not only that He goes back to God in all the purity in which He came from Him as God, but also with the glory which the Father had conferred upon Him.

“Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.” He is the servant still. It is the task divine love must take up for such a world as this. Man loves to figure and be somebody for a little while; God humbles Himself, and becomes a

man, yea, a bondman, in order to deliver from self and Satan, loving and serving to the end, not merely as now because of wretchedness and sin. It could not be otherwise. It is exactly what Jesus did, and does, and will do. Love serves, and seeks the good of others. We see it not only in the Son, but in the Father Himself also, though in another way. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

Such is love, but it was displayed above all in the Son. Jesus would intimate what would occupy His heart about us when He should be on high; especially as it would prove no small difficulty for the Jewish mind or any other. Further, it was meant to form the heart and ways of the saints in their mutual relations. He shows them in this significant act that He was still to be their Servant in divine love. His cross would in no way exhaust the ever-flowing and fresh spring, for it was not a question of expiation only; but, if He was going up into glory, He would work so that they might have part with Him, even while they were upon earth, being destined to share that glory into which He was gone, and would come thence for them. Therefore "he took a towel and girded himself, and after that poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet."

Carefully remember that all through the context it is the washing of water by the word, and not by blood. In no case, so far as this scene typifies, have we propitiation here. The doctrine of the chapter is exclusively founded on cleansing by water. No doubt the very same Son of God shed His blood for His own; but this was, observe, to wash us from our sins and expiate guilt before God. Here it is the cleansing by water of these when reconciled to God, meeting the failures and sins of saints in their daily walk. "If any man sin;" but it is as saints that the Lord here regards them as His own; not those that grace seeks and brings to Christ out of the ranks of a rebellious world, but such as were already His own, and loved accordingly. And this was the way in which He would prove His love: He would cleanse them in divine grace when He went up on high. He showed them here what He would do there. He washes the feet of those already bathed—bathed in water, and washed with water. It is the word used at first, then throughout the believer's career. The bathing that He supposes as a ground for washing their feet is water, not blood, although there was blood at first too and of everlasting efficacy. But here water only is meant.

For remember "This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." This is the more important to recall, because it is one of the truths that has well-nigh dropped out of the professing church of God. Whoever met a man yet in the ordinary profession of Christianity that understood well the washing of water by the word? But few indeed have any just idea of it whatever. Some may count this plain speaking; but is there not a cause? At any rate it is quite evident that the truth intended is of no less value for saints. It is the provision of grace against what defiles on our walk. One is far from meaning that the godly persons included in the previous statement have not had some real effect of the truth itself; for we may be quite sure grace has secured that. But I am now speaking of intelligence in the word which rightly implies it, and so avoids utter misconception of a really important part of divine truth. Refer it to baptism, and you have absurdity as well as false doctrine; use it as the symbol of new birth, and of the subsequent cleansing by the word for the saints when defiled and you have the truth most needed.

[W. K.]

(Continued. from page 349)

(To be continued)

## The Advocacy of Christ (Duplicate)—3

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For that which the Lord then and there re-presented is exactly what the Holy Ghost is carrying on here below in answer to Christ's advocacy on high. For evidently another truth is intimately connected with it, the action of the Holy Ghost now sent down from heaven, and this, we know, grounded upon Christ's ascension. For having accomplished redemption, He went on high, and is glorified at God's right hand, whence He sent down the Holy Ghost here, Who, in answer to His advocacy with the Father, works in us by the word. Hence therefore is readily seen how it applies to the soul. "If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father." Carrying out the purposes of that advocacy, as far as concerns the saints in their need, the Spirit of God brings home the word in power to the conscience and in every detail of our practice day by day.

Let us just refer to a clear instance in another Gospel, which may show that the principles run through scripture. We have seen that the doctrine and the application are particularly found in John, as bound up with divine life and communion. But now take an instance from the great moralist among the four Evangelists, who was inspired to give us his account how Peter fell into a public and scandalous offense, calculated to shake the confidence of all weak believers. For, as he was a weighty man, and a well-known leader, the public fall of such a one denying his own Master in the hour of His greatest need, and this with oaths so solemnly and repeatedly and openly as in Peter's case, could not but necessarily be a tremendous shock to the infant company of the disciples who were then gathering to the name of the Lord Jesus. This being so flagrant a case, and recorded for our admonition, the Spirit of God shows us how it was dealt with by the Lord. First, he had been solemnly warned. When boasting of his love, he was told of the fall that was at hand—told of it in the presence of his fellows undisguisedly, but also with the most tender desire, if peradventure he might only be wise enough to profit by it. Alas! it is part of the state of him who is about to fall that he does not realize his danger.

Here it was Peter's own Master Who told him what impended; and he had confessed before that Jesus was a divine person, for he had owned Him to be the Son of the living God. Nevertheless, our ears are but heavy when we like not to hear, and we do not understand what we do not at the present time feel to be our own need. Unpalatable truths pass over us: what is then said is "a parable," as we find with the disciples on a previous occasion. Peter therefore had no deep impression left on his soul, no vivid sense of need produced. Indeed such a fall, an aggravated outward evil, is always the effect of inward or secret failure before God. It neither comes alone nor all at once. Before this, Peter's case, though a man singularly fervent and of earnest purpose, had not wanted certain traces of unjudged forwardness and self-confidence. And this it was that furnished the occasion; for the apostle was so sure of himself and of his own courage that, if every-body else denied the Master, it was impossible to his own mind that Peter could. Yet this was the man that denied the Christ of God through fear of a mere servant-girl. So it is: if unbelieving and unwatchful, we fall into the very thing in which we are proudest, and in the way that is most humbling to us.

But look at the merciful ways of the Lord Jesus: for this it is of all things we want most to see not Peter's fall, but Christ's fullness of grace. Before it He had said (Luke 22:31), "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Satan demanded to have the disciples to sift them in general as wheat; and the Lord said to Simon individually, "But I (emphatically) have prayed for thee," not merely "for you." Ah! did not Peter need it? How sweet soon would be the proof of such interest and deep concern on the Lord's part about himself under such circumstances, as if there had not been another to care for, and all His love were concentrated on the one on the point of such grievous dishonor of His name. "I have entreated for thee, that thy faith fail not quite. And thou, when thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren." The word rendered "converted" means the turning to God, whether it be conversion originally, or the turning back when one has departed from Him. The latter is of course what is meant here. It is what we commonly call "restoration" of soul rather than what people in general understand by "conversion." The word is suitable to either. "Thou, when once thou hast turned again, strengthen thy brethren."

But the point I would now press and clear is the grace of the Lord that could so provide for a wanderer, and that would give the certainty of it to the soul in such an hour of distress and humiliation. That flesh and hypocrisy might take advantage is true; but such grace is needed and shown. How comforting is the truth of God! Observe that this rich grace does not appear in answer to a penitent cry. Not for a moment does one doubt that the Lord hears and answers such; but there was in the case before us a reason for speaking otherwise, and, to my mind, of no small importance. If one had only the consolation of the word of the Lord, and of His appearing on our behalf when we begin to repent of any sins and judge ourselves before God, one might perhaps think it was one's own repentance, or prayers, that drew out His grace and awakened His care. And such is the thought of many a soul around us. It is exactly where people ordinarily find themselves in Christendom. That is, they make out that a man's conversion, as well as his restoration, is in answer to his prayer, a substitution throughout of human merit for grace. Where is Christ in such a scheme? It is semi-Pelagianism.

It is not so scripture speaks. There God ever takes the first place. It was God that began the good work when the soul sought Him not; as here it is the Lord evidently that entreated even before Peter fell, not the failing man after it, though of course he did pray and weep bitterly. But the stress is thrown on the prayer of Christ, not of Peter, however men may reason. "If any one sin," we have—not shall have when he repents— "If any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father." It is the settled possession that Christians always have. Sin is inexcusable always in a saint; but if one should be guilty, "we have an advocate with the Father." His advocacy brings us to repentance. It is not our repentance that makes Him our advocate—but His grace which puts all in effectual activity.

Have you seized the truth? Thus, as grace it is at the beginning, so is it throughout every step of the way. The spring is mercy all through. Far I am from implying there is no righteousness; for indeed without it not anything else were good. Without the full maintenance of God's character and ways, all must be wrong; but this we have in Christ Himself, Who is our life, "Jesus Christ the righteous." And besides, as we know, the fullest account has been taken of all that we were. "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." It may not be in precisely the same way as for the believer; but still He died for all. The blood is on the

mercy-seat, and this is not limited to the people of God merely, but embraces the largest outlook over God's creation, so that the gospel can go out righteously in His grace to all, commanding "all everywhere to repent" no doubt, but appealing in love, persuading and warning souls far and wide that they may be saved.

It appears to me then, that we have the subject distinct thus far in God's word. We are born of water and of the Spirit. It is that action of the Holy Ghost by the word of God, carrying out the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which first of all the soul is set apart to God. Hence we read that He saved us "by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." There we find what is clearly from the starting-point of the Christian's career. For "God chose us from the beginning to salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." So also Christ "loved the church, and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it, cleansing it with the washing of water by the word." The disciples were clean through the word Jesus spoke to them; certainly not in baptism, a heathen idea, leading to antinomianism and self-deception, and bound up with sacerdotalism, but by the Spirit through the word of God.

The truth too is often taught without the figure, as where we read in James 1, that we are "begotten by the word of truth." It is the same principle in I Peter 1: "We are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible," which is true from the very first.

The same distinction is maintained in the symbolic action of John 13, to which I have already referred. "He that is washed" (or bathed) "needeth not save to wash his feet." "Bathed also is in the water of the word. It is not in blood, but in water still. Only this is when a man is first converted, or set apart unto God. He is bathed, as it were all over. Afterward, when there is a particular case of failure, the word is applied by the Spirit to convict us of that failure, and to humble us for it in self-judgment. So we see in Luke 22:61, that the Lord turned and looked upon Peter when he fell. "And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." It was the washing of water by the word. The words of Jesus were recalled in all their life and power to his soul. "And Peter went out, and wept bitterly."

There is another remark, too, that I have to add as to this. We come to further details in the practical application to this particular instance. The work was not completely done when Peter went out and wept bitterly. This was right and seasonable; it was of God; but it was not complete. And therefore we find that the Lord Jesus afterward deals with the inmost soul of this very Peter. As far as the apostles were concerned, His first interview was with Peter, with him alone. But even after this we learn what must be to make the work complete, and this not judicially, but in the perfection of His love. "Simon, son of Jonas," said He, "lovest thou me more than these?" Simon protests He knew that he dearly loved Him. The Lord repeats the question of his love, and the third time takes up his claim of special attachment; on which Peter was grieved that He said the third time, Dost thou love me dearly? Well he might feel; for it became evident that his threefold denial was before the Lord's eye, and its root also. And now Peter gets to see how it came to pass. Not but that he had wept over it, and felt already his great sin and the Lord's great grace; but had he thoroughly judged himself?

It is not a question therefore of merely judging the particular offense. Never do we reach the bottom of that which has misled us if we but look at the outward act. What exposed one to it? And what was it that exposed Peter? He thought he loved the Lord better than anybody; he could go

where the others could not; he could trust himself who loved Him so truly: never should he deny the Messiah. Peter was satisfied that he loved Jesus more than all, and could face prison, death, anything for His sake. The Lord thus brought to light the root of his failure. There, without one harsh word, without even an ostensible reference to the threefold denial, without the smallest needless exposure to others, the root was laid bare and dealt with; and Simon Peter was perfectly restored, and the Lord now could commit His sheep and His lambs to his tending and feeding. "When thou art restored, strengthen thy brethren." He was converted (restored) now, and had the promise in the end, when nature's strength should wither, that he should follow

Himself even to the death of the cross. Nor is it only in the New Testament that we find this truth. We have there, of course, the doctrine and the application, and such a special instance as I have just cited; but now I go farther, and affirm that it is a principle which is no less true of the Old Testament, though it is only the New Testament which gives us to understand it clearly. The water of separation which the law enjoined on the children of Israel—what did it mean? Water was mingled with the ashes of an heifer that was wholly burned, skin and all, even what was most offensive. The whole was reduced to ashes, being one of the few sacrifices where this was done completely; and why? For the very important reason of vividly expressing in a figure the consuming judgment of God. In no sacrifice was this more fully carried out than in the burning of the red heifer. The ashes (for that was the point) were kept mixed with running water, and the Israelite, if defiled, was ordered to be sprinkled with this as a water of separation. There were two sprinklings; the first on the third day, and the second on the seventh day if the defiled one had been sprinkled on the third. The meaning I take to be that he was sprinkled on the third day, not the first, because one does not show a due sense of sin by being over quick to get through it. You have seen a child who, directly she has been guilty of a fault, readily tells you how sorry she is. But the same child will fall into the fault again no less quickly. Would you not rather see a child that showed more shame, and remained for a while under the feeling of it, than one so very hasty to ask pardon, and then forgetting the sin the very next moment? Alas! we are but naughty children ourselves, and sometimes we have behaved as ill to God our Father.

The only wise God provided this institute for the people passing through the wilderness; for, remark, it appears only in Numbers, the book of the wilderness journey. And there it was, and is, wanted. It contemplates the people, not in Egypt, nor in Canaan, but on their march through the wilderness. Accordingly the Israelite was called to abide under the sense of his uncleanness; he must bear the feeling of defilement till the third day. There must be no haste. The man who was unclean must abandon life to the pain of it for two days, and only on the third day, when there was a full witness ("in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established") is he sprinkled. Such I believe to be the force of the third day here. It has nothing to do with resurrection. It signifies, it would seem, an adequate testimony to his having been unclean; and it is when he feels it before God, and abides under it thus, that the seventh day sprinkling takes effect and the man is clean. Thus it is the reverse of trying to escape and have done with it, as a man would like to do; just as Saul, when he said, "I have sinned," and then forgot all. Here the unclean was not sprinkled till the third day, and then afterward on the seventh. This one case gives us sin in the presence of grace, as the other grace in the presence of sin. Thus all defilement was now judged and gone. The once defiled Israelite is now fully cleansed. Grace triumphs.

How great, then, the grace of our Lord! Who, while making the fullest provision in case of sin nevertheless in no case makes light of it; even in the very provision for restoring, grace turns all to holy account. Thus is the soul made to feel its sin as it never did before, not the particular act simply, but that which exposed to it, so that one may be profited and strengthened as well as humbled, in a way and degree which had not been the previous experience. Thus, too, where sin abounded, grace yet more, giving a better state to the Lord's praise alone, which could not be if there were no more than the open evil act seen; for we may be as liable to fall again, if not more so. What riches of grace thus meets us! Assuredly it does meet us in the particular act that disgraces and pains us: only according to both Old and New Testament it does not stop there, but would go to the root of the matter, that the defiled might judge self in its roots, and the soul gather strength for itself, minister grace to others, and God be glorified in all things by Jesus Christ our Lord.

May we, then, rejoice in the Lord, and rejoice always. May we know how to hold every particle of His truth, in the confidence of His grace. May we look to it, that all the grace and truth we know in Him be used to maintain and vindicate the revealed will and word of God, that it may deal with our own souls as with others, that we may be partakers of His holiness.

W. K.

(Concluded from page 365)

“Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

## Our Advocate With the Father: Part 1

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Our subject this evening is Jesus Christ, our Advocate with the Father; and it may be as well at the outset for us to be clear as to what is meant in the Scripture by this word "Advocate." What are we to understand by the Advocate with the Father? Clearly it is here closely associated with the question of sin: "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And the thought comes to us at once that in the hour of our fall there is One acting for us on high, One that takes our place and pleads on our behalf, and restores that communion which was taken away. And this thought is perfectly just. The Lord so serves in our interest in the presence of the Father above.

The word, however, has a wider meaning than this, and you may see that it has a wider meaning by referring to the Lord's own use of it. When He was leaving the world we find that He spoke in view of His departure of sending them another Advocate or Comforter (for the words are the same). Now if the Lord on His departure promised to send another Comforter, who we know was the Holy Spirit, and who is referred to in those discourses, on more than one occasion, as the Comforter, then He Himself was a Comforter while He was here (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13).

The Lord had been continually in the midst of His disciples, and had acted towards them as their Advocate or Comforter. Now He was going away, and it looked as if they were about to lose what they had so constantly enjoyed by His presence. But He said, "If I go away, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter."

### WHAT IS AN ADVOCATE?

The meaning of the word is this. An Advocate (Paraclete) is one who undertakes the case of another, a strong person, for instance, who under-takes the case of a weak one. In the case of our Lord, it was One who was Almighty, taking up the case of those who followed Him.

If you look in the second of Luke you will find a reference to those pious Jews who were in Jerusalem, waiting for the Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25, 38), that promised One, that gracious and glorious Person who was to come according to promise, and to be to Israel all that the nation needed. Well, the Lord came to be the expected Comforter, and He was such especially to the little company that gathered around Him. So that if you want to read what an Advocate or a Comforter really is, read the doings of our Lord as given in the four Gospels. See what the Lord did for His own. See how He gave everything to them that was requisite. There was not a thing that they wanted but what He supplied to them. At no time did they lack anything (Luke 22:35). The Master was one to whom they could come under any circumstances, and always find Him ready to help. Are we not expected to learn that the same blessed feature is in our Lord now? He is surely the same now; and the Lord prepared His disciples to learn that lesson before His departure, as He would have us learn it now. Why do I say 'now'? because, however brief or long your Christian career may be, you know right well that your great lack is that you think too little of our Lord Jesus Christ. You must be continuously finding out that you might have made more use of Him than you

have done. It is because of your neglect of Him, of your forgetfulness of Him that you have missed so much, and that you have done so little. Remember therefore, that the Lord is all that we need, though He is absent from us.

Now I should like to draw your attention to two or three instances in the Gospel of John which illustrate our subject.

The Lord educated the disciples to think of Him in this way—that although they might not be able to see Him, although He was not visibly in their midst, yet still He was thinking of them. He was serving them, and devoting Himself to their interests, and to their well-being, and, moreover, He was able to work things out in a super-human way for their blessing and benefit. They were slow to learn this truth, and so are we.

#### NOT FORGOTTEN IN THE STORM

Now take the account we have in the sixth of John of the disciples on the lake. After the feeding of the multitudes they were told by the Lord to embark in the boat, and to cross the sea, but the Lord did not return in the boat with them. They put out from the shore and sailed across the sea, but two unexpected things happened before they had reached their destination. Darkness came on, and coupled with the darkness a storm arose. The darkness by itself was enough, but when the storm came, and the wind began to blow, then their difficulties were multiplied. They did not know where they were; and the fury of the sea and the wind was threatening their destruction, and Jesus was not present. He kept away from them. He had left them to fight the battle alone. Why did the Master leave them in that way? They struggled with all their energy to keep the boat straight, but how could they? They had no landmark, everywhere was black night, and the wind and waves were howling.

Now we read that at this juncture Jesus came to them walking on the sea, and they so little-expected Him, that when they saw Him they were alarmed. They were filled with fear; they did not recognize Him; they were so busy with their danger that they even shrank from Him who loved them so much, and had come to their rescue. They did not recognize Him in the storm. Depend upon it, beloved friends, we have been in similar straits ourselves. The darkness has been around us in our lives. Storms have come, and the sea has been in confusion. Dangers and death have threatened us. But we must not forget that the tempest also brought the Master to our side. Let not our hearts be so filled with fear that we fail to recognize Him in the midst of the storm. He is there, and He is working for our ultimate peace and safety. It has no terror for Him. He is the sovereign power above and over all.

He came to His disciples, and they received Him into the ship; they heard His word; and His word stayed the storm so that there was peace at once. What threatened their destruction was taken away from them. More than that, you will read that He brought them to their desired haven. When Jesus came to them, they found they were exactly where they wanted to go. How did all this come about? Through His power, that Almighty power that resides in the person of Jesus. His disciples were slow to believe it was so then, and they have always been slow to believe it from that day to this.

The blessed work of our Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of everyone here to-night is a service that we often forget. At any rate we are not as conscious of it as we should be. The Lord is always active

for our sake. Difficulties and trials may be about us, but He is among them. He is supreme over them all, and He will bring us to our haven of rest in His own good time.

#### THE LORD'S ABSENCE FROM BETHANY

Take another case; you know these incidents very well, but I remind you of them to illustrate this faithful character of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is impossible for Him to leave one of His own. He would not forsake one of His own whom He has cleansed by His precious blood. What more beautiful instance of loving interest could you have than that recorded in John 11? You have death coming into a pious household. What is there that is so terrible as death in its power to destroy all happiness? Death had come into the house of Mary and Martha, and death had taken the beloved Lazarus. The sisters Mary and Martha had no resource in their sorrow just then, because Jesus was not with them. He was about twenty miles away, and they had previously sent a messenger, not with some importunate request, but just with the quiet announcement of what was the trouble: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." They did not ask Him to come or to interfere, or to stay the sickness. They probably felt somehow that He would come, but He did not. The messenger came back, and the Lord was not with him, but the Lord sent them a message: "This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God." And when the messenger arrived Lazarus was dead.

This sickness unto death, how was the sickness for the glory of God? This poor stricken man taken away from his dependent sisters, and from the coming kingdom, was that for the glory of God? Their hearts were torn with doubt; Jesus was not there. They were inclined to distrust and doubt the love of the Master, for the Master did not come to them in time, they thought. Was it because He did not care? Beloved friends, when He did come, remember how He groaned, how He burst into tears; He did care most surely. There was, however, a right moment in which His work was to be done, and He could not come until that moment. If they had only the faith to trust Him and had been able to lay hold of the truth and to say, "He does all things well," even in them the glory of God would have come out. Still they were not full of faith, and yet He was thinking of them all the while. He came, and as we know, at the graveside He said, "Lazarus, come forth" and restored the brother to the sorrowing sisters. It all came out for the glory of God after all; it was not death. He gave life, and you see the blessed Jesus was full of care, love and sympathetic power for these two sisters in the hours of their sorrow. He is the same now. At Bethany the Lord was preparing the hearts of His own for the time when He should be in heaven, and they upon earth. There would be no change in the manner of His love, whether present or absent.

#### THE SELF-APPOINTED TASK

Another instance you have in the twenty-first of John. There you have seven of the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus. They were in Galilee, and they started out on an enterprise of their own. Peter said, "I go a fishing." I think we may fairly gather that it was just a scheme originated by themselves. They thought it was about time they did something. Peter was a man that could not sit still. He said, "I go a fishing"; and the answer was, "We will all go a fishing." It was entirely an idea of their own. The Lord was away, and they thought they must manage their own affairs. That is how we often think, is it not so? If the Lord was in the house, well, we could come to Him, but as He is in the heavens it does not signify—I can do this, and that, and the Lord does not come into the matter at all, so far as my thoughts are concerned.

Well, they started off on their expedition; they worked hard but caught nothing. They did not ask the divine blessing upon their project, and they did not succeed. They toiled all night and got nothing. Now, what did the Lord do? He was away from them, but He knew their purpose. He had heard the words that fell from Peter's lips, "I go a fishing." The Master did not forsake them in their disappointment, but He went and stood on the shore. When the morning broke His voice came to them across the waves, "Children, have ye any meat? what is your success? what sort of fishing?" They had to confess they had nothing at all, and his words to them were, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." There was the very thing they had been seeking for all night in their own way, but which they had failed to find. And they came ashore, dragging the net full of great fishes, and the Lord was there to receive them, and more than that, He had made provision for their immediate needs. They were cold through the night's exposure, and there was a fire of coals. They were hungry, and the Lord had prepared refreshments for them. The Lord's care for His own, though absent from them, is strikingly illustrated.

Do not these incidents tell us what sort of an Advocate we have with the Father. Though on high, He takes this kind of loving interest in all that we do. I wish we could have it in our very souls that as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ there is not a thing we need to do apart from Him. Indeed, why should we ever act independently? It is because we forget that our Lord is that great One in heaven, who is our Advocate, our Comforter, the One who said, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Well, now you will probably say that I have been a long time coming to this first of John, but I had it on my heart to lay first before you that our Blessed Lord as Advocate takes a tender interest and compassionate regard for us in all our ways, and more than that, He is the One who supplies the strength, wisdom, and blessings that we require, and in these things He will never fail us. We may fail Him, but He will never fail us, and that is something to know.

#### FELLOWSHIP IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

We now come to a greater matter—one of the greatest matters in the life of a child of God—the matter of sin in relation to fellowship. You will notice that in the verses I read, the subject of fellowship several times comes in. "Fellowship with us," says the apostle (ver. 3), "Fellowship one with another" (ver. 7), and that is spoken of the children of God generally. Again, "We have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (ver. 3). What does this mean? The idea of fellowship is of common interests, common thoughts, common affections and devotions. In these things believers have fellowship with the Father. Why? because the Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His hands. And is there one here to-night who does not love Christ? We love Him because He first loved us, and there is the essence of fellowship, which is developed in the power of the Spirit by whom we are sealed. The love of the Father for the Son, my love for the Son, and your love fixed also upon that same One, and there is our fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The Son loves the Father, and He loves to reveal the Father. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" He said, and do we not also love the Father by the Spirit of the Son sent forth into our hearts? Love which is the expression of the eternal life given to us is the energy of true fellowship.

We have fellowship with the Son and the Father, and we have fellowship one with another. And I hope everyone in this room tonight is a child of God. All then possess this common love, having

believed on Christ and received eternal life through His name, so that there is a bond between all. This bond is not the result of fleshly descent. It is not nationality. It is nothing but the result of the new birth, that work of the Holy Spirit within our hearts. Our new nature loves God, who has given us of His Spirit; and, beloved friends, in these times it is of greater importance than ever that we should lay hold of this abiding truth.

This Epistle of John has a general character, and applies to Christians everywhere. It was not written to a particular assembly. Throughout it, there is no one named. It is addressed to the whole family of God from the time of Pentecost till now. The family of God is one, and none of the outward changes can sever the link between and child of God and the Son. It is of great importance to remember this love, arising out of relationship which we have in Christ Jesus which is the foundation of our fellowship. But I do not now want to speak about our fellowship one with another so much as our fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

[W. J. H.]

(To be continued)

## Our Advocate With the Father: Part 2

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### IN THE LIGHT

You will observe that the apostle, after referring to the normal condition of the family life, speaks of sin. He speaks first of Light: “God is light, and in him is no darkness at all,” and as children of God we are in this light.

It is difficult to explain what light means. We can easily think of it. We can imagine it better than explain it. In a pious home there is always light. People say there is no place like home, and if when they are at home they are in the place they like best in all the world, there is something in the saying. There is a feeling at home that they do not find anywhere else, and so it is in the family of God. There is that holy character which becomes the whole family of God, because God is light. Light reveals, light shows us what displeases God: “In him is no darkness at all.”

Light does not, however, remove defilement. It shows it, if it is there, but it is not the function of light to cleanse. There may be all sorts of dust and dirt and cobwebs in a darkened room; these are not seen. Throw open the shutters and its condition is revealed. But the light shining in will not rid the room of the unwholesome accumulations.

John speaks here of this. He says that God is light, and he speaks of us as walking in the light. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light” are his words. People say that is just the difficulty. “I have been troubled over that verse for months—years. I cannot walk in the light, sometimes I think I am, but I cannot always be sure that I am, walking in the light.” Now, if this is your thought you are making a mistake, and your mistake is that you are confounding two things. Walking in the light does not necessarily mean walking according to the light. There are two statements: one states where you are walking, and the other how you are walking.

If you are a Christian you are walking in the light, or else you would not be a Christian: “He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). The question is, are you following Christ? How you are walking in the light is a different matter, but every Christian is walking in the light. “Ye are the light of the world” is said of the followers of Jesus.

Once we were sons of darkness, but we have now been brought into the light; some may not be walking according to the light, and that is why they are so uncomfortable. Just because you are in the light it brings before you the mistake you made. There may be an evil thought you have allowed, an improper word, an action that is not beautiful, and you feel troubled about these things. Once you did not mind. What makes you mind now? Because you are in the light. The light of God shines into your heart and you feel unhappy because you have done something contrary to Him.

I would speak very gravely to my friends this evening and implore them to be careful not to injure the sensitiveness of their conscience and heart. Let in the full light of God and His holy word, and if you feel within your own soul that things are not right in your life, do not listen to any false adviser

who says it does not matter. You must get right in your personal communion with God. There are remedies for failure, and the remedies are stated in these verses.

### SIN WORKING DESPAIR

There are those who, when they have sinned, feel that they must give up everything. They say, "Well, it was easy enough for me to expect forgiveness when I was an unbeliever, but having known the love of God and then to have sinned, my responsibility is so much greater. What can I do? A sinner can come to seek forgiveness, but I have sinned against the light. I must give it all up, for I am the more to blame."

I know this state of mind to be a fact, my friends. Christian men at the Front write and say, "We can keep straight at home, but out here a man cannot live a Christian life. It is a dog's life here. I have gone under and have now given it up. I will turn over a fresh leaf when I come home." They forget, poor men, that they may never come home. But the feeling is there, and it is what we have in some cases in London as well as in the Forces.

Beloved friends, these men know they have sinned, yet they go on sinning. Why? Because—they are afraid to come to the Father. They feel that the fellowship with the Father and Son is broken, and they know not what to do for restoration. Sometimes there is not a Christian friend to tell them what to do, but the Bible explains it all. Only they neglect the Bible and listen to the evil suggestions of their own hearts. This danger, beloved friends, is not only for those in France, or in Mesopotamia, but the danger is also here. It is indeed everywhere, for we are all liable to fall into the serious error.

### THE POWER FOR CLEANSING

You have here in John the great foundation of Christian fellowship. You have things that never change—the blood of Jesus Christ and its cleansing power. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin. This does not imply that I, as a failing Christian, have to come and be washed again in the blood of Christ, but the phrase means that the blood of Jesus Christ was shed for a definite purpose. Has it cleansed you? If it has cleansed you it has cleansed you forever. It removes every defilement, and makes the soul whiter than snow. One application is sufficient. And when the apostle says "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth" he means that this character never alters through the ages. As light reveals, so blood cleanses. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from every sin, and this is therefore the great immutable foundation of my walk in the light.

The apostle goes on to write, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The truth shows that we have a root within us from which evil springs. You know perfectly well that without any effort on your part evil thoughts will arise within you when you wake up in the night. You may go along the streets, and evil thoughts may come, for there may be suggestions in the street. But in the darkness and quiet of your own chamber, how do these evil suggestions arise? There is but one answer, namely, that which the Lord Himself supplied: "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts." And this character of the old nature within never changes, so that the man who says he has no sin, deceives himself. It is a terrible delusion for a person to look into his heart where sin is, and to say "I am holy." He, in effect, calls an unclean thing a clean thing. Can anything be more deceitful? The heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

## CONFESSION OF SINS

We need the warning word therefore: "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Herein lies our responsibility: "If we confess our sins." Is there a day passes without some sin? Shall we not own it with shame? I do not say that we should always be thinking of our sins, or our liability to sin, but on the other hand, there is no portion of Scripture to tell us that we should never think of our sins.

But we are also to think of the personal interest of the One against whom we have sinned. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. What is there that shows more beautifully the gracious and loving care of the Father and Son? Jesus Christ the righteous is faithful and just not only to forgive our sins, but to clear them away. We have therefore His work of blood-shedding, which is the basis of cleansing, and we have all the personal activities which rest on that basis for our cleansing wherein we have erred.

Now there is a practical difficulty which comes into the lives of A great many young Christians in this matter. They feel that although they may ask forgiveness, things are not as they were before they had fallen.

One describing this feeling, says, "It is like this: if you wrong your mother and ask her forgiveness, you cannot go to her just the same as before." But that is just the mistake; you can go; you ought to go to her. And it is also true in divine intercourse. If ever you need to go to God it is when you have sinned. And when He forgives, the whole thing is cleared away. All His heart is towards you in love, and He restores your soul. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, etc." So that defilement which was on your conscience is cleansed by His word of assurance. It is one of the subtleties of the devil to seek to keep a Christian from his knees, and from the presence of God his, Father, and of Jesus Christ the Advocate.

## THE PERSONAL PROVISION FOR FAILURE

The great desire and hope of the apostle was that the children of God should be kept from the defilements of their nature, and that they should in no way get themselves entangled in the snares of the world, but should keep themselves pure and holy. If, however, any man sin he has an Advocate with the Father. There is great need for this, because a Christian either might not feel his sin, or feeling his sins might not confess them, and what a sad state would this be? what would become of us if we had not the Advocate with the Father? You know how proud and stubborn the will is, and how you like to turn the wrong way, and having taken the false step you still go on. And where would you go if there was not One to look after you? It is very comforting to think of Jesus coming to us in our troubles and conflicts, or in the hour of bereavement, or when we engage in an enterprise which ends in failure and distress, But this is not a question of trouble, or bereavement, or business methods. This is a question of sin, allowed and indulged.

But we here learn that even in such conditions He does not leave us or forsake us. He is prepared to do everything needful to bring us back to God and to communion with the Father. "If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father."

Now we see this advocacy beautifully illustrated in the case of Peter. He sinned deeply against his Master, he denied his Master in a terrible fashion, though he did not think he would. But Jesus, who loved him, said, "Satan desires to have thee to sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee."

The Master made intercession on his behalf. And at a given moment, the Lord looked at Peter, and Peter remembered the words of the Lord, and he went out and wept bitterly. Apart from the Advocate, where would he have gone? We know where Judas went, but Peter had an Advocate. He went out in contrition and wept bitterly. Tears, the tears of the strong man, were fitting. It was good for him to feel his sin, to learn what there was in that wicked heart of his, so that he might prove the abounding love of the Father and the Son.

Jesus Christ is just the same today, and we, you and I, have Him as an Advocate with the Father. His eye is upon us, He is watching us, and we do not know where we might have been to-night, if it had not been for the Lord's advocacy with the Father.

I am speaking now, of course, of our Christian career. There has ever been an unseen hand helping us, holding and bringing us back into safety. This work of our Lord is not always recognized; there is a danger that we overlook and forget that the blessed Master has been thinking and caring for us. We know not how, but in some way or the other He has been pre-serving us from sin. He has gently drawn us back from slippery ways. He has seen to it that our communion should not be destroyed forever, but restored again. Remembering this, our hearts should be quickened in love towards the One who is so faithful to us, and Who will not leave us nor forsake us. The Lord is our Advocate with the Father to bring us to a confession of sins, and to restore our souls to the joy of communion.

#### A WORD ON COMMUNION

Many persons have an idea that communion is something exclusively for old Christians. They say, "I suppose you mean that we have to think about the Lord all day long. But I have other things to attend to. I have correspondence, ledgers, housework, etc., to think about. I could not do my work faithfully if I had other things upon my mind."

But this all arises from a misapprehension as to communion. Take a familiar incident, by way of illustration: suppose you are sitting down at home writing a letter, and your wife or someone you love is also in the room. They are reading or doing something else. Now you are writing your letter, but you are conscious all the time that the person or persons is there. It is not necessary to converse. There is the joyous sense of the loved one being there. If that one was not present there would be quite a different feeling. Now this is a feeble illustration of divine communion. There is a sense of the Lord's presence which I may have throughout the day. There is a feeling that His eye is upon me, His hand guides me and that He is preparing everything for my ultimate good, and when strange, unexpected things come along I am not disturbed. So that the feeling of communion in this sense may be enjoyed by the youngest Christian, and that is what I am trying to convey.

If you are a son or a daughter, you have the sense of your duty to your parents, and of their loving interest and regard for you. You have the consciousness of all that without directly thinking of them all day long. They do not engage your thoughts definitely, but still there is the sense that they are about you. It is quite different if they should be removed from this world, but while they are here there is the sense of their presence, even if there is local separation.

Now, beloved friends, the great theme of my text is that we have Jesus Christ the righteous there with the Father, who has undertaken to see that all is well with us, to keep us right, to keep us in the joy of God's love throughout all the difficulties of this world, and more than that, if it should be that we drift into sin, even then He will not forsake us, but by His intercession and His power, He will bring us back to the enjoyment of God's own gracious law.

(Concluded from page 272)

W. J. H.

## All Things Ready in the Gospel and in Worship: Part 1

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It is indeed very blessed to be enabled to tell a poor awakened sinner that in Jesus all things are ready which he needs for remission of sins, righteousness, and life. And it is not less blessed to be enabled to tell those who have so come to Jesus, that all things are ready for their worship in the holiest of all; that everything is there ordered by the blessed Jesus Himself for their entrance therein, and that He Himself has consecrated the way for their approach.

The time is coming when “many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3). But now is the time for believers to encourage one another to enter into the holiest of all—even into heaven itself, because Jesus is there, and His blood is there. Come ye, say they, and let us draw near with a true heart.

Under the law, much of the priestly ministry was outside the tabernacle, and open to the view therefore of the worshipper. If he brought a burnt sacrifice, he was to bring it to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where he was to kill it, and then the priests sprinkled the blood in his sight upon the altar that was by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. This part of the priest's work was visible to the outside worshippers. But he who could approach thus far was never satisfied as to his conscience. He came indeed to these sacrifices—he saw them offered—but they were utterly inefficacious as to the purging of the conscience. “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.” But now all on the outside has been once and for all accomplished; the priestly ministry is all within and invisible, and therefore only known to faith by the revelation of God.

Let us put ourselves in the place of a Hebrew worshipper, by God's grace taught to know Jesus as the one sacrifice for sin, and as the ever-abiding High Priest in the holiest of all. What a struggle must there often have been in his mind when approaching God, because he had no sacrifice to offer—nothing visible on which to lean, no victim to lay his hand upon. It must indeed have required real true heartedness to Jesus to enable him to draw near—and to look at everything with which he had been formally conversant as taken up in Jesus, so that all that he had seen before was now only to be discerned by faith as fulfilled in Christ. And are we not often false to Jesus in this matter? Do we not often harbor the thought that something yet remains to be done—either by ourselves or by Him—in order to our drawing near? Do we not often thus become occupied with the circumstantial of worship rather than with Jesus—the substance? Are we not often false to Him in questioning our title to draw near because we find distance in our own hearts, as if it was the warmth of our affections, instead of the blood of Jesus, which brought near?

But oh, beloved, how false to Jesus has the church been! The worshippers are often pressed down by a burdensome ritual, and allowed neither to know that they are once and forever purged, nor that all is prepared for their entrance into the holiest. They are turned back again to that which is visible, and go through the daily routine of service, never getting farther than the door of the

tabernacle! They are set in the place of distant Jews, instead of that of priests sanctified for heavenly ministrations and worship!

And how continually do we see souls led to put the act of worship in the place of Jesus. Surely this is not to draw near with a true heart. A doubt harbored as to the all-sufficiency of His sacrifice, or the perfect efficiency of His priesthood, or His tender sympathy and compassion, is not to draw near with a true heart. if we shrink back into a distant place after all He has done, are we true-hearted to Jesus? But what positive treachery to Jesus is it to set up an order of men as in greater nearness to God than others-virtually putting them within and virtually putting others without. To lean on priests, or ministers, in worship, as if they were needed to that end, is absolutely denying the virtue of the person and work of Christ. But such things are the necessary offsprings of departure from the truth of a sinner's justification before God, by the one sacrifice of Christ. Distant worship necessarily follows imperfect justification. And if a sinner's justification before God by the blood of Jesus be not seen, much less will entrance into the holiest of all by the same blood for worship be allowed as the common portion of the saints. But even where the truth as to justification has been recovered and is preached, we still see a form and a ritual of worship altogether subversive of the truth. The access proclaimed in the gospel preached, is not permitted those who have believed that preaching! Thus the saints are practically kept in a place of distance, and thus taught to be false-hearted to Jesus!

(To be continued)

## All Things Ready in the Gospel and in Worship: Part 2

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Surely we might say, if every church and chapel of the kingdom were closed, and all the ministers of the gospel shut up in prison, that true-heartedness to Jesus would lead His saints to assemble themselves together to worship, by faith, in the holiest of all-knowing that there the ministry of the Great High Priest can never for a moment be suspended. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

As to this expression “full assurance of faith,” it by no means conveys the idea of a certain standard measure of faith as a matter of attainment. The reference is not to the measure of faith, but to its bearing on the right object. The faith may be the weakest possible, but let that, weak as it is, be in full bearing on its own proper object.

We have another form of the same word in the New Testament. It is said of Abraham, “he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform.” So again—“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.” The moment the soul has laid hold on Jesus it is delivered from itself, and ought to be fully persuaded that all it needs is presented to it in the object before it—even Jesus. It is this single eye to Jesus which we need in worship. The very things which man in his wisdom has thought to be helps to devotion are really its hindrances. Which of the senses do not men seek to gratify in the circumstantial of worship? Now the very object of the apostle here is to turn away the worshipper from the things of sight and sense, to which he had been accustomed, in order to concentrate his soul on one single object in which he was to find everything he needed.

We can never look at our title to worship God but we see our salvation. How blessedly has God linked these things together, and how perversely does man rend them asunder, either by calling on all to worship, believers and unbelievers, or by binding believers to a form which negatives the sense of complete justification. What we need in order to happier and holier worship is more simple faith in Jesus. Are we fully persuaded that Jesus has done all that is needed to make an acceptable meeting-place between ourselves and God?-then let us draw near.

And what holy freedom and liberty attends this— “having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.” The leper to be cleansed, in order to restore him to the privilege of worship, needed to be sprinkled with blood (Leviticus 14:7). The Israelite who had touched anything which made him unclean, needed to have the water of purification sprinkled on him, but it only sanctified to the purifying of the flesh (Hebrews 9:13). The priests at the consecration had the blood applied to them that they might so draw near and minister before God. But what is all this compared with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus? It is no longer a purifying of the flesh, but a purifying of the heart by faith. The flesh purified for worship might co-exist with an evil conscience, but a sprinkled heart never could. How entirely is a good conscience alone maintained by that which is not of sight, even by the purging power of the blood of Jesus.

Before Aaron could put on the holy linen coat he must wash his flesh in water (Leviticus 16:4), and so it is now— “Our bodies washed with pure water.” We cannot put on our white robe unless we know what communion with the death of Jesus really is. How needful for us in our approach to our place of worship, even the holiest of all, habitually to remember that we have died, and that we are alive in Christ. We have to do with the living God—and He too a consuming fire. All that is contrary to life has been set aside by the death of Jesus. “Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” And it is as alive from the dead that we alone can approach Him.

“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.” It is literally “of our hope,” not faith, and has reference to the sixth chapter— “that we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” Our hope is that we shall be there actually, the holiest of all being our own proper place as priests unto God: but by faith we now worship there in spirit.

But it is hard indeed to maintain a profession contradicted, so far as sight goes, by everything in us and around us. Jesus witnessed the good confession, before Pontius Pilate, that He was a king—without any mark of royalty about Him. His confession seemed contradicted by His appearance. Timothy had confessed a good confession before many witnesses (1 Timothy 6:12), and he needed to be reminded of it. And so do we. For how constantly do we forget that we are what we are in hope. We could not give satisfactory proof to another that we are what we confess to be. We can indeed give the soundest reason of the hope that is in us, because the forerunner is for us already entered within the veil; but we cannot satisfy the restlessness of our minds, or the mind of others, by evidence. No—blessed be God, He has provided for our hope on surer ground than any evidences we could produce, even on the ground of His own immutability and faithfulness—for He is faithful that hath promised.

The word is of great force, “let us hold fast,” —let us tenaciously grasp. And why? Because our hope is that which Satan would try by all means to wrest from us. And has he not effectually done this in the church at large by making that their hope which is, in fact, the ground of their hope—even their justification. Present righteousness is the ground of Christian hope. The holiest of all is alone open to those who have been once and forever purged. If our hope springs not from that within the veil, where is our steadfast-ness? Everything short of that may be shaken-and will be shaken. If, therefore, we know not accomplished righteousness, fitting us now for the holiest of all, the peace of our souls must be un-steady. An Israelite might approach the door of the tabernacle with a sacrifice to be offered, but that sacrifice had yet to be pronounced acceptable and to be accepted; but it was on the ground of an already offered and accepted sacrifice, that the holiest of all was entered by the high priest. Thus it is with our title to enter within the veil—the one offering of Jesus has forever given us liberty to enter there. How amazing is the craft of Satan in his devices against the truth! When he could no longer keep out of sight the doctrine of justification by faith, he has contrived to rob it of its real power, even where received, by having practically put it as the object of hope instead of the present possession of all who have come to Jesus. The peace of the gospel is thus practically un-known, although the gospel itself is truly stated. And this hope of justification by faith always opens the door for distant worship. In how many real believers is the peace of the gospel hindered by their very acts of worship.

Let us therefore, beloved brethren, grasp and maintain this confession as our best treasure—Having present righteousness by faith, our hope is nothing short of the holiest of all; and there we worship in spirit now. Our hope is independent of ourselves—it hangs on the immutable faithfulness of God it is secured by the blood of Jesus, and it is already made fast within the veil, for Jesus is there, and there for us. Beware of mock humility, which is only the cover of unbelief and self-dependence. Look at yourselves and you are hopeless; yea, nothing is before you but a fearful looking for of judgment. Look at Jesus and know your hope, for where is He? In the holiest of all as the forerunner. Let this check all wavering, and answer every doubt and every difficulty. In spite of all appearances hold fast the profession of the hope without wavering.

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.” Here we are reminded that we have also to perform our priestly work. The priest had to consider, in cases of leprosy—and so, as priests, we have to consider one another, not whether we are cleansed or not, for it has been authoritatively pronounced of us by the Great High Priest Himself, “now ye are clean,” —but we are to consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. The expression is remarkable— “consider one another.” There is but one, even the Lord Himself, who stands in the authoritative place of the Priest to the church, therefore we are to consider one another. How entirely is this exercise of our common priestly function nullified by again setting up an order of priesthood to prescribe to us. What is the Confessional? what the Absolution? —but the priest again pronouncing the leper clean! And how effectually does such a thought hinder our considering one another. We can only do this as standing in grace ourselves and recognizing others as standing in the same grace and the same nearness to God. It is as together standing in the holiest of all that we are to consider one another. There we are thus to help each other to detect what is inconsistent with that our high and blessed standing. There is no room for rivalry now—all are priests; but abundant room for love; and our love for each other is to be measured by the love that has brought us where we stand. And as to good works, they also are to be judged by the same standard. No lower standard than the sanctuary itself must now be taken to determine what are good works. What becomes the holiest itself alone becomes those sanctified to worship therein. It is not what men call good works, but what God estimates as such, to which we have to provoke one another. The costly ointment poured on the feet of Jesus, wasteful and extravagant in the eyes of an ancient or modern utilitarian, was a good work in the eyes of Jesus. The two mites of the widow more costly than the splendid offering of the rich. How little of what men think good is really so before God! and how entirely what God esteems as-precious is despised among men! Hence Christ was despised and rejected of men; and hence really Christian works are now despised of them. How needful, then, is it for us to be in spirit in the holiest of all, to prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God!

But not only is there to be this constant provocation to love and to good works, it is also added, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.”

When Israel came into the land, they were not to offer their sacrifices, or to worship, at any place they might select, but at the place where the Lord should put His name only. Jerusalem was the place whither the tribes went up. Put yourself in the position of a believing Hebrew on a solemn feast day in Jerusalem one of the three thousand converted by the first sermon of Peter. Multitudes from all quarters might be assembled around him—Jerusalem filled with worshippers—while he would be apart from all that which attracted them. But would not his soul

have many a struggle in keeping away from the festive and religious throng? Would he not have almost appeared an enemy to his country and to the temple? But was it really so? Think, further, of the contrast he must in his own soul have seen between the upper chamber or any other unpretending locality, and the splendid temple. Must it not have needed much simple faith in Jesus, to meet together to break bread and worship with a number as unaccredited as himself, without any visible priest to order their worship, any sacrifice, any incense, any altar, any laver? Would not the multitude keeping holy-day give, as it were, the lie to the worship he had been engaged in, as if it had been no worship at all? Surely there is great force in the words, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is."

Yes, some drew back from acknowledging that as worship which was without the outward form—some even who believed in Jesus. It cost too much to own Jesus as everything by disowning all the shadows. The assembling of themselves together thus was the great testimony against the religion of the world, and that Jesus was all. It was the profession that He was the substance of worship, and that worship must now be according to the place and power of His priesthood. The despised company in the upper chamber were feeding on the substance, while the religious world, in their gorgeous temple, were bowing before the shadows. That despised company had by faith access into the holiest of all—they knew that Jesus, as the forerunner, had entered there for them; and in this knowledge of Him, they could meet at any time and at any place, for the name of the Lord was recorded in the place of their meeting. They were worshippers in the sanctuary, let the scene of their gathering on earth be where it may.

Hence we find that "on the first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread" (Acts 20:7). They might or might not have some one to minister the word unto them—that was accidental; their coming together was for a positive and specific object. Paul came in among them and preached, but that was by the way. They came together as disciples. And if man puts a hindrance in the way of disciples coming together, is it not treading underfoot the Son of God, who has not only given them the liberty, but who has made their doing so the point of collective confession of His name? There is need of our exhorting one another as to this, for the danger is imminent of turning back to the old order. And the Spirit of God clearly saw the tendency of things that way, and that this would increase. That as the day approached when the Lord Jesus would be revealed, worship would become more and more worldly—more and more after the ancient distant Jewish pattern. Hence the exhortation would in the progress of things be increasingly needed, to stand fast as disciples in the simplicity of grace. Nothing can be more gracious than the provision which the Lord has made against the increasing evil.

Just in proportion as the thought in the minds of Christians has prevailed of a progression unto blessing in the world, has worship adapted itself to the world. But when it has pleased God to open the eyes of His saints to see the steady progress in evil, and the great assumptions of the flesh, He has thrown them back more on Christian simplicity. And our exhortation the one to the other as we see the day approaching, is to test everything by the light of that day, and to see that nothing will then really stand which is not of Christ. Surely the Lord intends to make His saints sensible of all that they have lost; but in doing so to make them as sensible of the value of what remains. If He had to say to His people of old, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?"—this was not said to enfeeble but to strengthen them. All the outward glory was gone, but still the Lord was there. And

therefore it is said, "Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, and work; for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts, according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." God remained unchangeably the same, and His original power in deliverance was real strength in the midst of weakness; so that out of weakness they became strong.

And this is God's provision for the comfort and strength of the saints, as they see the day approaching, and everything unprepared to meet it, to exhort one another to the use of what remains unto them; and whilst Jesus abideth in the holiest of all, and now appears in the presence of God for them, they can always draw near. Yes, it is our privilege to do so, now that the dispensation has well nigh run its course, equally as much as in the apostle's days. Men indeed have, by their perverseness, put many things between themselves and God, but that which giveth nearness still remaineth, even the blood of Jesus. Let us then draw near.

Beloved, how much is this exhortation needed at this day! Simple worship, although our high privilege, is despised. Believers need something more than the presence of the Lord to induce them to come together! Jesus is not really to them the great substantial ordinance of God. They are not glad when they assemble themselves together. Let us not forsake this, for if we do we are in danger of forgetting that we are once and forever purged worshippers, and that our place of worship is the golden sanctuary itself, also once and forever purged (Hebrews 10:2, 14). There we have such an High Priest, one who can bring us in at once to the throne of the majesty on high, to us a throne of grace, although He who sits thereon is Holy, Holy, Holy.

Beloved, it is your place of confession to contradict all assumptions of priesthood, all repetition of sacrifice, and all repeated absolutions, by drawing near. Your worship is to be characterized no less by confident nearness to God than by reverence to His name. The day is approaching. Its approach is marked by a return to ordinances. Hold fast your profession, and let it be Jesus against every pretension. For be assured that whatever is not of Him is nothing better than a carnal ordinance, to be utterly disowned by the Lord when He appears.

If we look forward as to worship, what do we see there? All the shadows passed away and only the substance presented. "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." So again—the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him (worship Him), and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever. They shall serve and they shall reign at the same time. They shall then be manifestly priests and kings. But now in the knowledge that grace has already made them so, it is their privilege to approach by faith that glorious place in which they will in due time actually stand. Our best instruction is gathered by looking forward. It is the reality which is to be our pattern now. Not things on earth the patterns of the heavenly, but the substance known by faith stamping its impress on that which is present. Let us draw near "unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

(Continued from page 80)

## All Things Richly to Enjoy

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I Timothy 6:17. “He hath given us all things richly to enjoy.” In a day of ruin, but not of poverty—for “thou art rich” —we have to do with a bountiful Giver, One who is faithful and unchanging. Are we enjoying all things richly? We ought to be able to enter more than we ever did into His bounty, into the infinity of His re-sources. His love and care have never wearied, He holds not back that which is good for us. We ought not to hide our heads in the sand, and refuse to face things, but we ought to face them with God. Timothy was told, “Be thou strong.”

We are here to do His will. We are not to think of ourselves as a testimony! unless of ruin, perhaps. But we should be rejoicing. In what? In the Lord. Has He changed? is He not the same? Let us humble ourselves about the state of things within and around. If He gives, He gives richly with no niggardly hand, and it is for our soul's enjoyment. Do we then, take advantage of all His gifts which He has given for enjoyment?

If we are doing His will we shall not be ashamed before Him at His coming, and this is what we are here for—to please Him in everything. For this, we need to abide in Him. Is the Lord Jesus Christ our home? Do we dwell there? Is Himself the circle of our affections? Is whatever concerns Him that which concerns us? Are His interests ours indeed? Do we delight ourselves in all that delights Him, and are we grieved by whatever is a grief to Him? He is our life, and for me to live should be Christ. The joy the Lord is then indeed our strength.

## The Ark and Obedience

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There are two portions of Scripture in which we may see the blessedness of obedience and the sorrow of disobedience, or neglect of obeying. In the second the order is reversed. Paul committed the dear ones he was about to leave (he had told them who the apostolic successors would be) to God and the word of His grace. Oh, that we knew more subjection to that word!

In Joshua 3, when the priests came to the river of Jordan, its waters rolled down to the Dead Sea, and left a passage some miles wide, quite a contrast to the passage of the Red Sea. The waters of judgment are stayed by the ark; all the praise is His! The Jordan crossed, they, in figure, are risen with Christ. On the resurrection side, they get to Gilgal, and there circumcision is carried out, the flesh judged, and their whole confidence is now to be set on the One Who had stayed back the Jordan, and brought them into the promised land.

Let us contrast Egypt with the land. In Numbers 11 they lusted after six things. “We remember” (said they, forgetting the hard bondage) “the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions and the garlic.” They all belonged to Egypt, and they were all low down. Egypt's prosperity depended on the Nile, but they did not know the source of it. The land God brought them into drank water of the rain of heaven. Seven things grew in that land that could be gathered without stooping: “Wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey” (Deuteronomy 8:7). When they were circumcised the manna ceased, and they ate the corn of the land—type of Christ risen.

In Numbers 34 we are told the boundaries of the land; on the north a great mountain—the world and its power; on the east a great river—the world and its prosperity; on the south, a great wilderness—the world and its sterility; on the west a great sea—the world and its lawlessness. It is a type of the land into which we are brought, but there are always contrasts between type and antitype. Abraham could walk through the land, but we get lengths and breadths and depths and heights, immeasurable, “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” Do we realize and value this? We are already thus blest.

Let us just turn to the prayer of the apostle for these saints (Ephesians 3:16 to 19). The words “length, breadth, depth, and height,” are often applied to the love of Christ, but I do not believe that this is the meaning, for he goes on to say, “and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.” It is according to the riches of His glory, not from it that He desires they should “apprehend” (not “comprehend”) the vastness of all this blessing, and then know the love of Christ.

But Israel had to be warriors, and to fight the Lord's battles in that land; their warfare was against flesh and blood, but ours are far mightier foes, even “principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places,” and we are no match for these in ourselves. God forbid that we should ever trust in ourselves, for we are only earthen vessels. In Ephesians 6 we get our equipment for this warfare. There is never anything lacking on God's side. He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. We can always praise Him, though we

have so much to mourn over in ourselves. In this armor there is, as has often been pointed out, nothing for the back. Never turn your back on the foe. We are always more than conquerors if our confidence is in the Lord. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth." Let us become acquainted with it; let us hold it tighter: it is strength-giving when we have it tight about ourselves.

"And having on the breastplate of righteousness" —this is practical righteousness. So Paul exercised himself to "always have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men."

"Taking the shield of faith" —the Roman shield was generally sufficiently large to cover the whole body. Let us use it well— "wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Satan cannot touch you if faith is kept up, together with prayer. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." It is the very same word in Paul's prayer in chapter one, "the exceeding greatness of His power... which He wrought in Christ." That power which stayed the Jordan is what these must have who fight these battles.

Jericho was the first obstacle to the Israelites after crossing the Jordan, and the ark goes with them, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." On the seventh day the people surrounded the city seven times, and then a great shout went up from those who became "more than conquerors," for they had spoil. It is when we are obedient that we are strong in the Lord. Then we have the other side, Ai. They fall back on their own understanding, and do not seek the Lord's mind. They only send a few men up and get defeated. They had not on the breastplate of righteousness. They could not cover up the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold from His eyes. They were not strong in the Lord. They had to be searched and the sin judged, and Achan and his family stoned, before they were clear of the evil in their midst.

Now turn to 1 Chronicles 13; David makes much more of the ark than Solomon. Solomon makes more of the brazen altar, but David is on a higher level. David was always able to turn to the Lord. In his darkest hour, when Zildag was destroyed, he encouraged himself in the Lord. It is a gloomy picture we have of Solomon's old age, but David's last words are very bright. He constantly re-covers. He has a nimbleness of faith, which leads him always to the Lord.

Very often when the Lord has enabled us to shine for Him our darkest hour is at hand. When David had escaped from Saul, he said in his heart, "I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul": all declension begins in the heart.

Here in 1 Chronicles 13, "David consulted with the captains and with every leader," a natural thing to do, but he should have sought the Lord's mind first. A sad path is thus begun. He put those first and the Lord last (verse 2). We should always put Him first, and throughout.

We may do a right thing in a wrong way. We all know how before this the Philistines had adopted this course, for they knew no better. They sent the ark home on a new cart. It was very well for them, for God had not given them instructions. Let us beware of human reason. Do not let us be imitators of apparent success. Let us be subject to the word of God, and let us do nothing without it. We get on broad, dangerous, sinful ground if we get away from it. Do not ask, "What does it condemn?" but "What does it enjoin?" "And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the ark and there he died before God." That could not have occurred if they had not had the new cart. "And David was afraid of God

that day, saying, How shall I bring the ark of God home to me?" What a contrast between the experience of Obed-Edom and that of David!

Now we find David was being trained. In chap. 14, "David inquired of God." This was better than consulting captains, however able. So a breach is made on his enemies, not on Uzza; and again he gets God's mind (verses 8 to 17).

God has said, "I will instruct thee and teach thee." What a shame if we do not get His guidance! "David did as God commanded him," so he proved the blessedness of getting His mind and carrying it out.

In the next chapter, having learned his lesson, he can now say, "None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites, for them hath Jehovah chosen to carry it." "For because ye did it not at the first, Jehovah our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order" (verses 2, 12, 13). What a lesson is this for us! It is not simply to show us David's mistake, but for our sakes also it is written. May we ever seek to do things in "the due order." There is no failure in the love that gives the light for every circumstance; let us get it. Have we not often been tripped up and led astray by relying on the counsel of others instead of seeking the light of God's word.

"God helped the Levites." We may sometimes shun that which is not very easy for us by slipping aside from the path of obedience, but oh, what a blessing for them to have His help and power! It led to worship. May this be our portion too.

"And Michal the daughter of Saul... saw king David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart." We may be despised by the world, but what matters if we have the Lord's approval?

## The Assembly of God: Its Present State and the Duties That Result—1

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### 1. THE LORD'S DESIGN AS TO THE GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL HERE BELOW

It is the desire of our hearts and, we believe, God's will for this economy, that all the children of God should be gathered together as such, and consequently outside the world. Jesus died, "not for that nation only (the Jews), but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." This gathering, then, was the immediate object of Christ's death. The safety of the elect was as certain before as after He came. The Jewish economy which preceded His coming into the world had in view, not to gather the assembly on earth, but to display God's government by means of an elect nation. Now the aim of the Lord is to gather as well as save—to realize unity not only in heaven, where the counsels of God shall assuredly be fulfilled, but here on earth by one Spirit sent down from heaven. "For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body." This could not be denied of the assembly as it is presented in the word. It may be proved that hypocrites and wicked men crept in; but the conclusion cannot be evaded that there was an assembly into which they crept. The gathering of all the children of God into one body is evidently according to God's mind in His word.

### 2. POSITION OF NATIONALISM

As to nationalism, its existence cannot be traced higher than the Reformation; such an idea is found nowhere before.

The only thing in the least analogous, the Gallican privileges and the voting by nations in certain general councils, differs too much to call for discussion. Nationalism, that is, the division of the assembly into bodies made up of such or such a people, is a novelty which dates little beyond three centuries, though in this system are many dear children of God. The Reformation did not touch directly the question of the true character of God's assembly; it did nothing directly to restore it to its primitive estate; it did what was much more important—it put in evidence the truth of God as to that which saves souls with far more clearness and with a far more powerful effect than the modern revival. But it did not re-establish the assembly in its primitive powers; on the contrary it brought about its subjection generally to the state in order to get free of the pope, because it counted the papal authority dangerous, and considered all the subjects of a country as Christians.

### 3. POSITION OF DISSENT

We are then agreed that the gathering of all the children of God in one is according to the Lord's intention expressed in His word. But I ask in passing, Can we believe that the dissenting "churches," such as they are in this or any other country, have attained or are at all likely to attain this end?

This truth of the gathering of God's children scripture shows us realized in different localities; and in each central locality the Christians residing there formed but one body. The scriptures are

perfectly clear on this. Objections are raised on the possibility of this gathering; but they present no evidence drawn from the word. How could this be in London or Paris? It was practicable in Jerusalem, where more than five thousand saints gathered; and if they met in private houses and upper rooms, they were none the less but one body led by one Spirit, with one government in one communion, and they were owned as such. Hence at Corinth or elsewhere a letter addressed to the assembly of God would have reached a known body. I can go farther and say that evidently we ought ardently to desire pastors and teachers to guide and instruct these congregations; and that God did raise them up in the assembly as presented to us in the word.

If these important truths are owned, first, the gathering of all God's children, and, secondly, this in the same district; if it is owned besides, that they are clearly so brought out in the word of God, the question might seem settled. But wait.

It cannot be denied that this fact affirmed by the word (for it is a fact, not a theory) has ceased to exist. The question then to settle is this: How ought a Christian to judge and act when a state of things described in the word has ceased to exist? You say, Restore it. Your answer is a proof of the evil; it supposes power in yourselves. Understand the word, I reply, and obey the word as far as it applies to a like state of ruin. Your answer supposes, first, that it is God's will to restore the economy after its failure; and, secondly, that you are capable of restoring it and sent for the purpose. I doubt each of these pretensions.

Suppose a case: God made man innocent; God gave man His law. Every Christian will confess that sin is an evil, and that one ought not to commit it. Suppose one convinced of this truth should undertake to accomplish the law, or to be innocent, and so to please God. You will say at once that he is self-righteous, he trusts in his own strength, and does not understand the word of God. A return from the evil which exists to what God first established is therefore not always a proof of understanding His word and His will. Nevertheless, to own what He originally set up was good, and that we have departed from it, is evidently at least a sound judgment.

Apply this to the assembly. We all (for it is such alone I address) own that God formed assemblies; we own that Christians, in a word the assembly in general, have sadly departed from what God set up, and that we are guilty therein. To undertake to restore it all on its original footing is or may be an effect of the same spirit as that which leads a man to restore his own uprightness when lost.

Before I can accede to your pretensions, you must show me, not only that the assembly was originally such, but that it is God's will to restore it to its original glory, now that man's wickedness has spoiled all that and it has gone astray; and, further, to come to facts, that the gathering of two or three, or of two or three and twenty, has the right to call itself God's assembly, for this was the assemblage of all the faithful. You must show us, moreover, that you have received of God the mission and the gift to gather the faithful, so that you can treat those who do not answer to the call as schismatics [heretics] self-condemned, and as strangers to the assembly of God.

And here let me insist on a most important point overlooked by those bent on making "churches." They have been so pre-occupied with their churches that they have lost Sight of the church or assembly. In scripture all the gathered saints compose the assembly; and the church or assembly in a given place was just the regular association of what formed part of the entire body, that is, of all the body of Christ here below. He who was not of the assembly where he lived was not at all of

God's assembly; and he who says that I am not of God's assembly where I reside has no right to allow that I am of God's assembly at all. There was no such separation of ideas between the little assemblies of God in a given district and all the assembly. Each member of Christ was in the assembly where he lived. Nobody imagined himself to be in God's assembly if outside where he lived. Making "churches" has separated the two and almost destroyed the idea of God's assembly.

Returning to the case already before us, let us now suppose the man's conscience touched, and life received by the Spirit of God: what will be the effect? In the first place it will make him acknowledge his state of ruin by sin and the utter lack of uprightness; in the next place he will feel an entire dependence on God and sub-mission of heart to His judgment on such a state.

Apply this to the assembly and all the economy. Whilst men slept, the enemy sowed tares. The assembly is ruined, plunged into the world and lost there, visible if you will, whilst it ought to present as from a lampstand the light of God. If it is not in this state of ruin, I ask of our dissenting brethren, Why have you left it? If it is, confess this ruin, this departure from its primitive state. Alas! it is too evident. Abram may receive men-servants and maid-servants, oxen, camels, and asses; but his spouse is in Pharaoh's house!

What then is the effect of the Spirit's operation? what the fruit of faith? To own the ruin-state, to have the conscience exercised by faith, and to be humbled in consequence. And shall we who are guilty pretend to restore all that? No: it would but prove that we are not humbled. Let us rather search with humility what God in His word says of such a state 'of things; let us not, like a child who has broken a precious vase, attempt to put together the broken bits in the hope of hiding the damage from the eyes of others.

#### 4. CAN MAN RESTORE THE FALLEN ECONOMY?

I press this on such as pretend to organize assemblies. If they exist, they are not called to make them. If, as they say, they existed at the beginning and then, ceased to exist, in this case the economy is ruined and gone from its original standing. Their pretension then is to restore it; and this is what they must justify: else they have no foundation for their attempt.

It is objected that the assembly cannot fail, Christ having promised that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I agree, if it be understood thereby that the glory of the risen assembly will triumph over Satan, God securing the maintenance of the confession of Jesus on the earth till He comes. This however is not the question, nor the safety of the elect, which was sure before there was an assembly gathered. But if people mean to assert that the present economy cannot fail, it is a great and pernicious error; and if so, why have you separated from the state around? If His economy in the gathering of the assembly subsists without failure, why are you making new "churches"? Popery alone is consistent here.

But what says the word? That the apostasy is to come before the judgment (2 Thessalonians 2); that in the last days perilous times shall come (2 Timothy 3), when there should be a form of godliness without the power. It adds, "From such turn away." And the idea that the economy cannot fall away is treated in Romans 11 as a fatal presumption which leads the Gentiles to their ruin. The Holy Spirit condemns those who so think as wise in their own eyes, and teaches us on the contrary that God would act toward the present economy exactly as He did towards the past—that if it continue in His goodness, His goodness would continue toward it; if not, the

economy must be cut off. Thus the word reveals, not restoration, but cutting off in case of unfaithfulness. To set about re-making the assembly and the assemblies on the footing they had at first is to own the ruin, without submitting to the witness of God as to His mind in reference to such a state of ruin. It is to act according to our own thoughts and to rely on our own strength for realizing them; and what has been the result?

The question is not, whether such assemblies existed at the epoch when the word was written, but, after that by man's iniquity they ceased to exist and the faithful were scattered (and such are the acknowledged facts), whether those who have undertaken the apostolic work of restoring them on the original footing, and thereby re-establishing the entire economy, have understood God's mind and are endowed with power to accomplish what they have taken on themselves—questions widely distinct. I do not believe that even the most zealous of those who, with a desire ever so sincere (and David was sincere in his desire to build the temple, though this was not God's will for him), have sought to restore the fallen economy, are in a condition to do so, or that they have the right to impose on my faith as God's assembly the little edifices they have reared. Nevertheless, I am far from believing that there have not been assemblies when God sent His apostles for the purpose of establishing them; and it appears to me that he who cannot distinguish these two states of things, what it was of old, and its present condition, has not a very clear judgment in the things of God.

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(To be continued)

## The Assembly of God: Its Present State and the Duties That Result—2

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### 5. If Restoration Cannot Be, What Is To Be Done?

It will be said that the word and the Spirit abide with the assembly. This is true, God be praised; it is this which gives all my confidence. To lean thereon is just what the assembly needs to learn. Therefore do I ask what the word and the Spirit say of the state of the assembly when fallen, in place of pretending to claim competency to make good what the Spirit has said of the primitive state of the assembly. I complain that people have followed the thoughts of men imitating what the Spirit describes as having existed in the primitive assembly, instead of seeking what the word and Spirit have said of our actual state.

The same word and the same Spirit which by Isaiah bade the inhabitants of Jerusalem remain quiet and God would deliver them from the Assyrian, said by Jeremiah that he who would go out to the Chaldeans would save his life. What was faith and obedience in one of these cases was presumption and disobedience in the other. Will it be objected that this embroils the simple? I answer that those who would re-organize the assembly ought to be well taught in the word and to abstain from pleading such simplicity. The humbleness which feels the true state of the assembly, it may be added, would have been preserved from a pretension which reaches forward in an ill-founded activity.

The truth is that even those scriptures, which have been cited already, prove that the state of the economy at its close will be entirely opposed to that of its beginning. And the passage quoted from the Epistle to the Romans (11:22) is positive that God will cut off the economy, instead of restoring it, if it has not continued in His goodness. The passage "My Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not" (Hag. 2:5) is a very sure and precious principle. The presence of the Spirit is the keystone of all our hope. But this prophetic encouragement of Haggai never led Nehemiah, faithful to God when Israel returned from captivity, to pretend to do the work of Moses, who had been faithful in all His house (Hebrews 3) at the beginning of that economy. No; he owns in the clearest and most touching terms the fallen state of Israel, and that they were "in great affliction." He does all that the word authorized him to do in the circumstances wherein he found himself; but he never pretended to make an ark of the covenant as Moses had done and because Moses did so, nor to establish the Shechinah which God alone could do, nor Urim and Thummim, nor to arrange the genealogies as long as they had not Urim and Thummim. But we are told in the word that they enjoyed blessing which had not been since Joshua's time, because he was faithful to God in their actual circumstances, without pretending to do again what Moses had done and what Israel had spoiled. If he had done so, it would have been human confidence and not obedience.

Obedience, not imitation of the apostles, is as to this our place. It is much more humbling; but at any rate it is more humble and sure; and this is all that I seek and ask—that the assembly be more humble. To be content with evil as if we could do nothing is not obedience; but no more is it to

imitate the apostles. The conviction of the presence of the Holy Spirit delivers us at the same time from the bad thought of being obliged to abide in evil, and from the pretension to go beyond what the Holy Spirit is working at this moment; or from considering one or other of these positions a state of order.

Am I asked, Do you wish our arms to hang down and ourselves reduced to do nothing till we have apostles? By no means. I only doubt that it is God's will for you to do what the apostles have done; and I say that God has left to faithful Christians directions sufficient for the state of things in which the assembly is found. To follow His directions is to obey far more truly than if one try to imitate the apostles.

## 6. DIRECTION OF THE SPIRIT FOR THE PRESENT STATE OF THINGS

Besides, I say that the Spirit of God is always present to strengthen us in this way of true obedience. God's Spirit, who foresaw all that was to befall the assembly, has given in the word the warnings and at the same time the helps that are needful. If He warns us that difficult times would come in the last days, and if He describes the men of those times, He adds, "From these turn away." If He says to me, "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Cor. 6:14.), and this warning is for all times; if He tells us that "We, the many, are one body, for we are all partakers of the one bread"; and if nevertheless I do not find a like union of the saints, He tells me at the same time that, where two or three are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus, He is in the midst of them.

Those who would form assemblies appear, though with a good desire, to have entirely forgotten the need of power as well as of directions. When they tell us that all the directions for the assemblies are for all times and all places, I ask if they are for times and places when assemblies do not exist. And we always come back to this question: If the economy is in a state of ruin, who is to make assemblies? Once more, Is the direction, given by the apostle for the exercise of the gift of tongues, for our times? Undoubtedly if the gift exists; but this condition is surely a very important modification of your rule, and the very turning-point of the question.

## 7. DOES THE WORD OF GOD AUTHORIZE THE NAMING OF PRESIDENTS OR PASTORS?

Those who are so strong for making and organizing assemblies quote with the most perfect confidence the Epistles to Timothy and Titus as serving for direction to the assemblies in all ages, whilst they were not addressed to any assembly whatever. Observe, that the quotations from God's word on matters of most moment for those who organize assemblies, such as the sanction of elders, deacons, etc., can be drawn from these Epistles only. And it is remarkable enough that the confidential companions of the apostle were left in the assemblies, or sent to them, when they already existed, to make these selections for them: a clear proof that the apostle could not confer that power on the assemblies, even when assemblies existed which he had formed himself And yet this is presented as guidance for the assemblies in all ages!

## 8. THE CHILDREN OF GOD HAVE ONLY TO MEET, RELYING ON THE PROMISE OF THE LORD

To what end have I then pleaded? That nothing should be done? No; but in the desire that there should be less presumption; that there should be more modesty in what we pretend to do; and

more sorrow at the state of ruin to which we have reduced the assembly.

If you tell me, 'I have abandoned the evil which my conscience disapproves and which is contrary to the word,' well and good. If you insist on what the word of God wishes, that the saints should be one and united, on what it says, that, where two or three are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus, He is in the midst of them, I repeat, well and good. But if you tell me that you have organized an assembly, or that you have united with others in order to do so, that you have chosen a president or a pastor, and that thus you are the assembly of God in the place, I would ask you: Dear friends, who has authorized your doing all that? Even according to your principle of imitation (though to imitate power is a very ridiculous idea, and "the kingdom of God is in power"), where do you find all that in the word? There I see no trace of the assembly having elected presidents or pastors. You say, For the sake of order it must be so. I answer that I cannot abandon the word or swerve from it. "He that gathereth not with me scattereth." To say that it must be is only human reasoning. Your order, constituted by the will of man, will soon be found to be disorder before God. If two or three only are gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus, there will He be found. If God raises up in your midst pastors, or if He sends them to you, it is well; for it is a great blessing. But, since the day when the Holy Ghost formed the assembly, nothing is found in the word as to the assembly choosing them.

What is to be done then? you will say to me. What faith is always to do; that is, to recognize its own weakness, and to put itself under dependence on God. God is enough at all times for His assembly. If you are only two or three, gather together; you will find Christ in your midst. Appeal to Him. He can raise up all that is necessary for the blessing of the saints, and most surely He will do it. It is not pride and pretension to be something when we are nothing which will assure us blessing. In how many places has not the blessing of the saints been injured by choosing presidents and pastors! In how many has not this been the occasion of the ruin of the presidents themselves! In how many places would not the saints have assembled with joy in virtue of the promise made by Christ to two or three, if they had not been frightened by this pretended necessity of organization, by the accusations of disorder (as if man were wiser than God), and if this fear had not made them continue in a state of things which they recognized to be bad! And in these bodies which man had thus organized, one often ruled alone or several disputed. That which the church particularly needs is the sense of its ruin and of that which it lacks—a sense which makes it take refuge in God with confession which separates itself from all known evil, recognizing the Spirit of Christ as the only government of the assembly, and each of these He sends according to the gift He has received, and that with thanksgiving to Him who, by this gift, makes such and such a brother the servant of all.

To recognize the world as being the assembly or to aim at re-establishing the assembly are two things equally condemned by the word and destitute of its authority.

If you say to me, What is to be done then? I answer, Why are you always thinking of doing something? To recognize the sin which has brought us where we are, to humble ourselves completely before the Lord, and, separating ourselves from all we know to be evil, to lean upon Him, who is able to do all that is necessary for our blessing, without aiming ourselves at doing anything above that which His word authorizes us to attempt—this is indeed a position truly humble, but, in proportion, blessed of God.

A point of the greatest importance, and one which those who wish to organize assemblies seem to have entirely forgotten, is that there is such a thing as power, and that the Holy Spirit alone can gather and edify the assembly. They seem to believe that, the moment they have a few passages of scripture, all they have to do is to follow them. But, under the appearance of faithfulness, there is this most fatal error: they put aside the presence and power of the Holy Ghost. We cannot follow the word but by the power of God. The constitution of the assembly was a direct effect of the power of the Holy Spirit. To lay aside this power while pretending to copy the primitive assembly, is strange self-deception.

I know that those who consider these small organized bodies as the church of God, view every other meeting of God's children simply as an assembly of men. As to this there is a very simple answer. These brothers have no promise which authorizes them to re-form the assemblies of God when they are divided; whilst there is the positive promise that where two or three are gathered to the name of Jesus, He is in their midst. Thus there is no promise in favor of the system which organizes assemblies, whilst there is one for the despised gathering together of God's children.

And what is the effect of the pretensions of these bodies? It is to nourish pride in their presidents and in their members, and to disgust and repel those who compare these pretensions with the reality. And this hinders the desired result, which is the union of the children of God. In such or such a locality the gifts of the pastor may produce great effect; or it may happen that all the Christians are united, and there will be much joy. But the same thing would take place where there was no pretension to be the assembly of God.

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(To be continued)

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## The Assembly of God: Its Present State and the Duties That Result—3

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### 9. SUMMARY

I conclude by a few propositions—

(1) The object to be desired is the gathering of all God's children.

(2) The power of the Holy Spirit alone can effect this.

(3) Any number of believers need not wait till that power produces the union of all, because they have the promise that, where two or three are gathered together to the name of the Lord, He will be in their midst; and two or three may act in reliance on this promise.

(4) The necessity of ordination in order to administer the Lord's Supper nowhere appears in the New Testament; and it is clear that it was to break bread Christians came together on the Lord's Day (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-23).

(5) A commission from man to preach the gospel is unknown to the New Testament.

(6) The choosing of presidents and pastors by the assembly is altogether unwarranted by the New Testament. The election of a president is merely human and quite unauthorized. It is a mere intervention of our wilfulness in the concerns of God's assembly, an action pregnant with evil consequences. The choice of pastors is a daring encroachment on the Holy Spirit's rights who distributes according to His own will. Alas! for him who does not profit by the gift which God grants to another. When elders were appointed, it was either by the apostles, or by those whom they directed for the purpose to the assemblies. If the assembly is in ruin, even for such a state God is sufficient; who will lead on and guide His children if they walk in humility and obedience, without setting about a work to which God has not called them.

(7) It is clearly the duty of a believer to separate from every act that he sees to be not according to the word, though bearing with him who unintelligently does so. And his duty requires this of him, even though his faithfulness should cause him to stand alone, and though, like Abram, he should be obliged to go out, not knowing whither he goes.

### 10. CONCLUSION

My design in these few pages has not been to show, either the ruined condition of the assembly, or yet that the present dispensation cannot be again set up, but rather to propose a question which usually is altogether misapprehended by those who undertake to organize churches. The ruin of the assembly has been briefly considered in another tract. But as a brother, to whom these pages were read, felt that this question of present ruin was awakened in his mind, and desired to have some proof to satisfy such as were in like manner exercised, I add a few sentences.

(a) The parable of the wheat-and-tare field gives us the Lord's judgment on this point—that the evil wrought in the field where the good seed had been sown was not to be remedied but to continue until the harvest. Let it be borne in mind that the parable has nothing to do with discipline among God's children, but relates to the question of a remedy for evil brought in by Satan whilst men slept, and to the restoring the economy to its primitive footing. The question is decided with summary authority by the Lord in the negative; for He tells us that throughout its course no remedy shall be applied to the evil,—that the time of the harvest, or the judgment at the end of the age, will extirpate it, and that till then the evil is to go on. Let us here call to mind that our separation from evil, and the enjoyment of Christ's presence with the “two or three,” are altogether distinct from the pretension to set up again this economy now that the evil is come in. The former is both a duty and a privilege; the latter is a fruit of pride and neglect of the word.

(b) Rom. 11, already quoted, expressly tells us that the present dispensation shall be dealt with like that which went before it, and that, if it continued not in God's goodness, it would be cut off, not restored.

(c) 2 Thessalonians 2 teaches us that “the mystery of iniquity” was already working, and that, when an obstacle which then existed was to be taken out of the way, the “wicked one” would be revealed, whom the Lord is to consume with the breath of His mouth and to destroy with the manifestation of His coming. Thus the evil that began in apostolic days was to continue, ripen and manifest itself, when it would be consumed by the Lord's appearing.

(d) 2 Timothy 3 shows the same thing, that is, the ruin (not the restoration) of the dispensation; for in the last days perilous times are to come and men be lovers of their own selves (from whom the Spirit calls us to “turn away”), evil men and seducers waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

(e) Jude also shows that the evil which had already crept into the assembly would be the object of judgment when the Lord came (compare verses 4 and 14); and this awful truth is confirmed by the analogy of all the ways of God with man. For man has perverted and corrupted what God had given him for his blessing; and God has never repaired the evil, but brought forth something better after judging the iniquity. And this better thing had been in its turn corrupted, until at length everlasting blessing is brought in. When the economy was a revelation to sinners, God gathered a feeble remnant of believers from among the unbelieving, and transferred them to that new blessing which He established instead of what had been corrupted; as for example the residue of Jews into the assembly at Pentecost, and so on. So in Romans 11 we are taught that the Lord will similarly deal with the present dispensation.

(f) The same thing is seen in the Revelation. As soon as “the things that are,” or the seven churches, are brought to a close, the prophet is taken to heaven: and all that follows has to do, not with anything acknowledged as an assembly, but with divine providence in the world.

I have done no more than refer to a few express passages; but the more God's word is studied, the more do we find this solemn truth confirmed. I say then, Do all that you can, but pretend not to do what exceeds that which the Lord has given you, which would but betray the pretensions and the weaknesses of the flesh. Humility of heart and spirit is the sure way not to be found fighting against the truth; for God giveth grace to the humble. May His name of grace and mercy be

forever blessed!

J. N. D.

(Concluded from page 361)

## Christ's Desires for the Christian: Part 1

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### John 17

This chapter has a very peculiar character, in that it is not the address of the Lord Jesus to His disciples even, much less to the world. It is their admission to hear Him address His Father about them. And we can easily understand, that where such a privilege is given them, we should be let into the fullest possible apprehension of the place in which He has set us. When He spoke to the world, Christ suited Himself to their capacity; and we, in our measure, ought to seek to do the same. But when He was addressing His Father, we can naturally understand that He would speak freely of what He had on His heart about His disciples. But still, as it concerned them (now, through grace, we have received the Spirit, who communicates these things to our souls), He spoke it in the audience of the disciples, so that they should hear and know what His heart felt about them.

Let me ask you this: If we find that Christ has an interest in us, and that He is speaking to His Father, and speaking of us, of what He has on His heart for our blessing, do our hearts turn with interest to listen, and to know what He feels about us? We have wretched, cold hearts, it is true; nothing is worse than their deadness and indifference to God. An openly bad, vile man of the world is bad enough; but if I saw a son do what was wrong, and if his father went out and intreated him with all the tender affection of a father, and the son did not trouble his heart about what he said, I should say, There is no hope now.

Therefore, when I find this first truth, that Christ has us on His heart, and can speak to His Father about us that we are become the objects of their common interest, surely our hearts should turn to it. "These things," He said, "I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (ver. 13). The character of Christ's love, being perfect, was to bring us into the same blessing with Himself. It is very true, but it is not all the truth, that we are blessed through Christ; we are blessed with Him, and that was the perfection of His love. He loves us enough to have us near Him, and have us all in the perfectness of His own heart; and having opened our understandings to see what He is, and to delight in what He is, He gives us the consciousness of His own perfect love. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." If I always saw perfect blessedness before me, with the consciousness at the same time that I never should have it, that would not give comfort to my heart; but if I have a perfect object before me, with a certainty that I shall possess it, I shall be occupied with that object.

Whilst here below we have the consciousness, in looking at our blessing in Christ, that we are not perfectly like what He is; we desire it, we long to be conformed to the image of Christ. But still, if we have in any measure tasted the loveliness of Christ, what distresses the heart is that we are not like Him. But here Christ engages the affections, and brings the heart to this point—the consciousness that this is our place in Him before God, and that all the blessedness that He has is ours. Does it become us to say, No? Is it humbleness to be short of that, to say we are unworthy? Is God right? But it is not humbleness to refuse grace. And then, when it is seen to be such

grace—unmingled grace—it is not humbleness to speak of not being fit to have such things. If I talk about not being quite worthy, there is the thought that if I were worthier I should be fit to have these blessings. Here is just where the want of humbleness is. You ought to be on the right ground with the Lord. That which enables us to have this thought and desire of being brought into the presence and blessing of God, and to be like Christ, is, that all is grace. We are nothing. If we look at the glory that is before us, it at once puts out all thought of worthiness in ourselves.

Here, then, the Lord is just setting us in His own place upon earth. Poor feeble creatures we are for it; but He is setting us in His place on earth. “Father,” He says, “I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.” This chapter is often spoken of as being a prayer. The half is a prayer; but all the other part is a plain and full exposition of the ground on which He places us, beginning with His going up to heaven, and then going on to the glory which He will give us. There is the prayer too—a prayer for, us while we are passing through the trials and difficulties of this world. Christ gives us this place with Himself above; but He speaks while still in the world, that we might have it from His own lips in the world. It is not as taking us out of the world; but He begins it all from that starting-point, that we shall be in the glory. When He was here He did not want any witness; He was Himself the heavenly witness; but now He is gone He sets His saints as His living active epistle in a world that they do not belong to any more than He did.

First, then, look at the way in which He introduces us into this place. You will see in the first few verses that it is a question of Himself being, glorified: “These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father...glorify thy Son:...as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.... I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Now there are two thoughts which the Lord brings out here. He says, “Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.” That is the title which His person gives Him to this glory. And the other is, “I have glorified Thee on the earth,” etc.; “And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me,” etc.; that is, the Lord presents these two grounds on which He is asking for His glory as man. He is glorified in virtue of His person, and then glorified in virtue of His work.

It is in connection with both these titles that we have to see our place on earth. He takes His place with the Father in virtue of His own personal title, and in virtue of His accomplished work. There is the basis which He lays for our admission into this place of blessing; and at the close He says, “I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” The love wherewith the Father had loved Christ should be in the disciples. They should enjoy it; they should have His joy fulfilled in themselves. It is this that we are called to; the enjoyment in this world of the love that Christ knew here below—of His Father's love. He was there the Son of God, as man in this world; and what was His delight? Was it from the world? Surely not. Was He of the world? He was not. He was walking in the world; but His character and place while there was as the Son of the Father. There was His joy; not from the world, no more than He was of it, but from the Father. There was His constant blessedness. The wellspring of His delight in a world that hated Him was the constant inflowing of the Father's love to Him. He was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. Now the first point is, how can such as we are get into such a place? The Lord always retained the perfect consciousness of His

Father's love. How can a sinner get there? Though He had declared His Father's name to the disciples (take, for an example, the sermon on the mount), did they understand it? No; they had not the Spirit of adoption. He revealed the name and character of the Father, but their hearts did not enter into this relationship.

Christ, as man walking down here, was the Son of man which is in heaven. His person gives Him this title. He walks through this world in suffering and trial. He suffers from man for righteousness' sake, and for love's sake. But whatever the suffering through which He was passing, He always addressed God as His Father during all the time of His life in this world; every expression of His heart was of His conscious relationship to God as Father. But when He comes to the cross, it is, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Upon the cross, all that God was in His holy hatred of sin fell on Christ for our sakes; and hence it was not then a question of love and fellowship, but all else that God was, His holiness, truth, majesty, righteousness, all was against Him, because on the cross He was as the One made sin for us.

The one other thing in God's nature was His love, and that Christ necessarily could not then taste; therefore, on the cross He does not say Father, but it is, "My God, My God!" Afterwards, when just expiring, He does say, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Never was He more perfect, never more acceptable to God, than on the cross. God was a debtor in that sense to Christ; for His character was brought out as it never had been before. If God had merely swept away all men in anger, there would have been no love; if He had spared all in mercy, there would have been no righteousness. But Christ giving Himself up to death, and to the bearing of God's wrath on the cross, there is perfect righteousness against sin, and perfect love to the sinner. God was there fully glorified in all that He was.

And now—the whole question of sin being settled, and all that Christ was, proved in the resurrection—He says, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren." The Lord Jesus then comes, having been heard and answered in resurrection; and now He says, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God:" that is, He brings out both these names now; the relationship in which He had been as a Son with the Father all His life long, and the full effect of all that God was as such, which He had borne as wrath against sin, He now brings out as entirely for us. If it is a question of God's righteousness, we are made the righteousness of God in Christ. If it is His love, we are loved with the same love with which Christ was loved. Grace is reigning through righteousness by Jesus Christ. Everything that the Father can be towards sons, that He delights in—as He was to Christ, so He reveals Himself to us. Sin is [anticipatively] put away, and by the very word of Christ Himself the disciples are even brought, by the efficacy of His work of redemption, into a place along with Himself. He declares His name unto His brethren: "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father," etc.; and He puts them in this place after death and judgment have been gone through, and He is risen out of them. While Christ was upon earth He remained entirely alone, because the atonement was not made. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." But He has died, and now He can bring them into the place belonging to Himself; and that is what He is doing now. Did sin hinder it? Yes; but it is put away. Did righteousness? Yes; but it is for them and for us.

J. N. D.

(To be continued)

## Christ's Desires for the Christian: Part 2

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If we speak of the sufferings of Christ, there were two kinds of suffering, quite distinct one from the other. In one sense He went through every possible kind of suffering. He suffered from man for righteousness' sake, and He suffered from God for sin's sake. The suffering from God for sin He took for us entirely alone; He suffered it that we might not suffer it. He took it fully—drank the cup to the very dregs, and it is done with. In His sufferings for righteousness' sake, He gives us the privilege of suffering with Him. “Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” If we suffer from man for righteousness' sake, there we are with Him; but with suffering for sin we have nothing to do. He has taken it entirely alone: not one drop is left; no particle or trace of it remains for us. He took it that we might never have it.

And now, having done that, He takes another place, in which man, as man, must necessarily remain a stranger to Him. But the fact that Christ is gone up on high is the reason why I can be with Him. When He was upon earth, I could not be in any full sense with Him. Why? Because He was holy, and I was not. But when sin has been put away, and He is gone into heaven, and has taken a place there in the presence of God, He has done that by which I can draw near. He has gone into the presence of God, and gives me a title to be there (Hebrews 10:19, 20). Thus, the glory in which Christ is, which He has entered as having accomplished redemption, enables me to be with Him, instead of being a hindrance. I never could be with Him, if He had not been in this glory. He might visit us in mercy, but it is as risen from the dead and gone up on high that He gives us the place of union with Himself before God.

What He is doing now is to reveal this name of the Father to us. When He spoke to Abraham He said, “I am the Almighty God; walk before Me.” God revealed Himself in a character on which Abraham's faith was to act; it is the revelation of Himself as the One who was All-powerful, whatever might be the difficulties of the path; and Abraham was to live by faith in that name. He says to Moses, “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” Now He takes this name with Israel: He puts Himself in relation with Israel by the name of Jehovah. He was the unchanging One, who would be faithful to His word and oath, however many the changes that Israel might have to pass through. He was thus a perfect Protector; He was the Almighty One; He was Jehovah; but that is not what I want, blessed as it is in its place. I want eternal life. But He comes now with another name. The Son reveals the Father's name.

If I have found this, that the Father has sent the Son to be a Savior, and that this work is accomplished, I say He is not now merely a Faithful and Almighty Protector, or the One true God that governs the world righteously—He is interested in my salvation. He takes the place of a Father to me, if I receive His Son. I get in Christ the revelation of my place with God, and that, consequent upon the blessed truth that He has taken away the sin that shut me out from the presence of God, and has gone up before the Father, that I may have the very same place that belongs to Him as the Son of the Father. Can I possibly have more than that? Yes, there is even

more than that. In virtue of it, there is the Comforter sent down. "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." The Holy Ghost comes down because of Christ's being exalted at the right hand of God. He becomes the Spirit of adoption. "Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."

So that the place in which we find Christ thus glorified, we find the believer set in, as this righteousness presented to God. The Holy Ghost is given as that which seals me, and gives me the power and blessing of the place into which Christ has brought me. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." There is the relationship. Then there is the work, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He asks then that the Father should glorify Him, and adds, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world.... Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee." It was not merely what Messiah received from God, but what the Son had from the Father, that was made known to them. And He adds, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them," etc.

Two things you will find connected with the position in which the disciples are thus set; first, that which ministers to their joy, and then the place which they have as witnesses for Him in the world. He has communicated to them all the means of this joy: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." "Henceforth," as He said before, "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." Now He puts us in the place of sons, and as sons the words that the Father gives Him He makes known unto us. What Christ does is to bring us into the enjoyment of His own relationship and place with God. The first thing He does is to secure our being in it by this work of atonement. Then, having wrought this, the next thing is to give us the name by which we are called to know God as the Father; and accordingly He gives us the words of the Father, that we may have the joy of this place in which He has set us. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.... Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." He puts them under the shelter of the name "Holy Father." He looked for them to be kept with all the Father's tenderness; that is, they are in this world under this name of Holy Father. And then He presents these two motives to His Father for keeping them: first, "for they are Thine"; and the other is, "I am glorified in them."

Do you believe that the Lord was speaking the truth? When He says He tells us these things that we might have His joy fulfilled in ourselves, did He really mean so? I believe it. I believe that the Lord meant us to have His joy fulfilled in ourselves. If you tell me that we are poor feeble vessels to have it, that is most true; but He did not speak thus. The possession of life is not power. Power is in Christ, and in Christ alone; for the character of the new man is dependence and obedience. If you say, I have life from God, and therefore I have got power, it is not true; but if you say, I have got life from God, but I have got the temptations of Satan and the world, and all that can seduce me away from the range and exercise of this life, and you say, "Father, keep me, I want to be kept," then there will be power.

When Paul gets into the third heaven, what is the effect? When there the flesh is not puffed up; for he is there to hear things which he cannot even utter down here. But when he comes down the

flesh would use it to say that no one had ever been in the third heaven but himself. He must get that broken down; therefore the thorn is sent, which brings the consciousness of weakness where boasting might have been. We are never in danger when in the presence of God; but when we are thinking of having been there, danger is there: the thorn gives conscious weakness to the man himself. In Paul's case, we know, it was something that made his preaching contemptible. The Lord has to put us down in every way. The danger of the Christian is, that he is not consciously weak, that the flesh is not put in its place, that he thinks he can do something; but when the flesh is put down, where it had pretended to be something, then the believer can say, "When I am weak, then am I strong," and Christ is exalted. For when Paul, with all this incompetency, was the means of such blessing to others, it is quite clear that it was Christ, and not Paul, that was the strength. This is the truth that is brought out before us in 2 Corinthians 12; perfect righteousness and glory, which are ours, or the man in Christ; and then the man made nothing of, and Christ in him everything.

There is where we get the Christian complete. In both cases it is Paul; but in the one it is the man in Christ, and in the other it is Christ in the man, and the man thus made nothing of. That which the believer has on earth is not only this place in Christ in heaven, but the power of Christ in this world. While we certainly shall have the experience of what we are, at the same time the Scriptures show us always, as such, no necessity in this world for being anything else but Christ. "To me to live is Christ." The fact that the flesh is in me is no reason why I am to walk after it. The power is not in the fact that we have the life, but in exercised dependence upon Christ in whom we have got the life.

We have seen the full blessedness of this place, that we may have His joy fulfilled in ourselves; and now He goes on to their testimony before the world. "I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Here I find the Christian's place in the world: he is no more of it than Christ. He does not say, They ought not to be; but, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." As Christians deriving your life from Christ, and having your place with Christ, you are not of the world. The life, the place, you have in Christ all flows from the fact that He has given you a relationship with the Father, in virtue of which you are no more of the world than He Himself was. There is the manifesting of Christ to the world; but these duties and affections flow from a relationship that is established already. It is not as the way of getting into the relationship; but when Christ has become my life, then I must walk as He walked. To the world this becomes a testimony. Of what? What became of Christ Himself? The world would not have Him. "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee." It was as good as saying, "There is a complete breach between the world and Me."

Christ came into the world in grace, revealing the Father, and the world hated Him; and therefore He goes out of the world, and brings us into His place as gone on high. Will the world bear us any more love than it bore Him? It will not. He is there because the world would not have Him; and it is only as having entered that place by blood and death that He can say, "My Father and your Father, My God and your God." Now, He says, I will make you a witness of that. You are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world," etc.

How are we to get the character and spirit proper to us as such? It is not that we can always be in the third heaven, but that, if living the life of Christ in the power of the Spirit, we shall be manifesting it before the world, as it was with Christ Himself. He could say even as to His path down here, "The Son of man which is in heaven." Was there ever anything in Christ inconsistent with the third heaven? Therefore, my life being there, and my heart and affections, I shall walk according to that place. Where is the pathway for such a life through this world? "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them," etc. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

This is not quite all. Christ is the truth: the word of God gives the truth about everything. Do I want to know what my heart is? The word tells me. Do I want to know what God is? The word tells me. What Christ as a Savior is? What Satan and his wiles are? The word will tell me. And therefore I have the word to make all plain, when I want to go through the world which is a labyrinth for any one else; for a labyrinth it naturally must be to all, and to the infidel specially. God is love, and yet here I see such misery of every kind around me; the child of three days old agonizing perhaps through the fault of its parents; suffering and sorrow everywhere. Nobody, I say, can understand this: it is unaccountable, except as the word of God, which is truth, explains it all. Take Christ Himself; He can appeal to them and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Yet how does it end? He is obliged to confess before men that God has forsaken Him. Their hard hearts take advantage of this, and say, If God delight in Him, let Him deliver Him.

All is inexplicable; and those who would make this world, as it is, a proof of the righteous government of God, are just doing what the friends of Job did. They were saying that this world could be explained as to the present expression of God's moral government. But no; there is Job, and he is in the depth of suffering. He was very naughty, but he spoke more rightly than his friends. He says, I have seen the righteous man suffering. He wants to find God. He says, "Oh, if I could see Him! but I cannot find Him." All this, again say, is in itself inexplicable. But the moment I search into the word of God, I have got the key to it all. Take the infidel upon his own ground, and he has not a word to say: he is the least capable of any of explaining the facts that are going on every day; for they are inexplicable, except as sin has come in.

"Sanctify them through thy truth." It is the word of God applied to judge every thought and feeling that is in me. He does not say, "Sanctify them by the law," but by Thy word. Persons take the law as a rule, but you want power; you want an object that seizes your affections. What object does the law give you? Where is the thing, the One, you are to love? Where is He? Who is He? The law cannot and does not tell me, save of a judge; I have no object before my soul to give me blessed and holy affections; but the Father's word does give me this.

That is what He goes on to immediately. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Now I get something more than the word; it is Christ Himself who is the substance of all that the word speaks about. And therefore Christ says, as regards His place, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." He has gone up to glory, and there sets Himself apart as the object for our hearts. The Holy Ghost reveals Him to me, and the word is the revelation of all that is in Christ; it brings to me all that Christ is: "Sanctify them through thy truth." How? "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." I have now got an object: it is

the truth, which will judge everything that is in my heart. This it is that sanctifies me, by showing me the One whom I love, and who has said that I am going to be like Him. Christ has got hold of my heart, has given me a place with Himself, and has fitted me for it by the revelation of Himself to my heart. And that is what I find here.

And besides this place, I get the Comforter sent down, taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to me; revealing to me that He has given me what He has, that I may have it with Him, that I may be like Him, when I see Him, as He is. And now the sanctifying power is, that the Spirit takes of these things and shows them unto me. More than all, Christ Himself is mine. He is the perfect and blessed Man set apart in the presence of God; and that, transported into my heart in the living power that it has in me through the Spirit, sets me apart to God. It is the truth that sanctifies me; but if I look at what the truth is perfectly, it is Christ. We, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." "For their sakes," as our Lord says here, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

"Neither pray I for these alone" (He brings in other Christians here), "but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." He imparts to us all that He has taken as man in blessing and glory. He will have us enter into His joy while upon earth; and then I find, "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." When the Lord comes, and when the saints are displayed in the glory of Christ, and with Him, that will be the revelation to the world that we have been loved as Christ has been loved. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one: and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

But even this is not the best thing He has to give us. He goes on to say, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." While He has given us the glory of the inheritance, He puts us before the world as those who have been brought into the same glory with Himself. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." And then the world will say, These poor people, that we have despised, are loved with the same love Christ was loved with." But while all that is true and most blessed, we shall, besides, have the enjoyment of Himself. We ought to have it now. "I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." We get the present knowledge that we are loved as Jesus is loved; for He has declared the Father's name to us, and will declare it, that the love wherewith He is loved may be in us; and He in us.

This is the place in which He puts the Christian now. Christ will bring us into the glory; but even I that, in a sense, is an inferior thing, compared to the enjoyment of Christ Himself. I do not wait till then to know that I am loved as Christ is loved; I know it now; the world will know it then. All being founded upon this work that He has done, and upon His being thus in the presence of God, who puts us in this Himself, we can say, I know that I am loved as the Father loves Jesus, if Christ says it; "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Is it in you? Have you believed Jesus' word, that the Father has loved you as He loved His own Son?

It was not enough for Him to give His Son for you, but He puts you in the same place, and loves you with the same love. If we grieve the Spirit, we may not enjoy the power of it; but there is the place in which Christ has set us to stand with His Father and our Father, His God and our God, and to enjoy Him who is the truth, and who gives us the consciousness of being loved as He Himself is loved. It will be manifested before the world when He comes, but it is ours now. The Lord only give us to believe it! If we are seeking the world, that is not the Father's love, but enmity to it. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away," etc. You will find these three always opposed the one to the other—the flesh and the Spirit, the devil and the Son, the world and the Father. "All that is in the world," if our hearts seek after it, damps the enjoyment of the Father's love; for we are not of the world, even as Christ was not.

The Lord give you to know it, as it is testified of Jesus Himself, and then, as walking in His steps, and sanctified by the revelation of Himself in your heart, to enjoy the real consciousness of the blessedness of the love wherewith the Father loves you!

J. N. D.

(Concluded from page 187)

## Condemned With the World

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Q. 1 Cor. 11:32. "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."-Does "condemned with the world" mean (as some affirm) judged or criticized by the world, which, if given the cause, is ready to point the finger and say, There are these Christians! If this is not the meaning, what is? T.H.

A.-To be "condemned with the world" is to share its doom. Once we were of the world, but now, as believers, we are "not of the world." The Christian can say, "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Is there then liberty for carelessness of walk and ways? Assuredly not. We are called to holiness in every manner of behavior, because it is written, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." We are children of God, and our Father judges according to each man's work without respect of persons. Hence the call to pass the time of our sojourning in fear, knowing we have been redeemed at how great a cost!— the precious blood of Christ.

So here, the Corinthians were guilty of dissoluteness, and irreverence in the assembly, and accordingly the Lord's disciplinary hand was upon them as Son over His house. Many were weak and sickly, and some overtaken by death. For there is "sin unto death." If, therefore, we Christians are judged, it is here and not hereafter. We are chastened now of the Lord who cannot but take cognizance of every believer's ways.

From this it will be seen, how entirely beside the mark is the affirmation that the passage means "judged or criticized by the world"!

## David in Suffering and in Victory

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In Luke 24:26, 27, the risen Savior said to His disciples, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself." Do not these words afford us a warrant to expect the Holy Spirit to give us, in those sacred pages, glimpses of Him Whom, through grace, our souls love, "for he first loved us."? The view obtained of Him is often more by way of contrast than of type, as we may see in the subject of our paper.

The circumstances which led to David's obtaining possession of Ziklag are not to his credit. David had shone in chapter 26, in his sparing Saul's life, "for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD'S anointed, and be guiltless?" he said (ver. 9). And "Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David; thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail" (ver. 25)- the enemy himself being made to bear witness of what Jehovah would do by David whom He had used to deliver Israel from the hand of Goliath, and who had also anointed him to be king in the room of Saul. It was, therefore, a giving way to sad unbelief when David said in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul" (27: 1) and so went to Achish, king of Gath, to request a place in some town in the country to dwell therein. Then "Achish gave him Ziklag that day; wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day." The full year and four months spent by David in the Philistines' land reveal no such luster as attached to the time he and his followers had spent in the wilderness. Psalm 99:8 says, "Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though Thou tookest vengeance of their inventions," and this in principle holds good today. Compare 1 Cor. 11:31, 32, "But if we discerned ourselves we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world" (R.V.).

So in the case before us, "It came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire." Amalek was the determined foe of Israel (and represents the power of Satan over the flesh), meeting them when they came out of Egypt, and smiting the hindmost, all that were feeble, when they were faint and weary. And "thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven, thou shalt not forget" (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). Better still, however, when "Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword" (Ex. 17) "the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua for I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven."

Now the Amalekites had taken captive the women that were in Ziklag, "but our captivity by nature was far worse, as dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2), some walking perhaps grossly "fulfilling the desires of the flesh," others morally "of the mind," but all "by nature children of wrath." The apostle even speaks of himself as once "carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14).

No wonder was it, in view of all that had taken place, that “David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.” And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, the people to whom he had been so kind. For when he was in the cave of Adullam, “every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them.” And to Abiathar he had been able, notwithstanding all his wanderings, to say, “Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life; but with me thou shalt be in safeguard” (1 Samuel 22).

But how David's distress pales in view of David's greater Son and Lord, as given us in Matthew 26, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!” Jesus the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who hid not His face from shame and spitting, and never before had asked for exemption from any sorrow, now making request, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt,” and the second time, “O my Father, if this may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done,” and again a third time, “saying the same words.” We adore, but do not wonder at the words, for the Holy One was to be made sin for us, was to bear our judgment, and in that awful hour to know His abandonment by God!

David could seek God only by the ephod—what a contrast! and this he did having encouraged himself “in the LORD his God.” In return David got more than he asked; for, told to “pursue,” he was assured that he should certainly overtake them and “without fail recover all.” This result he had not definitely solicited, though doubtless he hoped for it. If he was thus answered, there was One “who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him out of (R.V.) death, and was heard in that he feared (or, because of his piety); though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect (or, having been perfected) he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Hebrews 5:7-9). David's lack of obedience brought him into his sorrow; on the other hand, our Lord's perfect obedience spared Him not unutterable anguish and grief. David was used of God to accomplish a temporary deliverance; the Lord accords an eternal salvation to all who own His adorable person and work. How right it is that He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied! Blessed be His name.

The death of the Lord Jesus may be viewed in varied ways. “By the grace of God he tasted death for everything (or one)” (Hebrews 2:9). “Having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself” (or itself-the Fullness) “whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20). As the living bread which came down from heaven, He said, “The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51); and again, “He died for all” (2 Cor. 5:15). Yet whilst there is this world-wide aspect, there is, nevertheless, what is special and peculiar. Caiaphas prophesied “that Jesus should die for the nation” (John 11:51), and further we know that “Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25).

But to revert to David in the scene before us. There were his two wives to be rescued, and in God's gracious counsels an Egyptian (type of a worldling) to be blessed. The names of his wives are suggestive. Ahinoam (“the beauty of the brother”)—may be taken to represent Israel, and Abigail (“joy of the father”), the bride of the Lamb. Jehovah shall inherit Judah his portion in the

holy land, and shall choose Jerusalem again (Zechariah 2:12). "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 54:5). How fittingly Abigail pictures the one, now being gathered out to Christ's name in the hour of His rejection here, is exquisitely set forth in David sending his servants to take her to him to wife. "And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord." This was true humility, and quite consistent with the implicit obedience she yielded to David's word, acting in a way suited to one who was to be his wife, for she "hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her, and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife" (1 Samuel 25:41, 42).

On his journey after the foe, 200 abode behind, being so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor (meaning "good news"). It is not given to all in the behalf of Christ, as to the Philippian saints, "not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake," but it is written for all in Romans 8:17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." This way in which David's servants dealt with the Egyptian is worthy of note; they "brought him to David." So of Andrew, in a later day, it is recorded that he brought his brother Simon to Jesus (John 1). David's servants further "gave him bread and he did eat; and they made him drink water." So again, Jesus said unto the multitudes that followed Him from Tiberias to Capernaum, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). Further, David's servants gave to this young man of Egypt, "a piece of a cake of figs, and two cluster of raisins; and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him, for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any water, three days and three nights." Truly God's grace provides both healing and nourishment, and it appeals to us in our need, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." "Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." David now probes the young man and said unto him, "To whom belongest thou, and whence art thou?" and receives as answer, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick." Such indeed are the rewards of Satan's service. Take Gehazi and Judas as examples.

But further comes out the raid that had been made on Judah, and the burning of Ziklag with fire. Now, all is out, and David is prepared to trust the one who had been his open and avowed enemy. He who speaks of the heaven as His throne and the earth as His footstool, and Who charges His angels with folly, says "To this man will I look even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2). Oh, the blessing of being a repentant sinner! For "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

But the Egyptian was not so ready to trust David, and needed his assurances. And are not divine assurances: given to the Lord's sheep? Hear these words of Jesus, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man (or, devil, we can safely say) pluck them out of my hand. My Father who gave them me is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28, 29). The man is now in the train of the victorious David, who comes upon his enemies in their pleasures, and so it will be with the world when the Lord comes in

judgment of His enemies. For “when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thessalonians 5). David gains a spoil for himself now which he shares with his friend. Our Lord in John 17 says, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (vers. 4, 5). Then, in verse 22, “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one.” Some of David's followers begrudged that they who had remained behind should partake of the spoil, but David peremptorily ruled it otherwise, saying, “Who will hearken unto you in this matter?” So Paul, when speaking of the end of his course, and saying, “Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day,” adds, for the comfort of those who have not gone through such manifold tribulations, “and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8). May we not then be ashamed before Him at His coming!

W. N. T.

## A Daysman

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In what state did the Lord Jesus find men when He came? He found them “all under sin.” And what does Job say of himself as being in this condition? “If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean, yet thou shalt plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both. Let him take his fear away, then would I speak; but it is not so with me.”

Now what do I find in Christ when He came? I find “a daysman” —the very thing that Job wanted. Was there fear in Christ? Was anyone afraid of Christ? If a sinner was ever so burdened, he could go to Christ and then to God. I find that though my sins hindered me from going to God, they could not hinder God from coming to me!

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—1

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“The mental habit of him who imagines that Balaam's ass spoke, in no respect differs from the mental habit of him who imagines that a Madonna of wood and stone winked; and the one, who says that God's Church makes him believe what he believes, and the other who says that God's Word makes him believe what he believes, are for the philosopher perfectly alike in not really and truly knowing, when they say 'God's Church' and 'God's Word' what it is they say, or whereof they affirm.”-Extract from Matthew Arnold. (Sent to L.H.H. with the question, “What think you?”)

What think I? —that Matthew Arnold has betrayed himself badly by appealing to philosophy, and yet confounding two entirely different mental phases—superstition and faith. Superstition is “the subject of the mind of man, in the things of God, to that for subjection to which there is no warrant from divine testimony.” Faith is the reception of a divine testimony into the soul. The object of our superstitious reverence gets between our souls and God: faith puts us into immediate connection with God.

If then faith is as above stated—the reception of divine testimony into the soul—what can he who has never experienced it know of such faith? He can, and does, know nothing, and herein lies the futility of reasoning on questions of faith. I have put down certain evidences of the inspiration of the Bible, but I say at the same time that we rely not on proofs such as these, but on the testimony within us which is the corollary to the “reception of divine testimony in the soul.”

The major part of what I have written I knew nothing of before you challenged my belief, and yet knowing it now more fully, do I believe in the inspiration of the Bible more? No, my faith remains as before. It will not convince you; no reasoning can convince in matters of faith. Our Lord said, when here on the earth, “O Father, ... I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (Luke 10:21). Because even as a little child, receive the truth as a child, and then will come to you without any reasoning, knowledge of the truth of the Bible. We cannot explain this divine mystery, but it is none the less real.

Do not think from what I have said, that the proofs I have given are not cogent or adequate— they prove amply the inspiration of the Bible, but they are proofs which will not be received by a hostile critic, whose intention is to pick holes in the arguments.

### WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible consists of two parts, the Old Testament containing thirty-nine books, and the New Testament containing twenty-seven books. Now, the first criticism that is sure to be raised is, “Why do you select these sixty-six books, and declare them to be direct communications from God, and yet reject the other books having similar claims—the Apocrypha—as entirely man-made?”

At first sight the selection certainly seems arbitrary. It is asserted that Jerome in the fourth century separated the books in two series, and that his judgment has been accepted as correct through all subsequent time. Now we have ample testimony to the fact that the early Christian fathers and the

early Christian church did not receive the books, which were thus separated from the canon before the date of Jerome's translations, in the preface to which he states that they do not form part of the Bible. Athanasius, Origen, Eusebius, Rufinus and others bear similar testimony. The Apostolic Constitutions, and early Christian testimony, pronounced against them. Christ Himself never used or quoted from them, as He did so often from the Old Testament.

Now the Apocrypha, in some of its books at least, gives the later history of the Jews, and therefore the Jews, if any, would be the first to recognize them. On the contrary, they have not been found in the Hebrew tongue at all, and Josephus, the Jewish historian, definitely states that they were not recognized.

But apart from any external evidence at all, who, having read the Apocrypha, would be daring enough to uphold its claims to a place in Holy Writ? The following quotations from 2 Maccabees will suffice to show their trivial character

"All these things, I say, being declared by Jason the Cyrenian in five books, we have tried to abbreviate into one: for, considering the multitude of books, and the difficulty of those who wish to occupy themselves with historical accounts by reason of the multitude of events, we have taken care, for those who wish to read, that there should be pleasure for the mind; for the studious, that they commit it more easily to memory; for all who read, that profit may be conferred on them. And for ourselves, indeed, who have undertaken this work of abbreviating, we have taken on ourselves no light labor, but indeed a business full of vigils and toils" (2 Macc. 2:23-26).

"With these things I will make an end of the discourse, and if indeed well, and as suited the history, this I myself would wish: but if less worthily, it is to be pardoned me. For as drinking always wine or always water is unwholesome to us, but to use both alternately is delightful, so to those that read, if the discourse be always exact, it will not be pleasant. Here, therefore, it will be closed" (2 Macc. 15:37-39).

With this total absence of divine dignity in the contents of the Apocrypha, could you with any truth assert that the choice of books now included in the Bible was in any sense arbitrary? The Jews knew far more than we do of the Old Testament, and they had no doubt very good contemporary reasons for not accepting these books. But Christ did not recognize them: that is enough for me.

We may deal, then, with the Bible as a unique series of books, which have a place of their own alone amongst the books in the hands of man.

## BELIEVING AND REASONING

Let us return, for a moment to the question of reasoning and faith. You say, "I must know that the Bible is the Word of God before I believe it," and I say, "You cannot." When you have believed, you will know that the Bible is the word of God—that is, you receive faith. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Human reason cannot pronounce on the authority of the word of God, but "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (1 John 5:10). Believing, you may examine the external evidences, and you will find them satisfactory; but this will not produce faith. It may be useful in answering the objections made by men who believe not; but the authority of God's word cannot be subject to human intelligence. "The law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul. The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth

understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

Consider the word of God as light. I am asked to show that something is light. I cannot prove light. It requires eyes to see it. If a man has no eyes, he cannot see it, or know what it is. Nor can anyone tell him what it is, or make himself understood in speaking of it. If you have eyes, you know that you see the light. So it is with the word of God: if you do not see it to be the word of God, it is a proof that you lack moral eyes, i.e., faith. If you had eyes, you would ask for no proof, for you would see that it is so. A blind man does not want proof of light before he has eyes to see it—it is impossible; he must have eyes first, and then he will enjoy light for himself. So that until a man has faith, we cannot prove to him that the Bible is the word of God; and when he has faith, then, as in the case of light, it is a self-evident fact, needing no proof. A man asks me how I can prove honey to be sweet. I say, If you cannot taste it, you must remain ignorant.

Have I then made my point clear?—that faith in Christ must come before believing the inspiration of the Scriptures. Without faith you cannot see the true beauty of the Scriptures any more than a blind man can see a beautiful view. Jesus says “Why do ye not understand my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word” (John 8:43); and Paul— “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit: they are foolishness to him” (1 Cor. 2:14).

Not only is it impossible to prove this question without faith, but the effect of reasoning on the subject is to destroy faith. If Scripture has to be proved by reason, God is not believed because He has spoken, i.e., there is no true faith. If I believe A because B has said that what A has said is true, I do not believe A at all. I come to a logical conclusion from other evidence that the statement is right—I don't believe the person. Similarly, in reasoning about the Scriptures, I may come to the logical conclusion that it must be the word of God, but this is not faith, though faith is almost certain to follow from such a conclusion, but it must be realized that reasoning cannot give faith.

#### THE CLAIM OF SCRIPTURE TO ITS OWN INSPIRATION

As we shall see later, the authority of Scriptural testimony is established firmly by the Scriptures themselves, the authority being independent of its reception by the hearer. “The words that I have spoken, they shall judge him in the last day” ( John 10:11-48). These “words” are found in the Scriptures, and the Lord states hereby that they are endued with moral evidence, powerful enough to convict a man as guilty who does not receive the testimony, and who thereby treats God as a liar. Unbelief cannot destroy the authority of the Word.

N.B. — “Inspiration,” says Prof. Jowett (who wrote in the “Essays and Reviews” on this subject) “is the idea of Scripture which we gain from the knowledge of it.” If this is indeed so, then our inquiry may well be at an end, for the Scripture teems with allusions to its own inspiration. Quotations without number could be given in support of this-many will be given later on. But it is only necessary to refer here to one, a very famous one, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16—mistranslated in the R.17.). Is not this sufficient evidence? To me it is ample.

Now, if there is no inspiration, the words spoken or written by the various writers must have had one meaning only, viz., that intended by the writer as he used it. So, indeed, says Prof. Jowett, has the Scripture only one meaning— “First, it may be laid down that scripture has one meaning—the meaning which it has to the mind of the prophet or evangelist who first uttered or wrote, and to the hearers or readers who first received it.” Exactly two pages farther on he says, however, “All that

the prophet meant may not have been consciously present to his mind: there were depths which to himself also were but half revealed." Apart from the absurd inconsistency, which shows that inwardly the man is not satisfied that all was clear to the prophet, it is important to note that the unbeliever in divine inspiration himself has to admit that all that the prophets wrote cannot have been understood by them. And if this is so, how then can he escape from saying that the prophet wrote under inspiration? Can you conceive the man concocting a sentence, not understanding what he means by it, and yet writing it down—unless guided by the hand of God? It is inconceivable, and the conclusion is forced upon us that an external agency must have been at work—God guided the pen.

## THE WORDS INSPIRED

Prof. Jowett states that the language of the Bible is in no sense divine—words are used in their ordinary simple use according to men's ideas. It is not so. In divine things we must know the thing to understand the word. For example— "ye must be born again" (John 3:7). If I take this in the "simple universal meaning," I shall stumble into Nicodemus' nonsense. The word Son applied to Jesus Christ—has it the simple universal sense? "The Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). What does  $\lambda\gamma\omicron\varsigma$  mean here? "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin"(Romans 6:11); and "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3); -what absurdity to take "simple universal meanings" here! In everything referring to God, the words must have a meaning only to be known by those who have the divine key, for in the Bible we have human words to express divine things.

If the Lord's words had only a literal meaning, how then could the woman of Samaria have missed it in that beautiful conversation with the Lord? (John 4) If the words have an inner hidden meaning, to whom then shall we ascribe this meaning? To the writer? No, for in many cases the force of the writing was not seen until years after; besides there is the impossibility of man's mind being capable of writing thus. This inner meaning must be of Divine origin.

"But," says Prof. Jowett, "if words have more than one meaning, they may have any meaning." An absurd statement on the face of it. If an old coin has more than its face-value, does it follow that it has infinite value? Besides, as we have already stated, the inner meaning is apparent only to him who had the divine key, and with that he cannot err.

Let me take an example to show the existence of double meaning. When Christ died it is said that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. If you assert that this statement has only one meaning—the history of the fact—you are utterly and entirely wrong. The rending is ascribed to Christ's death—the veil was the sign that God was hidden and could not be approached by man: now, by Christ's death, the way is open to all believers to come to Him. The whole mighty change in dispensation was marked in it, and the full power of redemption in Christ's death. These senses are indeed ascribed to it in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (6:19; 10:20, etc.). Thus the "simple universal meaning" robs the Bible of half its beauty, but the existence of these hidden meanings is a sure sign of Divine origin.

Now those who do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible believe that the writers received revelations from God, but that they communicated them in their own way: there can thus be room for mistakes in writing. In other words, the apostles had divine testimony as a basis for their faith,

but that since then, there has been nothing to rest on but human testimony! Now what does Paul say? "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are given to us of God" (1 Cor. 2:11, 12). This is a clear statement of the fact that things were revealed by the Spirit to the apostles. Were the apostles mistaken? No, the apostle proves that he could know nothing apart from revelation. Revelation as a fact, therefore, must universally be admitted. But note another statement in the passage quoted, namely, that without divine communication there can be no faith. God alone knows divine things, and He alone can make them known; man must remain ignorant unless God reveals them, as He does by His Spirit, i.e., by revelation.

Now if there can be no faith without divine communication, then we can have no faith if we have no such divine testimony. If the Bible is not inspired, our only testimony is human, on which faith cannot rest. Where then is our faith? It cannot exist; and yet "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). Is there not a fault in our reasoning? Yes there is; the fault lies in assuming the Bible is not inspired.

Continuing the passage above quoted, in which Paul states that divine matters have been revealed to him, he then states precisely that the Holy Ghost who revealed to him, also speaks through him— "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth" (1 Cor. 13). Could the idea of inspiration be stated more definitely? We have shown that revelation without inspiration is absurd, and now we see a definite claim to inspiration, by one whom all admit to have had revelations from God. Of his competency and authority in speaking we shall say more later.

## THE CLAIMS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Turning now for a little to the Old Testament, those who believe in revelation without inspiration in the New Testament, here state that they believe as infallibly true what the prophets say after "Thus saith the Lord." Indeed, how could it be otherwise? Where the writers 'act as reporters' of God's statement, we have no alternative but to believe: but I wish to point out the absurdity in this belief in 'partial revelation' Throughout the Pentateuch the historic narratives contain very commonly— "And the LORD spake unto Moses," adding, "Speak unto Aaron" or "to the children of Israel, and say unto them." Are these statements true? If we believe the prophets we must also believe here. So in Deuteronomy we find, "These be the words which Moses spake unto the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 1), and then, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2). Is it true? If so, all the commandments, which are inseparable, in the last four books, from the history, and the history also with them, are the word of God. If not, there is no revelation in the Pentateuch at all. The whole must stand or fall together.

'No,' says the higher critic, 'I do not believe the literal truth of the Pentateuchal statements.' What, then, think you of a system which believes that the words of the prophets to the Jews in warning, and in statements occupied with their history and future as a nation to be a revelation from God, and yet rejects the account of the fall of man, the promises, the law, the sacrificial ordinances, the judgment of the world (all of infinitely more importance to us) as no revelation—as a fiction of man's invention? It is absurd on the face of it.

But what again of the man who tries to steer a midway course by believing as revelations all those parts of the Old Testament which start with "Thus saith the LORD," or "The LORD spake unto Moses, saying," or "The word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah, saying," or some similar phrases, and rejects the rest as doubtful of human origin alone? Not only do the revelations from the Lord confirm the historical narrative, but the absurdity of the system must be self-evident. No, the theory of partial revelation will find many difficulties in its way both in the Old and the New Testaments.  
[.L. H. H.]

(To be continued)

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—2

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### THEORIES OF INSPIRATION

Prof. Jowett objects that there are various views of inspiration, all contradictory, and therefore if even those who believe inspiration and teach it, do not really understand what they mean by it, are we not justified in saying it is an elusive—a non-existent phantasm? Now this argument has no force whatever. When we sit down to read the Bible, we believe it to be inspired. In what way it was inspired matters nothing. Faith accepts that it is inspired, and is satisfied with that.

Now the disputes of the doctors of theology on inspiration are futile. Some hold, says Prof. Jowett, an inspiration of superintendence, others an inspiration of suggestion. I believe both. When the apostles wrote as eye-witnesses of events, the Spirit directed, taking care that they wrote according to His mind, putting down what He saw fit, leaving out what He wished to be left out: it is the inspiration of superintendence. Then there is the inspiration of suggestion—the history of creation, or prophecy, the Revelation in part, for instance. Here the Spirit guides more directly by revelation, as the writers were writing of things of which in themselves they knew nothing. And Jesus Christ expressly promised both: “The Spirit of truth will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself, but what he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will show you the things to come” (John 16:13). Also in another place: “He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance” (John 14:26). The views therefore are not contradictory but complementary.

### THE UNITY OF THE BIBLE

One of the most striking proofs of inspiration is the fact that the Bible is a collection of books by different authors, written at different times, the first and last books differing by a period of many hundreds of years. And yet there is a perfect unity of design running right through the whole Bible, the separate parts being perfectly linked up with each other, so that it is evidently the work of one mind producing the harmonious whole—even the work of the Spirit of God. The various authors lived and died, and yet the true Author remains from the first book to the last, all being fitted in according to His mind. I hope to show later, more in detail, how the various parts fit in one with the other, each filling its place so naturally that, until removed, one is not aware how important it is. The existence of a Master Mind guiding the hand of the various writers must be admitted by all serious students of Scripture.

### VERBAL INSPIRATION

Now, not only do we hold the inspiration of the Bible, but also the verbal inspiration of it. If the words are not infallible—that is, the original Greek and Hebrew (in copying, mistakes doubtless have crept in) —then we cannot rest with security on the statements of the Bible. But if the Holy Spirit inspired the men to write what they did, surely we must believe that He inspired the words also: we have seen that the Lord promised that the Spirit should guide them into all truth: the inspiration of superintendence cannot allow verbal inaccuracies. But what has the Bible itself to say on this question? Paul, as we have seen, emphatically states that the words he uses are those

given him by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 2:13). Then again, the Lord Himself said, "When they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak" (Matthew 10:19). This is the promise of true verbal inspiration, and if in speech, how much more in writing! Again, on the day of Pentecost they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4): this is an example of the fulfillment of the promise quoted above.

We must believe in verbal inspiration, or no inspiration, but it is blasphemous to suppose the Spirit guiding the apostles and writers, and yet overlooking mistakes. Indeed, not only must we believe, on the Lord's testimony (and what testimony could be more sure?) that the apostles were given what to speak, but also that the Spirit Himself spoke and not the apostles. "For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh through you" (Matthew 10:20). What a terrible thing, then, to believe verbal inaccuracies!

### THE STYLES OF THE VARIOUS WRITERS

At first sight it may seem impossible to have verbal inspiration, and yet have, as is undoubtedly found, variety of style. But this may be made clear from a musical analogy. If I sit down to a piece of music and play it on a certain piano, not allowing a single discordant note to come in, the tone or—scientifically—timbre of the instrument remains unchanged. The tone was settled in the making of the instrument, and it remains passive so that, as I will, harmonious or discordant notes will be played, and the music will have a distinctive sound due to the tone of the instrument. Played on another piano, the tone being different, the music will have a different sound, although both pianos were tuned correctly. Similarly, the style of the writer remains distinctive whilst the choice of words remains entirely in the hands of the guiding Spirit.

### THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE

It is stated that the Bible cannot be inspired, as the language is inconsistent with modern science. It cannot be too often stated that the Bible is not a scientific treatise, and since that is so, an inspired instructor will only speak in the common language of men. An inspired man would say the sun rises, like any other. It is the grossest and flattest stupidity to question this—to think that the Holy Ghost, speaking to immortal souls, would stop to explain astronomy, or to avoid current expressions: the whole effect of what He said would be destroyed. Apart from that, do men stare at you as ignorant if you speak of the rising of the sun, unless you are addressing an astronomical society?

But remember at the same time, the Lord would not sanction popular errors. For example, He would not use the phoenix, as Clement did, as a proof of the resurrection. Prof. Jowett says that chemistry and geology have proved the Bible wrong, but when the whole aspect of all the sciences changes so completely in so few years, who is to say what are scientific facts, and what will be contradicted in a few years' time? But even apart from that, I say, when God has spoken, let Him "be true, and every man a liar"(Romans 3:4).

### THE VALUE OF SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE OF INSPIRATION

Now it is proposed to adduce certain internal evidences of inspiration from the Scriptures them-selves, and in doing this it is necessary to make a few preliminary remarks. We may take it

that if the writers declare themselves to be inspired, their evidence is sufficient: is this so? Ordinarily, it would not be—it would be merely begging the question: this case is certainly unique, but to be on the safe side, we may take up one position which is unassailable. That position is the authority of the Son of God, which none can consistently call in question. If we can show that He states that the Old Testament Scriptures are inspired, then it must be acknowledged to be unassailably true.

Our next inquiry must be whether the Lord states anything as to the power conferred on the apostles, and here we must take the Evangelists as historical writers, and they are as much to be believed as any biographers. If He shows that the apostles were endued with power by Him, then their own statements as to their infallibility must equally be accepted. With these few remarks it will be seen that our statements are perfectly logical when we adduce Scriptural evidence of its own inspiration.

Now it is also evident that inspiration of part involves the inspiration of the whole. In Cor. 14:36, 37, Paul definitely states that he is speaking “the commandments of God,” as all acknowledge. “But,” he says, “if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” Will anyone say that the apostle, acting in the same character, and addressing himself in the same manner, in virtue of his apostolic authority to the Romans, is less inspired than when he addresses the Corinthians? Such argument deserves no other refutation than “if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” To say that God has willed that the faith of the Corinthians should rest on divine inspiration, and that of the Romans on a human basis, deserves no serious answer.

We will deal with the inspiration of the Old Testament and of the New Testament separately as far as possible, though many of the references are applicable to the whole Bible.

The inspiration of the Old Testament is more directly stated, for the prophets and writers constantly use the authoritative expression, “Thus saith Jehovah.”

The inspiration of the New Testament is different: here the Holy Ghost dwells in the writers, who speak by Him, and do not therefore so often state their authority.

Finally, to those who would limit the truth and inspiration of the Bible to those passages which definitely state their inspiration, I say that I have nothing but contempt for those who would turn the Bible to a checkered patch-work of inspired and non-inspired portions, following one after the other. It is the foolish suggestion of those who unexpectedly find themselves in a wholly untenable position.

L. H. H.

(Continued from page 232)

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—3

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### THE WITNESS OF CHRIST TO THE INSPIRATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Our first task must be, as we have stated above, to ascertain the teaching of the Son of God with regard to the Old Testament scriptures.

But let me first lay down this principle of faith, to which all true Christians will adhere with the utmost tenacity: that is, that Christ did not “succumb to popular opinion” in any question whatever. Our higher critic tells us that Moses did not write the Pentateuch: and to explain the fact that Christ speaks of Moses as the writer of those books, he makes the shameful suggestion that Christ allowed popular opinion to have its way with Him (though some would even go so far as to say, blasphemously, that He knew no better). Put bluntly, our higher critic states that Christ, not only once, but throughout His life, deliberately made false statements about the authorship of the Pentateuch. Such a suggestion needs no refutation to those who know anything of the character of Christ, as revealed in Scripture itself. Was He afraid of the popular opinion about the scribes and Pharisees? Did He not with all boldness pronounce most bitterly against them? Why, then, should He “succumb to popular opinion” on the question of authorship of the Pentateuch? And, finally, not only why should He, but could He?

Now we can divide the Lord's testimony to Old Testament into four groups, or classes.

### THE WRITERS NAMED

(1) He mentions several of the writers by name, and ascribes to them in this capacity an authority which could only be conceded to one inspired. To the cleansed leper he says: “offer the gift that Moses commanded” (Matthew 8:4); and again, when asked about divorce, He says, “What did Moses command you?” (Mark 10:3); putting Moses into the place of authority, He speaks of Moses' seat in the tabernacle: “the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat” (Matthew 23:2). He speaks of Moses giving them the law: “Did not Moses give you the law?” (John 19). When quoting this book, He expressly speaks of Isaiah the prophet: “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet.” (Matthew 8:17). He also speaks of his prophesying, “Well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying” (Matthew 15:7); and of his prophecy, “In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias” (Matthew 13:14). The Lord recognizes David as an inspired prophet: “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord?” (Matthew 22:43), and repeatedly quotes the Psalms as prophetic...which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables” (Matthew 13:35; Psalm 78:2) and “Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone that the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner (Matthew 21:42; Psalm 118:22)? He refers to Daniel and Jonah as prophets: “desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet” (Matthew 24:15) and “the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matthew 16:4). He speaks of the writing of Zechariah as authoritative: “All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd” (Matthew 26:31; Zechariah 13:7). What then? Those whom the Son of God counts as authorities, shall we despise them? Shall we call the story of Jonah a myth, and the prophecy of Daniel the writing of an impostor?

Shall we affirm that Moses was not the writer of the Pentateuch when the Lord asserts that he was?

#### THE SCRIPTURES WERE TO BE READ

(2) He refers to Old Testament Scriptures with the question. “Have ye not read?” — “Have ye not read that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female” (Matthew 19:4)? and “Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying: I am the God of Abraham...” (Matthew 22:31)? Christ thus intimated that if they had studied these scriptures, they would have ascertained the will of God on the subjects about which they had asked Him. If the Old Testament taught them on any subject, that was sufficient warrant for them to accept the teaching as that of God. Is it not also sufficient warrant for you?

#### THE STANDARD OF TRUTH

He refers to a definite collection of writings, knowledge of which protects against error in matters of religion. Thus He reproves the Sadducees for neglecting the Scriptures: “Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures (τὰς γραφάς), nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29). Again, He commends the study of them as having the power of conveying eternal life. “Search the Scriptures, (ἔρευνετε τὰς γραφάς), for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39). Certain scholars would translate this: “Ye search the scriptures,” and whether this be correct or not does not alter the sense that the practice was commended; for our Lord proceeds to declare that the Scriptures testify of Him as the Messiah, and if so, who can avoid the conclusion that they are inspired? The very numerous passages in the Psalms and Prophets referring to the Messiah cannot have been written by man, who then knew nothing of Him, and conceived of Him as a mighty King rather than the lowly Jesus. On another occasion, when convincing them of the guilt incurred by rejecting Him, He asks: “Did ye never read in the Scriptures (ἐν ταῖς γραφάς), the stone which the builders rejected (Matthew 21:42; Psalm 118:22)?” implying that that passage was ample evidence of the folly of rejecting Him.

#### THE WORD OF GOD

Our Lord speaks of the Old Testament in the 'singular as the Scripture, ἡ γραφή— “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said” (John 7:38), and “Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David?” (John 7:42), and “that the scripture might be fulfilled” (John 17:12). He vindicates its authority as the word of God: “Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him, etc.” (John 10:34, 36). Here the Scripture is definitely called the word of God, and it is further stated that it cannot be broken (οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι.). Its authority cannot be called in question; it must be received and treated as coming from God.

From these and other passages which might be given, it is evident that our Lord fully admitted the inspired authority of the Old Testament. Inspiration is not taught in so many words—that would not be characteristic of His teaching, but it is implied clearly in many of His discourses. In many cases His appeals rest upon the Old Testament writings, and without them would lose all their force. In defense: the opponents of inspiration are compelled to adopt the abominable hypothesis of accommodation, spoken of previously as inconsistent with the integrity and derogatory to the dignity of our Redeemer.

## ITS USE AGAINST SATAN

Not only did our Lord use the Old Testament to refute His earthly adversaries, but we find that He quoted scripture, and effectively too, when tempted of Satan. “The devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written” (Luke 4:3, 4.), and again, “If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written” (Luke 4:7, 8), and thirdly, “Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God” (Luke 4:12). The devil was unable to resist the word of God: if that which the Lord quoted were only the word of man, how would that have troubled Satan? Is he not greater than man? But, you will say, Satan himself quoted scripture. Yes, but he misquoted it. He quoted inappositely. Satan's quotation was a right one, that is, had the Lord cast Himself down, no harm would have befallen Him, but the quotation did not advise anyone to seek danger. That Satan was able to quote scripture ineffectively is no proof that it is uninspired. Even higher critics quote scripture ineffectively, but it does not alter the character of the scripture in the slightest degree.

Now if the use of scripture correctly was a safe shield from the wiles of Satan, can it not be used by you as a safe and infallible guide? Can you not admit that it is indeed the word of God-

“sharper than any two-edged sword” (Hebrews 4:12)?

## THE PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES

We will now consider the Lord's statements as to the truth of the prophets.

(1) The prophets spoke of Christ, and all that was written must be fulfilled. What could be more authoritative? Who could expect a clearer statement of the integrity of prophetic writings? “All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

“If ye believe not his [i.e. Moses'] writings, how shall ye believe my words” (John 5:47)? Here the Lord put the Old Testament scriptures on equal authority with His own words!

“The law and the prophets were until John and it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fall” (Luke 16:16, 17). Note that an unwritten law is no law: if there is a secret law unknown to the public, who is to blame the public for ignorance and transgression of such a law? The law is written in the Bible, and here we have an emphatic statement of the importance of and truth of the law.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead” (Luke 16:31). Moses and the prophets spoke with equal authority with one who had seen all and returned from the dead to tell man. Is not this another way of stating that their writings are absolutely and literally true?

Well, then, we must accept Moses and the prophets as true, this being taught by the Lord in the strongest possible language, and since they are so infallibly true, can we believe them to be human writers only? can anything human be infallible? No, never. But since they are infallible, let us see what they say themselves.

“Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken” (Jeremiah 13:15), says Jeremiah. He deliberately disdains his statements as his own, saying that they are the Lord's.

“Balaam took up his parable, and said... He hath said which heard the words of God” (Numbers 24:15, 16): similar statements are found in Numbers 23, such as “The Lord met Balaam and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak and say thus” (Numbers 23:16). Balaam then in both actions and speech claims the authority of God. If Balaam's ass never spoke, that chapter is a deliberate lie, and a lie recorded in the name of the Lord. You do not deny the sayings of the Lord recorded in these books, but you deny that Balaam's ass spoke, because physiologically it is impossible. If that chapter is a lie, what reason have we to believe the following chapters? If we do not believe these chapters, then we have no right to believe or anyhow to rest on the remainder of the book. All is by the same author, and one who is so daring a deceiver in one place will certainly not be infallible in other parts of his book. Take out Numbers from the Pentateuch, and the rest of the Pentateuch need not be believed: not only is the author the same, but the statements also to a large extent overlap.

What then? Our knowledge of the Law of God rests on a foundation in which innumerable holes can be picked—we need not believe all, some parts are certainly wrong, and others—well, possibly they are all right. How utterly absurd a conclusion we have come to by logical steps! I know that few will go as far as this, but logically, if the first step is taken, the others must follow. And, remember, all these results are because one cannot believe that Balaam's ass spoke! How futile!

But to return. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other writers use repeatedly the expression “thus saith the Lord,” “the word of the Lord concerning”; “the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,” and similar phrases. Do you want examples? Jeremiah uses the expression, “saith the Lord” no less than 173 times, and Ezekiel, 206 times. So one might run through all the prophets (and the historical books too), and find almost everything based on the declarations of the Lord, and surely even the most searching of critics—apart from open infidels—will accept His statements as in-fallible.

#### THE CHARACTER OF PROPHECY

Now, not only do the prophets state themselves to be inspired of God, but the very character of their prophecy shows it. They predict a time which has not come even yet, besides many things that have been fulfilled in the Messiah. Whence then, did they obtain this prophecy unless by inspiration?

The early prophecies declare that the order of the inhabited world was all arranged in respect of Israel: “When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel” (Deuteronomy 32:8). Isaiah shows that Israel should be given up for a long period, yet preserved in a remnant: “Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed. Then, said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate. And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return (Isaiah 6:10-13).”

Isaiah also shows that the cause of their being laid aside is their rejection of Him, and promises fullest restoration. This is found in Isaiah (chapter 1.), of which only a small part can be given: "Which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves.... Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? when I called, was there none to answer" (vers. 1, 2). Hosea declares that they shall remain many days desolate, without true God or false, but shall seek Jehovah in the end: "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king" (Hosea 3:4, 5). Micah declares that they will insult the Judge of Israel, born in Bethlehem, and therefore be given up: "they shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek... therefore will he give them up" (Micah 5:1-3).

All this has been given to show that there is a great plan in God's mind respecting Israel settled beforehand, and revealed, in part at least, to the prophets. Can the student state seriously, then, that these writings are merely human? All the statements have been verified by the state of the Jews consequent on Christ's coming to them beforehand all was inexplicable; now we can understand it better from the explanations given in the New Testament.

The Old Testament speaks of the coming of the Messiah and then judgment. But the blessings promised under the Messiah did not have their fulfillment at His coming as they rejected Him: they will be fulfilled at a later day at the introduction of the millennium, which is to be preceded by judgment. The New, in quoting the Old, quotes only that part relating to the day of grace, and stops short of the judgment. For example, in Matthew 21:5, the quotation: "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek and sitting on an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass," leaves out references to judgment, and also the famous passage in Luke 4:19, where our Lord does not quote "And the day of vengeance of our God" (Isaiah 61:2).

Now look for a moment at Daniel's prophecy of the "seventy weeks." At the end of the sixty-ninth week, we are told that Messiah is cut off, and takes nothing. Then we are told of war and desolation. "And after the threescore and two weeks, shall Messiah be cut off, and shall have nothing (marg.)... and until the end of the war desolations are determined" (Dan. 9:26). That is, the prophet speaks of a break at the end of the sixty-ninth week, when Messiah is cut off. At the end of the seventieth week (not yet come) God brings in righteousness and blessing. There is much more to learn from this marvelous prophecy, but I have said enough to show its character.

My assertion is that the prophets do speak of future blessing for the Jews, of their being laid aside by God for their rejection of the Messiah, together with an appearing of grace, teaching us to wait for the appearing of the glory later, and as the prophecies are distinct, inspiration is the only explanation of them. At the same time I am aware that the prophecies were occasioned by the circumstances of the moment, and contain warnings and consolations to that generation, but they also looked out further in their true scope. This is an example of the double meaning before spoken of which is characteristic of the Divine word. The clear existence of true prophecy is one of the strongest proofs of inspiration.

We may at this stage note that unless the prophets were inspired, they were simple impostors, for they give their burdens as the words of God. We have also seen that the Lord did not treat them as impostors, but as true prophets of God, which leads us to the irresistible conclusion that the

prophets were inspired.

(To be continued)

[L. H. H.]

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—4

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### APOSTOLIC WITNESS TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

You will note that hitherto we have based our statements entirely on bases allowed us by the words of Christ concerning the Old Testament, claiming His authority as supreme. We now go on to find what authority He gives to His apostles in order that we may judge of their testimony to the Old Testament. That the apostles were to be the subjects of extraordinary divine assistance is amply shown by our Lord's discourses to them. "And I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17). "These things have I spoken to you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:25, 26). "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeded from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). "Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:12-15). The promise is thus emphatically repeated, and by it the apostles are assured that in one sense they should be gainers and not losers by the departure of their Master, and this sense is their illumination in all points of Divine truth. That this Person is the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Divine Trinity, is not necessary for me to dwell on: it is evident that a Person is meant here literally, and the promise is not used metaphorically to mean superior mental endowments.

### THE OFFICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Let us now see what office the Holy Spirit was to hold, and what He was to do according to Christ's promise:

- (1) He was to guide them into the whole system of truth, which should be communicated to men that they might enjoy fully the blessings of salvation: "He will guide you into all truth" (16:13).
- (2) He was to recall to their memories all the instructions which the Lord had given them during His sojourn here, many of which would be forgotten or recollected imperfectly. "He shall... bring. ALL things to your remembrance" (14:26).
- (3) He was to teach them the meaning of the doctrines given by the Master, but not rightly understood, and to complete all the teaching necessary for their work: "He shall teach you all things" (14:26).

(4) He was to endow them with a knowledge of future events, so that they should be qualified to instruct the church: “He will show you the things to come” (16:13).

(5) He was to reveal fully to them the dignity and excellence of their Redeemer, imparting to them an accurate knowledge of His Divine Person, and His Mediatorial undertakings with their glorious results in order that they might show others more effectively what He is, so that many might be brought to honor and acknowledge Him: “He shall glorify me” (16:14).

(6) He was to confirm all that He had enabled them to teach, by affording sensible demonstrations of the truth of their divine commission by the miracles which they performed in the name of Jesus, and the supernatural gifts which should accompany their ministry: “He shall testify of me” (15:26).

(7) By means of this miraculous interposition He was to qualify the apostles to bear ample and infallible testimony to the things they had seen and heard from Jesus: “And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning” (15:27).

He was to effect all this in an invisible way, by means of a supernatural influence on their minds or in connection with their ministry, of which the world would have no perception: “Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” (14:17).

He was to render supernatural assistance permanently, so that whatever the apostles required at any period of their life would assuredly be vouchsafed to them: “That he may abide with you forever” (14:16) and “shall be in you” (ver. 17).

Looking now carefully at all these important offices which, since the Lord promised, were undoubtedly fulfilled, we must be impressed with the fact that all natural disadvantages were to be removed, and the apostles were qualified to become infallible interpreters of the will of God. Who is there, that places any reliance on the testimony of the Son of God, who can feel the smallest degree of hesitation in according to these divinely accredited messengers absolute submission to the doctrines they teach? Since the Holy Ghost was to remain forever with them, it is obvious that, in whatever way their instructions were to be communicated, whether orally or by writing, they were equally to claim an unqualified reception on the part of all to whom they might be addressed.

We can now see what testimony these favored men give to the Old Testament, but before doing so, I might point out that as they were promised the guidance of the Holy Ghost throughout life, that is only another way of saying that their writings were to be guided by Him, that is, inspired, one of the proofs of inspiration of the New Testament.

But now what have the apostles to say? Let me quote again a passage I have quoted before, but one of supreme importance: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, etc.” (2 Timothy 3:16). Now many have tried to quibble with this sentence, and suggested that it means something entirely different, but the Greek is clear, and only those who try to find fault with the word of God are troubled at all about it. Prof. Jowett admits this to be the translation, but tries to make out that it refers alone to the Old Testament. Does the New Testament come under the heading  $\pi\sigma\alpha\ \gamma\rho\alpha\phi\eta$ ?—undoubtedly (1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Peter 3:16, these speak of the Gospel and the Epistles as scripture); and the passage thus undoubtedly refers to the whole Bible—not more nor less. But even if you persist in confining it to the Old Testament, we have here

a very clear proof of the subject of which we have been writing so long. Will you accept it, or will you persist in saying that the apostles knew no better?

We have now another striking testimony in Peter to the inspiration of prophecy: “We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:19—21). Now the last verse shows as definitely as could be expected that all prophecy is inspired of God. Some would say that it applies to prophecy alone, but first of all notice that prophecies of the Messiah are spoken of, so that not only the prophetic books, but also writings of Moses, Samuel, David, etc., are included. And of these the whole books must be inspired, for, as above stated, patchwork is absurd. Also those who held a divine commission could not be expected to be inspired by the Holy Ghost in parts of their writings only: just as rejection of part of a book must mean rejection of all as infallible, so believing in the inspiration of part of a book necessarily means inspiration of all. But, apart from this, which many will not admit, we have here a striking testimony to the inspiration of prophetic scriptures.

We may now take two passages together: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning” (Romans 15:4) and “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition” (1 Cor. 10:11). I hope to show this more clearly later, but if these things that were written were, in the early parts at any rate, only myths, what instruction do they afford? If true, then we may well take heed, but he who casts aspersions may gain no lessons from these happenings. Is not the incident of Balaam’s ass a lesson to us? Assuredly so, if we believe its truth: but call it a fairy tale, and half its value is lost at once. But these passages teach us something more. If they were written with the purpose of teaching us, whose purpose was it? Do you credit the various writers with the forethought of knowing that the history would be of value to us as lessons? Why not admit Divine purpose, and so Divine over-ruling in the narration of these incidents?

In certain passages the Old Testament is definitely referred to as the “Oracles of God”: “teach you again which be the first oracles of God” (Hebrews 5:12) and “What advantage then hath the Jew?... Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God” —τὰ λήγια τοῦ θεοῦ (Romans 3:2). Now “oracles,” says Dr. Johnson, “are something delivered by supernatural wisdom,” and this is the purport of this important phrase. “The utterances of God” —is not this a synonym for inspiration? And the Jews are stated to be privileged in being appointed the keepers of His oracles. “The utterances of God!” who dare question them? and they form the Old Testament. Have we not yet accumulated proof of Old Testament Inspiration?

The apostles repeatedly ascribe passages in the Old Testament to the Holy Ghost, implying their inspiration in this manner, e.g., “Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet, saying” (Acts 28:25): also “as the Holy Ghost saith, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts” (Hebrews 7; Psalm 95:7); and, thirdly, “Wherefore the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, this is the covenant that I will make” (Hebrews 10:15; Jeremiah 31:33).

## FREQUENCY OF QUOTATION

We could continue this testimony almost to an indefinite extent, but one more point I would make in speaking of the apostles' testimony to the Old Testament, namely, that the writers are so impressed with the importance of the Old Testament that in the Epistles and the Revelation they quote it more than 450 times. All of them refer to many of the Books in proof of statements, e.g., James refers to Job, Kings, the Pentateuch, and Joshua, also Peter to Isaiah, Exodus, Hosea, Genesis, and Psalms. In the Acts we find the following references—Psalms (10), Isaiah (5) and Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joel, Amos, Habakkuk, 1 Kings. Paul, in his writings, refers to the Old Testament in support of his claims in the following numbers of passages—Psalms (37), Genesis (45), Exodus (10), Numbers (1), Deuteronomy (13), Joshua (1), 2 Samuel (1), Kings (2), Job (1), Proverbs (3), Isaiah (27), Jeremiah (3), Hosea (3), Habakkuk (3), Joel (1), Haggai (1), Malachi (1). If the apostles, then, attached such importance to the Old Testament as support for what they said, what right have we to regard it as only human?

So far, therefore, we have seen (1) that Christ attached much importance and authority to Old Testament writings; (2) that He promised the apostles extraordinary and constant Divine assistance, so that we may regard the apostles' writings as infallible; (3) that the apostles themselves regarded the Old Testament with the utmost reverence, and on more than one occasion definitely stated it to be inspired.

#### FURTHER NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

We will now take briefly further New Testament proofs: the authority of the Old Testament is well established by the Gospels and Epistles— “These things were done that the scripture might be fulfilled” ( John 19:36): “Jesus, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst (John 19:28): “Promised aforetime by his prophets in the holy scriptures” (Romans 1:2): “Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3): “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith” (Galatians 3:8): “And the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35): “Give place unto wrath, for it is written” (Romans 12:19) “that by patience and comfort of the scriptures we might have hope” (Romans 15:4): “The scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation” (2 Timothy 3:15): “Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition” (Mark 7:13): “Said unto them, thus is it written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer” (Luke 24:46). There is no need to comment on these passages: any one reading them carefully cannot doubt that the writers believed fully the authority and inspiration of the scriptures. Let us consider a few New Testament passages in some detail.

(1) “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (John 5:45-47). Here we have more than one point. Think what the higher critic would tell us—not only that He was not the object of Moses' writings, but also that Moses did not even write them! Again, Christ puts Moses' writings on equal authority with His own. Now which will you believe? —Christ or the higher critic? If you believe the higher critic—what think ye of Christ? —what foundation is left for Christianity as a revelation of God's mind? None.

(2) “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). Here no blasphemous pretext about Jewish prejudice is of any avail. Christ is here risen, and therefore freed from such “prejudices.” This is but a

reiteration of the passage quoted above, stating (a) that Moses was the author, (b) that he wrote of Christ.

(3) “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” (Matthew 26:53, 54). The scripture governs the Lord's own mind in the most solemn moment of His pathway up to that hour: when He was taken of man He could have saved Himself from them, but bows to the testimony of scripture. And yet all was a fable!

(4) “These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44). The Lord here sets His seal to the whole of the Old Testament as infallible— all things must be fulfilled Here again note the Lord is risen, and He treats them as inspired and as prophecies of Himself, which the higher critic presumes to deny!

(5) “Unto Berea... these were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so” (Acts 17:10, 11). So the Bereans made a mistake in judging Paul's words by the Old Testament writings: they had nothing to do with Christianity! Prophecies are fables, history distorted! But nevertheless, they are commended for so doing. Accept the inevitable conclusion that the Old Testament writers taught of Christ, and if they did that, whence obtained they their knowledge of Him apart from inspiration?

(6) If the Old Testament be not literally and entirely true, what was the force of Stephen's defense? The Jews were not guilty of resisting the Holy Ghost, if He had no part in the writing of the Old Testament (Acts 7:51).

(7) Apollos “mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ” (Acts 18:28). Can one convince “mightily” by means of a pack of myths and writings of impostors?

(8) Paul in his defense before Agrippa declares all he taught was according to the writings of Moses and the prophets, and appeals “King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest” (Acts 26:27). Was all this delusion and deceit? Unless you admit that the prophets were true prophets and not impostors, Paul was deceiving his hearers, for undoubtedly he knew, since the Lord “opened their under-standing, that they might understand the scriptures” (Luke 24:45). If the prophets were true they must have been inspired.

We have now reviewed the New Testament evidence to the inspiration of the Old. Is it not conclusive? At least, is it not evident that Christ and His apostles believed fully and absolutely in inspiration? So that this leaves us with the question, What think ye of Christ and the apostles?

(Continued from page 269)

(To be continued)

[L. H. H.]

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—5

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### OLD TESTAMENT WITNESS TO ITSELF

We will now look at Old Testament proofs of its own inspiration.

First and foremost, as we have seen above, the writers constantly affirm the truth of their statements by saying “Thus saith the Lord” —there is no need to go all over this again, but I would remind you that Ezekiel uses this or similar expressions over 200 times.

David, in a Messianic Psalm, declares “In the volume of the book it is written of me” (Psalm 40:7), an Old Testament instance of the passages that speak of Christ.

Isaiah refers to the book of the Lord: “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord” (Isaiah 34:16). If it is the Lord's book, who shall accuse it of inaccuracy?

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Habakkuk all speak of being charged by the Lord to commit their predictions to writings: “The Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen, concerning, etc.” (Isaiah 8:1). “Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book” (Jeremiah 30:2): “Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel... and Baruch wrote from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the Lord” (Jer. 36:2-4): “Jeremiah wrote in a book all the evil that should come upon Babylon” (Jeremiah 51:60): “The Lord answered me, and said: Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it” (Hab. 2:2). These passages not only show the authority upon which the writers recorded their sayings, but also that they wrote what they were commanded of the Lord to write. But these statements are not confined to the prophets—David the psalmist claims that he wrote by the Spirit of Jehovah: “The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue” (2 Samuel 23:2).

Again, let us take an example from a book of very different character—Proverbs. Here the writer does not claim that his words are from Jehovah, but he speaks of a book: “the word of God,” which he declares to be absolutely true in every particular—a striking statement of Old Testament inspiration: “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:5, 6).

Most striking of all is the declaration of Jehovah concerning the writings of Old Testament. Hosea, as is well known, consists of “the word of the Lord that came unto Hosea,” and in the midst we find the Lord's declaration: “I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing” (Hosea 8:12).

The Psalms of David contain many testimonies to the integrity of the scriptures, but reference may be first made to the fact that the Lord definitely stated that David in writing Psalms was guided by the Holy Ghost: “How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool” (Psalm 110; Matthew 22:43, 44). And not only have we the Lord's testimony, but we have the testimony of common sense: what

meaning had the above quotation to David as an ordinary human being? None whatever, but if inspired, the statement is but an ordinary one. Well, then, we see that the Psalms are stated to be inspired, and we may now listen to their testimony. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimonies of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb" (Psalm 19:7, 8, 10): "Thy word is true from the beginning: every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever" (Psalm 119:160): "The words of the Lord are pure" (Psalm 12:6): "Thy testimonies are very sure" (Psalm 5); "All thy commandments are faithful" (Psalm 119:86): "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting" (Psalm 119:144): "All thy commandments are truth" (Psalm 119:151): "He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children" (Psalm 78:5). Lastly, after speaking of the words of the Lord, the Psalmist says, "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them is great reward" (Psalm 19:11). These examples of David's testimony must suffice, and comment on them is needless.

Quotation after quotation has already been given to show that, despite the higher critic, Moses did in reality write the Pentateuch. But all the testimony has been taken from the New Testament, such as "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46, 47); thus not only definitely ascribing the writings to Moses, but also putting Moses on equal authority with His words. Let us find, now, the Old Testament evidence to this disputed fact.

In the books themselves we find that the Lord commanded Moses to write an account of the doings of the children of Israel and the words of the Lord in a book: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book" (Ex. 17:14): "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord" (Ex. 24:4): "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words" (Ex. 34:27).

Then we get some references in the Old Testament outside the Pentateuch; in Isaiah 63 the prophet speaks of "the right hand of Moses" (Isaiah 63:11, 12), and the indwelling of "the Holy Spirit within him" (Isaiah 63:11, 12). The prophet Malachi ascribes the law to Moses: "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded him in Horeb,...with the statutes and judgments" (Mal. 4:4). Still more, remember the constant testimony of Him "in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9) to Moses. Were all deceived? On what grounds are we to believe that Samuel wrote one part and Jeremiah another? The surmises of some German and English critics! Do you believe them, or do you believe God, for He has spoken most clearly?

## MESSIAH'S SUFFERING

The allusions to the Old Testament at the time of the passion are very impressive. Every step seems here to be guided by Old Testament prophecy: "Ye know that after two days is the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2). He was the true passover, and the time of His sufferings must correspond with the sacrifices which prefigured it. "The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed" (Matthew 26:24). The easiest way to show this is by making a series of quotations from the Old Testament, and side by side the corresponding New Testament quotation recording its

fulfillment.

Old Testament

New Testament

1. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed" (Ps. 2:2).

Pilate "sent him to Herod" (Luke 23:7). "And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him (Lu. 22:2).

2. "Neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10).

"He is risen from the dead" (Matthew 28:7).

3. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Psalm 22:1).

"Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, etc." (Matthew 27:46).

4. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head" (Psalm 22:7).

"Likewise the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders" (Matthew 27:41): "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads" (Matthew 27:39).

5. "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him: let him deliver him" (Psalm 22:8).

"Saying: He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him (Matthew 27:43).

6. "They pierced my hands and my feet" (Psalm 22:16).

"And they crucified him" (Matthew 27:35).

7. "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture" (Psalm 22:18).

"And parted his garments, casting lots" (Matthew 27:35). See also John 19:24.

8. "False witnesses are risen up against me" (Psalm 27:12).

"Many false witnesses came" (Matthew 26:60).

9. "Into thine hand I commend my spirit" (Psalm 31:5).

"Jesus cried with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

10. "My friends stand aloof from my sore: and my kinsmen stand afar off" (Psalm 38:11).

"And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things" (Luke 23:49).

11. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9).

“And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas.... He then... went immediately out... Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them” (John 13:26, 30; 18:5).

12. “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psalm 69:21).

“They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall” (Matthew 27:34). “Jesus... saith, I thirst.... When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar” (John 19:28, 30).

13. “When they looked upon me they shaked their heads” (Psalm 109:25).

“They that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads” (Mark 15:29).

14. “I gave my back to the smiters... I hid not my face from shame and spitting” (Isaiah 1:6).

“When he had scourged Jesus... they bowed the knee and mocked him... and they spit upon him” (Matthew 27:26, 29, 30).

15. “He was oppressed... yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

“And when he was accused of the chief priests and the elders, he answered nothing... And he answered him to never a word” (Matthew 27:12, 14).

16. “He made his grave with the wicked and the rich in his death” (Isaiah 53:9).

“A rich man of Arimathea.. laid it in his own new tomb” (Matthew 27:57, 60).

17. “He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken” (Psalm 34:20).

“When they came to Jesus... they brake not his legs” (John 19:33, 36).

18. “Thou hast put mine acquaintances far from me” (Psalm 88:8).

“They all forsook him and fled” (Mark 14:50).

19. “I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day” (Amos 8:9).

“And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour” (Luke 23:44).

20. “They shall look on me whom they have pierced” (Zechariah 12:10).

“One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side” (John 19:34).

21. “Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered” (Zechariah 8:7).

“And they all forsook him and fled” (Matthew 26:31; Mark 14:50).

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(To be continued)

[L. H. H.]

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—6

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### MESSIAH'S SUFFERING

What can be more striking than this remarkable proof that all the details of the Lord's passion were fully foretold in the Old Testament! Many will tell us that the Old Testament references only happen to coincide with the incidents. No less than twenty-one coincidences (and I doubt whether this number is exhaustive) in the space of a few hours! The absurdity of it must be apparent. But if they did indeed refer to Christ, how can there be any doubt as to the inspiration of at least these passages?

The Bible is full both in the Old and New Testaments of incidents having no human eye-witnesses. How does the one who does not believe in inspiration explain the accounts of such incidents? Are they all myths? Unless inspired, they must be myths or else received by tradition. Did Adam preserve for the benefit of his posterity a record of his sin, disobedience, his expulsion from Eden, the curse upon the ground, and the barring of the way back to the tree of life? Similarly with other incidents recorded not as man would tell the story, making excuses and pointing out extenuating circumstances were these received thus by tradition? It is impossible. Is the history of Christ's temptation in the wilderness a myth? I leave these questions with you.

### MORAL PURPOSE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Now scripture consists, as we said above, not only of facts, but of facts arranged with a view to one over-ruling purpose, which the unassisted mind of man could never have projected or supplied, and while I hope to show this more fully in speaking of the New Testament, it is convenient here to show in support of this statement the purpose of the long series of histories of men seen in the Old Testament. As the Apostle Paul says, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. 10:11). Human sinfulness is traced through its manifold disguises. Thus we find scoffing infidelity in the antediluvians (Jude 14, 15; Genesis 6:12); envy in Cain (Gen. 4:5) and Joseph's brethren (Gen. 37:11); malice in Saul (1 Samuel 18:28, 29); slander in Doeg (1 Samuel 22: 9) and Ziba (2 Samuel 16:1-3); contempt for Divine teaching in Korah (Numbers 16:3) and Ahab (1 Kings 20:42); covetousness in Achan (Joshua 7:21), Balaam (Numbers 22:7.), Gehazi (2 Kings 5:20-27); ambition in Abimelech (Judg. 9:1-5); pride in Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:13) and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 4:30).

Again we find the inconsistency of human nature-Ahithophel (Psalm 55:12, 13), the friend and traitor; Joab (2 Samuel 12:28; 1 Kings 2:28), the faithful servant, yet "doer of evil"; Jehoram (2 Kings 3:1-3), who destroyed the images of Baal, but cleaved to the sin of Jeroboam.

We see the power of self-deceit in David (2 Samuel 12:5, 7) and Balaam (Numbers 23:10); of prejudice in Naaman (2 Kings 5:11-12); of habit in Ahab (1 Kings 21:27, 26) who repented before Elijah, and yet returned to his idols.

We are shown the danger of ungodly connections in Solomon (Nehemiah 13:25, 26); in Jehoshaphat's connection with Ahab (1 Kings 22:2-44), in Ahab's with Jezebel (1 Kings 21:5-14); of worldly prosperity in Rehoboam (2 Chronicles 12:1) and Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26:16).

We find moral excellences illustrated: faith in Abraham (Romans 4:12); patience in Job (James 5:11); meekness in Moses (Numbers 12:3); decision in Joshua (Joshua 24:15); patriotism in Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:4; 5:14); friendship in Jonathan (1 Samuel 19:2-4).

Certain characters furnish us with patterns: Hannah (1 Samuel 1:27-28) to mothers; Samuel (1 Samuel 3:1-21) and Josiah (2 Chronicles 34:3) to children; Joseph (Gen. 39:9) and Daniel (Dan. 1:8) to young men; Barzillai; (2 Samuel 19:34, 35) to old men; Eliezer (Gen. 24) to servants; David (1 Samuel 24:6-10 etc.) to those under authority. And in these examples we must note the evidence of weakness: Abraham (Gen. 20:2) failed through fear; Job (Job 3:1) through impatience; Moses (Deuteronomy 32:51) through irritability and presumption.

And all these things happened as ensamples to us: we have a complete portrait-gallery of man: was this divinely-perfect picture made by man alone? Surely not; we are told of the lives of certain men just sufficient to teach us a specific lesson: do you credit man with this foresight?

#### THE AUTHORS WRITING BEYOND THEIR OWN KEN

Now to conclude this section of the paper on the inspiration of the Old Testament, I would refer to the fact that both by their own declaration and by the declaration of the apostle Peter, the writers did not in every case understand the meaning of their writings.

First then, all the sacrifices set forth in such detail in Leviticus were types and shadows of Christ—they prefigured every aspect of His work, and His perfection. Yet to the Jews they were mere ordinances, and the meaning of all the ritual was not, and could not be understood by them. The tabernacle itself in every detail figured some aspect of God and His Christ, but until Christ came, all was not understood. Were the sacrifices given by man or by God? If by God, is not Leviticus God's account of these sacrifices and the ordinances connected with them? The tabernacle, says the higher critic, was not erected in the wilderness, but was a copy of the temple at Jerusalem. What a wicked travesty of God's word!

As before stated, David's psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool" (Psalm 110:1) cannot have been understood by David, nor indeed, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." If all this was dark and mysterious to David, how can you avoid the conclusion that he was inspired when he wrote it? (Psalm 16:10).

Now look for a moment at another scripture: "And I heard, but I understood not." We see that Daniel wrote what he understood not, and he was not allowed to have understanding as to what he did write, for the Lord said: "the words are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end" (Dan. 12:8, 9).

Again, Peter testifies to the same thing: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto

themselves, but unto us they did minister the things" (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

If the writers had to "search diligently" to find out the meaning of the prophecies, they cannot have written them by their own initiative. I have no need to labor the point. The word of God is sufficiently clear about it, so that I need only call your attention to so striking a passage.

What then? We have shown that Christ, the Son of God, taught the inspiration of Scripture, that He promised great assistance to His apostles, who taught inspiration, that the prophets constantly justify their writings with: "thus saith the Lord," that David ascribes purity and truth to the "law of the Lord," that the apostles appealed for support in their writings more than 450 times to the Old Testament, that the Passion was fully foretold by the Old Testament, that the purpose of the histories of men found in the Old Testament is manifold, that the Jew's greatest privilege was to be allowed to keep the "oracles of God," and lastly, that the writers in some cases at least definitely disclaim understanding what they wrote. Is not all this testimony a sure proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament?

L. H. H.

(Continued from page 298)

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—7

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### 3.-THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now the inspiration of the New Testament is different in character from the inspiration of the Old. Here the writers were indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and do not therefore so often proclaim their authority in speaking. Nevertheless, evidence is to be had for the seeking.

We may assume that the ground taken up in dealing with the Old Testament is safe again in this case—that is, we may count the statements of the Son of God as infallible. Now He does not speak of the New Testament writings, for the very obvious reason that they were not written. But He does speak in anticipation of their being written when He promises the Holy Ghost, who shall “teach you all things” (John 14:26). We have already seen the high authority He gave to His apostles, and after reviewing a large amount of evidence, came to the conclusion that they may be regarded in their writings as infallible. I do not intend to repeat that evidence, but to add one or two considerations thereto.

The apostles were empowered to give irreversible decisions on all matters of the church—“whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:9). Since the majority of the apostles' writings concerned the doctrines and duties of the church, this power implies the truth of the writings: for we are told that it is not the apostles themselves that speak, but the Spirit of God, and He is infallible—“For it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak: for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you” (Matthew 10:20).

#### NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE TO ITSELF

We are fully justified therefore in regarding the testimony of the apostles with the utmost seriousness, seeing that they were such highly-favored servants of God. Now what is their testimony?

(1) “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (1 Thessalonians 13). Need I comment on so clear and emphatic a statement?

(2) “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:36, 37). As comment, I would add the next verse: “If any man be ignorant let him be ignorant.” Notice that inspiration is taken as an axiom, not needing proof.

(3) “The things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God: that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth” (1 Cor. 2:11-13). Not only is this a statement that the apostles are inspired, but that verbally the Holy Ghost guided them what to write.

(4) "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not" (Romans 9:1). Though he might well have claimed apostolic authority, as he does elsewhere, here he states that it is in Christ that he is speaking.

(5) "He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 4:8). That is to say, the writings at which they scoffed were not the writings of men at all, but of God!

(6) Paul characterizes his epistles as "not the word of man, but the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 13).

(7) "For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And the laborer is worthy of his reward" (1 Timothy 5:8). Now one of these quotations is from the Old Testament (Deuteronomy) and the second from the New Testament (Luke 10:7). Both are called by the name of Scripture, and appealed to as decisive authority. The Old Testament we have seen to be inspired, and the New is here stated to be of equal authority.

(8) "But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:25). The words of the apostles are thus stated to be the "word of the Lord!"

(9) "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior" (2 Peter 3:2). The words of the prophets are put on high authority (we have already seen them to be inspired) and the words of the apostles are put on equal authority.

(10) "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:15, 16). What a striking testimony to the inspiration of Paul's Epistles, which, note, were written according to the wisdom given unto him! Incidentally, it is a proof of the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Epistles are stated as scriptures, which are, according to 2 Timothy 3:16, divinely inspired. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." The other scriptures would refer to the three Synoptic Gospels and the Acts (John's Gospel was not then written). Thus in this one passage we are told that almost the whole of the New Testament is inspired!

(11) "But now is made manifest and by prophetic scriptures [literal translation] according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26). This refers to the New Testament, for the secret was kept since the world began, but was made manifest at the beginning of the new dispensation. Here, then, the New Testament writings are declared to be scriptures, and as such, therefore, inspired.

(12) We may now quote a passage which is a remarkable one in many ways: "But I speak by permission, not of commandment." "Unto the married I command: yet not I, but the Lord."... "But to the rest speak I, not the Lord." "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." "But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment, and I think also that I have the Spirit of the Lord" (I Cor. 7:6, 10, 12, 25, 40). Now, as may well be supposed, many fault-finders quote this as a definite proof of

non-inspiration. Of course, the apostle says nothing of the kind. Here he distinguishes between his judgment, as to which he could yet appeal to them as having the Spirit to form and guide his experience, and a revelation from the Lord which constituted a commandment. The Corinthians were not left the option of believing or not believing as they thought best by his disclaiming commandment from the Lord. In fact, he shows the indwelling of the Spirit by stating that he speaks “by permission” —of whom? —of the Spirit dwelling within him. He distinguishes between his spiritual judgment as a matured believer, and the higher revelations from the Lord Himself.

Although this is clearly the meaning of the passages it may not be inapposite to observe that if Paul did intend to disclaim inspiration in these passages, it follows from the very circumstances of his making them exceptions, that all the other parts are inspired. And this is a contrary conclusion to the one the higher critic would lead us to, surely!

(13) I do not intend to dwell on this point, as one could write at great length on the question, but to anyone who has read The Revelation with any understanding and care, the question inevitably arises: “Could a simple fisherman write with such clarity on so difficult and weighty a subject?” Assuredly he could not, and even if he wrote unaided by the Spirit, of what value are his writings? None whatever, and the Bible is no longer complete. Passages in Daniel, the Gospels, and elsewhere remain inexplicable; but recognize it as the handiwork of the Spirit of God, and once more the dark passages become clear, and the Bible is complete, not τμήματα βιβλίου, but the Book, one harmonious whole.

(14) Although, as before stated, Jesus made no definite reference to the New Testament scriptures, there are two passages which may be quoted in this connection: “If ye continue in my word... ye shall know the truth” (John 8:31, 32). And His word is contained in the New Testament. Let us take care, therefore, that we are not misled by the higher critic, who would tell us that much of the information contained in the Gospels is distorted by tradition, and, from imperfect remembrance; that miracles were never performed; and similar travesties of God's truth.

(15) Similarly the Lord tells us to “live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). Where are these words to be found if the scriptures are not inspired? The scriptures undoubtedly form the mouth of God for man, and these communications “the un-learned and unstable wrest.” We could offer the wise counsel of Gamaliel— “Refrain... lest haply ye be found even to fight against God” (Acts 5:38, 39).

## THE UNITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We have previously shown that there is purpose in the histories of men contained in the Old Testament, and that they form part of the divine plan running through the whole of Scripture. I want now to show that the New Testament in its entirety forms one harmonious whole, the Gospels and Epistles fitting in one with another to form one divinely perfect Book.

“Its author,” says Mr. Darby, “is so much more evidently God, from the human instruments having been many and diverse. But its unity—and above all the intimate union of its different parts—demonstrates a complete and perfect body. If but one joint of a finger were wanting in a man he is not a man such as God made him: he may have life, but he is imperfect, and his imperfection is perceptible. So take away a book from the New Testament, the remainder is divine undoubtedly, but it is no longer the New Testament in its divine perfection. As in a noble tree, the

inward energy, the freedom of the sovereign vital power, produces a variety of forms, in which the details of human order may be wanting, but in which there is a beauty that no human art can imitate. Cut off one of its branches, and the void is obvious: the gap which is made in the intertwining of its tender leaves proves that the devastating hand of man has been there (Collected-Writings, J.N.D., xxiii. 42).

Now let us try to point out the divine perfection of these books: Matthew's Gospel, containing the genealogy of Christ from Abraham and David, treats of the Messiah, the relation of Christ to the Jews, the fulfillment of prophecy in Him, and also of His rejection as Messiah with the beginning of a new dispensation. Mark's Gospel tells us of Christ as the Servant made in the likeness of man, and as a prophet on the earth. Luke's tells us of the great grace brought by the "Second man," and the great moral principles connected with it. Hence in this Gospel we have a moral and not a chronological order of events, even in the history of the temptation: we have also the genealogy to Adam. John's Gospel treats of the person of the Savior, the Son of God. Thus the four Gospels show us the four aspects of Christ—the Son of David, the Servant, the Son of man, the Son of God, giving us a complete picture of Christ. And each Gospel is adapted to the purpose for which it was written, e.g., in John we read of nothing of the agony in Gethsemane, or of the forsaking at the cross, because it is not the Holy Spirit's purpose to show us this in connection with Christ as the Son of God.

The Acts of the Apostles teaches us the foundation of the church by the power of the Holy Spirit the development of the church in Jerusalem through the twelve: the ingrafting of the Gentiles by Peter: and lastly the church fully revealed and made known by Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles.

The Epistle to the Romans shows the eternal principle of God's relationship with man, the means by which the believer is established in blessing, and the reconciling of these things with the speciality of the promises made to the Jews.

The two Epistles to the Corinthians give us the details for regulating the church in all its experiences—its walk, its order, its restoration.

The Epistle to the Galatians gives the contrast between the Old and New dispensations, and the condemnation of Judaism.

Ephesians presents the relationship the believer bears to the Father and to Christ, the church's privileges as the body of Christ, and also "the mystery which has been hid from ages," in which all the counsels of God for His own glory are unfolded.

Colossians teaches the fullness and perfection of the Head of the church, and warns against separating from union with the Head.

Philippians shows us what Christ is to the Christian—His all-sufficiency in all circumstances, and also the walk of the church in unity maintained by grace when its human leaders are spiritually slack.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians deal with the hope of the church, who looks for Christ, and the mystery of iniquity ending with the manifestation of the man of sin.

First and 2 Timothy and Titus exhibit ecclesiastical care for the maintenance of truth and order—1 Timothy, the normal order of the church: 2 Timothy, the path of the individual when it is in disorder.

The Epistle to the Hebrews, in contrast with the Ephesians which views the church as seated in the heavenly places, shows the faithful journeying in weakness on the earth, Christ being seen apart in the presence of God. This is contrasted with the earthly figures given to Israel, and is followed by an unfolding of the person of the Lord as God the Creator, as Son, and as High Priest, after the order of Melchisedec. Then follows the unfolding of the life of faith, and the final separation of believing Jews from the camp of earthly religion.

James sets before us the necessity of practical righteousness to accompany faith, which must be real or living, and also the last dealings of God with the twelve tribes.

Peter deals with the government of God—in the First Epistle in blessings to saints; in the Second Epistle in reference to the wicked.

Jude unfolds all the moral features of the apostasy, recording Enoch's prophecy, which we should otherwise have lost.

First John presents us with all the features of the divine nature, and deals particularly with the love of God, which was manifested in Christ coming down here. This divine nature is exhibited first as manifested in Jesus, and then as characteristic of the whole family.

Philemon and Second and Third John show us that if the mystery of God is revealed by one apostle, and the nature of God by another; if they lift us to the heights of God's counsels, they are also interested in the welfare of a runaway slave, in the practical difficulties of a lady, and in a kind brother, who wants advice. They show that the great and manifold love of God does not disdain to provide for every little detail and trouble of His servants.

The Apocalypse gives the elements of a perfect judgment with respect to any state in which the professing church would be found, so as to guide any one connected with the church in those circumstances. At the same time it encourages the faithful, and declares the blessings for "him that overcometh." The Holy Ghost then reveals how all will end—the judgment of the world, the apostasy, the coming of the King of kings, followed by happiness (Satan being bound), and then a second apostasy, and the judgment of the great white throne, and lastly the eternal state when God will be "all in all." This is the complete development of what Jude, 2 Peter, and 2 Thessalonians had previously made known to the church in its moral elements.

"The New Testament, then, commencing with the manifestation of the man Christ in humiliation on the earth, and carrying us forward to the eternal state when God will be "all in all," presents us with the full development of all the ways of God, and of what He is in Himself, in order that man may joy in Him, know Him, and glorify Him—that the believer may be kept through all the difficulties and dangers of the way by the wisdom and admonitions of God—and that He may understand His wisdom and His love. Man could not have composed this as a whole—could not have foreseen the necessity of each part. One feels in it the energetic spontaneity of life, that is, of the Spirit of God. Take away one single part, now that we possess the whole, and the breach is immediately felt by one who has seen and appreciated its completeness."

## VARIED VIEWS IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

Now, much difficulty has arisen in some minds from the fact that the four Gospels do not appear to agree in every detail. With reference to this difficulty I would say that it would be surprising if they were all exactly similar, for, as we have seen, the four Gospels present Christ in four different lights. In recording the same event the different historians relate different circumstances, some giving more, some fewer than the rest: the fuller account includes the shorter, and the shorter does not contradict the fuller. Take the case of the blind man at Jericho recorded in Matthew 20:30-34; Mark 10:46-50; Luke 18:35-43. Read the three narratives carefully and see how one adds to the other. Was it ignorance that caused Mark to write "a beggar" instead of "two beggars"? As we shall see, the apostles did not write according to their knowledge, but according to the guidance of the Spirit of God.

But let us first take one more case to show how scripture is amplified by taking the different narratives together. The inscription placed on the cross of Jesus is mentioned by all four Evangelists, but all give it differently. Can we say that they forgot this inscription? How unlikely! But compare the four narratives.

Matthew: "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" (27:37).

Mark: "The King of the Jews" (15:26).

Luke: "This is the King of the Jews" (23:38).

John: "Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews" (19:19).

In full: "This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews."

Thus we see that all the writers were absolutely correct, each giving that part of the inscription which was necessary for the purpose of the Gospel.

Now John was one of the three witnesses in the Garden of Gethsemane, at the time of Christ's agony, yet he does not mention it. Nothing would be more affecting and more solemn. Can we say he forgot it? Mark was not present, yet he tells us. Matthew was there, and saw how those who came to take Jesus "went backward and fell to the ground" (John 18:6), and yet he does not mention it.

L. H. H.

(To be continued)

## Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures—8

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### 4.-THE INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

John accompanied Jesus at the cross, and yet he does not record that bitter cry in the darkness, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!” while he mentions a number of other details. A mere man would never deliberately leave this out, but if we admit that John was inspired, the reason becomes clear at once. John's Gospel is the one inspired by the Spirit of God to present Christ as the Son of God, and the human traits in His character are not prominently given. He is presented to us as calm on the cross as He is in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He said “Whom seek ye?” (John 18:4).

If space had permitted I had intended to go through John's Gospel to show how the Spirit has worked through John to present Christ as the Son of God. But read it at your leisure, remembering that this is the key, and then you must admit that John was indeed inspired when he wrote.

### LUKE'S PREFACE

A common objection raised by those who disbelieve inspiration is founded upon the introduction to Luke's Gospel, the writer of which, they say, takes the ground of an eyewitness alone. “Many,” Luke says, “having taken in hand to set forth the things most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses of the word, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first (παρηκολουθηκ■τι ■νωθεν) to write unto thee, in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of the things wherein thou hast been instructed” (Luke 1:2, 3, 4). Now Luke does not say a word of setting forth in order what eyewitnesses have delivered: others, he said, had done that. But this was not sufficient, and he wrote his Gospel that Theophilus might have certainty from him, who had “perfect knowledge” of all things. A clear statement, surely, that his account was infallible, and if so, undoubtedly inspired, for no human account can be infallible.

We get a confirmation of the fact that St. Luke's gospel is scripture from the fact that it is called so in a quotation in 1 Timothy 5:18, which has already been quoted— “For the scripture saith... The laborer is worthy of his reward.” This is a quotation from Luke 10:7, and is here called scripture, and appealed to as decisive authority. No fuller testimony could be given in a few words to the inspiration and authority of the third Gospel.

Many rationalists ridicule the application of the words of Hosea, “Out of Egypt have I called my Son” to Christ. But it is the system and plan of scripture to transfer passages from Israel, the provisional son, to Christ, the true Son. Matthew, therefore, uses the Old Testament scripture rightly according to the intended use of scripture: whether this plan be wise or foolish is not the question—I believe it assuredly to be divinely wise—but rationalists may not quarrel with Matthew for quoting the Old Testament thus. The substitution of the Messiah for Israel can be clearly seen in Isaiah 49, where we see the Messiah directly presented as taking the place of Israel.

Another point raised is that Paul was corrected by the course of events in his expectation of the coming of Christ. At the extreme close of his career, he urges Timothy to “keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate” (1 Timothy 6:14), that is, he uses exactly the same language then as in his earliest Epistle— “ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God: and to wait for his Son from heaven” Thessalonians 1:10), and “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23), and similar passages. No man ever knew the time, which the Father had put in His own power— “Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father” (Mark 13:32).

But on the other hand they were commanded to be expecting continually the return of their Master. This attitude made the difference between the faithful and unfaithful servant. Christ had marked the church's unfaithfulness by saying of the servants, “My lord delayeth his coming” (Luke 12:45): into that error Paul did not fall.

At the extreme close of his career, however, he had a revelation from the Lord that he should glorify Him in death— “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Timothy 4:6). Paul was marked as a faithful servant by expecting his Lord's return, not as an ignorant one.

#### THE NATURAL IGNORANCE OF THE APOSTLES

Now inspiration was a necessity owing to the fact that the disciples were in every case ignorant of the meaning of the Lord in His speech and actions. For instance, when the Lord warns against the leaven of the Pharisees, they say it was because they brought no bread. After the conversion of the Samaritan woman, when He says: “I have meat to eat that ye know not of” (John 4:32), they ask “Hath anyone brought him ought to eat?” When He tells them He should die and rise again, they say: “Be it far from thee, Lord” (Matthew 16:22). Even after His death, they say on the road to Emmaus with Him: “We trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel” (Luke 24:21), and many other instances could be adduced in support of my statement. Indeed John says: “These things the disciples understood not at the first: but when Jesus was glorified then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him” (John 12:16). How was it they remembered after? by the revelations of the Holy Spirit who came down to “teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance.”

We closed the section of this paper on the inspiration of the Old Testament with quotations declaring that the writers in some cases did not even understand what they wrote, implying unmistakably that they were inspired. Have we any such declaration in the New Testament? Should we expect it? No, because the character of New Testament inspiration is different: it is shown by the following words: “reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12). He it is that leads into all truth, and inspiration acts in and by the understanding: but it is not on that account the less inspiration.

Paul preferred the inspiration which acts by the understanding to that which is apparently more independent of it: “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.... In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I

might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (1 Cor. 14:14-19). Thus Paul knew of an inspiration by which he spoke “in an unknown tongue,” but preferred the inspiration “with understanding,” and this is the character of the inspiration found in the New Testament.

## DIFFICULTIES

Many rationalists state that they cannot believe the Bible because of the numerous difficulties in the word. On the contrary, I say that I should be very surprised indeed to find no difficulties: the Author is divine, I am but human, and can I be expected to understand all? “The very difficulties of scripture, philological and historical, afford cogent internal proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the Bible,” says Dr. Angus (Bible Handbook, p. 271). Let me say if I did not understand a passage that its meaning being doubtful to me, not that the meaning itself is doubtful, then let me wait on God to teach me its meaning.

Difficulties try our faith. Is not this again an evidence in their favor? What are all the dispensations of God but our discipline? What is life but a walking by faith—by habitual reliance on Him whom we cannot understand fully, and in circumstances that require such a trust?

But many difficulties melt away when we look at them at all closely, and it will be found useful to remember the following six statements—

## RECAPITULATION

Recapitulating. We have seen that the inspiration of the New Testament is of a different order from that of the Old, that nevertheless the writers give ample testimony to their inspiration, that the whole of the New Testament books form one harmonious whole, each book fitting in one with the other so as to present a complete guide to the Christian in any circumstance in which he may be found, that the Gospels do not present the same view of Christ, and that therefore they do not all give the same incidents, or even the same details of the incidents they relate in common, that the introduction to Luke, the use of quotations from the Old Testament, and the alleged “change of views” of the Apostle Paul do not in any way affect the claim to inspiration, and lastly that the disciples heeded guidance from the Holy Ghost, since they did not understand the purport of the Lord's teaching, while He was here.

(1) We have an original text somewhat mutilated by copying and translation, but only to a very limited extent.

(2) The suggestion that inspiration is not verbal destroys the absolute authority of the Bible— “it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail (Luke 16:17).

(3) In any divergence between two accounts of an event only direct contradictions can afford any proof against inspiration (but see (1)).

(4) Silence is no proof of ignorance—see John's declaration, “There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they were written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books, that should be written” (John 21:25).

(5) The events narrated in the Gospels are not arranged in chronological order.

(6) Statements which are apparently contradictory may record different facts, e.g., the feeding of the five thousand, and again later of the four thousand, often confused as one.

Let us take two examples: Matthew 1:1-16 gives our Lord's genealogy, and another genealogy occurs in Luke 3:23-38. The two genealogies are different because the one in Matthew traces the descent through Joseph in the royal line (as son of David), and the one in Luke through Mary, in the natural descent from Adam (as son of man).

Again, John states that Christ was before Pilate's tribunal "about the sixth hour" (John 19:14). Matthew, Mark and Luke record the fact that He was on the cross "about the sixth hour" (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; Luke 23:44). There is no real discrepancy here, for John calculated hours according to the Roman method, the "Synoptists" according to the Jewish method. The sixth hour was, therefore, with him 6 a.m.; with them it would be noon.

Finally, let no man attempt or expect the explanation of every difficulty. "The last step of reason," says Pascal, "is to know that there is an infinitude of things which surpass it." "After all difficulties have been solved, and every word of the Bible explained, the weightiest difficulties of all remain. The origin of evil, the mystery of Divine foreknowledge and free agency, and much of the scheme of redemption will still exercise our faith. We shall say even then, as it is our wisdom to say now, O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). Thus wrote Warburton.

We have come to the end, and in doing so, let me emphasize again the word with which we started: the Christian does not rely on evidence such as this: he has within him inward testimony to the inspiration of the Bible, which is the natural consequence of faith, and nothing that man or devil can say can shake him in his firm belief. We believe God, and He has spoken to us—shall we disbelieve Him for the reasonings of man? Are we Christians surprised at the attacks on men on the scriptures? No, for Paul foretold it. "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God: having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.... Ever learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.... Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13). What in such case is the resource of the faithful? "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them: and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:14-16). Therefore, the resource in the last and evil days is reverence for the holy scriptures, and confidence in their divine inspiration.

What is the Christian to do? Am I to believe or throw up the authority of Christ and His apostles? What is the authority of Christianity if I do? Am I the disciple of impostors or deceived men, or of the blessed Son of God? and am I receiving divine truth from His inspired servants?

L. H. H.

## Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos: Part 1

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Ephesus is a name of note in the history of the church, and amongst the other churches of Asia. God wrought special miracles there by the hand of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the dis-eases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. From Ephesus all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. The church there was highly privileged, enjoying for three years continuously the ministry of the great apostle of the Gentiles, the man who had been in the third heaven (Acts 19:10; 20:31; 2 Cor. 12:2), and only in the Epistle to the Ephesians does Scripture give, in its full height, the doctrine of the church, To the elders of Ephesus, Paul delivered his weighty final charge, in which he warned them of what would take place after his departure; not only grievous wolves entering in among the flock, but of their own selves men arising speaking 'perverted things.'

The Lord, too, in the address to Ephesus, assumes a general character, which might apply to any or all of the churches. "To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write: These things says he that holds the seven stars in his right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps."

This is appropriate to the first of the seven churches, which, in some respects, is representative of the church in general, while in several of the following epistles the Lord takes a special character corresponding to the state of the particular church. Here He holds the seven stars in His right hand. It is salutary to remember this. All who exercise subordinate rule and ministry in the church are in the right hand of Christ. They may have no human ordination, but if truly Christ's servants, the blessing of the flock is to recognize them and show a sympathetic attitude toward their labors. "We beg you, brethren, to know those who labor among you, and take the lead among you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to regard them exceedingly in love on account of their work" (1 Thess. 5:12, 13). What a steadying influence too it has, to remember that Christ walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: His feet like fine brass as burning in a furnace. Yes! there is One always walking about, so to say, amongst us, treading out, with feet of burning judgment, all sin and evil.

The warnings of Paul in Acts 20. to the Ephesian elders, do not appear to have failed of effect. For here, in the Epistle to Ephesus, the Lord specially commends the assembly's faithfulness in these respects: "I know thy works and [thy] labor and thine endurance, and that thou canst not bear evil [men]; and thou hast tried them who say they are apostles and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev. 2:2). Works and labor are not exactly synonymous. Works are definite acts done; labor the exertion which produces them. The work may give but a small indication of the labor it required. A long journey on a cold night—inconvenient and perhaps painful—may be taken for only a small work at the end. The Lord assures us that He knows the work and the labor.

The Lord commends, inferentially, what had been their early fervor; but it was a fervor which they were allowing to wane: "Thou... endurest and hast borne for my name's sake, and hast not wearied: but I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. Remember, therefore, whence

thou hast fallen, and repent and do the first works; but if not, I am coming to thee, and will remove thy lamp out of its place, except thou shalt repent” (vers. 3 5). There is only one thing against Ephesus: “Thou hast left thy first love.” But that is the root of declension, either in a church or an individual. A sin into which a Christian may fall, is merely the outward tact; there had been failures in secret before the outward transgression was allowed to appear. But independently of this, it is precious to know that the Lord values the saints' heart-devotion. At Ephesus there was a great deal that was most excellent, and which the Lord does not fail to acknowledge. He knew their works, their labor and endurance; their abhorrence of evil men; their intelligent and faithful rejection of those who claimed apostolic office or position; but all this would not suffice, if love to Himself were deficient or declining. Note, then, as deeply significant, that at the outset of the church's history, there is discovered, declining love to Christ, the root and starting-point of all failure and sin.

In this lapsed condition, the call is to-(1) “Remember whence thou art fallen,” and (2) “Repent, and do the first works.” This definite and emphatic call has been remarkably disregarded. At the Reformation there was no recognition of the status from which the church had fallen. There was the revolt of even natural conscience against iniquities of the so-called church; there was recovery of salvation by faith, and of right to the use of the Scriptures; but no serious inquiry as to the original status of the church, or as to scriptural practice in the church. The Lord's Supper in its true simplicity and beauty was not restored. The place and office of the Holy Spirit in meetings and worship were not seen; and instead of the Spirit's power and guidance, a substitute—humanly invented liturgies were continued; and in place of a free exercise of the Holy Spirit's gifts in the body of Christ, a humanly appointed clergy was still permitted. So also in subsequent movements since the Reformation, resulting in the numerous denominations now existing; there has been in some, most blessed evangelizing zeal; in others a rallying for one doctrine or ordinance or another; but not any going back to the point from which the church had departed; no solemn calling to mind whence it had fallen, no studying it out from the Scriptures; and by consequence, no repentance and doing the first works. This is deeply important for the church today—and indeed, for any case of repentance—to go back, and not stop short of the topmost point of departure.

Failing repentance, the lamp will be removed. This is announced at the beginning of the church's departure. The word “quickly” in the fifth verse of the Authorized Version is not authentic; the removal of the lamp is certain, but the judgment may be delayed, and has been long delayed; it is not until Laodicea that the dead profession is spued out of Christ's mouth. Repentance, however, as a matter of fact, not having taken place, the sentence is certain, **THE LAMP OF CHRISTIANITY WILL BE REMOVED FROM CHRISTENDOM.**

In the Ephesian epistle, two evils are seen as intruding into the church, but not yet allowed. One is the early appearance of clerical assumption, and the Lord commends resistance to the claim: “Thou hast tried them who say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.” No-where in scripture is there any authority for the continuance of apostles, or any provision for succession to the apostolic, function or office. The office was temporary, to lay doctrinally the foundation of the church, and an apostle must be a witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus (Acts 1:22). True ministry, according to Scripture, in the power of the Holy Ghost, is indeed blessed, and is provided for, for the Holy Spirit remains with the church to the end (John 14:16).

But office and gift are two distinct things, and there is no authority upon earth now to appoint to an office in the church, either apostle, bishop or elder, or deacon.

The other of the two evils is Nicolaitanism. And what, it may be asked, is Nicolaitanism? An elaborate explanation has been proposed, based solely on a supposed etymology of the word Nicolaitan; Nike- in Greek being victory, and laos, the people. Hence it has been assumed that Nicolaitanism meant an overcoming of the people; and this is taken to be the rise and prevalence of clerical authority. But this derivation, even supposing it to be actual, and not more than a fancy attached to a mere name, would just as well bear the meaning of a victory by the people over some one else, as a victory by some one else over the people. The explanation, however, is based upon a fallacious theory; 'a name in Scripture,' it is alleged, 'is always significant.' That it is SOMETIMES so, that it may be so, would be within the mark of sober interpretation; but to adopt it as a universal rule, would give a precarious scope to imagination, and certainly tend to unsound exegesis.

That Nicolaitanism can scarcely mean clericalism seems palpable from the fact that clericalism has already been dealt with in plain language in this same epistle (verse 2). And when so treated, the tone used towards each subject is so different as scarcely to permit of their being the same. The rejection of clericalism is very simply and moderately commended, but the utterance about Nicolaitanism is exceedingly strong, and it closes the judgment upon Ephesus: "I will remove thy lamp out of its place except thou repent. BUT THIS THOU HAST THAT THOU HATEST THE WORKS OF THE NICOLAITANS, WHICH I ALSO HATE." We are not told what the works were. Another has said, "This strong expression in the mouth of our Lord, unquestionably points at deeds of abomination and impurity." Ephesus, at all events, was faithful as to the solemn evil, whatever it was; they had the mind of Christ about it—there was no apathy; they "hated" the works of the Nicolaitans, and the Lord hated them too. How intense is God's hatred of unholiness! Respecting Nicolaitans, we shall find more in the Epistle to Pergamum. In this epistle, the promise is: "To him that overcomes, I will give to him to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." In the earthly paradise, man never ate of the tree of life, but was, after he had sinned, sent out of the garden to till the ground; and cherubim and a flaming sword kept the way of the tree of life. But what man forfeited, and never tasted in the earthly paradise, is, in the paradise of God, the beatific food of the overcomer (chap. 2:7).

#### SMYRNA

Persecution, suffering for the faith, is the prominent point in Smyrna, and the title which the Lord takes corresponds to this. "These things, saith the First and the Last, He who became dead and lived." The Lord thus places Himself before the distressed Smyrneans as one who had passed through the extremity of suffering. He had been through death.

Besides tribulation, they were in poverty, and Omniscience knew it all; but that is not the form in which He conveys His consolation. He shows them that He knows their sorrows in detail. It was not enough for their hearts, or His, to say that He knew them in the gross. As to Israel in bondage (Ex. 7), "I know their sorrows," so here, it is His heart speaking to their hearts. "I know thy tribulation and thy poverty; but thou art rich; and the railing of those who say that they themselves are Jews, and are not, but a synagogue of Satan. Fear nothing of what thou art about to suffer. Behold the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have

tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life.”

When in tribulation of any sort, it supports the Christian to know that our Lord is acquainted with all the circumstances: He takes cognizance of minor trials far short of death. How gracious of Him to say, “I know the railing of those who say they are Jews, and are not.” In our Bibles this is translated “blasphemy,” which, in English, is commonly understood to be blasphemy against God. This, however, is not the true sense. It is railing by those who claim to be Jews, against those who had gone forth to Christ without the camp. “Jews” in this epistle may be both literal and symbolic. Literal for the actual church of Smyrna, for in apostolic times Jews were bitter haters of the gospel. Symbolically, and in later times, it would represent those nominal Christians who are professedly the church of God, who claim a superior religious status, but who speak evil against those who manifest the life of Christ—and in times past have persecuted them. Contempt and railing are a sore trial to the spirit—hard to bear; and the Lord tells the Smyrneans that He knew of the railing, and lets them know His estimate of their foes they were a “synagogue of Satan.”

There is another comfort here for the soul in trial. It may seem to us that the world, or men of the world, have a victorious course before them — that the power is all in their hands. But here it is shown that the limit of suffering is prescribed: “Ye shall have tribulation ten days.” When faith apprehends this, it can be still, knowing that God is the superior; He is over all. “Be still and know that I am God.” The book of Job lifts the curtain off Satan's doings, and shows that Satan can only go as far as God allows him. “All that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand” (Job 1:12). Later, God saw fit to extend the trial, but never without limit. “Behold he is in thine hand, but save his life” (Job 2:6). Smyrna, however, was honored with a higher martyrdom than Job: “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” “He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies. He that overcomes shall in nowise be injured of the second death” (ver. 11). This does not imply that any saint, however feeble, would or could become liable to the second death. Its force is simply this—that, being persecuted and about to be cast into prison, they are exhorted to be faithful unto death (verse 10), and the overcomer is reminded for his comfort that, though he may be called upon to give up his life for his faith, that would be the end of his suffering; there was no second death for him, as there would be for the persecutors. The second death is being cast into the lake of fire, consequent upon the judgment of the great white throne (Revelation 20:14; see also Luke 12:5).

Viewing the seven churches as symbolical of the church's career, Smyrna represents the early persecutions. Seduction by worldly temptations follows later. This is usually the way. Satan tries to destroy; this failing, he seeks to draw aside. So in the case of Israel; destruction was attempted through Pharaoh, and afterward by seducing the people in the wilderness. So, too, with the blessed Lord: Satan, through Herod, sought to take His life; afterward came the temptation in the wilderness (Matthew 4, Luke 4).

In the Epistle to Ephesus, the Lord says, “I know thy works,” etc. To Smyrna He says, “I know thy tribulation and poverty,” etc., but some meddlesome person has interfered with the text by repeating in Smyrna's epistle “thy works” in the list of things which the Lord says that He knows. The same has been done in the succeeding epistle to Pergamum, but both are without authority.

Smyrna is one of two churches, the other being Philadelphia, with regard to which the Lord has no adverse comment or criticism to make.

[E. J.T.]

(To be continued)

## Ephesus, Smyrna and Pergamos: Part 2

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### PERGAMUM

In Pergamum, we shall see, keen judgment of evil was called for, and the character which the Lord assumes is consistent with that. “These things says He that has the sharp two-edged sword.” But, nevertheless, His gracious way is shown in praising everything He can, before commencing to deal with what was wrong.

“I know where thou dwellest, where the throne of Satan [is]; and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in the days in which Antipas my faithful witness [was], who was slain among you, where Satan dwells. But I have a few things against thee; that thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat [of] idol sacrifices and commit fornication. So thou also hast those who hold the doctrine of Nicolaitanes in like manner. Repent therefore; but if not, I come to thee quickly, and I will make war with them with the sword of my mouth.”

There is a change here, and a marked contrast with Smyrna. Smyrna was overwhelmed with tribulation and persecution—and more was yet predicted for her. To Pergamum, instead of “I know thy tribulation,” it is, “I know where thou dwellest, where Satan’s throne is.” The Christian’s calling is to be a stranger and a pilgrim, so that “DWELLING” where Satan’s throne is, may imply very different relations with the world of which Satan is the prince. Probably the reference is to the time, the fourth century, when, under Constantine, Christianity became the public, accepted religion of the Roman Empire—that is, of the world. True, there had been martyrdom; but this was in the past. The Lord, however, is able to acknowledge—to their honor—that they still held fast His name, and had not denied His faith even in the days when Antipas, His faithful witness, was slain.

An important principle is shown in this epistle; that of assembly-responsibility. This, in some quarters, is not known; in some, not admitted; but Christ says, “Thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of...” And again, “So thou also hast those who hold the doctrine of...” If challenged as to evil doctrine held amongst them, those who would evade assembly-responsibility, generally answer, ‘We do not trouble as to what Mr. X holds.’ But we cannot deceive Christ; His eyes are as a flame of fire. He knows everything that goes on, and He says: “Thou hast there those who hold the doctrine of...”

The Lord finds against Pergamum that they had there those who held the doctrine of Balaam. Balaam’s case illustrates more than one kind of evil. One is, prostituting his prophetic office to the world for gain. In this he was a type of many in these last days—as Jude says of them they have “run greedily after the error of Balaam for reward” (Jude 11). In this aspect, the “doctrine of Balaam” typifies the evil of clericalism—the ministry of Christ turned into a polite and desirable profession, carrying worldly rank and honor. Ephesus had been commended for resisting this in its incipiency; but in Pergamum it had developed into a system; there was the “doctrine of Balaam.” To what dimensions it has since grown is common knowledge. There are Princes of the Church in

Rome, and Lords, Spiritual and Temporal in England, with how many minor degrees of honor and wealth, who shall say? —though, indeed, to many of the clergy but little of the latter reaches. Worse, however, than worldly benefits, is that an official clergy too often cringes to the opinion of the day—superstition, when that is superstition; and rationalism in a day of rationalism. This is at its maturity in our time, when we see the professed ministry of Christ giving itself over to discredit Holy Scripture, and undermine Christianity in its essential doctrines.

God in His love for His people frustrated the designs of Balak against Israel, so far as that Balaam was not allowed to curse the people; and hence, after the failure of various attempts, “Balaam rose up and returned to his place, and Balak also went his way” (Numbers 24:14). But what followed? “The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods; and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods” (Numbers 25:1, 2). The narrative does not give details of this latter effort of Balak and Balaam, further than to say that it was “through the counsel of Balaam” (Numbers 31:16); and in one chapter the Lord Himself states that “Balaam taught Balak to set a snare before the sons of Israel, to eat of idol-sacrifices, and to commit fornication”(Revelation 2:14). Now this is the other evil of the teaching of Balaam referred to in the Epistle to Pergamum. What, then, is this teaching? IT IS UNION WITH THE WORLD; giving up the Christian position of separation from the world (Romans 12:2; 2 Cor. 6:14-18, etc.), abandoning that separation, as no longer to be maintained; joining in closest union with the world, and bowing down to the idols that the world bows down to. This is the antitype of eating things sacrificed to idols, and committing fornication, with the daughters of Moab. And this received the sanction and encouragement of teaching in Pergamum.

There was another evil in Pergamum: “So thou also hast those who hold the doctrine of Nicolaitans in like manner.” Ephesus has been commended for hating the DEEDS of the Nicolaitans. But this is an advance in evil. The “deeds” were followed by doctrine which justified the deeds, and deliberately taught things which Christ hated. Satan felt his way warily with Ephesus; but at Pergamum the evil is admitted and taught. There is nothing to show that the Nicolaitans were a sect, separating from the flock. At first, in the Ephesian stage, they simply adopted vile practices; while later, in Pergamum, they taught their views, and were tolerated in so doing; but still not a sect. The Lord holds the assembly responsible for having them there, so that they were not separated as a sect, nor had the assembly put them away as evil persons. The Lord's language is extremely strong, both in approval of the Ephesians, and in condemnation of the evil doers.

The silence of scripture as to what Nicolaitanism was, is significant; possibly it is left so, that we may be able to fill in the blank with other evil doctrines which may arise, and which may be tolerated by an assembly. That the Lord holds the entire assembly responsible for what it allows in its midst is clear, whether deeds or doctrine. In the extended view of the seven churches, it is not difficult to surmise what Nicolaitanism probably typifies; that it is not clericalism is evident; for clericalism is dealt with under two other heads, as has been shown; neither is it licentious mingling with the world, for that is the doctrine of Balaam. But there is another evil that has blotted Christianity, enormous in dimensions, but the nature of which explains the reticence of Scripture about it. In the early centuries, asceticism infected the church; this developed into attaching a special virtue to celibacy. Instead of holiness being the result, in the end of the second century and subsequently, unnamable corruption was the fruit of it; that corruption has continued since, and

survives today. How well this suits the language of our Lord to Ephesus: "But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans which I also hate" (Revelation 2:6). The doctrine of Balaam and the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, both tended to fleshly indulgence, but in totally different ways; one was in mingling with the world; but the other was a deeper form of corruption, licensed and allowed within the circle of the so-called church. Especially appropriate to this condition is Christ's character in the epistle: "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges." "For the word of God is living and operative, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and penetrating to the division of soul and spirit, both of joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is not a creature unapparent before him; but all things are naked and laid bare to his eyes, with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12, 13, New Translation). Following comes a solemn call to REPENT, addressed to that which represents the assembly. Not merely the evil-doers are held responsible, but the whole assembly—for the assembly is defiled by evil which it tolerates in its midst. Failing repentance, Christ threatens the evil-doers that He will come quickly, and fight against them with the sword of His mouth. This does not mean Christ's second coming—but that He would be turned into an adversary to the sinners. In the state of things such as at Pergamum, the word ministered by His faithful servants in the assembly would be as a sharp sword with two edges; normally, Christ's word to the saints is cheering, comforting, teaching, encouraging; but where evil exists, it is stern and sharp, and would be exceedingly uncomfortable, except to those who have a good conscience. If the word in the assembly be still resisted, Christ, Who is in the midst of the golden lamps (chap. 1.), will act in judgment in His solemn character as revealed in that vision—and this may be even to death (1 Cor. 11:29-32).

The promises to the overcomer are especially sweet and encouraging. They are two-

1. To PARTAKE OF THE HIDDEN MANNA. The manna in the wilderness was a type of Christ in His life as man down here, and a golden pot of it was placed in the ark of the covenant for a memorial (Ex. 16:33, 34; Hebrews 9:4); it was hidden there. Of this mystical store we shall partake in heaven. In the glory we shall have blessed communion with Jesus, in respect of His path of humiliation in this world. The angels cannot have, with Him, that mutual sympathy respecting the trials of the godly here, which we shall be privileged to enjoy.

"There on the hidden bread

Of Christ-once humbled here-

God's treasured store-forever fed-

His love my soul shall cheer."

But not only in heaven; even here, the spiritual, the faithful, they who overcome while corruption spreads around, are given to partake of this secret delight.

2. "And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written, which no one knows but he that receives [it]." The word used here (ψιφιδιον) signifies a stone or pebble which, in ancient times, had two well-known uses. In criminal cases, a white stone was given denoting acquittal; or a black, signifying condemnation. Thus Paul, referring to his pre-converted days when he persecuted the Christians, says, that when they were put to death, he gave his voice against them—literally, it is, he gave his stone against them; the word is the same (Acts 26:10). But there

was another signification; the white stone meant a token given to victors in the public games. Either of these two senses would suit the present case, though probably it is the latter which is intended for the overcomer in the Revelation. The white stone of our chapter, however, had a rare and precious attribute; it contained, and conferred on the possessor, a name which no one knew but he that received it. How sweet, amid the thronging myriads in heaven, for an individual to enjoy a secret shared only by himself I and the Lord of glory! Personality and private acquaintance with the Lord Jesus will not be lost in the numerousness of the glorified hosts. How compensative will this be for any toil or loss or adversity into which, down here, faithfulness may have led the overcomer!

E.J.T.

“Called by that secret name

Of undisclosed delight

(Blest answer to reproach and shame),

Graved on the stone of white.”

(Concluded from page 159)

## Errata

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P. 25, col. x, 1. 9 fr.bottom For xvi. Read xiv. II.

77 27, 77 I, 7, 5 „ xliii. 1-17 xliii. 1-7.

“4o, „ 2, „ 6 fr.bottom „ xxxvii. 37 xxvii. 37.

„ 40, „ 2,,, 5,y y, John 10:7 “ Jeremiah 10:7.

„ 41,,, 1,,, I „ Isaiah 32:1, 2,, Is. iXii. 1,2

### Errata

Page 228, col. 1, line 2x: For “subject” read “subjection” 2, „ 3: “Because” “Become.”

### Errata

Page 356, line 3 of footnote: For actual-born, Read natural-born.

Page 357, col. x, line xo from bottom, for significance, Read insignificance.

Page 358, col. x, line 16, For Bethsaida, Read Bethesda.

## Erratum

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(in last number

Page 374, col. 2, last line but one, For publish Read punish.

Erratum

Page 24, col. x. 1. 18, For Judah's Read Josiah's.

## Extract

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I believe it is more devotedness than competency to help, which is wanting, though devotedness is a large part of the competency. It is this we want, we are not our own but His, bought with a price. It is carried out cheerfully and joyfully when we think of Him, not of ourselves. For love does not grow weary of serving, though service may be often in trial as regards the scene—indeed, save with rare encouragement, always in the general run of it, is. “Therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”

J. N. D.

## Fragment: 2 Corinthians 5:14

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To apply 2 Cor. 5:14 to death to sin, instead of death by it, is more wrong than I thought, because *panton* is absolute. "He died for all," and of *pantes* applies necessarily to the same all.

## Fragment: Devotion in Service

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“To me to live is Christ.” So said the blessed apostle; and are we not called to be followers of Him as he was of Christ? Can anything be more blessed? And do we not happily confess that He “loved me and gave Himself for me?” May it be ours to devote ourselves to Him in all our daily walk and service!

## Fragment: Luke 10:39

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It was not much to record of this one that she (Mary) sat at Jesus' feet. Has this value in the eyes of the world, or even of Christians in general? Has it in ours? But it was as ointment poured forth to the heart of the Beloved One. We may be active in service, right as all this is in its place, but there is nothing He so values as for us to love to listen to Him. How wonderful that, although He is now exalted on the throne of the Majesty on high, He still looks for the opportunity of speaking to us down here. Are we beyond His care or reach? or outside His interest? Here was no bustling crowd, no activities of service—here was rest even for Him.

The last of the seven addresses to the churches, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice, and will open the door, I will come in to him." What for? To talk with him! He, when here in this world, had many things to say to His own which they could not bear, and He would have much to say to us if we were ready to listen. The only place to learn His mind for service is at His feet. Service is good, but the Lord said, Mary had chosen the good part. He appreciated and valued Martha's service as no other could, for He never slights or fails to value service in its place. He is listening for the voice that will bid Him enter. May we open to Him!

What was the end of it all? The Lord perhaps had spoken to Mary of His death. When He spoke to His disciples about His decease they wouldn't have it. But this one had sat at His feet, and because of what she had there learned from Him, she brings out an alabaster box of precious ointment, and pours it on His blessed feet. Let it be ours to be found sitting at His feet, listening to His word.

## The Gentleness of Christ

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John 21:15-22

This is a very touching narrative, and comes closely home to our hearts. There is a background to this lakeside picture which heightens the moral beauty of the scene.

The upper room at the last supper, where the self-confidence of the apostle vaunted itself in a boastfulness and a depreciation of others by his saying, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise," throws into relief the deep probing questions of the morning by the lake. The crowded hall of the high priest's house at night with its fire of coals, its weakness and threefold denial, contrast vividly with the quiet lakeside and the threefold confession of loving attachment to his Master.

But one great Figure is the same; one strong tender Heart is common to both pictures; through all the lights and shadows of the terrible tragedy of that dark night in which He was betrayed by one, denied by another, and forsaken by all, the atmosphere of the gentleness of Christ pervades the whole. To Judas the traitor, the reproof and dismissal from the apostolate are given in such gentle terms that none at the table knew for what intent He spake; to Peter, ignorant of his own weakness and boastful of his ability, "Simon, Simon, I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and when thou art converted (or, restored), strengthen thy brethren," is the utterance of the Lord who knew him fully.

At the high priest's house, when the recreant apostle has thrice denied with oaths and curses that he ever knew his Master, then the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. No upbraiding, no reproaches, no scathing denunciation, but a look, one well believes, of such infinite pity and sorrow for His poor, craven-hearted follower, that Peter went out and wept bitterly. Who amongst the followers of the Lord Jesus does not know something of this—the gentleness of Christ?

Now, on this calm, peaceful morning, the same holy Master awaits His follower, and, thoroughly dealing with him, restores and re-instates him to office.

But note the gentleness of the Lord as He trusts the restored man again, and entrusts to him a yet greater share of His interests. This gentleness made Peter great, and in after days we find this apostle teaching the lessons learned that day. Cf. 1 Peter 2:21; 5:2-4.

It is interesting to observe that the inquiry of the Lord is not "Lovest thou My sheep?" but "Lovest thou ME?" Then, "Feed my lambs"; "Shepherd my sheep," "Feed my sheep" incidentally reminding us that no amount of affection for the sheep will guarantee sufficient impetus to maintain a course of unwearied service to them. The people of the Lord are sometimes difficult to get on with; they have moods and opinions and are sometimes apt to be very viewy and trying; likewise the pastors or shepherds, being human, may magnify themselves and not their office, or cease to be ensamples to the flock of God, and so the relationship fails of its divine intention.

But the Unchanging One to Whom Peter realized his eternal indebtedness, Whose love had entirely won him, Whose gentleness had made him great, with unerring wisdom touches the vital question of all true service, whether towards the people of God or to sinners needing salvation, "Lovest thou Me?" thus presenting Himself as the sole object for the heart of the servant, and the sufficient motive for the most arduous, unwearied, patient, willing service to man.

One further thing calls for notice in this incident, namely, no sooner is Peter restored and re-instated to office, than a hint of the old disposition appears. The final words of commission have been spoken by the Lord, and the emphatic injunction, "Follow Me" has been placed upon him, when he, turning about, began to be occupied with another disciple.

An eye off the Master, and on a fellow disciple leads to an outburst of curiosity. The turning about, and the occupation with some other one than the One he was called to follow was and is the cause of the mischief. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was probably morally and spiritually the best of the apostolic band, but anyone or anything that diverts the gaze of the believer from his Lord is a hindrance to the close following of His steps.

So the Lord in His tenderness rebukes the incipient wandering of this one, who once before "had followed afar off," with, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me."

There is but one Lord, and He the sufficient object for the heart of the saint; and the Lord here briefly indicates what is the life-long occupation for Peter, and for ourselves, "Follow thou Me."

"Oh, guard my soul then, Jesus,

Abiding still with Thee;

And if I wander, teach me,

Soon back to Thee to flee;

That all Thy gracious favor

May to my soul be known,

And versed in this, Thy goodness,

My hopes Thyself shalt crown."

W.G.T.

## Gethsemane (Duplicate)

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Luke 22:44

The state of the heart has more to do than exegesis with the understanding of this passage. Yet important doctrines, or rather facts and truths relative to Christ, are connected with these re-markable verses. I shall try to bring out the position in which the ever-blessed Savior is found here, although the appreciation of the bearing of these verses depends, after all, on the spirituality of the heart. It will be understood that doctrines about Christ are connected with them, when one knows that vers. 43, 44 have been omitted by more than one manuscript, evidently because according to the view taken by the copyists they made Christ too much a man.

Now it is this which gives to these verses their true value: Christ, in the Gospel of Luke, is essentially man. We there find Him in prayer much oftener than in the other Gospels. Thus, after His baptism by John, it was whilst He prayed that heaven was opened upon Him; it was whilst He prayed that He was transfigured (chap. 9.). So also He had passed all the night in prayer before choosing the twelve disciples (chap. 6:12). All this is exceedingly interesting, yea, of profound interest for the heart.

But other elements present themselves in the consideration of these verses which are before us. An immense change was taking place at this time in the position of the Savior. Until then He had, by His divine power, provided for all the wants of His disciples, entirely disowned as He was, and in appearance dependent on the kindness of a few women (for it was their particular privilege thus to devote themselves to Him), or of other persons, for His daily bread—if needed, a fish. They brought Him exactly what was necessary to supply His wants. And when He sends His disciples to preach in the cities of the glorious land, He knows how to turn the hearts so that they lacked nothing. But He was to be rejected. The things concerning Him were to receive their divine and wonderful solution, and to be accomplished according to the depth of the counsels of God.

He was going, not to shelter His disciples from every evil, and not to shelter Himself, but to be exposed to the outrages of those who said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." Christ was not yet drinking the cup of wrath. This was accomplished on the cross: it was there, that which He suffered from the hand of God, supreme and expiatory in its nature. But the moment was come which He Himself described by these words: "This is now your hour, and the power of darkness." The hour of temptation, not of wrath but of temptation, when the Savior must have thought at the same time of the terrible cup that was before Him. The enemy tried to overwhelm Him by the circumstances, before which human nature, as such, would shrink; and in view of the forsaking of God amidst these circumstances. The Savior entered at this moment into the trial; but He entered into it perfect in every way, receiving the cup in obedience from the hand, of His Father. As to the circumstances, and as to that which weighed upon His soul, Satan and the men under His power were everything: as to the state of His soul, they were nothing; His Father was everything. This is one of the most perfect and profound instructions for all our troubles.

It is to this supreme hour that the apostle John alludes when he says, more than once, when no one touched nor could touch the Lord: "His hour was not yet come." But I would enter into some further consideration of the character of this hour of temptation. The Lord in His grace deigned, led by the Spirit, to allow Himself to be tempted, having associated Himself with us to take part in our miseries and troubles. Satan tempted Him at the beginning by all that which (sin apart) induces man to act from his own will, that which leads him into sin when he listens to his own will—the need of food, the world and its glory, the promises, outside the path of obedience and in distrust of God and of His faithfulness.

But the Second man maintained His integrity, and Satan could not succeed in making Him depart from the path of the man of God. The strong man was bound and Christ returns, with the power of the Spirit, being untouched in His soul, "to spoil him of his goods." He delivered all those who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him; He was the man who conquered, gaining the victory over Satan, as the first man had broken down. By the Spirit of God He cast out demons; the kingdom of God was there. All the effects of the dominion of Satan disappeared before Him, even death itself. Alas! this did not change man's heart; who was, in the affections of his flesh, enmity against God. Death was needed for the redemption of man; quite a new state of being, his reconciliation with God; the righteousness of God was to be glorified; the claim that Satan had over man by sin in death and that by the judgment of God, was to be destroyed and annulled. The righteous vengeance of God against that which was hostile to Himself was to be manifested. So that all the enmity of man against God, all the anguish of death viewed as the power of Satan and the judgment of God, all the energy of Satan, and lastly the wrath of God (and it is in bearing the latter that expiation has been accomplished) were to meet on Jesus, and did meet on the head of the Lamb of God, who opened not His mouth before His oppressors. Terrible testimony showing that the hour of man and of his will is the power of darkness! The hour of God in righteousness for man is but the righteous wrath which abandons Him, and finally excludes from His presence him who is in hostility against Him.

What powerful and infinite proof of grace, that Christ tasted this in His grace; that God gave Him that we might escape it; that Christ tasted it, offering Himself without spot to God for that! Outwardly, the power of Satan and the malice of men led Christ to death and the cup of God's wrath. And it is thus that the perfection of Christ knows how to separate absolutely these two parts of suffering, and to turn the terrible suffering, from the power of Satan in death, into perfect obedience to God His Father, because He passed through that fearful hour of temptation with God, and without entering into it one moment as a temptation which might have for its effect in Him to awaken His own will.

Such is Gethsemane; not the cup, but all the power of Satan in death and the enmity of man taking their revenge (so to speak) on God ("the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me"): all perfectly and entirely felt, but brought to God in an entire submission to His will. It is the Christ—marvelous scene!— watching, praying, struggling in the highest degree; all the power and the weight of death pressed upon His soul by Satan and augmented by the sense He had of what they were before God, from whose face nothing then hid Him. But He always kept His Father absolutely before His face, referring everything to the Father's will, without flinching for a moment, or trying to escape that will by giving way to His own. Thus He takes nothing from Satan or men, but all from God. When He is well assured that it is the will of His Father that He should drink this

cup, all is decided for Him. "The cup which my Father hath given, shall I not drink it?" All was between Him and His Father, the obedience is calm and perfect.

What ineffable victory, what supreme calmness! suffering, yea, but between Himself and God! Satan now was as nothing, men were the instruments of the will of God, or the redeemed of His grace. See what happens when they come; Jesus went forth, and when He announced Himself, they fell to the ground. He voluntarily offers Himself to accomplish the work, and thus permits those to go in safety who had no strength to shelter themselves, to subsist in that terrible moment when the triumph of good or of evil was to be decided, and where the righteousness of God against sin lent its force to the power of death and the malice of those who were the voluntary slaves of him who possessed the power of death.

The perfect bond of love has overcome through the subjection of Christ as man to the judgment against sin, by which righteousness can triumph in blessing according to love; the expiation of sin has been made, and the power of Satan and of death annulled for him who comes to God by Jesus. But Luke 22:39—44 presents to us Christ conscious of that which was to happen, and, as man, occupied in communion with His Father, with this final and decisive trial. Was He to enter into the temptation, that is to say, to yield to a will of His own, even by desiring to escape death and the cup of judgment, or to find an occasion of obedience, instead of sparing Himself? For Him obedience, however terrible the sufferings, was the joy and breathing of His soul.

Not to dread the judgment of God would have been insensibility; to avoid it would have been to fail as to the will of His Father, since for this cause He came to this hour. It would have been to fail as regards the salvation of man, in which the whole character of God revealed itself even to the angels. But here Christ does not draw the character of this moment from elevating and encouraging motives, but He goes through it in entire subjection to the will of God with all the pain attached to it. He prays. Verse 43 puts the question in all its simplicity. An angel appeared to Him to strengthen Him. It is a man having need of help from on high. If He had not been that, it could not have been the deliverance of man.

The pressure of anguish only became stronger on realizing the evil with which He had to do; but this struggling agony of soul is only expressed by more intense prayer. His soul attached itself more strongly to God, and He rises—having perfectly gone through the valley of the shadow of death, the power of Satan, the horror of evil as opposed to God He rises victorious. The cup which His Father would give Him He will drink. Then it will not be a question of struggling, watching, or praying, but of subjection. A perfect calmness marks the cross, a calmness of darkness where man's eye does not penetrate; but the subjection is perfect. Here goes out the cry, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" "But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

It was perfection, the perfection of suffering; of subjection, but not a struggle, where the soul cleaves to God in order not to enter into the temptation, a temptation—mark it well—not by means of something agreeable, but of all the power of evil, of death, of Satan, who tried to make the Savior shrink from the awful cup which was found on the path of obedience, the cup which produced our salvation, and the glory of Jesus as man. On the cross, in the solemn hour of expiation, all takes place between the soul of Christ and God. In Gethsemane, the Christ, in presence of all the efforts of Satan, cleaves to God so as not to enter into temptation, but follow the path of obedience, low as it brought Him. Now He descended into the lower parts of the earth,

alone, forsaken, betrayed, denied, and, lastly, abandoned of God— perfect, victorious, obedient, the Savior of those who obey Him.

And notice here, therefore, that in Gethsemane, infinite as were His sufferings compared with all ours, Christ is an example to us. We have to watch and to pray, to struggle in prayer perhaps, so as not to enter into temptation. Sometimes even, when some affliction comes upon us by our own fault (in Christ no doubt it was the fault of others), it is difficult to submit to the ways of God. It is the same thing when, in one way or another, the path of obedience and of uprightness, the path of life is painful. A more easy path, more verdant to the eyes of the flesh, is to be found by the side of it. Then in our little troubles our portion is that of the Savior, to watch and to pray so as not to enter into temptation. The trying path (see Psalm 16) is the path of life. There God is found; there is the deliverance for His glory and for our own. May God keep us in it! We need His grace, we need sometimes to struggle in the presence of God, to hold good; but He who overcame is with us. And if we have gone through the trouble of circumstances with God, the circumstances themselves will be but the occasion of obedience when in fact they do happen. This is the secret of practical life.

In the expiation, it is evident that Christ was our substitute, and is not our example except in the fact of His perfect subjection. There were doubtless, on the cross, profound sufferings of body and soul, where Christ was a perfect example of patience for us; but in speaking of the cross we are pretty well accustomed, and rightly, to have the moment of expiation before our minds. It is in this sense only that I make a difference, as to the example. It is important in these days to maintain as clearly as possible the idea of substitution where Christ was alone, of suffering in which we had no part but by our sins. One is willing to have Christ as a burnt offering, a Christ who offers Himself (we, by grace, can offer ourselves, we ought to do it); but a Christ who is a sacrifice for sin some often will not have. Are we to suffer for our sins and to bear them? Morally speaking, there is a glory in expiation, in the cross, which is not found even in glory. I shall share the glory of Christ with Him, by the infinite grace which vouchsafed it to me. Could I have shared the cross? The Christian knows what he has to reply. May God teach us in exercises of piety, but may He keep us firm in the simplicity of that faith which rests on a perfect expiation, accomplished by Him who has borne our sins in His own body on the tree!

Hence, to understand Gethsemane, we must understand Christ as man, as He was at the time of His first temptation in the wilderness; then all the power of evil and of death in the hands of Satan, and in presence of the judgment of God in death against sin. If Christ had not gone through that—the horrible bottomless pit, this deep mire, where there was no footing, lay on our path—who could have gone through it? Satan tried to make Christ shrink before the abyss which our sins had opened, to place it between His soul and God. The effect on Him was to make Him draw near with greater intensity of soul to God, to ascertain His will while realizing all the horror of that moment in fellowship with Him, and then thus to find therein an occasion of perfect obedience without entering into temptation.

The cup of judgment itself He drank on the cross.

A word on our portion in following His example, if a trial is before us. If it be the will of God that we should pass through a trial, if even we dread it, our wisdom is to present ourselves before God, and to place all before His eyes. There may be anguish; that in which the will in us has not been broken will be laid bare. When we would avoid the temptation because it is painful, that is, spare

ourselves instead of yielding the fruits of righteousness, instead of submitting ourselves to it for the good of our souls, and for the glory of God, the evil path of selfishness which the heart tries to take, becomes evident; we choose “iniquity rather than affliction.” When these exercises are sent for the development of grace, grace is developed, God working with the trial in the soul. When it is discipline, positive chastisement, and the soul submits—receives the discipline from the hand of God, the discipline has lost its bitterness and borne its fruit. In it God is all in holiness for the soul. I do not desire that one should anticipate evil, but that, when the evil is in view, one may pass through it with God and not with man—that one may watch and pray so as not to enter into temptation.

“And when he was at the place, he said to them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and having knelt down, he prayed saying, Father, if thou wilt, remove this cup from me—but then, not my will, but thine be done.”

It was, indeed, no wanted occasion even for Him, but the awful moment of the enemy's return, who had departed for a season after his old defeat in the wilderness. But this garden was to behold an equally decisive defeat of the enemy as became the Second man, the Lord from heaven. It was no longer Satan seeking to draw away from the path of obedience by what was desirable in the world (Luke 4). He sought now, if he could not drag Jesus out of the path of obedience, to fill Him with alarm and to kill Him in it. But Jesus shrank from no suffering and weighed before God all that was before Him. He watched and prayed and suffered being tempted. The disciples failed to pray and entered into temptation, so that nothing but grace delivered them.

The Holy Spirit does not give us the detail of the three prayers of the Lord as in Matthew, but rather a summary of all in one. In both we see His dependence in prayer and His tried but perfect submission to the will of His Father. Here, however, we have what is characteristic of our Evangelist, both in the angelic succor which was sent Him and in the bloody sweat that accompanied His conflict. It is well known that many Fathers (Greek and Latin) have cast a doubt upon verses 43, 44. “and an angel appeared to him from heaven strengthening him. And being in conflict he prayed more intently, and his sweat became as clots of blood falling down upon the earth.” Several of the more ancient MSS. indeed also omit them, as the Alexandrian, Vatican, and others, beside ancient versions; but they are amply verified by external witnesses, and the truth taught has the closest affinity to the line which Luke was given to take up. The true humanity and the holy suffering of the Lord Jesus stand out here in the fullest evidence.

Here again, however, observe that the suffering differs essentially from atonement. For not only does He speak out of the full consciousness of His relationship with the Father, but He has also the angelic help which would have been wholly out of season when forsaken of God because of sin-bearing. All was most real. It is not meant that His sweat fell merely like great drops of blood, but that it became this as it were, that is, the sweat was so tinged with blood, which exuded from Him in His conflict that it might have seemed pure blood. “And rising up from his prayer, he came to the disciples and found them sleeping from grief. And he said to them, Why sleep ye? Rise up and pray that ye enter not into temptation.”

## Heaven's Joy

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Will it be the glory bright  
Of those realms of endless light?  
Streets all paved with crystal gold,  
Gates of pearl of price untold,  
Harps, and thrones, and diadems,  
Palaces, and costly gems?  
All, and more than this, is given,  
But 'tis not the "joy of heaven."  
One there is, and One alone,  
Every ransomed saint will own  
As the central fount of bliss;  
Heaven were empty without this.  
Jesus, Lamb of God, Thou art  
Now the center of my heart;  
While by faith Thy face I see,  
While I live and feed on Thee  
E'en in this sad, weary waste,  
Often heavenly joys I taste:  
Thou the joy of joys wilt be,  
Of my heaven's eternity.

J. G. D.

## Notes on Jeremiah: Part 1

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Very few Christians occupy themselves with prophecy in general, or with the prophetic books in particular. They look upon the study of prophecy as speculative and unprofitable, but the apostle tells us that “every scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable” (2 Timothy 3:16). Prophetic study would, no doubt, prove to be unprofitable if entered on without seeing and keeping in view the grand object and purpose of God—the glory of Christ. And this is not confined to prophecy, but runs through every part of the Bible. The glory of Christ in the church, in Israel, and in the world, is the object and end of all the divine way. All sorts of efforts and schemes are in vogue to bring about union and a better state of things in the professing church, but the true unity and glory of the church of God will not be seen until Christ is manifested; then shall we be manifested with Him in glory, and the desire and purpose of His love will have been fulfilled (Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 3:4).

Many, indeed, are interested in the recovery of the Holy Land, and the return of the Jews to their own inheritance, but the purpose of God with regard to His beloved Israel will not have been fulfilled until they have looked on Him whom they pierced, and have mourned for Him as for an only son (Zechariah 12:9-14; 13:1-2).

Many, too, are looking for a lasting peace at the conclusion of the wicked and cruel war now raging; but there can be no such peace for the world so long as the “Prince of peace” is absent—until He comes who is “King of kings and Lord of lords,” “whose right it is” (Ezek. 21:27) to bear universal sway.

But we have no intention nor desire, in this paper, to occupy ourselves with prophecy, but with some of the moral principles which we find in the Book of Jeremiah. This Book of the prophet is very rich in and full of moral principles—principles which, while they apply primarily to Judah, are nevertheless full of instruction and blessing for us.

Chapters 1 to 24 are full of the pleadings, the gracious pleadings, of Jehovah with His rebellious, backsliding, guilty, but beloved people (cf. chaps. 2:9-35; 4:14; 7: 19-22). Chapters 14 and 15 go together and the teaching of these two chapters is specially important and instructive for ourselves today. The moral state and condition of Judah at the time of the prophecy were alike deplorable. All classes were involved in the guilt of having forgotten and forsaken Jehovah—kings and subjects—high and low—rich and poor—pastors and people—prophets and priests—all were alike fallen and guilty (see chaps. 5: 1-5, 13, 30, 31; 6: 13; 8: 9; 10: 21; 12:10; 22:10-30; 23:1, 9-11, 15, 21, 22; 26: 8-11).

The time of the prophecy was in the reign of Josiah and his sons. There was a great revival in Josiah’s day; but, alas, like many another revival, there was much that was superficial and unreal (3:10). Josiah himself was a pious man. He did that which was right in the sight of Jehovah, and walked in the ways of his father David. The house of Jehovah had fallen to decay, and in place of the worship of Jehovah idolatry was rampant throughout the land. But Josiah had the house of

God repaired, and its services restored. In the process the neglected and forgotten book of the law was found, which was taken by Hilkiyah and read to the king, who, on hearing it, rent his clothes and wept before the Lord, and set about to obey and act upon it (2 Kings 22; 23). Josiah thoroughly cleansed the house, and removed the vessels and every trace of idolatry, as well as the guilty idolaters themselves, and then restored the worship of Jehovah. They kept such a passover as had not been kept since the days of the judges, we are told. But his sons were wicked men, and walked not in his steps, but did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.

Chapter 14. The first thing we notice here is blessing withheld. There was a "dearth"; the sources of life and refreshment were dried up; there were no reviving, refreshing, fructifying showers from heaven; all was desolate and barren. It is a sad case when God has to withhold blessing from His people. He loves His saints and delights to bless them. "Bring all the tithes into the store-house, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10) —such is His desire to bless. But here, how different (vers. 1-6)! Is there not a cause? What says ver. 7? "Our iniquities testify against us... our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee."

Have not we in our day had to mourn the lack of spiritual power and blessing? Do we inquire Is there not a cause? Have not we failed and sinned? In old times, men of faith, men of God who felt deeply the condition of God's guilty people, and bore it on their hearts before Him, were wont to say, "our iniquities," "we have sinned." Now it is rather "they have sinned; they have gone wrong." Verses 8 and 9 are very beautiful as showing that where there is simple faith and self-judgment, the soul may ever cling to and look to the Lord. "O the hope of Israel, the savior thereof in the time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night? Why shouldest thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save? Yet thou, O Jehovah, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name; leave us not."

But the Lord must vindicate His name; evil must be judged (vers. 10-16). We know how much evil has been brought about, not only by false prophets, or false brethren, but by the true servants of the Lord. "And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle" (Gen. 13:7) with what result we all know. How often strife, conflict and division have been brought about through the disagreement of leaders!

Again, we have in the verses that follow (17-21), the cry of faith, and love, and see the tears of a broken heart.

How many, when trouble and weakness have come in, have turned aside from the path of faith, into unscriptural associations, or even gone back into the world, thinking to find an easier path and blessing! But are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Surely not. "Art not thou he, O Jehovah our God? therefore we will wait upon thee: for thou hast made all these things." Oh, the folly and the loss of departing from the Lord! (chap. 2:13; Hebrews 12; 13).

Chapter 15 pursues the subject of the government of God and the judgment of evil, but declares the way is open for any to forsake their evil ways and return to Himself. At the same time Jeremiah is presented as a striking type of the godly remnant and the position and moral features of such.

These are striking and important principles and full of instruction for us.

The government of God is as real as the grace of God. In the exercise of government “He can by no means clear the guilty,” nor recognize or accept that which has failed. But grace may find a way of escape and bring in salvation—praise His name! How deep the fall, how grievous the sin; when He has to say: “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, let them go forth.” There have always been faithful and devoted men, who have felt deeply the condition of God's people in a day of ruin, and who have borne them on their heart in prayer and intercession, before God; but none are more conspicuous than these. But such was the guilt and perversity of Judah at this time that He says to Jeremiah: “Pray not for this people for their good” (16: 11), and here He declares He could not hear on their behalf even Moses or Samuel (15:1-9). How solemn is this!

But does the maintenance of government in the judgment of evil alter or diminish the love of God for His own? In no wise. It is the God of love—the Spirit of Christ working in the heart of the prophet that leads him to enter so fully into the truth and to exhibit (ver. 5) those feelings which we see in perfection in the Lord Jesus. Himself. “And when He was come near, He beheld the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes” (Luke 19:41, 42).

The following verses develop the position and moral features of the remnant. Jeremiah there represents and exhibits the moral features of that remnant. There has always been a remnant, those who, in the darkest days of sin and ruin on the part of God's people have “feared the LORD and thought upon His name.” God has never “left himself without a witness.” The first thing we find in this connection is what has been always true, conflict and persecution (verse 10). From Cain and Abel downwards they that are after the flesh have persecuted those that are after the Spirit. Is any persecution so fierce, persistent and cruel, as religious persecution? But the Lord accepts this remnant and they are separated unto Him, and assured of His protection and blessing. Grace and strength are vouchsafed that they may be able to disarm and resist the evil. God is on the side of those who honor and serve Him and He counts them His special treasure (Mal. 3:16-18). There is at the same time identification, not with the evil, not in fellowship and walk with the sinning, but with those who feel rightly before God, who feel the effects of failure and ruin, in weakness and trial if not in persecution, and, perhaps, death. But they know their refuge and resource— “O LORD, thou knowest” (verse 15).

There is more than one kind of separation. There is the Pharisaical kind which says, “Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou” (Isaiah 65:5). There are those who separate themselves, natural men, having not the Spirit (Jude 19). The word of God is the source of true separation to God (verse 16). When the word of God is found and fed upon, it produces not only separation with the outward consequences, but the heart is imbued with the Spirit of Christ who felt deeply in His Spirit the sad condition of a fallen people before God, as Jeremiah here, in his measure. The principles of the closing verses (19-21) are very definite and instructive.

1. However far the professing people may wander from God and His word, the way is always open for return to Himself. How encouraging!
2. To find restoration, and ability to stand before Him.

3. In spiritual intelligence and discrimination (Hebrews 5:14). If we consider the church in its first estate and think of it now, how sad is the contrast! how universal the ruin! what errors and superstitions abound! But there are saints precious to God, and good as well as evil everywhere, and we should know how to separate the precious from the vile.

4. One cannot help fearing that this and other portions have been used in a party spirit and for party ends. But if we are quite sure of our ground, if we are not actuated by a party spirit, if we have the word for our warrant and guide, and the glory of God as our object, we are not at liberty to return to what we have left as evil and contrary to His word, but welcome any who desire to cease to do evil, and discern all that is good everywhere.

5. "And I will make thee unto this people a brasen wall." Here we have divine security and strength to judge and resist the evil and the enemy.

6. God is everywhere and sovereign in wisdom, love and power, and can bless His own wherever they may be found. But there is a special promise of manifestation and blessing to those who walk in faith and obedience (John 14:21-23), and His presence vouchsafed to such as are gathered to His Name.

7. To save and bring in final deliverance from sin and sorrow and all the power of the enemy; for the church when He comes (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18), for the Jewish remnant when He appears.

When the armies of Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and carried Judah captive to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar's captain of the guard left a remnant of the poor in the land, and chapters 39-44 tell us what happened to that remnant.

We are apt to make mistakes in applying scriptures, but in meditating on these chapters one cannot help thinking of the history of our own time.

In chapter 39 the enemy comes in like a flood, the rebels flee, but are overtaken by death, bondage and blindness (verses 1-9) —awful picture of the result of disobedience (chap. 18: 14-23)! Special favor is shown to Jeremiah; God knows how to deliver His faithful servants in the worst of times (11-14). Jeremiah is given perfect liberty to go where he pleases (chap. 40: 1-5); but, gracious and faithful man that he was, he chooses to remain with the poor few who were in the right place (ver. 6). For, notwithstanding all that had happened, this feeble remnant were in their right place in Jehovah's land. Many were attracted and sought, and joined themselves to the remnant and got much blessing (vers. 7-12). But alas, how soon evil developed in this remnant! If they had "feared the Lord and thought upon His name" if they had submitted to the rule of Nebuchadnezzar, who was the rod in Jehovah's hand for the punishment of Judah for her sins; if they had remembered that they were part of the guilty nation and that all were involved in the common ruin—all might have been well. The promise to Jeremiah in chapter 15: 11-14 applied to them and they were assured of divine protection and blessing again and again (39:10; 42:7-12). But false ones got among them. In chap. 41 the flesh is rampant; conflict and confusion reign supreme; many fall; some are brought into bondage to the power of evil; others, actuated by the fear of man, seek refuge in Egypt, that world from which they had been delivered by the sovereign favor and mighty power of God. "In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence, but the fear of man bringeth a snare."

How possible it is to be in a right position without answering to that position, to be in the way of separation without being really separate to God!

Chaps. 42, 43. How futile are all the gracious promises, the loving appeals and the solemn warnings against a wrong course when self-will is at work! There was a professed desire to know the mind of the Lord, but no real faith in God, no respect for His word. When His mind was made known to them they flatly refused to obey, and were determined to go into Egypt (43: 1-17), but judgment overtook them there.

Chapter 44. Bent on going into Egypt (the world), into Egypt they went, and it is there in this chapter we find them. Those who choose the world will be involved in its judgment (43: 9-13).

If all this shows what man is in self-will and rebellion, it shows also what God is in patient grace and goodness (ver. 4; 2 Peter 3:9). Grace follows them even into Egypt, and still pleads with them; but nothing humbles them or brings them to repentance (vers. 5-10). But there is a limit to patience, and judgment follows from which there is no escape (vers. 11-14). If people think that by going into the world they will escape trouble, they make a great mistake. We get tired of strife and divisions and weakness, but going into the world does not mend matters. We see here the sad effect of going into the world; it left them without heart or conscience. It would be hard to find a bolder, more impudent and wicked defiance of God and His word. They, moreover, impudently assert that it is better and more profitable to serve idols than to serve the Lord! (vers. 15-19). But all such will find out to their cost, that the Lord does not forget and will be as good as His word in judgment as in blessing (vers. 20-27). But here there is a remnant, though here as elsewhere, when the remnant fails it does not relieve from individual faithfulness. All who were carried away by the leaders do not form part of the class who dwelt in the land of Egypt; six or seven times these are addressed as dwellers in Egypt; for such there is no escape (ver. 14). But there were faithful ones—some specially named; Ebed-melech (39:15-18) —what did he do? He helped to rescue the testimony from the mire (38: 7-12); another, Baruch (45); what did he do? He helped to preserve the testimony of God (36: 4, 32). If a cup of cold water given to a disciple in faith and love, cannot lose its reward, how could these faithful ones be forgotten, who, in a dark and evil day, had, in helping the servant of the Lord, been the means of rescuing and preserving the word and testimony of Jehovah?

But alas, for those who make their home and seek their portion in a world which is under judgment, forgetting God, and who fall with the world and its prince (vers. 29, 30)!

C. J. D.

## Notes on Jeremiah: Part 2

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Our meditations on Jeremiah have suggested forcibly to our minds a great and precious truth, viz., the purpose of God in Christ. For this purpose of God in part, as connected with the Jews and Jerusalem—their future restoration and establishment in peace, blessing and glory in their own land—we find very plainly set forth in Jeremiah. But the purpose of God in Christ Jesus is in its extent much wider than its connection with Israel. It is far-reaching and all-embracing, and presents a sure ground of confidence, comfort, hope and assurance for the heart of the believer. God has been graciously pleased to reveal His purposes in regard to man; whether for Israel or the world; whether as affecting saints or sinners; above all, as concerning Christ, and also the church.

How wonderful that God should purpose that man should be exalted, above angels, above principalities and powers! The question, why all the failure and ruin from the beginning and all through the world's history—man, Israel, the nations, the church, everywhere failure and ruin?—has doubtless occurred to every diligent reader of the Bible. There is one answer. God's purpose is not in the first, but in the Second man. How important it is to see this! Whatever the state of things in the world and in the church, however distracting and discouraging, we know that the purpose of God in Christ can never fail.

Man, the first man, Adam, is said to be “the figure of him that was to come” (Romans 5:14). Made head and center of this lower creation, placed in the garden of delights, surrounded by every token of divine power and goodness, he soon fell and brought in sin and ruin. Since the fall man has been tried and tested in every way, and the result has proved his incompetence and unworthiness to stand in any position of privilege or responsibility. The Second man was tried and tested in every way and was found to be absolutely perfect; perfect in every thought, word and deed; perfect in dependence and obedience. Wherefore God highly exalted Him. And not only is He the man of Psalm 8—worthy that everything here should be put under His feet, but He has a name given Him above every name, that at the name of Jesus every created being—heavenly, earthly and infernal—should bow the knee, and every tongue confess Him as Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 2:5-9).

### ISRAEL

On the utter failure of man before and after the flood, Israel was called out to be Jehovah's peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation—to be a witness to the one true God, the Creator of all things, in the midst of an idolatrous world; but they alas soon broke down and were given over to Gentile rule and captivity.

Our chapter opens with a pronouncement of “woe” on those guilty kings of Judah who should have been as faithful pastors to Jehovah's flock, heeding and caring for them as the sheep of His pasture, but who helped by their wickedness to destroy and scatter them (vers. 1, 2). But if man is unfaithful God is faithful, and here makes known His love and care and purpose for His beloved

though guilty people (vers. 3, 4).

Royalty, no less than priesthood, utterly failed in the hands of the first man. The best of the kings of Israel—David, Solomon and all the rest—broke down; and the wicked kings, as we see here, only helped to destroy and scatter the flock of God. The work of the enemy is to scatter and destroy. The work of grace is to save and gather.

This truth applies to Israel (chap. 31:10-14). The Jews will no doubt return to Jerusalem in unbelief; but grace will gather a remnant (verse 3) whose hearts will be prepared to receive Jesus their Messiah as their God (Isaiah 25:9; John 20:28); their King (John 1:49); their Savior (Isaiah 53); their Righteousnesses (verse 6). In that day Jehovah—in spite of all that the first man is in the power of the enemy, in spite of angry nations or aught else—will set His King, “the righteous Branch,” the Second man, the First-begotten, upon His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2). Priesthood and royalty will be united in His person; the true Melchisedec (righteousness), King of Salem (peace)—Psalm 110:4.; Hebrews 7— “He shall sit and rule upon His throne; and He shall be a priest upon His throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both” (Zechariah 6:13). “In those days shall Judah be saved and Israel shall dwell safely” (verse 6) —not on the ground of the old covenant, the covenant of works, but on the ground of a new covenant, the covenant of grace. Covenants belong to an earthly people, and so also this new covenant that is yet to be made, will be with the house of Israel and the house of Judah (Hebrews 8:7-10). The Remnant will not come under the declaration of Romans 10:1-3, that they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” For they will have been brought to feel and own their guilt and unrighteousness, and will “know His name” — “Jehovah our righteousness.”

## THE WORLD

Nebuchadnezzar the king, and all kings, emperors and rulers of the nations of the world have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. And what a scene the world presents today! Are the angry nations unconsciously paving the way for the furtherance of the plans and purposes of God for the establishment of His righteous government of the world in peace, blessing and glory under the rule of the Second man, “[the Lord] from heaven”? Not only is He the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2; 27:37), of Israel (Isaiah 44:6; John 1:49), of the nations (John 10:7); He is the “God,” “the Lord” — “of all the earth” (Isaiah 54:5; Micah 4:13; Zechariah 4:14). In that day He will ask and receive the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession (Psalm 2; Isaiah 32:1, 2). “And His dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth” (Zechariah 9:10).

But judgment must precede the glory (Psalm 2). How astonished the nations will be! “The kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider” (Isaiah 52:15). How soon the Lord may come, first as the Bridegroom to receive His own to Himself, and take them to the Father's house; then as Judge and King to punish the world for its iniquity—and bring in righteousness, peace, blessing and glory—complete deliverance for a groaning creation!

“Break forth, O earth, in praises!

Dwell on His wondrous story;

The Savior's name and love proclaim,  
The King who reigns in glory. See on the Throne beside Him,  
O'er all her foes victorious,  
His royal bride for whom He died,  
Like Him forever glorious.  
“ Ye of the seed of Jacob,  
Behold the royal Lion  
Of Judah's line, in glory shine,  
And fill His throne in Zion.  
Blest with Messiah's favor,  
A ransomed, holy nation,  
Your offerings bring to Christ your King,  
The God of your salvation.  
“Come, O ye kings! ye nations!  
With songs of gladness hail Him,  
Ye Gentiles all before Him fall,  
The royal Priest in Salem.  
O'er hell and death triumphant  
Your conquering Lord hath risen;  
His praises sound whose power hath bound  
Your ruthless foe in prison.”

But there were deeper counsels, higher purposes and richer blessing in the mind of God before the ages of time than that which relates to millennial blessing, rest and glory for the world under the righteous and beneficent reign of Christ. There was the purpose of love and promise of eternal life in Christ for

#### SINNERS

made good in righteousness and truth to the glory of God in redemption through the precious blood of Christ; made known by the preaching of the glad tidings by “the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven” (1 Peter 1:12); and made good in the heart of sinners through faith. So that the apostle could say in full assurance of faith, “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began” (2 Timothy 1:9).

Next, the purpose of God for

## SAINTS

“We know” (we Christians), says the apostle, “that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:28, 29).

“Hail to the King of glory;

Head of the new creation-

The ways of grace we love to trace,

And praise Thy great salvation.

Thy heart was pressed with sorrow

The bonds of death to sever,

To make us free, that we might be

Thy crown of joy forever.”

Last, but by no means least, the purpose for Christ and the church, the consideration of which we must leave for another occasion.

[C. J. D.]

## Jesus the Son of God

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The great truth that underlies the Gospel of John is the Godhead of that Man who was thus walking on the earth. I do not mean merely in its explicit statement of Him, but in that which implies it constantly, as is ever more wonderful to him that attentively weighs the word of God. Thus His divine glory comes out in the most indirect ways and unexpected forms; hence souls grow in strength by that infinite display of love—Jesus nowhere more truly God than when a man. He was indeed a man: but this was little or nothing in itself, unless He were God. Then what a truth and what a love! What humiliation on His part! What infinite blessing to man, at least to the souls who believe! The Word was made flesh, but He was the true God; and hence it is that we find, whenever He speaks or acts, by wherever the Spirit of God traces Him, Godhead is there behind the veil.

John the Baptist's testimony here has quite a different character in itself and another effect on the soul from what we find in the other Gospels. Where else does he treat of Him as the Lamb of God? The Messiah, the coming King, the perfect Servant engaged in the work of God, the woman's Seed and Son of man—these we do find elsewhere; but here we have Him as the Lamb of God in a far more comprehensive relation than with the old and favored people. He is the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. Thus it is that He is presented in a universality of blessing through His work that could not be in any one but a divine person. Certain it is that He is shown here habitually in this character. "This is the Son of God."

Hence it is that in the Gospel of John it is not a question of the dispensations that disappear or succeed one another, but of what is vital and unchanging because divine. Hence, too, therefore, it is when dispensations have passed away that the full meaning of such a word as this is realized. It is not particularly now, nor in the age that follows, but in the eternal state, that it will be manifest that He is the Lamb of God who taketh away (not our sins as believers but) sin in its totality. We know how it is usually quoted for a sense altogether different. It is not really to meet that which we are found in and forgiven by faith in His blood, but when the world shall be clean rid of it all. Sin will be banished wholly from the universe. What a testimony to His glory, who by His work effects it all! I refer to this prevalent error the more plainly and pointedly, because souls may be suffering under the influence of this too common confusion in things which so materially differ. It is not a question of the saint on earth in whom the Spirit of God dwells. The error helps on the delusion of Satan, not alas! outside, but in Christendom. There is the subtlest snare for man. It is Babylon.

What is Babylon? Is it not the cage of every unclean bird and beast? What havoc is not there, particularly of the truth? God has been most of all dishonored there. It may be, as in the present case, by only one letter, but that makes all the difference between truth and error. All Christendom then says or sings, Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. How blinding is worldly religion!

Can we not now register our growth in the truth by the words we used to say ignorantly, but dare not repeat now at all? They are positively false. Indeed I know scarcely a more injurious error than

this if logically carried out. Christ is “the Lamb of God which takes away the sin,” not the sins, “of the world.” One is a blessed truth, the other is a mistake with the gravest consequences. It is to enfeeble or destroy the peace of the believer, and to pillow unbelievers with hopes that work ruin to themselves, with dishonor to God and His Christ.

Nor do I believe that any bodies in Christendom have contributed to this error so much as those who boast of their liturgies. Remission of sins for faith is an integral part of the gospel, which supposes that the sins of unbelievers, far from being taken away or forgiven, will be the more sternly judged because of unbelief in Christ.

But this verse, misinterpreted as we have seen, has helped on the errors of Christendom from sub-apostolic days. It was among the delusions which gave impulse to the departure that undermined the gospel of God; nor am I aware of a single Protestant Confession which has cleared itself from perpetuating this error, though they differ widely enough otherwise.

The dissenters too, who stand for extemporaneous prayer, are no better. If you went into a place where there is no prayer-book, you would find the self-same doctrine, and the same misuse of this very Scripture. So engrained is the error that, if you stated the truth, they would affirm that it was a distinction without a difference. Thus everywhere the truth of God is entirely set aside for tradition, which is man's thought, and subversive always of God's truth.

The only party that succeeds in a compromise is Satan's synagogue. Where souls in the forms of prayer are habitually fed with such an error as this, it is vain for the pulpit to assert the truth opposed. The heart prefers error to truth, for the truth exalts God and humbles man. And Satan is striving to lower the person of Christ, to Whom that word testifies. Hence it is, no matter what you take up, though it were a “Life of Christ,” the uniform tendency is to dishonor Him, and in the same proportion to blot out the real difference between believers and unbelievers in relation to Him. There may be every kind of reverent language and pious desires, but it will never suffice for God without the truth, that is, Christ. Error puts all down on the same level, but this gives, in vain, everything to the world, as it takes away every distinctive blessing from the believer. They humanize Christ and they deify man as he is.

How full and refreshing the testimony of God—Christ as His Lamb taking away the sin of the world in due time; the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost (vers. 29, 33)! They are the two works of the Lord Jesus, in the words of John the Baptist—His great earthly and His great heavenly work. We must not confound the bearing of our sins in His own body on the tree with taking away the sin of the world, as He will, for the new heavens and the new earth. When it is a question of sin-bearing, it is “our” sins (1 Peter 2); when it is a question of taking away, it is the world's sin. This is the ultimate effect of His work. The Spirit looks onward by John in the full sense of what Christ was eventually to accomplish, an immense work in connection with His divine glory. He “appeared for the putting away of sin” by the sacrifice of Himself. Heb. 9 speaks of His purpose to put sin away. It is not the time when it was to be done, but the end for which He appeared. The work was effected on the cross; but the full results of the cross are not yet manifested.

John bare record with another declaration—that he knew Him not. It was not to be in anything human. Of course the heavenly work needed a divine person. It is even more distinct, for who could give the Spirit thus? None but God could take away the sin of the world; and John knew Him

not, though he came baptizing in view of His manifestation to Israel. So also now there is an equally great heavenly work which He wrought at Pentecost, the effect of which still goes on. He Himself never was to be baptized by the Holy Ghost, which signifies the bringing entirely out of one position into another.

Quite another thing is said of Him. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost." We are said to receive the Holy Spirit of God, and to be "sealed unto the day of redemption." A believer is sealed now by the Spirit; an unbeliever at all times needs to be quickened. Were the unbeliever sealed, it would be woe to him; it would fix him (if it could be) in his state of ruin. "In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed." It is not a question of what the interval may be. It might be long or short. But no man is sealed the very instant he believes. First, there is the Spirit of God bringing him to judge himself and his sins before God. Thus is the soul born of God; he believes the gospel and finds peace. Men were cleansed by the word, or born of the Spirit, before the gospel. In reality it is the word by the quickening energy of the Spirit revealing Christ that effects this. The word brings home God's judgment of sins now, instead of by and by. Hence it is mischievous to date a soul's conversion or quickening from the day when it receives peace or is made happy.

It is of the deepest consequence to bring souls to repentance, as much really as to bring them into peace. People talk often of having peace with God long before they know what it means. They may have joy before. There may be a bright revelation to the soul through Christ which they are apt to call peace; but for solid peace the soul must have found its all in the work of Christ, entering by faith into God's mind about itself and Him. Consequently it can rest only in that full redemption of the Lord Jesus. Then the Holy Ghost seals. There can be no sealing until Christ and His work are thus rested on. The two things are distinct-to be born of the Spirit of God, and to be sealed on the ground of Christ's redemption. When the soul has submitted to the righteousness of God, the Spirit seals it.

But our Gospel is bringing us into the truth of Christ's person, as applied to whatever the Holy Ghost traces it here. He was not baptized by the Spirit, but He baptized others by the Holy Spirit. "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit," etc. There was an entirely special glory in our Lord's case. The Spirit was as the dove, not, as on the day of Pentecost, the rushing wind, or the tongue of fire.

Yet was Jesus man, and joined those who confessed their sins and were baptized with water. But at the very moment the heavens opened and the Father's voice was heard, and the Holy Ghost descended on Him, but no baptism of the Spirit for Him, no power needed to bring Him out of the position in which He was to a new and better one. It was as on a man that the Holy Ghost came down, on Christ without blood; no sacrifice did He need, no offering for sin, for in Him was none. Yet it is the believer that most of all confesses, what he is and what he has done, and the Holy Ghost not only descends, not only abides, as on Christ, but now baptizes believers into one body. It is divine power that puts us in entirely new associations in and with Christ. But the body is not the only great truth of God. It would be wrong to state that the baptism of the Holy Ghost effects it alone. The unity in John is very different from that of Paul. It is never the unity of the body, but that which is of Christ in us. Being thus formed by the Spirit of God, it has the character of deeper intimacy, and is rather family unity, giving communion of mind, feeling, and purpose. We have had the work of Christ on earth in respect to sin; before the work of redemption there could not be

baptism of the Holy Ghost. The work must be laid as a basis which would glorify God, and is to take away the world's sin. Now this work is done, and we can be thus baptized.

But many are quite incredulous. They hold that the Old Testament saints were just as much thus baptized; only we have better knowledge and can judge of everything, and so on. This is not the only error. They are doctrines that flow from a low estimate, if not of Christ, certainly of His work, and consequently there is no thorough judgment of sin or the world. Doubtless some would be disposed to talk of "peculiar views." How little have such souls been exercised by the word of God? We used, when denominationalists, to have peculiar views; we are getting rid of them now through the Lord's mercy.

The testimony of His work now follows the declaration of His person. So the two disciples heard John speak, and followed Jesus. But we fail to see the force of this, unless we see who it was that gave the testimony. According to the Lord Jesus Himself, of all that are born of women, none was greater than His messenger, John the Baptist. Yet the effect of it is that the disciples leave him for Jesus. "Behold the Lamb of God" had sunk into their hearts. Now we see this blessed result: they followed Jesus.

Here comes out the glory of the person of Christ. If He had not been God, what a slight it would have been to have given up John the Baptist! John was the greatest of God's servants; but he says, "He must increase, but I must decrease." God was there in "the man Christ Jesus." This truth abides still, and we see it open out a little, when "Andrew findeth Simon, and he brought him to Jesus" (ver. 42).

Now I want to show that there is another truth of the highest possible importance taught in all this. God is not merely saving souls, but gathering to Jesus. Do we want to know what He is gathering for and what to? It is to Jesus. One was there, God, that was not only from the beginning, but who looked right on to the end. There may be other things to intervene, but once we find this immense landmark, what a change! Jesus is not merely a Savior but a center, and this is what the Spirit here brings before us. There is nothing else to give us both firmness and humility. It communicates a deep sense of what God has at first done, and is still doing: for we are simply recovering what God has laid down in His word. It is what has long since slipped out of mind in Christendom.

This further truth I would now press on those that are here. It is not enough to have salvation, still less to have life in Him, and forgiveness through His blood. God also gives us Christ as His one central Object for gathering together. His love to us, His glory, would not be satisfied with conferring blessings on us. He makes Christ to be the one adequate and abiding center for the saints on earth. If He had not been God, it would have been a derogation from His own honor. But as He is God equally with the Father, to own Him thus is the Father's joy. In all things the blessed Servant of God, that Man alone was God, and in Him we find the true center.

But the knowledge of Christ as the Lamb of God precedes this, as we see here. Then God puts this desire into our hearts. The Destroyer of the works of the devil, the Deliverer from sin, attracts our hearts and we go forth to Him (Compare Hebrews 13:13). No person or polity, doctrine or creed, is worthy of such a place. It is due to Christ from all that are His. It is not a question of a center by and by in heaven. Scripture shows us the value of Him now as the divinely-given center on earth. So in Matthew 18:20, He says, "Where two or three are gathered together unto my

name, there am I in the midst of them.” What a joy to have Him thus! We shall ever be around Him in heaven; but why defraud Him and our own souls of the privilege, not to say bounden duty, of the same principle now, and on earth? It is His holy and unquestionable will about us; and we dishonor Him if we do not gather to Him here below.

Let me refer you to other scriptures that prove the importance of it, as Matthew 12:30. “He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad.” The believer is called to take his stand for and with Christ, and to make Him his one and continual center for gathering souls to. It goes far beyond the fact that one believes; “for he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.” The first is for myself, the second is for my work; and in both respects, Christ is all. He is my Lord and Savior, He is also my center, and, in whatever way seen, He is, in all His divine perfection, the needed and the given One; and, as His own, God works that we should be gathered to Him and gather. There may be seductions and trials, and these not on one side merely, but on all sides. There may be fair appearances, efforts after union if not unity, and success may be claimed where Christ is not the center. There may be sorrow and shame where He is thus acknowledged, sometimes wrong done and sometimes a right thing in a wrong way. Mire are not to be moved on the one hand, nor to be insensible on the other. For where God's center is owned in faith it is in general a question of grace and patience, though possibly at times a question of judgment, but all these things turn in the long run to Christ's glory, and then what joy for those who wait in faith!

Thus Christ as the center for saints on earth becomes of the deepest practical moment. There may be all kinds of centers, but, whatever they be, they are rivals. Every one but Himself is repudiated by God's word, and really it would be an unworthy center for His people were we to substitute for Himself anything in the Bible—say the highest truth—His body, the church. For that very reason you would have, not only a spurious center, which has wrought infinite mischief, as we see in Catholicism, Romanism, etc.; but besides, the very narrowest of all narrow parties; you would merely have those that understand the church of God! A similar result would follow if the Lord's coming became the central object and test for gathering to. We have been speaking today of the Lord's coming, and the very souls who need most the loving gracious care of Christ are the very persons who would then be rigidly shut out, for how little is their intelligence in this or anything else!

Where Christ is held to truly as the center, it will be found that the affections freely flow towards all that He loves. If you have the true center, can it be doubted that you will find yourself with the true circumference? It is His name by faith in it which alone gathers according to God, and those who answer to it are welcome to Him, and should be to us. Hence also it appears to me quite a mistake to set forth the church or its principles as the remedy for the present distractions of God's children, but to set souls right with Christ. I have never met a Christian who simply and fully entered into the liberty of Christ without also finding out the value of Christ as the true center for saints. Let them only know Christ better and His redemption, and then follows the heart's decision to cleave to Him in every way. On the other hand, I have known many, familiarly learning the church, the Lord's coming, and other grand truths, who nevertheless remain in their old human associations. If we all owned the same person, work, and center in Christ, we should all circle in harmony around Him.

But it is, alas! far from the fact; and men cleave each to their systems, which thus, whatever they may argue, become a rivalry of Christ. Nor should one wish to hurry any soul. Those who hear and refuse Christ as a center should be left with the Lord. I have known those who seemed even spiritually-minded to turn out quite unsound in faith, so that, if you had only known, you would have thanked God for keeping such away. If then you are content with Christ as the center, gather you with Him, and He will approve it when He comes again.

But if you are not gathering with Him, what forfeits? Oh, what scattering! oh, what an utter collapse of zeal and labor! Can you deny that His word warned you? Which is the case with you? To what center are you really gathering? Have you the "open door" and Christ inside, Christ in the midst? Are you looking and laboring in the Spirit to that center? He is worthy, He alone.

But there is another passage to be noticed briefly, in Mark 9:40, "He that is not against us, is on our part." Here it is a question of largeness of heart in what is wrought, and not of the paramount claims of Christ personally. Hence it is no longer "me" but "us" and "on our part." "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out demons in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us, is on our part." The danger is here of narrowness in service, not of speaking against the Son of man and the Holy Spirit. The faithful should appreciate true service wherever it is, but can only gather with Christ. We have to bear this in mind. There is such a thing as work done in the name of the Lord Jesus, which is not done within the circle that is formed round the true center. And what have we to do? Meddling as little as possible we should heartily own whatever is done in His name, but cleave to Himself as our security as well as our joy and boast.

You may see often a servant of Christ in a false position yet blessed to others largely. Do you envy it? Or would you depreciate the work done? The Lord answers to the faith in His name without the least endorsing what even we regard with deep regret. Be content yourself to keep His word and not deny His name, Do not forget the distinction between the sovereignty of Christ's grace and the Christian's fidelity to His person. I can understand an unhappy man always murmuring; but those brought into the richest blessing may well rejoice like Paul in Phil. 1. But do not confound largeness with laxity. Of all things under the sun there is, in a saint, nothing worse than looseness; but the more right we are by grace, the more we can afford to be gracious. Cleaving to Christ then, let us watch against the narrowness that is only occupied with our own things. If in Matthew we have Christ against Satan, in Mark, on the other hand, we have the place we should give to a servant, even if not with us. The Lord Jesus did not, could not, say as regards Himself what He says about His service. Compare Luke 9:5 for the one and Luke 11:23 for the other. The Gospel of Luke is pre-eminently full of great moral principles.

It is not then that we pretend to have what God does not give to all His children. But we want them to see all that Christ is to His own even on earth, as well as for them in their sins. We seek no party, and I dare say a big party is but a bigger evil. But there is only one thing which truly preserves from every snare to the glory of God, and that is Christ. Let Him then be the object of our souls. May we be kept by the Spirit in all subjection unto His blessed name.

Nor is it only that we have the divine center in Christ, in order to be thus kept from building up something that has to be taken down when He comes, but we are in the midst of dangers, and

snare, and evil. How are we to be kept from these? By Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever. The same divine person provides for all the difficulties of every day. He is the light of life as well as the center for our zeal and labor. Every word of God is precious and profitable, as every scripture is inspired of Him; but we need to read Christ in it to reap the full value: and for this we may count on the Spirit of God who is here to glorify Christ.

I do not believe that the word of God, apart from Christ, ever does suffice for His purpose or our blessing. The word written is meant to associate with Christ, and not to dispense with Him. God has given us His word. So He says to Philip, "Follow me" (ver.43). He is "the way," as well as "the truth," and "the life." How blessedly we have Himself set out in God's word! If a person is in difficulty and a situation opens out for him, he might think it providential, but he is required to do certain things he knows to be wrong. Is he then to follow Christ or evil? The voice of Jesus is heard, "Follow Me." Thus in our whole path by His grace we have the same Christ that engages our affections and service. Is Christ, then your object? He is the HOLY, the TRUE; and those that hear His voice will cleave to Him. Christ who is the constant spring of blessing, is the safeguard of every saint in this world of vain show.

The Lord then, is "the way" as He expressly says of Himself in John 14, as truly as He is the attractive center; and we need Him quite as much for our way now on earth. Are we competent to pass safely through this wilderness where there is no way? Only by cleaving to Christ as "the way." It is a great thing to work to Him, as well as from Him, and for Him; but there is no adequate, no absolute, preservation from slips and deviations on our part, or from the misleadings of others, let them be ever so wise in the main, save by following Jesus. He only is the way. We have to "beware of men"; we do well to try by the word what saints say and do, but we may, we ought to, unreservedly follow this divine and divinely given way—our Lord Jesus. It was not needed in the paradise of man unfallen; it will not be in the paradise of God, where all will be according to His will and glory in unending goodness, and no seducer intrude more, no weakness or lack of vigilance expose on our part. But whether we look at what is without, or bear in mind what our nature is within—we do deeply need a sure path through the world, away above its motives and maxims and habits and objects. And here we have the One God delights in, even Christ, not only as the Lamb of God, and the center, by grace and truth, for the saints, but as the way to follow through all snares and difficulties and dangers. Who that knows would fear to follow Him? May we learn to know Him better as the only way! "If any man serve me, let him follow me: and where I am there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."

W. K.

## Lectures on Job 1-3

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### Chapters 1-3

Chap. 1:1-12. Now I have only read the introduction, and indeed but a part of the introduction, because the first two chapters comprise the introduction. And then follows the impassioned and vehement opening speech of the patriarch Job. It is clear that here we have got a Book of patriarchal time. All the circumstances point to that time and no other; and further, it is as well to state even now before we go on, that the Book appears to have been written in the time of Moses, and probably by Moses. But some people are a little perplexed by the fact that it comes after the Book of Esther in the Bible. That has nothing whatever to do with the date of it. The Historical Books are given from Genesis to Esther—that is the end; then we begin the Poetic Books—Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Therefore, it is that we necessarily go back here; because poetry was not written certainly after history, but concurrently with it; and we can easily understand that the Book of Job carries us back to the very same time that the first Book of the history goes back to. Everything concurs to show that.

For instance, Job offered burnt offerings; it was lest his sons should have sinned, but it was not a sin offering, which would have been the natural thing if it had been after the law; but it was before the law, and the offerings that were habitually offered by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, under all circumstances, were burnt offerings. So that here we find a very simple mark in the very first chapter; and again, we find that there is a very peculiar idolatry at this time. The Book of Job was written after the deluge; there was no idolatry before the deluge. Of course, the theologians say what they like about the subject, and they very often say what is entirely unfounded; and they are pleased to think there must have been idolatry, and therefore there was; but that is no reason at all—it is merely their imagination. The fact is, the earliest idolatry was the worshipping the sun, moon, and stars; and in the course of this Book we shall see that this is the only idolatry that Job refers to. It was what was common at that time, and they were getting afterward into much more degraded forms of it.

Therefore, it would seem that the writer of the book was a good while after Job, but that Job lived in a time when there was idolatry. Yet this thing is what alone he notices; it is in his defense of himself—that he was not guilty—which is one of the thoughts that governed the minds of his three friends. I suppose they were the orthodox people of that day; but like the orthodox people of many a day, it was a poor, human, contracted notion of God. Orthodoxy is merely the popular opinion of religion, as a general rule; and although there are elements of truth, and orthodoxy is certainly much better than heterodoxy, still it is not faith; it is not spiritual judgment, which is a deep acquaintance with God's mind. Only we must remember there was very little written at the time that this Book was written, perhaps no more than the Book of Genesis. I judge thus because there is no reference to the law. If it had been written after the law was given on Sinai, we might expect to find some allusion to that, but there is none.

There is another thing that contributes also to help us to the date, and that is the age of Job. He was 140 at least. There are some people who seem to think that he lived 140 years after all his troubles; but there is no ground for that. It is merely the manner of speech in the last chapter, and I presume it really means that that was his entire age, the period of his life—not the time after these disasters purposely fell upon him—for reasons that I am going to explain in a moment. Now, if that age be the age of Job, it shows we need not imagine more than what God's word declares, and he would therefore be rather a younger man when he died than Jacob. Jacob lived less than Isaac or Abraham. So that that would appear to point to the time of the patriarchal age, and all the circumstances fall in with that.

But there is another thing very remarkable and separate in the Book. It is entirely outside Israel. There was certainly the nucleus of Israel then; Abraham, Isaac and probably Jacob, had been living, and it is clear that this pious Gentile, Job, had profited a good deal from the knowledge of what God had revealed in His dealings not only with those patriarchs, but the traditions of those who had lived before. I say “traditions,” because Scripture was not yet written. If there was any Book of Scripture written at this time, it could only, in my opinion, have been, possibly, the Book of Genesis. That was but very little. Only the Book of Genesis is one of the most instructive Books in all the Bible; and it is remarkable for being a kind of seed plot, (as it has been compared to before now), where all the germs, all the plants afterward grew up into, you may say, shrubs or trees, or whatever it might be—there you have them all in their beginning.

It answers very much in that respect to the Book of the Revelation; Genesis is the proper preface to the Bible, and Revelation the very suitable conclusion of the Bible; and you will find that there are links of connection between Genesis and Revelation that are more striking than in any other two Books of the Scriptures. For instance, the Garden, the Paradise of God, and the Tree of Life—these you have very early in Genesis, and very early in the Revelation. In the second chapter of Genesis we have it, and in the second chapter of Revelation we have it again. This is a revelation of a higher character, founded upon that Paradise which all readers of Genesis knew. Then that terrible personage Satan, the Serpent—in the Revelation he is called the “old serpent,” evidently pointing back to Genesis. The Serpent, the Enemy, is spoken of in various ways. We find him spoken of as “Satan” in the 109th Psalm, and we find him spoken of also in the 21st chapter of the First Book of Chronicles. There Satan tempted David, and succeeded in it, and brought David into a great sin, and which brought deep suffering upon the people of whom he was too proud; and so the people were shorn down and deprived of that strength because David was proud of their strength. Well then, again, in Zechariah, too, we have them all. So that the notion that there is anything very peculiar in the province given to Satan in this Book of Job is a very absurd one. It is a very proper thing, exactly what is needed, and it is the great truth which is about to be propounded and discussed throughout the Book.

Some divines are very fond of talking about the Book of Job as a drama—a kind of sacred drama. Well, I think they had better keep the drama to themselves, and leave the Book to its own simplicity and beauty, and not introduce mere terms of a very low and earthly kind. It is an authentic discussion; it is a grand debate. It is not the problem of how it is the wicked are allowed to flourish now, sometimes, and to await the judgment of God afterward; but here we have the far more serious question: How is it that the righteous suffer now so much; is it consistent with God's justice that a righteous man should suffer more than any other man? Well, that is the very thing

discussed in this Book, and the object is to show that it is not only that there is a God perfectly righteous and good, but there is an enemy perfectly malicious and subtle and active

Now this is all brought out in a Book entirely outside Israel. The wonder is as to the Rationalists and the Jews -for they had their Rationalists quite as much as Christendom has its Rationalists now; they were the persons who were always lowering the word, humanizing the word, and, further, attaching tradition to it, and all sorts of stories invented to improve the word of God, and make it palatable to the readers, who were not satisfied with the truth, but were as fond of anecdotes then as people are now, who cannot be happy with the gospel unless they have these stories about men.

Here we have the Spirit of God in this wonderful Book bringing out fact. The Jews did not like it; and you can quite understand that. What! a Gentile spoken of in stronger terms than Jacob, our father Jacob, Israel! Scripture shows Jacob to have been a very uncertain man; a true child of God, but a man whose flesh was very little broken, and a man who was naturally prone to the sly ways — 'sly,' I believe, is the modern word for it—the sly ways of his mother and her brother, and all connected with the chosen race. Jacob inherited a little of that blood, and in consequence of not being self-judging, submitting to God and confiding in God, he often brought himself into very great scrapes, and tried to get out of them by very uncomely ways.

All this indeed reads us a very important lesson, but it is quite a different one in the Book of Job. Here is a man whom God Himself brings before Satan. We have a most remarkable scene—that which I have read to you to-night—where "the sons of God" came together, we may say, to spew their homage to God Himself in heaven. You know "the sons of God" are employed as messengers; and according to this we have a very graphic view of a particular day when they came—the day, not merely a day. It is not either in the Revised, or the Authorized Version, but it is the word that is intended. Now these "sons of God" were clearly angels, and these angels were busy with their mission of God's goodness and mercy; for He loves to employ others; we have that now blessedly shown. Why, we every one of us have, our work; every one of us has his mission; we have all a mission from Christ, the most simple brother and sister too. We are members in the body of Christ, and each member has its own function. It is a very interesting thing that God employs the members of Christ's body to do what He could have done without them. He loves to trust them; He loves to exercise them; He loves that they should learn their place, and that they should fulfill their mission during this little while that we are waiting for Christ. That gives a great dignity to the place of the Christian, and also a very solemn responsibility. That is a part of God's ways.

Now it appears that there was a day when the angels came, and Satan was allowed to come among them. That is an astonishing fact not at all confined to this scripture. We have it even in the Revelation, the last Book of the New Testament. There we find the day is coming when Satan and all his host are to be turned out of the heavens. And we find it is a doctrine laid down in the Epistle to the Ephesians that we have to contend with these powers of evil not merely on the earth, but having that great advantage against the believer of possessing a place in the heavens. Why is it that Christians generally do not believe that? Because they believe themselves and not God. Because they listen to what they call theology instead of the Bible, and the consequence is they are getting to lose all touch of divine truth; they are getting more and more into the belief of not

only men's notions of the Bible, but of fables and ideas that are entirely unfounded. The fact is there is nothing that shows more the power of God and the patience of God than this, that the great Evil One and his emissaries are allowed still access to the heavens. They are not cast into hell yet; they are not merely thrown down to be only on the earth. We know that is a thing that will be, but not till we have ascended to heaven. Some people have the idea that they are turned out of heaven to make way for us, but that is quite contrary to Scripture. The removal of the glorified saints to heaven is before God overthrows the Evil One and his host, before He turns them out and casts them down to the earth, never allowed to get back to heaven again. And it is because God has absolute power to do it in a moment that He does that; because He is carrying on a grand work; and a part of that which brings out His wonderful ways is the allowed presence of sin. He gives Satan every advantage because He turns all his malice and all his power to the furtherance of His own way with His children; and the remarkable thing is that which we find in this Book of Job.

There is a very strong confirmation of it in a scene that is described in the first Book of Kings, and I only refer to that to confirm it, namely, where it speaks (chap. 22.) of Micaiah, the man that the wicked king could not endure because he never had a good thing to say to him. That is, Micaiah was not a flatterer. Kings do not like any but flatterers as a rule, and this prophet greatly vexed the wicked king. And alas! the good king Jehoshaphat failed in that very thing that we are apt to fail in now—fellowship between light and darkness, fellowship between the right people and the wrong; fellowship with that which is utterly opposed to God, in a kind of amiable way that does not give us any very great trouble. We like the easy path, we do not like the strait path, we do not like the path that requires faith, and it is to our own loss. Well, in this case, Micaiah, when he is brought to the point, speaks of a similar scene to what you have here. There God puts the question: “Who will go and deceive Ahab?” —that was the idolatrous king of Israel, “Who will deceive him?” —the one Jehoshaphat made his friendship with, to his own sorrow and to the dishonor of the Lord, and with no good to Ahab, for he fell; he was not won a single inch into that which pleased God. The good conduct of Jehoshaphat in no way did good to Ahab, but on the contrary Ahab drew Jehoshaphat into what was unworthy of God and of a child of God. The evil spirit said that he would go and deceive Ahab. He wrought, no doubt, by Ahab's false prophets.

Peter speaks of “false teachers” doing the same bad work that the false prophets did in Israel.

False “teachers” because the truth has come. They were false “prophets” when the truth was not yet come, when Christ had not yet appeared, when all was in the future. But now the solemn and blessed truth is, the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding to know Him that is true. It is therefore a question of teaching now. There is nothing so destructive as what is false, what is contrary to God and His word. Morality, a man of the world can judge, and what is more, he may be a bad specimen in outward appearance; but that is altogether different from the character of Job.

Here we have Job spoken of not merely by the writer, but by God Himself in the strongest terms. The writer says, “There was a man in the land of Uz” (which you know was near Edom, on the borders of Edom, and apparently the friends of Job all came from that quarter more or less), the great desert on the eastern side of Palestine, between Palestine and the Euphrates, where the Bedouins are constantly moving up and down—the nomad races, some of them descendants of

Abraham, indeed some of Ishmael. And it is said, "that man was perfect" —meaning by that, not that there was no evil; that is not the meaning of "perfect" in Scripture at all, but in the Old Testament it is the word for a man being thoroughly sound—a sound man, not merely a moralist, but a man who was right with God. And besides being sound in that way, he was "upright" with man. "Perfect and upright" showed relations, one to God, and the other to men. Both ought to go together. The great feature of it was, "fearing God." Another great feature was that it answered to these other terms—refusing or shunning evil. "Eschewing" you know is the old English for shunning. He avoided it; he would have nothing to do with it. So that there you have the fear of God, the great root of his being sound or "perfect"; and refusing evil, the great mark of his being "upright." And then we have his family description.

But the remarkable thing is this great trial—and very comforting to us it is—the most remarkable that ever took place upon the earth, except the trial of Christ. With that the Book of Job stands in contrast. What we have here is a man greatly tried by Satan. But what were all the temptations of Job compared with those of the Lord? And I take it not merely the temptations of Job, but the end—the end of Job was that he found God full of pity, and of tender mercy; but the end of the Lord Jesus in this world was the cross. Job was brought down to the dust in agony, but Christ was brought down to the dust of death. The Lord speaks of Himself (Psalm 22) as a worm; and what was that judgment that fell upon Him when on the cross? What was all the frightful state of Job's body compared with the judgment of our sins?

Between the two there is another thing. We shall find in this Book—I am anticipating now, but in an introductory lecture you must expect that—Job allowed himself language and thought about God that was the greatest dishonor to Job. It was not only that he cursed his day, which was, of course, extreme failure, and a failure that is very profitable for us to note. What was Job more remarkable for than any man upon the earth of his day? Patience. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job"; that is the very thing in which he broke down. He became impatient with his friends—and I must admit they were a most trying set, those three men, and there was everything to fill Job with indignation at their bad thoughts of him; because what they were thinking all through was that he must have been guilty of some terrible unknown sin, unknown to them, that was the cause of all this suffering. That was the orthodox idea of that day, and it is so still. If there is anything very trying that happens, there must be something wrong with that man! If he is very ill spoken of, 'Oh, well, with smoke there must be a little fire' say these sages of evil.

Now it is remarkable that God gave this Book for the purpose of uprooting all that superficial folly; all those utterly unkind, ungracious thoughts of men, in order to make another thing, totally different, manifest, namely, that whatever may be the power of Satan, God is the one that is at the helm, and God is the one that makes it all turn, eventually, for the blessing of the tried man, and for the glory of God. So that it is only the beginning of a circle in its own way—in very early days—because, as I have already observed, only, perhaps, one book, the Book of Genesis, was then written. Certainly no more, in my opinion; and yet for all that, in Job we have one of the grandest books that ever was written. I mean even in the Bible. I do not count it with other books; what are they to be accounted?—but the Bible even. There is nothing more astonishing for those who will fairly look into that Book; and therefore I hope there may be some who will become more intimately acquainted with it than they have been.

It is no use my speaking unless that should be the result. That is the object I have; and, along with that, blessing to our souls. Here it is eminently God on the one hand, man and Satan on the other. You must not think of an old tract that used to be in circulation amongst us, written by a very dear Christian, but under a very great mistake, which maintained that Job was only converted at the end of his life. Nonsense Job was converted from the very first time that God spoke. Do you think that God would speak of an unconverted man in the terms that I am about to read now? "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?" (ver. 8). You can understand that the Jews did not like that. None like Job. A Gentile, according to the story, according to the book, according to the truth; none like him. Yet it was so.

It is not, beloved friends, the amount of truth that any man knows, on which his state before God turns, but the using of it excellently. You will find men who know a great deal of truth utterly without principle; utterly without the fear of God. You will find men who know a great deal, and all they use it for is merely to exalt themselves. Sometimes for money, sometimes for a name. But all that is most hateful to God. Here we find a man that did not and could not know much in these days, but still he made the best use of it

He lived in the faith of it, in the faith of God Himself; and the result was there was none like him in the earth—a perfect man and an upright man, "one that feared God and eschewed evil"

There you have God's endorsement of what the inspired writer said about him. The idea that he was not a converted man! It just shows how when people get a notion into their head it governs them. They get the idea that conversion means justification. Now that is not what conversion means at all. Conversion properly and truly means the first turning to God; at the time when we are still a great deal behind, when we may have no proper faith in redemption, when we may not know that our sins are blotted out. But really we have a new light; we hate our sins; we acknowledge our sins, and turn to God. It is the beginning; it is not the end. There is, of course, another use of the word, that is when we turn back again after we leave Him; but that does not apply to Job, for Job had not left God up to this time; and he did not turn away from God at this time either. He was in the direst trouble, and no wonder; because Christ was not come; the work of redemption was not accomplished; how could he have that peace and that liberty which we are entitled to through faith not only in Christ, but in the work of Christ?

And this is one of the great objects of the Book; to show that no matter how good a man may seem, if he is put to the proof about what he is himself, in his own heart, he will break down. It will be my lot to show the particulars of this another day; but now we have merely passed before us here this great truth; and it is quite a key to difficulties of all kinds. It is God that really takes the initiative, not Satan. God is the one that moves in this; and if it led to Job's being so terribly tried, yet what a comfort to have known this! Job did not know it; that is what we know; this is what the word shows here; but Job had no idea that before all this trial came upon him in the earth there was a scene in heaven about him!

Do you think it is only of Job that God thinks? Do you think that God is not thinking of every one of you now, and that in the presence of the evil angel? Do you suppose that this was something entirely exceptional? The account of it was, the allowance of it was, the special circumstances of it were peculiar; but the principle is the same for every believer. God in His sovereign love and grace takes a pleasure in His children, far more than we take in any of ours. And you know what that is

for a parent. Well now, God takes more pleasure in you—not merely in Job—in you. I grant we do not deserve it; that is another thing altogether. Love does not count up deserts at all. Love goes out because God is love, and for His own glory in Christ the Lord. Now He is able to do it righteously; able to do it effectively. But here there was tremendous suffering before Christ came in, and before the full light of God came. God allowed all that; nevertheless it was He that began it; and, if God begins, how will He end? Worthily of Himself. It is not merely patching up; it is not merely repairing, but a radical work of self-judgment in the soul.

God, in His wonderful ways, is not one that waits for the devil at all. He begins. God had a child of His; and when this subtle, active, malicious foe came, in his restless roamings backward and forward on the earth to do mischief, God said “Look at my servant Job.” The enemy felt that as a challenge to him, as it were. God first of all laid down a certain restriction, and this He always does. He allows it only to a certain extent; and in this case it was to be to a very remarkable extent, that it might be a lesson forever after this Book was written; that it might cast a light on all the great struggle of good and evil, for every child of God from that day to this.

“And Satan answered Jehovah and said, Doth Job fear God for naught?” It is only a bit of selfishness; it is only for his own ends. How did he judge that? From himself. Oh, it is a dangerous thing to judge anything from ourselves. It is a blessed thing to judge from God's word. “Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power.” God allowed him to try. “Only upon himself put not forth thine hand.”

That was the first trial. Here we have light upon a very important thing. Satan showed himself to God, but he hides himself from men, to deceive all the more. We read that a messenger came, when everything was prosperous. No man in that part of the East was so prosperous as Job; he was the man that must be brought down to the dust. The same thing with his sons and daughters. There they were. We have a beautiful picture here of social happiness and family enjoyment, which is a thing that God takes pleasure in, but it all came to naught, and it all came to naught also as to his substance. Everything—children, the dearest of all that Job had—and also all his property. “The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them” —they were a people in that part of the country who used, to keep moving upwards from the south to the north” and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.” While that man was speaking, word came—and this was not the Sabeans, nor the Chaldeans— “The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep.” The flocks, of course, were vast compared with the herds, and they were all consumed, and the servants too. And while he was speaking, there came one and told him about the Chaldeans. They were enemies, plunderers at that time from the east, as the Sabeans were from the south; and they fell upon the camels, a very valuable part of Job's property, and carried them away. He only was escaped to tell the sad tale. And then came the last stroke of all—a whirlwind that attacked the house on all four sides. No ordinary wind would do that. And it fell upon and destroyed all assembled there on that very day—the festal day that they were holding together.

And how did it affect Job? Very few converted men now would act as Job did then. "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped." Now he was a most affectionate man, and he was a man full of graciousness even to strangers. What was it for him to lose all, not merely his property, but every soul of the family, outside his own house? And he said "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah." You cannot conceive a more happy and decided expression of entire godliness from a deeply tried soul. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly," that is, in a way that was contrary to all propriety.

The next chapter (2.) brings the further trial. Satan came again: he had failed the first time; now he says 'Ah! it is himself. He does not mind his family; he does mind himself a great deal. Himself is a nearer thing than all his property and all his children.' There you have this untiring wicked one turning everything to malice and falsehood. I need not go into the details, but we have there the terrible effect. Now said he, 'A man will do anything for self. Skin for skin. He may not mind this or that, however close it may be to him. The skin is, you know, just outside. But only just touch his flesh and his bones; touch him thoroughly, to the quick, inside, and then see what all his piety will come to!' And the Lord allowed it. Only, He said, 'You must not kill him.' If God had allowed Satan to kill him it would have put an end to all the trial. It was not at all that God forbade the killing to spare Job; it is exactly what Job would have liked; for he expresses his deep grief that he was not allowed to die. It was, he said, a terrible thing that he was allowed to be born, to come into all this. If he were born, why would not God allow him to die? That would be the greatest relief. He had fully the thought of going to be with God—no other. But it was God allowing all this tremendous trial, which was a picture of the most complete suffering and bitter agony and pain, night and day. And there he was, as people have presented him, on his ash heap; for he was scraping himself in this awful agony from head to foot.

Many of you know what it is to have a raging toothache; that is a very small thing comparatively—the tooth only. And yet many a one has found it very hard to bear, and has made tolerable outcry, and all the house, perhaps, has been troubled about that toothache. Well, think of this. It is not as if all the teeth were raging; that would be nothing, comparatively; it is not as if all the toes were troubled with gout, although that also is a thing very trying to bear; but the whole body from head to foot in every part of it; not an exception; the most tremendous disease known, among the diseases of a terrible character in the Eastern world. This most pious of men was allowed of God to come into it for the purpose of doing him far greater good than if he had never had any of these trials. That is what comes out in the Book. And, accordingly, even then Job did not sin. He had been even now not only marked by the greatest grace in his prosperity, but by the most exemplary patience in his adversity. If God had stopped there, there would have been no lesson at all, comparatively. It would only have turned to Job's glory.

But there was something with God (now that all this had taken place) which Satan knew nothing about, which Satan had no idea of whatever; but God knew it. There was something in the heart of Job that needed to come out, and the object of that appears. We see God orders that three devoted friends of Job should come. They heard of it. In the Eastern world news spreads very fast, especially bad news. They all knew that something terrible had happened to their dear and respected friend Job, and from different parts of the country they appoint, and they come together simultaneously. And the awful plight of Job so struck them that they could do nothing but weep

and rend their clothes, and sit upon the ground, as we are told, for seven days, with not a word to Job. They came there to console him; but they were so shocked that they began to allow in their hearts that Job must be guilty of something terrible. How was it possible that God would allow this if there were not some shocking sin that they knew nothing about!

There they were all wrong. But this very thing brought a great shame to Job. The lack of one word of pity; the lack of anything of consolation from his friends, brought out what very often happens. A man will bear grief and bow under it when he is alone, but when other persons come from whom he expects sympathy, who on the contrary show distrust—well, Job was quick enough to show that he could not stand that. Job then did not curse God. Oh, no, he did not then fall into what the devil thought he would do, but he cursed his own day, cursed his own lot. I do not say that that was proper; I do not say so, far from it. But still, that was the issue of this, that Job then opened his mouth. After seven days of silence, seven days of utter stupefaction at the enormity of his sufferings on the part of his dearest friends—well, we must not be surprised that he broke out.

I need not go into every word of the chapter, but it is all to this effect: “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, there is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness” (3: 3, 4). And so he speaks in highly poetic language, and in language of deep emotion. That is the real character of poetry of the best kind; it is the language of deep feeling and emotion. And Job breaks out into that language—a kind of poetic prose which the Book carries out till very nearly the end. But the great point is the mourning over this terrible lot of his, that he was ever allowed to come into the world to bear such awful suffering. Where do you find that in Christ? “For this cause was I sent.” The Lord accepts it; He felt, deeply felt; was troubled in spirit. He felt it, but also He accepted it. For this cause He had come. But not so Job. He could not understand—although his sufferings were not to be compared with those of Christ—why a holy God should allow such suffering. It was inexplicable to Job.

So we have in a very beautiful manner, to the end of the chapter, this idea in various points of view. You observe therefore that I am not going to enter into every phrase minutely in this Book; that would take me a very considerable time; but I am going to give what I think is a substantial view of the mind of God, as far as I have learned it, to help my brethren who may not have fully weighed the lessons of God in it. And I shall take, therefore, each part of the remainder of the Book, ‘the attack’ I may call it, the insinuation, the blame of these friends of Job; their expostulation because of his grief, and their suspicion of something wrong at the bottom of it; and Job's answer. I shall take these throughout the rest of the Book until we come to a part where they are all silenced. Job has the last word; the friends are silenced and a new man enters the scene; and then after that Jehovah appears as the Arbiter of this great debate; and finally the grand winding up and solution of it all; Job vindicated after he owned his fault; Job acknowledging it fully, which his friends did not. They were not broken down as Job was; but they were sorry to be found altogether wrong; and there they were, biting their lips or their tongues through vexation; and they had to be prayed for, they had to be delivered at the intercession of Job; we shall see that at the close. But this may now suffice.

[W. K.]

## Lectures on Job 4-6

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### Lecture 2.—Chapters. 4-7

Chap. 4:1-8. I shall not read more now, because we shall have it gradually before us. But here the great debate commences, founded upon Job's outbreak, who was now perfectly overcome through the calamity that God had allowed to fall upon him. As a pious man, Job knew very well that God could have prevented it, if He had not a purpose in it of which he himself was wholly ignorant. But it is well to take notice of this before I say more, that Satan completely disappears. He had been utterly foiled. He had been allowed first of all to destroy all that Job possessed, even to his children—his sons and his daughters—all his property was completely swept away. There is hardly a Christian who would not feel that to be a tremendous trial. And there was a greater trial to follow; for when Satan saw that he failed to move Job against God by the destruction of all his possessions and of his family, he was allowed another opportunity for his malice, and that was to inflict the deepest agony upon the person of Job. It would have been a great relief to Job if Satan had been permitted to kill him. Job had no fear at all of what would be after death, but the trial was to be made in this world.

It was not at all a question of what would be hereafter; but Job had to learn—and to teach others by the lesson—that things are not all according to God now; that the foundations are out of course; that some things that are allowed of God are not at all the will of God. Nor are they for the glory of God, except that God, in result, makes them always to subserve His wisdom and His goodness, though outwardly everything appears to go wrong. Now the friends of Job took the totally opposite ground, that it was not at all a bad sort of world, and that on the contrary what happened now was a very good means of judging how God felt about it; that if they were walking well, nothing could harm those who professed to be His followers and servants. No doubt they were men in a comfortable position of life themselves, and did not know much about trial; in point of fact they would not at all have served the purpose of God. God chose a much better man than all three put together. God chose a man whom He loved specially for his integrity; but nevertheless Job had to learn what he was. It was not to be a question of what he had done. They never could get beyond “what a man has done.” In their minds there must have been something very bad. Nobody, it is true, could see it; but that only showed—they did not like to say it at first—that he must be a hypocrite. They judged of Job by the trial that he was called to endure; whereas the truth emerges, gradually, very slowly, but at last it comes out very fully; though Job had no idea what the end would be. Job's one thought now was to die, no longer to be put to this torment. It was breaking a man upon worse than a wheel; it was wearing him out with the most dreadful tortures and agony; and how could such a God as he knew do such a thing? Yet he believed it was God, so that all this made him writhe; and what brought it out was not Satan—it was his friends!

What a solemn lesson that is! Our friends may sometimes do us the worst turn possible. That is what they did to Job. Nevertheless God never fails; and God was going to make all this turn to Job's greater blessing. But he knew nothing at all about it—how it was to be as he knew was that,

as far as appeared, there never was a righteous man who was called to suffer as he did. And how was it thus if God loved him? and he had always thought so, he fully believed it, he was quite certain that he loved God—he could not make out how it was possible. And yet it was a very possible thing, because the world is what it is; because human nature is what it is; and because the devil is what he is; and also because even the dearest friends that Job had, only aggravated his misery instead of helping him in the very slightest degree. Well, that was a most complicated web, and that is really the Book of Job. So that it is a grand Book in its way, and peculiar, and all the more full of instruction because it was before the law. If the law had come in it would not have mended matters in the smallest way, because the law was a system of divine government for a people on earth, under which, if they walked well, all would be well, and if they walked ill, trouble would come upon them from God. That would have been very much like what the friends of Job insisted upon. But what we learn is that these thoughts are natural to the heart of man, which believes that God deals with us now according to what we deserve. Job perfectly well knew that it would not be so in the other world; he had no doubt about that. It is true that he had not anything like the same ground of knowledge that we have in having Christ—the same Christ who has made redemption a blessed and a fixed certainty, a condition into which we are brought by divine grace, and which abides forever. But it is not merely that. Christ is the One who brings us to know God for every day—for everything that comes across our path every day, and for everything that can try the heart or the conscience every day. It is the same perfect law of God that is found in Christ; and our great wisdom is to learn how to apply Christ to every difficulty.

Well, that could not be yet; but the remarkable thing is that it was his dear friends—for they were dear to him, and he had always been dear to them before—who began to look askance. They heard poor Job in his passionate outcry at this terrible suffering that came upon his person. Oh! he could have borne it if they had not been there; he could have borne it if there had been none to look upon him. He might have groaned and cried unto God, and he would surely have done so; but what formed the crisis was his three friends. There they sat for seven long days, looking at the unhappy man! listening to his shrieks, and thinking that after all he ought to be quiet! They had no idea what he was suffering; they were very cool indeed; they were very calm; and they thought they were the men! But God thought otherwise; and Job knew in his heart that they had made a profound mistake, and that they had misconstrued not only Job but God Himself. He was quite right about that; and one thing that he never allowed in all the debate was that it was because of any hidden wickedness, that it was because of the smallest tinge of hypocrisy. No, no, no; they were all wrong about that, and he would never give it up until cockles turned into barley. He knew perfectly well that that could not be. And so it was. He would stick to it, and fight for it; and so he did.

Now, all this brought out what was not at all comely, the deep resentment that Job felt against the injustice of his friends. He could not help knowing they were all wrong, and he could not help feeling that, unless he was one who had no love for them at all and no respect; but it was just exactly because he had, that it all came so painfully upon him. He knew perfectly well that their glum silence meant that there was no proper sympathy in their hearts toward him. There they were, thinking their bad and dark thoughts about Job all the time, and yet afraid to let them out. But at last Eliphaz picks up courage, and, being the eldest of them, he certainly has much more calmness and dignity and self-restraint than the others that follow. He ventures to speak with a

kind of apologetic tone. He says when he hears of this, "If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?"

It was so very shocking that Job should let out so strongly! "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." He allowed the excellent character of his dear friend in the past, but what was the meaning of all this violence now? Well, he was so changed that the first sight of him made them rend their clothes and cast themselves upon the ground. They were astonished at him. It appears that from head to foot he was covered with everything that showed the awful inflammation and the workings of what seemed to be deadly corruption covering his body—so much so that even worms were appearing all over, and clods of earth. Had he not thrown himself upon the ash-heap to get something or other to relieve this terrible sting? Besides, all his comforts were gone—everything that he had had to alleviate him.

It was all very well for them; they were comfortable; they were not in pain; and they could not in the least degree enter into this terrible suffering of the godly Job. And now Eliphaz allows that he had been a good man towards others, but how was it that he could not teach himself now? Now that this terrible affliction had come, he ought to be a model! Yes, we ought all to be models; we ought all to be like Christ; and we ought all to be like Christ particularly when we are in the depth of affliction, and when we are suffering in the most terrible way; but it is not always so even with the Christian. At any rate, Job could not avoid an expression of his agony—it must come out in some way or another—cries and tears and shrieks as the pain entered most deeply into his nature. Well, there was One who suffered without a murmur;

One who always bowed submissively. There was One who accepted from God the most utter contempt and bitter persecution, even to being called Beelzebub; One who had not a house of His own; One who was entirely dependent upon other people—some of them poor fishermen, and others women who followed as they so often did, seeking in that way to serve Him.

So it was with the Lord! He would know what the feeling of a man is about that. You know very well that any man of what is called the least spirit likes to be independent, and that it is the most galling thing to be entirely dependent upon, what is called, other people's charity. There was the Lord of glory and when it came to be the time of personal suffering, we can measure a little what it was going to be upon the cross by that which the Lord passed through in the anticipation of it, because He never hardened his heart to shut out what was coming; He went always through the trial before the trial came.

We try not to think about it. Sometimes, also, people take means of strengthening the body against the feeling of these trials and pangs, but not so the Lord Jesus. No; He would take the vinegar, but He did not take the potion that was meant to deaden feeling—that He refused.

There was a cup given out of human mercy for the ordinary criminal to deaden pain, to be a kind of opiate, as we call it. But the Lord would not allow that. No, no; He allowed no anesthetics for Himself. It is all very well; men and women try to get a little anesthetic even for taking out a tooth, and yet there was all this unparalleled suffering that came upon the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, there it is: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But there was in Him no such thing as the fighting spirit of Job.

No doubt Job's friends were exceedingly provoking men, and that was a thing that did provoke him; but still the Lord was the complete contrast of it all. And this is a very instructive thing to carry with us, as we read the Book of Job, and look at it more particularly than I can afford to do in the lectures that I now purpose - i.e., the reading of it privately, phrase by phrase, and word by word. I can only pretend to give a helpful sketch-time would not allow me to attempt more. But the contrast is very admirable between the best of men put into a position which was nevertheless nothing to be compared with the sufferings of Christ. And yet there Job was, an object of contempt in a measure and of deep suspicion to the three friends of his, who were not to be named with himself.

Well, now, Eliphaz comes to it; he says, "But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled." Yes, no doubt! it did not trouble Eliphaz very much. He was very sorry, no doubt-that is easily said. "Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?" That is a phrase very badly given indeed in our version. It consists only of two clauses. The true meaning of it is, "Is not thy fear, thy confidence" (i.e., "thy pious fear of God")? "Is not thy fear [of God] thy confidence? thy hope, the uprightness of thy ways?" There are these two clauses, and only these two clauses in it, and that is the real connection. He is astonished that Job should forget his fear and also his hope which he formerly had. He could not speak about faith in redemption, because there is nothing at all of that; all the blessing for an Old Testament saint was in what was coming. But meanwhile the fear of God gave him confidence that God would take care of him, and there, hope was something far better than what he said. "The uprightness of his ways" —yes, he was not a hypocrite; but that is a poor ground after all, when we think of a Christian. Why? Christ is our ground. It is not our upright ways that are our great spring of hope; it is not anything but Christ which gives us firm confidence before God. So that Eliphaz only speaks according to that mixture that was constant, unless God gave a revelation in the Old Testament.

But there was always a mixing of their fidelity with the faith of the Christ that should come—the hope of Christ who was coming. That is the reason why there could not be certain peace. There are a good many people in that state now. They mix up their own personal fidelity with Christ, and what is the effect of it? The mixture of self with Christ has always a disintegrating effect—always injures and darkens the ground of our peace. I must have a peace entirely outside myself. I must have a confidence based upon Him who has no flaw at all, and who has done a work that gives me to be without a flaw before God. That is exactly what Christ has done.

Yet the time was not come to have that clear. But as the phrase stands in our version of 1611, I really could not pretend to understand it, and I very much doubt if anybody else could. In fact, it is very imperfectly rendered, and our translators, I am persuaded, did not understand it. That is not uncommon in the Book of Job, where are more of these misrenderings, I think, than in almost any other Book of Scripture. First of all, the language is very ancient. Of course, I know that the Germans say the contrary, but that is their fashion; they love to contradict what every true believer accepts; they love to unsettle all the foundations of the faith, and when that is done, they can say, 'Away with the Bible!' That is what is coming; that will be the end. So that they are not much help, whatever be their profession.

“Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished” now he comes to his false comfort. “Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent?” Well, what about Abel? I am beginning early enough in the Bible, and I am beginning with a clear example in the Bible. “Who ever perished, being innocent?” Well, there was Abel that perished. We are speaking about perishing in this world; Job never had a question about the next; and they were looking not at the next world but at this. It was not at all a question of faith; it was a question of sight; they were drawing all their conclusions from what they saw. That is always a false ground for a believer. “Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?” There it was again. Abel was righteous, and he was cut off by the unrighteous man; Abel was entirely guiltless; it was because Jehovah accepted Abel's offering, that Cain could not endure it. So, therefore, he perished as far as life in this world is concerned; and that is the only question that is discussed in these passages of Job.

That was the great question between him and his friends. It was what was going on now; they drew from that that God had a very serious charge against Job. Nothing of the kind. God was the very One who looked with admiration on him; and brought out Satan's earnest plan and subtle way to try and make Job speak against God—to curse God, as it is called—but he failed, and he had to be off, and he never appears again. No, it was through another way, the last that anybody could expect; it was through his friends that God did bring Job into—not cursing God—but cursing his own day, that he had been allowed to live; and if he had not been allowed to die before this came upon him, that God should not now take him away—that was Job's complaint. He did not see what God was going to do; he had not yet learned the lesson that God meant him to learn. Eliphaz shows in a very animated and striking manner what is a general modern principle— “Even as I have seen,” “they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.” But it is not an absolute rule. There are those who have sown and plowed iniquity too, and yet they have reaped a good deal in this world, and have laid up wealth and honor in the highest degree; they have become kings and emperors and all the rest of it. Well, that is the very thing. It was extremely short-sighted to talk as he did. “By the blast of God they perish” sometimes. That is true, and Job never denied that, without making it an absolute truth or an absolute falsehood— “and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.”

Then he brings in the lions as a figure to show that, however strong and great and matchless a lion may be, still he may be broken—and so it is with men who play the lion in the world. And now he brings in a vision of the night. He was very serious. And God has often used visions of the night. It is true we have something a great deal better; we have the vision of the day; we have the great vision of Christ manifested in flesh; we have the vision of God showing Himself, and God speaking and acting for us in this world of sin and death. But he refers to what he saw or heard then. “Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men. Fear came upon me, and trembling” —it was evidently not enough of grace that he had; grace does not make people fear in this kind of way. It is judgment that does so, and this is what these good men were full of; they were full of the spirit of judgment.

And yet that is the very thing we are called not to do. “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” When there is evil found on the part of one who bears the name of the Lord we are bound to judge him; but there was no evil found on the part of Job at all. And when evil is not found we are bound not to judge; we are not to yield to our own thoughts; we are to wait upon God to make it all plain. Look at

the way the Lord bore with Judas. He knew it, but they did not; and the Lord would not act upon this; it came out for them to judge. Well, this spirit, he says, passed before his face; “the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly. How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish forever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.” Well, all that is very true, but it did not apply to the case at all. It was a very good lesson for Eliphaz; however he may have learned it is another thing. But there is a great deal more to learn, and that is what had to come out,—that behind all the trouble, behind all the affliction, behind everything that can be brought by the malice of the devil upon God's children in this world, there is a God of grace; and more than that, that God looks for the sense of grace to fill our hearts too; and that is what He accomplished with Job. How much more ought it to be in us, who have seen by faith the Son of God! who have learned by faith what Jesus suffered that we might be brought into stable, everlasting and blessed relationship with God even now! That, of course, was beyond Job, or any in Old Testament times.

Well, Eliphaz pursues it. He says (chap. 5.) “Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one. I have seen the foolish taking root” —he was an aged man and was fond of looking back upon his experience— “I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation.” Ah, there it is! No prayer for him—cursing his habitation. No pity for him. Well, that was just the spirit that was produced by this readiness to judge, and to found the judgment upon appearance. “Judge not according to the appearance,” said the law. We are bound to wait for solid fact. Take a person who has a bad appearance. Sometimes a bad man puts on a good appearance. Well, we are not at all deceived by that. Sometimes a good man may be in such circumstances that appearances are very much against him. There we have to take great care. So that judgment according to appearance is a very dangerous ground. That is exactly where they were. “His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.” That was a very painful word for Job to hear. Job had been most careful about his children. Job watched over them with much prayer to God, and burnt offerings, as was the nature of things at that time—the way in which piety expressed itself. Eliphaz did not make it personal; nevertheless there are many ways of giving a hint. “Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.” Something very like that had happened to Job I do not say that he imputed it to him, but still that was the spirit that was at work.

“Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward. I would seek unto God.” Oh, yes, Eliphaz, all right—you are the man! It was a word meant for Job. He did not think that Job was seeking unto God. But he—he was very calm; and he could say, 'Yes, if I were in your case I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause, instead of crying out so loudly and complaining so bitterly' (as poor Job did); Unto God would I commit my cause'— “which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number: Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields: to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted

to safety.” But does not God sometimes try people? and the rains are not merely for fruitful seasons, but to destroy the fruit. The rains may be such as to greatly try the poor farmer and the husbandman; and it may all turn out quite the other way. It is entirely special pleading that we find in these men. It is not the whole case at all; it is never the full case. It is not the judge; it is the mere advocate; and in this case Job was the poor defendant. They were all on the side of hounding out Job, and finding where the secret iniquity was that they believed was at the bottom of all his trial. They were all wrong. “He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.” Not a thought about the bad people that prosper; he only looks up certain ones that were punished; and the idea is, Job must be one of them.

Well, we find that he does at last fall upon a real truth, quite different from all this random talk. “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth” (ver. 17). He never thought that that was the case with Job. “Happy is the man.” He knew that Job was very unhappy, and therefore he did not count him one of those at all. “Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty” —there he does venture to exhort— “For he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” There certainly is a milder vein running through these reproaches of Eliphaz as compared with the others; as we shall see at a later date. “He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh” —and so on. The end would be that “Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.” And the remarkable thing is that that was the end; and little did Eliphaz think that it would be verified in Job's case. It was more a homily in a vague way; and although he called Job to apply it, he had no idea that God would apply it, and that God would bring out Job more blessed than ever.

Now for Job's answer (chap. 6.). “Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed” —there was just where they were wrong; they only looked at the surface “and my calamity laid in the balances together.” No, they had no proper balances, they were all one-sided. “For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea” and so it was— “therefore my words are swallowed up.” They were all confused. He admits his language was not what it ought to be. He was so put to it by inward suffering and desperate pain that his words were quite confused, not quietly uttered, but simply swallowed up in the violence of his emotion. “For the arrows of the Almighty are within me.” You see he entirely gives way to it. “The poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.” [W.K.]

(To be continued)

## Lectures on Job 6-7

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### Lect. 2. (Continued)

Chap. 6. Now they had talked about the lions—Eliphaz had, at any rate. But Job brings a much more pertinent case into the matter.

“Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?” If he has got his proper food does he bray as if he were suffering from great hunger? “Or loweth the ox over his fodder?” No, he thankfully eats it. “Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt?” “Here am I, and not even a morsel of food but what costs me pain, and I have nothing to make it agreeable; no salt with it; it is all poison as it were” —poison that entered and drank up his spirit. “Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?” The best thing he could get was that which was altogether insipid and disagreeable. “The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat. Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me.”

You see he had not the slightest fear of death. He was singularly above it; but he looked at death not so much as gain—he could not do that; he had not Christ to make it gain; but he looked to death as the cessation of his trouble, the end of his suffering. And so it would be. That, of course, was a very partial way, and by no means up to the mark that God was going to show him. But I mention it to show that it was not at all any fear of the unseen world; it was the trial that he could not solve in this present tangled life. “Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.” The ordinary meaning of “concealed” is not at all the idea here. “I have not violated; I have not denied the words of the Holy One.” That is what they were doing; they were denying the words of the Holy One. They in their zeal, and in their superficial judgment, they were not guided by the Holy One at all; they were acting according to their own thoughts; judging according to their own feelings, on the mere surface of poor Job's intense affliction.

“What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stone, or is my flesh of brass?” —to be able to endure all this without any feeling. “Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me? To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend.” That they should be so lacking in pity—there was what galled him; there was what was inexplicable, next to the great riddle of how God allowed all this to come upon him—that there was not one word of true pity; not one word but what was very superficial, because of the bad judgment, the misjudgment that was underneath it. “My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.” They were no use whatever to him “The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.” He compares it with the desert; he was familiar with it, as they all were. It is a very different thing to pass through the desert in the winter, and to pass through the same desert in the summer—in the winter when people do not want so much the refreshment of water, and in the heat of summer when they feel the great need of even a drop of

water to cool their tongue—then it is that the “wadies” as they call them—those brooks that for a time cross the desert of despair—are completely sucked up by the sand or exhaled by the power of the sun. That is what he compares this to. And therefore it is that the same company of Tema, or of Sheba, that passed through the desert might remember that there is where we should find water in the midst of all this trouble. 'Ah! we hope we are nearing it now.' Not a drop; not a drop! That is like you. Time was when I could have got comfort from you, but now everything is changed. You have nothing now but an evil lurking suspicion that has no foundation at all. “The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.” There was no water to be seen. They had been promising themselves when nearing it, That is where we were only six months ago, when there was plenty of water ' and now six months after, not a drop! “For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.”

Yes, that was their state; they were shocked; they did not want to get near him even. They did not wish to have even the sense of the fetid breath of the poor sufferer, or to touch the skin for fear of contracting something bad themselves. They kept away from it; they were afraid. “Did I say, Bring unto me? or Give a reward for me of your substance?” He says, “It is not that I have the least want for anything, and yet you are treating me as if I were a person to be wanting to draw upon you in my trouble. No, I ask nothing of you except that you should not misjudge me.” “Did I say Bring unto me? or Give a reward for me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove? Do you imagine to reprove words?”

That is what they were doing. He had broken out in these violent words, and they pitched upon them at once to say, Ah, yes! there is old Job beginning to show himself. Now he is in this way; just think what the world would say if they heard or saw Job now! “Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind? Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend. Now, therefore, be content; look upon me” —yes, he begs that they would look upon him— “for it is evident unto you if I lie.” That is, “if there is anything hidden under; that is what you suspect.” “Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity” —he begs them to return to that, and to return to a sound judgment of the case. That it was their poor friend put to so tremendous a trial and could not see why it was come upon him. “Let it not be iniquity.” It has nothing to do with that. He had to learn that his own righteousness, however real, could be no ground; he must have the righteousness of God to stand upon, though he hardly knew how it could be. That is what comes out later in the book. “Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern perverse things?” That is what they were treating, him to.

“Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?” (chap. 7). There he has another ground; his trial was so prolonged. It was not merely a tremendous trial, which is usually very brief in this world. If people have great agony, say in the foot or the head—well, very often they become insensible if it is the head; and if it is the foot no doubt it is very trying, but it passes; the paroxysm passes. “But how is it that I from head to foot am nothing but a mass of sores, and inwardly suffering the deepest agony? Oh that God had taken it away; that God had terminated this terrible suffering.” “As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow” —of the evening, when he has done his work— “and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work; so am I made to possess months of

vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.” They had each day their relaxation from labor; it may be hard labor, but still they had their night of ease and rest. “But I have nothing day or night, it is all the same terrible unremitting suffering.” “When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day.”

Sometimes we have a little of that experience; but how little it is compared with Job's; and how very quickly it gives place. But God was putting him into the furnace in order that he might come out purer than ever. “My flesh is clothed with worms.” Think of that; not merely with woolen or linen— “My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.” That is, it was always something coming just like the rapid process with which a weaver passes his shuttle every moment. “Oh, remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more; thine eyes are upon me and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away” —that is what he compared himself to “so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more” —that is what he wanted, that it should terminate. “He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul. Am I a sea, or a whale” —a sea monster “that thou settest a watch over me? When I say, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions; so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.” It is not that he would have done it, but that is what would have terminated his suffering. That is what the merely natural spirit would have done—terminated it violently.

Oh, no; he had no thought of such a thing. He was under the hand of God, but he begs God's hand to close it. “I would not live away; let me alone; for my days are vanity.”

And he uses that very remarkable expression which we find in two other parts of the Old Testament: “What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?” It is very different here from what it is in the 8th Psalm, and it is sensibly different from what it is in the 144th Psalm. “What is man?” If you look at man without Christ there is nothing very wonderful to talk about; but when you look at Christ there is the most wonderful thing of all, both in the depth of His humiliation and the height of His exalted glory. Well, that is the 8th Psalm. But here it is man under the discipline of God; under the moral government of God. “Oh,” he says, “what is man, to be under such a tremendous government as this? If I were a sea I should not feel it; and if I were a big whale, well, I might perhaps endure more than I can now; but what is man? —poor, sensitive man; poor man full of his nerves, and full of his feeling, of mind, too, embittered by his outward trial?” “Oh!” he said, “terminate it! terminate it!”

Well, in the 144th Psalm there is another thing. He is looking for the kingdom to be brought in by divine power, and he says, “What is man?” Man stands in the way. There the nations are, but what are they? Execute judgment upon them, put them down with a high hand. That is the way that it is looked at. So that you see this “man” in all the blessedness of Christ, and this “man” in all the sufferings of Job, and this “man” in all the worthlessness of the nation; those are the three different comparisons in the three different places. “How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?” —i.e., to get a moment to breathe. “I have sinned” —or, “If I have sinned” I should think to be the real sense of the passage— “What shall I do unto thee,” “O thou”

—not exactly “Preserver” but “Observer?” It is well to take notice of these errors where they are more particularly flagrant “O thou Observer.” For he was perfectly conscious that God had his eye upon him all the time—perfectly conscious of that. Still he was not in the presence of God in the way that he afterward entered it, when he knew himself, and when he knew God better, as he learned through this.

That is what we have the privilege of learning in a very much more simple and blessed manner. “If I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou Observer of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression?” He had confidence in God, and he could not understand what God somehow or another had against him—what he was not conscious of himself “Oh,” he said, “why not pardon it, if there be that of which I am not conscious” — “and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.”

#### LECT. 3.-CHAPS. 8-10.

The reasoning of Bildad is precisely the same principle as that of Eliphaz. It is all founded on God's moral government, i.e., the impossibility of causing God grief, and casting down to the ground a really righteous man, and the certainty of His bringing to naught every wicked man. It is all founded upon what is going on in the world now. There was no faith in it. There was conscience, conscience toward God; but conscience, however useful and highly important as it is for the soul, never does, nor can it ever, reveal God. It detects our bad state, and the more it is purged by divine grace through redemption the clearer is its judgment. But that was not the case then. Everything was more or less confused, and God was merely regarded as a righteous God. But God is the God of all grace. And many people confound God's grace with His goodness; but the goodness of God is quite a different thing from the grace of God. The goodness of God is that which flows out in every sort of kindness, and in patience with us and consideration of our weakness. But the grace of God means not merely His love, but His love rising above sin; His love triumphing over all our evil.

Now it is clear that that never was nor could be, till Christ came, and it was not even when Christ did come. It was in His death on the cross; it was there and then for the first time that all the love of God met all the evil of man. Both worked fully out, but had never worked fully out before. Man had never shown himself so wicked as round the cross of the Lord Jesus. And it was universal; it was not merely the multitude, though it is a terrible thing to see how fickle the multitude is. They are just the same to this day, and they will never be any other until the Lord change the face of all peoples. The same crowd that cried “Hosanna to the Son of David!” and applauded Him to the skies, with one mouth cried, “Crucify him, crucify him!” within a few days. Well, and how was that? It was the power of Satan. It was their unbelief. Because their applause was nothing. Applause is merely human feeling excited at the moment, and that feeling may give way to a totally opposite one, and very quickly. Why, even the children of God are never to be trusted. The children of God are the most foolish people in the world in many respects. And the reason is because Satan hates them, and Satan entraps them, and they are apt to be deceived by appearances. They never seem to take warning from the word of God; they are always ready for some new thing; and the consequence is, always tumbling into some mess or another.

Well, this has always been the case; it was the case in the experience of the apostle Paul. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another" —it is no gospel at all. It was a man once born; it was poor wretched fallen man that was the groundwork. That is the very same thing in Christians now. They are carried away by man, and they are all so anxious to get man to applaud them, and to sacrifice and compromise everything in order to get the assent and consent of people that want to be saved, that have no kind of judgment in things divine, for this never can be had unless we not only have Christ, but know what it is to be crucified to the world and the world unto us. That is, it must be a thorough-going work, and the children of God shrink from that; consequently, they will read anything that merely keeps up their spirits, just like a boy at night whistling through a churchyard. Anything that will keep up their spirits—every little dram, every little sentiment, every little phrase—perhaps a very bad and poor phrase—but still there it is, and that keeps up their spirits. Well now, friends, that is the way to get removed from Him that called us; because it is entirely by growing in grace, and by dependence upon that grace, that we are kept from all these snares that more particularly surround the people of God. At the time of the cross the people of God were the Jews, and that was the reason why they were the worst of all.

And now in Christendom, in the world as it is now, who are the most guilty? Who are ripening now for the severest judgment of God? The world-church. I do not mean by that the Established Church; it will take in the Dissenters just as well. The Dissenters are further away in some respects than even the Anglicans. They are howling politicians, howling for their own will, and calling themselves, in the most extraordinary manner, "passive resisters." Why "passive resistance" is passive nonsense. You cannot be passive and resisting. If you are resisting you are not passive. It is the same kind of thing as people talking about the Roman Catholic Church; but if it is Roman it is not Catholic, and if it is Catholic it is not Roman, and the two things are just a marvelous piece of contradiction. But what I mean is this—there are different streets. There are high streets and low streets; there are streets of grandeur and there are streets of wretchedness of every kind—dishonesty as well as all kinds of contention. And it is upon that that the awful judgment of God is coming.

Babylon is more loathsome to God than "the Beast." The beast is open self-will rebelling against God; but Babylon is that which is a harlot in God's eyes, and pretends to be the espoused of Christ. And it is that pretension—that high pretension of being the holy bride of Christ—accompanied by the greatest unholiness and the greatest laxity of doctrine when pretending to be the orthodox, the holy Catholic, Apostolic, and I do not know what else. Well, that is Babylon, but that is only high Babylon; there is low Babylon too; and all Babylon, no matter whether high or low—all will be the great object of God's fury. For that is the expression of the term. It is His highest indignation. It is all this pretension to what the world has not. They are now giving up to religion as much as possible. What is the intent? To carry on religion with the world, that is, Babylon. It is the confusion of two things that cannot be united, and there they are—the greatest and worst confusion that is possible to be.

The Babylon of Christendom is a great deal worse than the Babylon of the Chaldees. What privileges had they? Why, they were the heathen; but there you have only the human mind; in Christendom you have got the New Testament. There they pretend to have the Holy Ghost. There they can give the Holy Ghost to a baby! and they can give the Holy Ghost to a priest! Or they can

do anything; bring fire—not from heaven, but from hell, to burn the martyrs of God. They can do anything that is wicked and is at the same time a pretense against God. Well, I say, because of them you must not be surprised that any who have got the truth in a measure are for that very reason the great object of Satan's desire to draw them into what will undermine and destroy. Therefore we need to be guided; we need the guidance of God; we need not to be taken in by appearances and fair promises and good desires that will never keep the same for one day or hour. But on the contrary, the better you desire, if you are not subject to God the more easily you will be drawn into that which will oppose God.

No doubt, nobody means that no Christian could be like the Galatians—you do not mean that. They thought they were in the better state. They thought they were getting on, that they were not so narrow minded as some people, that they were not so very bigoted as Paul. Paul was too much in one line; they were the large people; line; they were the large people; they were the liberal people. And so it was that they got into this terrible snare of the devil. The same thing repeats itself in every age. And I believe that there are persons on the face of the earth that are as much the object of Satan's wiles as the Galatians.

But that is no reason to be discouraged; not to be discouraged is the necessary consequence of having the truth—a necessary consequence that Satan dislikes and dreads, and will leave no stone unturned to prevent.

Why was it that Job came to this terrible plight in the Book we are reading? Because God said “There is nobody like him on the earth—a perfect man; a man thoroughly, all round—of integrity.”

Yes, but there was one thing that neither Job nor his friends understood, and that was grace; and it could not be understood. He did know that God was a faithful God, and his piety led him to feel, and to stand to it, that all the troubles he came into were from God. And so they were, because the devil even had disappeared. It was not merely the devil that endeavored to cast him down. That he did most fully in both the first and second chapters. But at the end of the second chapter he was defeated and baffled, and went off, and never re-appeared.

It is the greatest mistake to suppose it is only the devil. In the millennium there will be sin and death when the devil is bound. In point of fact, the occasion of Job's breaking out so violently was his three dear friends; and they were pious men, too. But what about that, unless you are guided of God? And that is the very thing that this Book is so instructive in—that we cannot trust to be led even, by a pious man. With the best of intentions we require God's guidance and to be kept to it.

And it was these three pious men by their conduct, so far from God's thoughts, so thoroughly judging by appearances, it was that that made them think that there must be something very bad in Job, after all his appearance, after all his life that seemed so fair, and after everybody thinking that there was nobody like Job. Certainly, if God said there was nobody like him, you may depend upon it that all pious people thought the same. And it was true, but still there was the great lack; because Job, till he got Christ as an object, made an object of his own piety, and thought a great deal of himself.

It is one of the greatest mistakes that a believer can make—to think a great deal of himself. I think I drew attention to a beautiful word of the apostle Paul that teaches the very contrary— “esteeming others better than ourselves”; and that means any Christian. And yet the Christians may be full of

faults in this way or that way.

But still, who is the person whose faults I know better than anybody's? My own. And therefore I can honestly and loyally count a man better than myself. I do not know his faults to be anything like the faults I know of myself. Of course, others have the very same and are called to the very same feeling, and they may have more reason, too; that is another question altogether. But we have to do with the fact that we know what we are, and we ought to know, and it is a great thing to grow in knowing, that we are not only nothing for guidance, but we are worse than nothing in the sight of God. Our nature is declared to be the flesh in enmity against God. And that is what we know working out. Other people may not see it; other people may not have any reason to see it.

But that is what every Christian should know who is not like Job, admiring himself because he is not like other people. That is, he is like the Pharisee.

“God, I thank thee I am not as other men.”

Yes, that is a very bad state; nothing could be worse—nothing worse in a believer. And these dear saints at that day were in imminent danger, every one of them, not even excepting Job. Job had a better knowledge of God, comparatively, than they; and Job stuck to it with amazing tenacity, first that all the trouble that came upon him was from God; that it was God who allowed it all to come upon him. He could have hindered every bit of it—and that he could not understand. Why, why, why? He had a thoroughly good conscience as far as that was concerned; he had no sin upon him at all, no particular defect of any sort. It was a question of self and not of sin; it was a question of never having judged himself in the presence of God fully.

I should like to know how many here in this room have judged themselves in that way now? I think they had better search and see. That is surely a very great lesson to learn, and it is a lesson that nobody likes to learn. It is always extremely painful, and it is very humbling to our comfortable thoughts of ourselves. Because we are occupied perhaps with the gospel, and we see that the gospel is completely clear. That does not touch self. It ought to lead to it; but it may not at all. And consequently there may be people most zealous in the gospel that are peculiarly ignorant of themselves—peculiarly so. They are generally occupied with other people, and have not much time for sober reflection and self-judgment; and therefore, active work in the Lord always pains, unless it is corrected by Christ—learned in this practical way by the power of God's Spirit judging everything of flesh-in ourselves. That is where they were all wrong, and it is bringing out that clearly—that it is not merely a question of the righteous government of God; but it was then the secret of grace. Now the grace is published; now it is proclaimed; now it is preached; now it is manifested; and therefore, now it is a far more serious thing. And there was what these Galatians overlooked entirely. They had never learned that yet; they were converted through the apostle; they were brought into the full joy of as good a gospel as ever was preached in this world—a great deal better than any of us preach it now. They were brought into that by the preaching of that blessed man—and yet they had not profited, to judge themselves. And it is this that we all need most deeply, in order that we may be kept from the snares that surround us, and which may spring upon us at any moment, even from friends just as dear as the three friends of Job. They were the occasion of this downfall, and that in a way that only God could have accomplished.

Well now, Bildad follows the line of Eliphaz, and says: "How long wilt thou speak these things?" He could not in the least understand it. "And how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?" Because Job could not understand why: as he was quite sure of the perfection of God, quite sure of the faithfulness of God, quite sure that God loved him, quite sure that he loved God; "How has all this come upon me; what is the key to all this terrible suffering that I am sure God has sent?" He would not lay it upon circumstances. [W. K.]

(To be continued)

## Lectures on Job 8-10

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### Lect. 3. (Continued)

But there were, to add to the terrible agony that he passed through outwardly, inward agonies. It really was one billow after another overcoming this poor man in such a sea of trouble as never came upon any man since the world began. How was all that? He was stung by the insinuation of his friends (he held to it firmly that it was all false) that he was not a true man, and that he did not love God. He was not conscious of a single sin; nevertheless, he owned it was God. That was what made the riddle, and no wonder at all. It was impossible that it should not have been a riddle, in those days, except by special teaching of God. There was one that appeared later, and Elihu did in some measure understand; but it was the Lord who put an end to all the uncertainty.

Now that Christ has come, there is no ground for it; only, beloved friends, we may treat the gospel now very much as is done in Christendom, and regard it as pretty much the same thing as there has always been, only with a little more light—a sort of new edition of Judaism—improved, that is all. Whereas it is entirely new—it is an absolutely new creation, a new light altogether. It is not merely the dim torch, as it were, on the earth; it is the light of heaven revealed in our Lord Jesus. They had none of that—none whatever. There was a looking for Him, but it was entirely in an earthly way. They looked to Him as the Messiah; they looked for Him as one who would meet their difficulties; but it was very, very shallow—anything that any one of them knew about it. We must not confound prophetic anticipations with the experience of the saints. The prophets did not always understand their own prophecy. They had to search and learn what the meaning was, just as you have to do now; but if you have all the prophecies, they do not give you what the gospel does.

The gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness. They were all occupied with man's righteousness produced by divine goodness, by faith, by looking for the Messiah; but they had no idea of the total judgment of man, and that this is an entirely new thing from God, communicated to the soul. This is what Christendom has never endured and never possessed. It has Christianity, but a very small amount of Christianity is quite enough for Christendom. Well, here then this man breaks out into this rebuke of Job for his extreme feeling. How could the man do anything but feel? And what were they about that they did not deeply feel for him? There they were, quite comfortable; and there they were, judging there must be something very bad; and I need not tell you that that deeply wounded the poor injured man. It was pouring vitriol into his wounds; it was not binding them with wine and oil, cleansing the wound, but, on the contrary, deepening and poisoning it.

And these were his three friends! What a lesson! Well, Bildad goes further, however. He says, "If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression" —there they thought they had him. How could God do such a thing as to kill all his children unless there was something very bad in them? It was all the same principle, and the same false principle. And what shows the falsity of the principle is the universal test. Bring Christ in. Was it any want of

God's delight in Christ that allowed Christ to be the greatest sufferer, far beyond Job? It was therefore altogether a false estimate, and a false principle underneath the estimate, to imagine that there must be evil in the person that came to this depth of suffering.

"If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression"—they never could rise above that—"If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright"—ah! there they were at it again! It was not merely the children then that had transgression! "If thou wert pure and upright"—why, Job was much more so than they—"If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee." Certainly not; the Lord was going to have the trial brought to its full completion; and He allowed all these discussions in order to bring out everything that was in their hearts, and then came He in with His own word completely setting down these principles which governed the three friends, and Job not able properly to answer them.

He could demolish their arguments, but that is a very different thing. A clever man could, of course, easily overthrow a foolish reasoning; but that is a very different thing from getting in the truth. The truth requires God and His word and His Spirit; and we never can have these in a difficulty except by entire dependence upon God. And if we have got any self-will at work, which was very much the case with Job as well as with his three friends—self-will is a most darkening thing—you never can have the certainty of the will of God where self-will is not steadily seen and judged as altogether beneath you. "Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase."

Then he appeals to another thing. Eliphaz had spoken of his own personal experience; Bildad differs in the manner in which he defends their theme by bringing in the traditions of other people. Those are the two ways in which men are apt to slip away from the truth—confidence in self; confidence in other people no better than oneself; confidence in anyone but God. So he says, "Inquire, I pray thee, of the former age" for people think that a little further back is where we should go. Why, beloved friends, we want to go back to the beginning; we want to go back to God's beginning. People talk about the early fathers; well, that is a great deal too late; why do not they talk about the apostles? Because they are as far from them as they can possibly be. There is not the slightest resemblance—except the mere name of things—a totally different reality. And so it was here. Had they gone back to the garden of Eden? Ah, that is not a former age; that was the beginning where God manifested Himself.

They were all arguing on the ground of righteousness. Not one of them had taken in, up to this and for long after, any thought of grace. And Job only arrived at it at last by the intervention of God. There he was dust and ashes. There he took the place of nothingness and worse than nothingness; and then it was he was blessed; then it was that he was vindicated by God, and not till then. So Bildad goes on with this, "Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?" But we want the words out of God's heart; it is not any but His heart that can do. "Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow without water?" Well, that is just what their condition was—mire and water, no substance at all, but just mire and water; and their thoughts were no better than the flag that grew out of the water, or the reed that grew out of the mire. And he talks about the hypocrite being no better than a spider's web. That is just exactly what they were, though they were not hypocrites; but still they were all wrong in their reasonings, and wrong

reason is never better than a spider's web.

And so he describes in a very lively and wonderful manner the man that had known the hypocrite, and all this was a sly hit at Job. There is where they were so very wrong. "He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap" to get a little strength from the heap— "and seeth the place of stones." That is what the reed does in order to get tenacity. "If he destroy him from his place, than it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee." That is the case with man upon the earth; he passes away, and his memory is so forgotten that the place itself even says it never saw him, or it was all completely forgotten. This he applies to the hypocrite. "Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man." But God was trying and troubling the perfect at that very moment; they never could take this into their minds; they did not understand it nor believe it in the slightest degree, and hence their reasons were all false, and more than that, thoroughly unkind; and it is a sad thing to be unkind to what is good and true, as also it is a sad thing to be very kind to what is not good and what is not true. This is what they were about; that is where they got through want of the guidance of God, and of the truth.

Chap. 9. Now we come to a very grand chapter, but still we find the lack of Christ. Job raises that question. "I know it is so of a truth." He did not deny what they were saying, about the hypocrite, in the least; he agreed with them fully. Only he said, as it were, "You are all mistaken in thinking I am a hypocrite." "I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God?" There was the great difficulty for him. He fully believed in God's faithfulness to himself, and His faithfulness to His children generally; but still where was the ground? Well there was no ground yet at all. It was all hope. It was a hope of the Christ that was coming, without their knowing how Christ would answer to that hope. They only knew it would be all right, but how, they had no idea. That Christ should become the righteousness of the believer—oh, what a wonderful thing that is! Well, the prophet Jeremiah speaks of Jehovah's righteousness; but I do not believe the prophet Jeremiah understood anything about it at all. How could he? Nobody could. Look at the apostles themselves. They had all the Old Testament to help them, and all the teaching of the Lord Jesus during the time of His ministry, yet they were entirely ignorant of it. They had not a notion of it until the cross began to enlighten them, and particularly the resurrection, and fully, the Holy Ghost—the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. He brought in the truth that was in Christ, but their eyes were holden that they could not take it in—could not see.

So Job describes in a very grand manner what God is in His ways—His uncontrollable power and authority. He knew man was weak and faulty. Nevertheless, Job did not doubt that God would see him through all his difficulties, but on what ground of righteousness he could not conceive. If man was a poor sinful man, and nevertheless God showed him saving mercy, how was man to be just? You cannot put justice and sins together until you have got Christ, who died for the sins and rose again for the believer's justification. There the sins are completely blotted out. How could Job know anything about that? Nobody knew it; no man on earth. Their idea of the Messiah was more of a great king that would be full of goodness and mercy to his people upon the earth. But that He should be made unto us righteousness as well as wisdom and sanctification and redemption! oh, dear no! they did not in the least understand; how could they?... I daresay that the people in Christendom think it was all known pretty much as they know it now. There was no power, no joy, no peace, but always entreating that God would show them mercy as poor, miserable sinners;

there was no idea of salvation. Well, here Job describes God's power in a wonderful way. "Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and seaeth up the stars; which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea." Very grand; wonderfully so; and very true. "Which maketh Arcturus" —that is in the constellation of Arctophylax or Bootes (the Herdsman), near the seven stars which people call "Charles Wain." The Arabs called the latter, however, a very different thing, viz., "The Greater Bear." They made the four stars to be the body, and the three stars were the tail. However, this is Arcturus; and Orion and the Pleiades go by the same names still. These are all in the northern sphere; but the people of those days had penetrated enough to cross the line, and they were aware that there was a southern world. They did not know much about it; they knew very little. Of course they did not know America, except very obscurely. There were hints from time to time that there was something in the west; but in the south they had no idea of Australia or New Zealand.

He goes on, "which doeth great things, past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?" (verses 6-12). That is exactly where poor Job was. He was quite sure that it was of God, and that is the very thing that made the difficulty. Because his conscience was pure toward God, and he knew the goodness of God, and yet how was this? He could not understand it, neither did they in the slightest degree. "If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him?" There he is beginning to feel his weakness. He was not a proud man; but as all men are, till they learn in the way that I have described, he had a very good opinion of himself. That must all come down. If a man is to be blessed, or a woman, the blessing will not come by a good opinion of oneself; that is wrong, and the greatest hindrance to the blessing of God, and the enjoyment of His grace. "Though I were righteous, yet would I not answer." There, you see, was thorough piety. "But I would make supplication to my judge. If I had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice."

Well, that was great ignorance of God; because God does answer, and God does hear; and God delights in His children now; now that they are cleared, now that they know Him, He delights in perfect intimacy and love with Himself. "For he breaketh me with a tempest" —and that was true—"and multiplieth my wounds without cause." Ah! without cause; that is a little too much to say. He had His own wise cause; He had His own blessed end. He meant that Job should be a far happier man and brighter in his state than he had ever been before; and till Christ came it could be only by making him a bag of broken bones —to learn that all the goodness was in God and all the badness was in himself. "If I speak of strength lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life. This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked." That is what they thought was a terrible blasphemy, but that is what he thinks.

We understand it. The greatest calamity might come, and God send it, and a number of people perfectly innocent might perish just as much as the wicked people—say the sack of a city, or a pestilence sent by God in His moral government. Well, I, say, these things are there undoubtedly, and Job stuck to that. All their tally did not at all drive him from the plain fact which they shirked and shut their eyes to. "The earth," he says, "is given into the hand of the wicked." And is not that

true? Is not Satan the god, and the prince, of this world? That is wicked enough. And further, "He covereth the faces of the judges thereof," i.e., he allows the judges to pronounce altogether wrongly and unjustly. That is, somehow or other their faces are veiled from the light, and they judge according to appearance. It is very certain that that is not a way to judge soundly. "If not, where, and who is he?" Who is he that does that? These things happen; innocent people suffer; guilty people escape; all these things are coming every day—are coming in England. It is not merely in Turkey, or Russia, or Tartary, or China; no, it is in England, in London; and nobody can hinder it. Things are out of course, and will be till the Lord takes the reins.

"If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself; I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." That is, God will show him to be defective after all. That is true. If you are resting upon yourself, you are resting upon a ground that is not approved before God. If you are resting upon Christ, you have got the only solid ground that never can be taken from you. So he closes. "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us." That is what Christ became; Christ became the mediator between God and men; and not merely a mediator, but a mediator who is equally divine with the God before whom He acts as mediator for us. If there had not been the hand of God in the cross, there could have been no divine redemption. It was God that forsook His Son; it was God that turned away His face from Him; and, therefore, now what is brought in is the righteousness of God. And there is nothing against that. But it is a justifying righteousness; it is not a condemning righteousness. The same God that condemned under the law saved under grace, because of Christ.

Well, then, we come to a great lament in the tenth chapter, and I may be very brief with that; for we shall have a great deal of this lament throughout the Book. We have had it already, so there is no need particularly to dwell upon it. My object is not to go into every word, but to give a sufficiently general understanding of the Book of Job. "My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself." He now despaired of getting any sympathy from them. "I will speak in the bitterness of my soul." Here I am alone with all my sorrows; here are three dear friends who have not one particle of sympathy with me! no kind of feeling nor compassion for all that I am suffering. They are quite comfortable that they have none of it, and they are quite astonished that I should have any of it; and they think therefore I must be very wicked. It is all false. "I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me." That God did; he was answered. "Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man? Are thy years as man's days?" That is, he compares himself to a sort of butterfly broken on the wheel. There is this terrible wheel for malefactors, and he, a mere butterfly, is all broken down—God, in all His uncontrollable power dealing with such a poor, weak man as he; every part of his body throbbing with pain, and full of nerves all on the strain of agony from head to foot. "Thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin."

Job had a perfectly good conscience and therefore he says, 'Where is it; I want to learn where it is and why it is.' "Thou knowest that I am not wicked." That he could say to God; and it was perfectly true. It was not that; it was his own satisfaction in that poor reflection of righteousness which the

best of men can have here below in himself, but which is no ground at all to stand on before God. "Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me"—after all the love thou hast shown me. "Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay." He had not made him as an angel; he had not made him as one that was above this kind of suffering. "Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart." 'You had that in your heart before I was born. You meant me to come into this, and I do not know why.'

"I know that this is with thee. If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity." He asked to be forgiven if there was anything unknown. "If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head." No, he is thoroughly humble now; at any rate, he was on the way to it. "I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction, for it increaseth." And he uses very ungodly language now. "Thou huntest me as a fierce lion; and again thou showest thyself marvelous upon me. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me. Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? Cease then and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death." You see how little they entered into the bright future. "A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness."

[W. K.]

## Lectures on Job 11-14

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### Lect. 4.-Chaps. 11-14

We must carefully remember that, although the Book of Job is inspired, it would be a great mistake to concede that the speeches are inspired. Certainly Satan's words were not inspired, and they are recorded there; and it is part of the profit of the Book that we have the mistakes of the speakers. Every one of the three friends was very much mistaken in what he said, and Job himself also. It is only when we come to Elihu that we get the mind of God as far as a man is inspired, and then we have Jehovah's own word clearing up all the difficulty.

This is very important, because there is a kind of hazy idea that seeing they are found in the Bible the speeches of different people are also inspired. The Book is inspired to begin with; but we have to judge of the utterances, say of king Saul, or even of David, whether what they said was so or not, for it is not that everything which they said in their daily life was inspired. It might be more or less true; it might be sometimes really and absolutely true; but that is all a question of searching and comparing scripture with scripture. When it comes direct from God or from a prophet, or from an apostle—the inspired writing—all that is absolutely the word of God. But not so where we have a historic scene—whether it is in Samuel, Kings or Chronicles, or whether it is in the Book of Job, where we have actual conversations given us by the Spirit of God—it would be quite a mistake to imagine that, because God gives us the speeches, therefore the speeches represent His mind.

It is perfectly plain from the solution at the end of the Book that they did not represent His mind. Now take this man Zophar—a great deal that he says is very true, but it does not apply to the purpose. It was all misused. It was based upon the assumption that whatever God allows now is really the judgment of God. But that is not the case. The devil now is the ruler; he is the one that actuates men. The spirit of evil works in the sons of disobedience, and everything is now out of course. Therefore to reason from things as they are now is to be guilty of a very great mistake. In short, it is to put what happens now into the place which the judgment of the Lord will have by and bye before the throne. Then there will be the mind of God pronounced upon all our words and all our ways; but the present time is a state of confusion, and men are not at all as they ought to be, and even God's children are very far from being as they will be. Everything is now imperfect and short of the mind of God. And still more, all the things that take place on earth are a mass of confusion, and judgment has not yet returned to righteousness. Judgment will never return to righteousness till the Lord sits upon His throne. Now, there is judgment in the hands of people who are themselves as bad criminals very often as the men whom they transport or hang. They might be thoroughly wicked men, and enemies of God in the most frightful manner; still, bad as they may be personally, they are very often honest in carrying out the law of the land fairly.

We all know that there may be sad mistakes in point of judgment; but the day is coming when judgment will return to righteousness. They have not got righteousness to return to—they are simply unrighteous men; and it is remarkable that the apostle Paul brands the judges of the law in his day as being unjust (1 Cor. 6:1) Yet for all that God employed them. There were magistrates; there

were judges; and God called them unjust when it was a question of His own people who had a far higher character of righteousness as their standard. They knew Christ; and all these things that these Corinthians were going to law about ought to have been settled among themselves—in the presence of them all. They were therefore exceedingly wrong in going on like the world. The world must go to the Court. What could they do? They could not settle things themselves. They have not got the authority the Court has. They go there, and on the whole they get their questions fairly well settled. But the children of God have quite another tribunal; and the apostle says it is so easy to settle these matters of an outward kind that the very least in the church might be asked to do it. He did not, of course, mean that the least in the church are the proper people to settle it, but it is a stigma upon their going before the world; and, of course, the most proper in the assembly are the people that ought to look into these things; those that have most experience and weight. It is merely the apostle putting shame upon the worldly spirit of the age. Here we are in a world where we are all apt to make mistakes; through ignorance sometimes, and very often through will of one kind or another that blinds us; but the mercy of God watches over all.

So here we find Zophar taking it all into his own hands. Why, if he had been a divine person, he could not have spoken more authoritatively. It was perfectly plain to him that Job was a bad man, and that he was a very vain man who liked to hear himself talk, and that he had no regard for other people, for there he, was abusing' them. In short, it is a very bad speech this of Zophar, most disrespectful to Job, and proud and haughty on his own part; and the more so as he was the youngest of the three, and consequently the one least capable. "Should not the multitude of words" that is all he would allow on Job's part— "be answered, and should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies" —think how far he went— "Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest" —that was all he considered it "shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes." Now Job had never said either. He had never said that his doctrine was pure. What he said was, that he held to God and to His ways. And what is said about his conduct was that he was not a hypocrite. He acknowledged that he might have sinned in some way unknown to himself that accounted for all this terrible storm of affliction that bore his soul down to the dust. And that was his difficulty; he did not know quite. He believed that he had been walking with a good conscience before God; and they were not able to say anything—they could bring nothing against him. All said alike, and judged him in a most severe and unmerciful manner. So he asked that God would speak. Well, God did speak; and when God spoke it was not to the honor of Zophar, nor of Bildad, nor of Eliphaz even—here very much more quiet and calm of spirit than Zophar. But for all that it was owing to the intercession of Job that the anger of the Lord did not fall upon those three men. It might have been their death had it not been for the intercession of Job.

Zophar says some things that are very excellent—properly—applied. He says, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" Well, nobody can God must reveal Himself. "Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Only if God speaks. "The measure thereof is longer than the earth" certainly, and that was a very insufficient measure—the earth— "and broader than the sea." He might have taken in all the universe. "If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?" There is no doubt about His power, no limit to it. "For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also." All these are insinuations against Job. "Will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." Well, no doubt. That is man's

condition now through the fall, that sometimes his acts can only be compared to those of a beast—uncontrollable, like a wild ass—or even to those of a savage beast, that consumes and destroys before it, like a lion or a bear. Man is capable of doing all these things. “If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him.” Now there, was excellent advice. That was just what Job did require—to wait upon God till God gave him the answer, as to how it was that all this had come upon him. But Zophar's notion was all wrong.

“If iniquity be in thine hand” —that was not what it was; it was not a question of iniquity, but of God dealing with Job's satisfaction with himself. Job was a truly pious, God-fearing man; but he had a high idea of his own character. That is what no soul ought ever to allow. It is altogether wrong for a person to rest in himself, no matter how unblemished he may be, no matter how he may truly wait upon God day by day. There is no rest in any creature, least of all in ourselves. It was One that was coming. And now there is One that is come, so that we have the understanding of “Him that is true.” But in Job's day he evidently did not understand all this. “For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear,” and so Zophar pursues down to the end of the chapter in very proper language. But his thought was all wrong, because he supposed there was some great wickedness unseen and unknown. Why then did he suppose it, if it was not seen and known?

We have the most remarkable instance of the opposite of this in the New Testament. One of the twelve was a dishonest man, and was about to betray the Lord Jesus. The Lord, who knew it perfectly, never brought it out in such a way as to act upon the consciences of the eleven. He allowed it to go on to the very last, and it was only when the dishonest one had passed out of their hands, and was himself on the way to death—and death by his own hand, as well as the death of the Lord by the hands of the Jews and Gentiles—that then the Lord no longer allowed it. If the Lord had meant them to judge Judas He would have made it manifest before. But He meant on the contrary that if he had made it manifest before, Scripture would not have been fulfilled Scripture had declared that that man was the man to betray the Lord, and therefore it must go on to the end—to the betrayal. The Lord would not therefore open out the wickedness of Judas until it was before all the world.

Job answers in the next chapters (12-14.) and no doubt he repays them too much in their own coin. “And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.” Well they deserved that rebuke. “But I have understanding as well as you.” Now there he was far more considerate than they; because he did not take the place of being so superior. “I have understanding as well as you” — “I am not inferior” —he does not say, “I am superior” “I am not inferior to you.” “Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?” They were only talking platitudes, moral platitudes, that every person of the slightest acquaintance with God already knew. They were not giving any light upon this very difficult question, how it was that a pious God-fearing man fell under such tremendous sorrow and affliction. They did not contribute one atom to that question. They merely let out all their bad thoughts and feelings, and consequently they were really heaping up wrath, if it had been the day of wrath; but it was the day of mercy, and God humbled them, by their being indebted to Job for His not taking them away by a stroke that would have been perfectly just. “I am as one mocked of his neighbor” —they talked about his mocking— “who calleth upon God, and he answereth him; the just upright man is laughed to scorn. He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at

ease.”

Now that phrase exactly gave the position; they were all at ease, these three men; there was nothing the matter with them; they had not, as Job, been taken up by God to allow the devil to do all the evil he could; and finally to allow that pious men should be the persons that would provoke them as they provoked Job. “He that is ready to slip with his feet” —that is what Job felt he was “is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease” —because if he gives way—the lamp requires to be held steadily—if a man is slipping with his feet, what is the good of a lamp? It waves and waves down into the mud. But they were all at ease sitting in judgment upon him. “The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.” Nothing could more completely upset all their arguments.

There had been that great robber Nimrod—that man who first began to hunt beasts, and then to subdue men to his own purpose without God giving him authority. And yet God allowed it. Nimrod built great cities and became a great man. “The tabernacles,” therefore, as Job says, “of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.” That is the present state of the earth, and any state of the earth since man fell is no adequate testimony of what God thinks of people. It is not bringing out His judgment of men yet. There may be an occasional dealing of God in a particular case, as an exception to His ordinary way of leaving things apparently to their own course. But that is just the reason why there is to be a judgment—because things have not been judged according to God, but they will be.

“But ask now the beasts” —there is a very triumphant thing. “Why,” he says, “the very beasts know more than you, and prove more than all your speeches! Ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee; or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea” —who have got practically no voice, and do not know how to talk—“shall declare unto thee.” That is, the whole creation—the lower creation of God upon the earth—is a proof that things are not yet according to God. Do they not prey upon one another; do not the great swallow up the small; and is not man the great executor of death upon beasts and birds and fishes, and everything, for his own gratification? I do not mean merely for food, but to please himself at all costs. In short, it is not merely what the Lord allows, but man makes it for his lusts, for his luxury, for everything except God. “Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this? He cannot deny that the Lord has left it in this way. “In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” —and yet He allows them to break forth in this lawless way. “Doth not the ear try words?” —do you think I cannot hear? — “and the mouth taste his meat?” —that I cannot discern my palate? “With the ancient is wisdom.” There again he shows how little he was for condemning where there was wisdom. He allows that with the ancient there is wisdom— “and in length of days understanding” —because there is experience that nothing else can give.

“With him is wisdom,” he says. He turns to God; for, after all, it is only in a little measure a man profits. “With him is wisdom and strength” —whereas as the ancient gets wiser he becomes weaker— “he hath counsel and understanding.” “Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up” —and what a wretched state the world is in when there is no water. But then in another way it comes, and He gives them too much water; “also he sendeth them out, and they

overturn the earth.” The waters carry everything before them. “With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.” That is the present state. “He leadeth counselors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.” Undoubtedly those counselors and these judges were persons eminent for their knowledge, and, were supposed to be, for their wisdom. But there is always a limit in this world, and there is often a disappointment where you most rest.

“He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them; he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.” There are all kinds of change. There is nothing therefore that shows the settled judgment of God. Everything among men is in a flux—a constant flow and change; and therefore nothing could be more foolish than the groundwork of the three friends in their attack on Job. “He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.” And that is the way where people trust in men.

But now he says (chap. 13) “Lo, mine eye hath seen all this” — “you have been boasting of what the ancients had all thought” — “mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.” That is just what he was doing. But how? He did not know. There was not the New Testament yet. There was not One to stand between God and man, like Christ. So he did not know how to get at Him. If he could only find Him; if he could only be before Him! He knew very well what he would find there—a faithful God. But somehow or other there were difficulties and riddles between God and his soul that he could not understand. He says, “But ye are forgers of lies.” You see all their arguments were founded upon man and upon the world. Everything that a believer stands upon, is what is in God, and what God gives and reveals. And there we find it, in all its perfection, in Christ. But they were all resting upon man's thoughts and man's experience, and the like. And further he says, “Ye are all physicians of no value.” You have come to heal me; you have heard of my terrible state; you came to heal and cure me in my dreadful sickness and suffering, and what have you done? Why, you have poured poison upon my wounds; you have poured no wine, no oil. No balm have you poured upon the poor sufferer. “Oh, that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.” And it often is a man's wisdom when he sits quiet and holds his tongue. But directly he begins to speak about what he does not understand—well, what then? That is exactly where they were. “Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?” That is what they had been doing. They pretended this to be for God. “Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out?” Well, that is what He did. “Or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him? He will surely reprove you.” How remarkably that was fulfilled! “He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons” —and that is what they were doing. They were accepting persons falsely —according to appearance. “Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay. Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak. and let come on me what will.” Now here I am, ready to bear whatever God sends. I feel the awfulness of it, and the terrors of God are on my soul; but here I am; let him do as

seemeth good in his sight “Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

There was a far deeper faith in Job than in all the other three, or in any of them. He did not mean, “though I am lost.” Oh no, he had no idea of that. “Though he slay me” —he knew that the best thing was not life on the earth; he is learning that; but the best thing is the life to come. There it would be all according to God; but here it is in confusion, and in every kind of moral anomaly. “He also shall be my salvation” —he has no doubt about that— “for an hypocrite shall not come before him.” He was very far from that. I do not say that they were hypocrites; but certainly they talked very badly, for men of piety, to Job. “Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.” That is, it was a relief to him, in the agony that he was passing through, to speak out; and all he wanted was to be put right if he was wrong. He says now, “Only do not two things unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee. Withdraw thine hand far from me” —the outward thing “and let not thy dread” —the inward— “make me afraid: then call thou, and I will answer” —and so he did— “or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and sins?”

Did he say that there was no sin in him? He never said anything of the kind; he never had the presumption to say, “I am clean in thine eyes.” No, no, far from it. Unfortunately he had rather rested in his cleanness in his own eyes, and in the eyes of other people; but he had to learn that it was a very different thing to be clean in God's eyes. He begins to learn that more and more deeply. “Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?” Was that a person pretending to any strength? “And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth” —it may be that they are coming upon me now. “Thou putttest my feet also in the stocks” —you make me an object of shame before everybody— “and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.” That might have been thought to be hidden— “the heels of my feet”; but no, everything is marked. “And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.”

Now we come to a very remarkable chapter (14.). Here we find how far were people, in those days even, ignorant as they were, from confounding the resurrection of the unjust with that of the just. This chapter brings in man raised from the grave. I would not say from the dead. Resurrection from the dead means some raised and others left. Resurrection from the grave will be true after all the saints are raised, and there remain only the wicked to be raised. That will be the resurrection from the grave, but not from the dead (for from the dead allows that others remain), there will be none left at that time. There are two resurrections. What is called in the common creeds of Christendom the “general resurrection” is a figment; it has no foundation in scripture. It is entirely opposed to the plainest words of God. Now you have in this world the righteous and the wicked all confused together. The tares are growing with the wheat. But that is only till the judgment come; that is only till the Lord come. And when the Lord comes there will be the separation of the righteous called not only from the dead (other dead being left in their graves), but to heaven where He is now. They are going to be like Himself— “the resurrection of the just.” But there remains the great mass of mankind; and that is what Job describes in this chapter. I shall have little more to show, if God will, next Wednesday, about “the resurrection of the just”; but here is the resurrection of the unjust. And therefore you observe how beautifully the language suits. “Man that is born of a

woman” —not a word about anyone that is born of God. Those that are born of God will be the righteous. But “man that is born of a woman” (and all are) “is of few days” —it looks at man since the fall— “and full of trouble.”

Now, if you are speaking of those that are born of God, is that all you could say? Surely not! To depart is no doubt gain, but to live is well worth while; particularly when Christ is the object; and such can say in their measure, in spite of all their weaknesses and all their faults, “To me to live is Christ.” Yes, it is full of blessing; but here it is merely man born of woman, never born of God—not yet, till we come to a later chapter—not one of these is supposed to be born of God. “He cometh forth like a flower” —for they are all pretty much the same when they are born, so far like a flower—no doubt, an interesting object, but how soon developed and made perfectly plain. “He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.” You know very well—we all know—that there is great mortality among the children; it is particularly there that we have death so frequent.

“And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.” It does not mean, “not one person,” but “not one thing.” I merely make that remark in order that it may be understood. “Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.” It is all therefore an uncertainty—a precarious condition as far as man is concerned—but all settled of God.

“Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away.” There is no hope for him for this earthly life; he dies and is done with. A plant on the contrary may be brought down to the worst and nothing appear, and yet it may shoot up again, particularly if there is water to help it. “Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth, and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not.” There people very often stop, but not so the Spirit of God here by Job. For it is plain here he really does say what Scripture fully warrants— “till the heavens be no more.” A very remarkable expression. It might have been thought to be—and that we could easily understand as a natural thing— “till the earth be no more”; but man lives and dies, and does not rise—not till the earth be no more, but— “till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.”

Surely, what is here said is very striking, that even man without God—man who is only born of woman, and not of God—man is to sleep till the heavens be no more. Now take the last Book of the New Testament. In the 20th chapter of the Revelation you find that, after the last outbreak of the world and the external nations of the world in the millennium, all that are not converted during the millennium will fall victims to Satan, after his release from the abyss, and they will all be rallied by him against Jerusalem on earth. (They cannot touch Jerusalem above, the holy city.) And not merely that, but “the camp of the saints about” —another striking thing. Why is there a camp of the saints around Jerusalem at that time? Has Satan gathered all the outside nations for one great effort to destroy the righteous that will then be on the earth? All the righteous flow up to Jerusalem, and as it will be entirely beyond the capacity of that Jerusalem to take in the saints from every

quarter of the world, they will make a vast encampment round the “beloved city,” and that will be the great mark for Satan. Against that he thinks to hurl his battalions—all the rebels of the millennium on earth. And what happens then? Fire comes down from God and destroys them all. And what then? Satan is cast at last into the lake of fire. There is to be no temptation more; everything is going to be changed now. It is not merely that he is bound—he is cast into the lake of fire. There is no use which God can put him to; he is now to be punished forever. And that is not all.

Heaven and earth flee away. And as the fire had consumed these wicked nations, they now are raised from the dead, and not only they, but all the wicked since the world began. This is the resurrection of the unjust, and they will all be in one company, and without one righteous person. You may ask what is to become of the righteous. Oh, they are translated, just as we are at the coming of the Lord for us before the millennium. They will be with the Lord. They are not spoken of; there is no need to speak about it. They were never promised to sit upon the throne; we were. They had their comfort all the time of their righteousness. They will enjoy nothing but comfort; and, consequently, as they never suffered with Christ, they are not to be glorified with Him. Nevertheless, they are to be raised, or as I should rather say, they are to be changed, because they do not die. But they will no doubt be changed.

That great principle of change will apply to all that are found alive—all the saints on the earth at that time. And we do find them in the next chapter. “The tabernacle of God is with men.” There they are the men; they are not the tabernacle. The tabernacle of God are the glorified saints; are those that had been already with Him and reigning—all those that were His, and they are particularly, as far as I know, the church. I do not know that one could predicate it properly of any but the church. Still, all the others will be blessed throughout all eternity. But the tabernacle of God is with men, and I presume that these men that are spoken of are the saints that are transported from the earth into the “new earth.” You may ask me, How and why? I say, God does not tell us, and I cannot tell you, beyond that I know it will be; and we are all bound to believe that it will be, because the word of God says so. So that there is the tabernacle of God quite distinct. And now when they are all in this city, fit for all eternity, the tabernacle of God, instead of being up in the air, comes down. It is not that it mingles with the other, but there it is. It deigns to be in the midst; God Himself is there, and all those that are in especial nearness to God will be there; but all the blessed inhabitants of the millennial earth will be there as the men with whom that tabernacle shall then be.

So that nothing can be plainer than how this coalesces with the words of Job. The wicked lie in the grave till the very end of the earth. Not merely the end of the age, but the absolute end, not only of the earth, but, of the heavens; and therefore it is said “till the heavens be no more.” For it might be thought that at the beginning of the millennium the earth sustains a very great change, and so it does. But it is not then; it is “till the heavens be no more,” and that will never be till the absolute end of all the dispensations of God; and then it is that the wicked from the beginning and up to the end of the millennium will be all raised for judgment. And this entirely agrees with the 5th of John. You recollect that very remarkable drawing out of the grand principle of life and judgment by our Lord Jesus. He is the source of life, and He is the executor of judgment. In giving life He had communion with His Father. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” But He, and He alone, will judge the dead. And in effect He carries on the judgment of the living also, the “quick” or “alive.” But at this time all His enemies will

be dead; all the wicked from the beginning of the world; and they will be sentenced therefore to that which lasts when the world is no more, when there is nothing but the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. They will meet their doom then. And it is lovely, it appears to me, that God should bring those that He loves into their blessing, long before those that are accursed meet their doom, and they will all meet this doom together.

Speaking now of those that are left when the Lord comes for His saints, there will, of course, be great executions of judgment; but then they remain (as a general law) till the end of all—till the thousand years are over, and the heavens and the earth that now are, are completely changed. I would therefore leave this with you as showing how Job had a very good inkling of this blessed truth—much more than the theologians have now-a-days. In general they are all partners in error, no matter who they may be. They may be Established or non-Established; they may be what they call the Free Churches; or they may be Ritualist or Roman Catholics, or anything; but they are all agreed in that great error; they jumble together both the righteous and the unrighteous in what they call one general judgment—a general resurrection—a thing that is entirely without one single scripture to justify it. Nay, more—that is condemned by all the light of the word of God, both Old Testament and New.

Now, I need not say much more; for Job turns from this very solemn scene that is before his mind to call upon the Lord, and says, “Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” His heart is beginning to get a little courage. “For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. And surely the mountain falling, cometh to naught, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.” But the Lord does not leave Job until he sees that he was not merely man looking up to God, but a man knowing God's love that was taking him up and chastising him in order that he might be blessed more than ever he had been before. That is the great object of the Book of Job. [W. K.]

## Lectures on Job 15-19

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### Lect. 5-Chaps. 15-19

In this 15th chapter we have the second debate between Job's friends and himself. I shall take a view of the greater part of it, if the Lord will, in a general way tonight.

Although Eliphaz was the more grave and solid of his friends, they were all infected with the same fundamental mistake. That is an important thing for our souls. We are so apt to think that we never make any important mistake. Why should that be so? Are we so different from others? Are we not very liable to it? You must remember that this is a practical mistake; it is not merely a dogmatic one. There is no question of false doctrine of any kind here; but it is the application of truth to the soul; and it is of great moment to us that God has given us a very early book—Moses probably the writer of it; but the persons concerned are considerably before Moses. We see that from the very age of Job, and from all the circumstances.

There is no reference to the law of Israel; no reference to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt; it always speaks of a particularly early time. Its great point is the dealings of God with man, and particularly with men of faith. It is not merely unbelieving man; with him it is always pretty much the same thing. His guilt may be aggravated; and, indeed, I have no doubt that there is no man now so responsible as those that hear the gospel—those that have Christianity in a living way presented to them. They are far more guilty and more to be pitied in one way than even the wild Tartars, or the subjects of that kingdom (Thibet) that seems now [1903] about to be penetrated—that practically shut up and sealed kingdom which now is about to be opened, as far as we can see; surely a rather solemn consideration; for it would be hard to find another. No doubt, in the wilds and center of Africa there may be many tribes that are unknown; but this is a very old civilization; and its rulers have managed to completely block out light from every source—to pursue their own devices to their own destruction. But God will not allow it to proceed further; and although we cannot look for much in the present state, many may go there as a matter of commerce, or a matter perhaps of politics, or a matter of ambition of one kind or another—still there may be children of God mixed up with them, and these, at any rate, can give a message from Christ.

However that may be, what I am drawing attention to is the interesting character of this book as the revelation to us now (and, of course, to the Old Testament saints long before us) of how God deals with pious men, and that for their souls' good, before there is any written revelation of God. For this is one of the very first books that ever were written, as I have previously remarked. Sometimes people forget that although Job appears far down in the Bible, it is the first book of a poetic character; the prose books all come before Job, carrying you down past the captivity to Babylon, and then returning from it; and then we go back to the poetic books, and the Book of Job is the first one. It answers, therefore, very much to Genesis; what Genesis is in the first portion of the Bible, Job is in the second. Then we have the Prophets; but it is the first of the poetic books that are not the Prophets.

Now as to the attack—for we cannot call it anything else that is a serious thing. It is not merely in modern times that Christians have their differences. We see it is here radical—it belongs to the human spirit, and it may have a very good source; because we are, as no doubt Old Testament saints found themselves too, instinctively caring for one another. These friends of Job were exceedingly troubled as to the man to whom they had all looked up, and he was considered the most righteous of all men within their scope; and no wonder, God pronounced him so. They did not know that. It is a most important thing to make this remark, that we are in a very different position, for hearing all these debates, from Job himself. How little did Job know that all that came upon him was in consequence of what passed in the presence of God in heaven!—everything spoken in heaven about the child of God, even the trials! This was to be a peculiar trial, but it was all settled there; Job knew nothing about it. The raid of these Chaldeans, and those we call “Bedouins,” and the like—all that was merely natural; and, no doubt, the tendency was to regard it merely as the trials of a righteous man and his family from natural causes.

No, beloved friends; it is not a mere natural cause to the believer; he is under the eye of God. He was so always; still more so now. Now we are brought into known relationship with God, and into the nearest relationship with God. We are put in the place of His own family; we are His own children, yea, sons of God, for this latter speaks of a dignity before others; that is to say, we are no longer novices, no longer babes in the nursery, as was the case with believers in the Jewish system. They had not arrived at age. The Christian now, if he knows what it is to be a Christian (a great many, alas! do not know, for they think themselves very much like believers of old, but that is a mistake), has far superior privileges; and it is one of the great means of Satan's hindering, to lead people not to understand the place they are brought into, and, consequently, their responsibility. However that may be, here we have these undoubted saints that were all at sea in regard to this terrible calamity, this blow after blow, tempest after tempest which blew away everything in which Job had once been so favored. For God has pleasure in blessing His people not merely in spiritual things, but where we can bear it. You remember that word of the apostle John, where he wishes that Gaius might prosper as his soul prospered. If the soul does not prosper, adversity comes as a great mercy; but where the soul prospers we may be allowed to feel, and God has pleasure in showing, His goodness in everything—in family circumstances, yea, in everything, if it be for His glory. He is the judge of that. But there are continually things that, in the wisdom of God, are forbidden in this way or that way.

However, I do not go into that now; but here we have the fact that the two things perfectly coalesced in Job—that there was not a man upon earth that God had such pleasure in looking upon as Job, and yet such a man passing through deepest trial from God. It is a great difficulty with the Jews; they cannot understand it. They want to make out that Job was an imaginary being, because it seems so strange to them that after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there should be a man outside Israel altogether that God had such a high opinion of—and he not a Jew! Yes. So there it was a great blow to their pride and their narrowness. Yet were they not all in fact outsiders? They would seem to have been in the Abrahamic line in one way; but they were not in the chosen line. You know that Abraham had other children; and they would appear to have been sprung from an Abrahamic line, but outside that particular covenant; and we have no reason to suppose that they had the sign and seal of that covenant which, of course, the Israelites have.

No; the point is God dealing with “man,” and with man's heart and conscience. And what is more, it was not because of any particular evil. There was the radical mistake of Eliphaz which runs through his speech that I have just read to-night. He cannot rise above the thought that Job had seemed everything that was beautiful to our eyes and everybody's eyes, and he was blessed of God in an extraordinary manner. For he was, as is said, the greatest man in that part of the East. And now this utter reverse! this casting him down from what seemed his excellency! How could it be but that, as God is a righteous God, there must be some terrible iniquity there? So he also felt that if there was an iniquity, Job must be conscious of it; and yet not a word from Job! Not a sign that he was ashamed of himself, or that he had anything to be judged! There was fault in Job; but not the least of the kind they expected. The fault in Job was this, that Job had a good opinion of himself, and that Job had great pleasure in everybody's so highly respecting him. I wonder whether any of us have got that? I am afraid it is a very common thing. And there is just what people do not find out. They do not learn; they so little understand this wonderful mirror of the word of God. They do not understand that here is their own case.

However, I perhaps anticipate. But we find how very strong is the outburst of Eliphaz—a mild, grave, and serious man—for this he undoubtedly was. There is no need of our running down the three friends as if they were something very uncommon. They were very common indeed. Job rather was uncommon, and decidedly uncommon; and that is what made the example of Job so very pertinent to the object of God—that a man might be spotless in his way, that a man might be justly respected, but that when the man that is pious, God—fearing, prayerful, and one so loved and valued and cried up as Job was—when he accepts it as his due, and has great pleasure in it, God is a jealous God, and will not allow that. And why not? Man is a sinner. And Job, even though he was now a believer, had sin in him, and self-judgment was wanting. If self-judgment had been duly exercised, Job would not have needed this trial. And there is another thing too; that when God does send a trial, the great call of man is to submit to it without a doubt, without a question, giving God credit for it that there is no undue severity. Now, on the contrary, Job felt a very great deal about it, and found fault with God, and thought that God was dealing very hardly indeed with him.

Thus it is that the way in which this book has been sometimes treated for 1,500 years (perhaps more) is an entire fallacy.

What I refer to is this: that Job was considered to be a kind of type of Christ in his suffering. Nothing of the sort. Quite the reverse. Look, for instance, at the 38th and 39th Psalms. There you have not exactly Christ personally, but the spirit of Christ in the Israelite, and this will be accomplished in the future day, when there will be a remnant of Jews thoroughly marked by the spirit of Christ, which will follow after we are taken out of the way to heaven. They will pass through tremendous trial, and the remnant will have that spirit of Christ. Those Psalms are prophetically written for them. No doubt all was written for us. All the Bible was written for the Christian, and for his use, blessing and enjoyment. But it is not all about us. This is the mistake that many people make, that because it is all for our good and for our spiritual taste and enjoyment, therefore, we are the persons that are meant in it! Not so. There is just what was falsified—this trying to find the pattern of Christ in it! whereas the very point is the contrast shown by the rebellious spirit of Job. For there is that. He charges God with being his enemy, and with tearing him to pieces and casting him down, making him to be an object of mockery for everybody. Job imputes to God. Well, no doubt God had allowed all this to come to pass; it could not have been without it. But it was not

God's, it was Job's own mistake; and it was Job also that had the most agonizing sense of that, because he could not bear the shame of his friends coming. He bore it all beautifully till his friends dawned upon the scene. A man when alone can bear; but when there are people that show no sympathy and no understanding, he breaks loose and lets out, and flings very improper language about his friends—perhaps they deserved it, but certainly, certainly not God. And his friends were alive to that. They could see that he spoke improperly about God; so that he put himself quite in the wrong there.

“Should a wise man utter vain knowledge,” for they were quite aware that there was something very able in what Job said—they called that vain knowledge— “and fill his belly with the east wind?” No doubt he was exceedingly wrong. “Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.” Now he did nothing of the kind; Job always clung to God, always looked up to God, but he said, “I cannot find Him; He has shut me out, occupying me with this agony that I am passing through, so that I cannot get at Him. I know if I could only get there I should find goodness and mercy.” It was no doubt very inconsistent; but that is always the case with poor man when he is not in the presence of God. That was one of the grand points that all had. Job was living, for a man of faith, too much in the good opinion of other people as well. as in his own good opinion. There is where he was quite wrong. And there is where Christ and Christianity puts us in our true place if we are faithful—which is, that we have to face a hostile world; that we have to face not only a hostile world, but even, it may be, fellow Christians, who, if they are not faithful, are mad against any people that are; because it rebukes themselves. We have to bear that, and consequently here we are now in the truth of things suffering with Christ. That is what Christ suffered.

I am not speaking now of suffering for Christ. Suffering for Christ is where there is a decided break made. Perhaps we are cast into prison falsely, or it may be transported falsely, or executed falsely as martyrs and the like—that is suffering for Christ. But there is another kind of suffering that belongs to the Christian—suffering with Christ. For instance, suppose that there was a royal princess of England that was truly brought to God, and who entered really into the place of the Christian—why, what would be the case of that young princess? Always suffering. Why? Because everything that surrounded her would be contrary to what belonged to her soul and to her position. Why so? Because it is of the world, and of the world in its grandest shape, and consequently it would mark the contrariety. What is the place of the Christian? He is not of the world. How far not of the world? Why, like Christ. What did Christ do with the world? Where did Christ ever contribute one iota to what the world likes and values? Christ appeared to be the most useless of men for the world. He never made a speech upon science; He never contributed one, lesson in learning or literature. He never gave a vote—if I may speak of voting or anything of that kind. He never did the slightest thing of that nature; He would not even judge a case, or arbitrate even when they wanted Him to judge in that informal way; consequently, there never was a person more completely outside the world while passing through it. That is where the Christian is. I say, therefore, that the higher you are up in the world the more you find the difficulty of being faithful. And that is suffering with Christ, where you feel it. There are some people who get through things easily. That is not to be admired; it is a kind of opiate—continually dramming oneself with opiates to drown feeling, and take everything quite comfortably, no matter what it is, and entirely losing sight of the fact that we do not belong to these things in which we take part.

Oh, beloved friends, that is not the way. Our call is to take part actively for Christ and according to Christ. Our call is to entire separation to the Lord. Supposing that there was a house on fire next door; it would be our business to immediately do all we could to help and save both life and property. That is not worldly; but it would be worldly to go into the Court and fight for our rights or to refuse to pay our dues if we are called upon to do so. All that is not only worldly, but it is rebellious. I know what they call themselves—“Passive Resisters”—but I do not understand that language. They are active resisters of the law; and if they had any sense of propriety they would pay their money quietly, or let people take their goods quietly, and so make an end. I only mention it now to show how completely God's children have lost the sense of what it is to be a Christian. I am speaking now practically. I might go further. I maintain that Christians have lost the doctrine of what a Christian is. It is not that there is a certain blessed standard that we all acknowledge to be what a Christian is, and that we fall short, practically. I believe it will be found that they are as wrong about the standard as they are about the practice; and one thing I can say for myself, honestly and truly, that what has occupied me all my life, is cleaving to what I have found to be the Christian pathway and duty, and seeking to help others to see the truth and blessedness of it, and to act faithfully according to it. I am sure I have plenty to judge myself for; but I thank God for every trial and everything that has made nothing of me. And that is just what Job had to learn as to himself. He did not know that God was working all this for Job's own great good, even allowing also what was most repulsive to God—the disease, and the sweeping away of his family. This was all the devil's doing; but God allowed it for Job's good, and Job had not an idea of all that. If Job had understood the end that was coming, and had understood the beginning which was before all the trial, he would have lost a great deal of the blessing, and why? Because, then, as now, the child of God is to walk by faith.

People like to walk by sight, and that was the great fallacy that lay under all the speeches of these three friends. They looked at Job; they looked at what he was; and they look at what he now is in all this terrible crushing to the dust, and they said in effect, “Well, God is a righteous God, and if there were not some dreadful thing behind all this, God would never have allowed it.” They were completely wrong, and Job was thoroughly right in saying, “No, I know it is not so, and all your talk cannot get rid of the fact that you have most wicked men that are most flourishing, and you have pious men that are exceedingly suffering, in the world as it is now.” How is that? Because Satan is actively working here; because Satan is the one that men follow without knowing. They are slaves and captives of the devil; and those that are not slaves of the devil are the objects of his vengeance and hatred. God does not remove that; He does not put down Satan yet; he is allowed his way. And there never was a greater proof of it than his leading the world and the Jewish people to crucify their own Messiah, the Lord of glory. Was there any fault here? Here you have the crucial proof. Here was the absolutely sinless One and never such a sufferer. The whole theory, then, of the three friends was a falsehood from beginning to end. Yet it is exactly what most people think to this day. They have an idea that there must be something very wrong where they see people passing through exceeding deep waters. Now there was something that Job had not got, and that was to measure himself in the presence of God; and God never stopped till He brought him into His presence. He interfered in the most remarkable way; but I must not anticipate. Eliphaz, after having let out strongly at Job, now falls back upon what was a very common feeling, especially of the former. Eliphaz was a man that strongly stood for the great value of experience. You know there are people that are very strong for experience, and accordingly, as to the great

and good men that have been before—is that a standard? No one denies the honor due to elders, at least no person with any propriety. But Eliphaz used it in a wrong manner, and told Job, “Why, you are going against everything that has been held by the best of men that have ever been. Are you the first man; are you as old as the hills when you talk in such a manner as this, as if you knew better than any of these most excellent men, older than your father? and you set up in this way.” Well, he carries on that for some time, and he comes to this; what it must be. “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? I will show thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare.” He meant Job particularly there. “I will show thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare, which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it.” He looks therefore at old experience, and of the best of men, when men were not so bad as they were in his time. For that is quite true; man does get worse and worse, and even he had remarked it.

A famous poet that I used to read as a boy—a heathen poet—says the very same thing, that no generation had been so bad as the present one, which is going to bear children that will be worse than their fathers. At any rate they are not so bad as the people who think the world is going to get better, for these are most deplorably wrong. There will be a great change; but what will bring in that change will not be preachers, nor tracts, nor books, nor education; nay, not even the Bible, although that is the word of God. But the Bible demands more than this. It requires that men be born of God; and even in the case of people that are born of God they are called to judge themselves, just like Job, the very best of them. That is what he was brought to, and what he was most slow to come to. Therefore all this reasoning was entirely out of place, and the larger part of the chapter is description, that when a man is carrying on in this way it must be that he is always in dread of what is coming. Eliphaz was wrong about that. Job had no such thought. Job was quite sure if he could only find God that all would be right, and that He would speak to him, and God would do all that was good. But he knew that somehow or other God was dealing, in allowing all these terrible things to happen to him; why he did not know, and for what end he did not know.

Now we come to Job's answer (chap. 16). I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end? Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest? I also could speak as ye do. If your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged.” And no doubt Job spoke perfectly truly. He would have been a comforter of sorrow; he would not have been a physician without any medicine. They brought poison into his wounds instead of something to assuage. He said, “I have been pouring out my sorrow, but I am no better for it” — “Thou hast made desolate all my company. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles.” He now speaks of his own person too. “He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me.” He does not say it was God. I think it is rather too much to suppose that he means that; but he does mean that God allowed it; and therefore, in a euphemistic way he says “He.” But it was God allowing the devil to do it—his enemy—otherwise it would be a dreadful inconsistency with the rest of his language which we are not bound to carry out to more than a superficial inconsistency; it is not radical. “God hath delivered me to the ungodly” —and he in the most graphic manner describes his intense affliction. But now (ver. 17), we find Job in the midst of this making complaint as to prayer being restrained. “Not for any injustice in mine hands” —that he could say truly. It was not a question of injustice; it was a

question of Job's too great complacency in himself. "Also my prayer is pure. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place." He regards himself as if he were a victim to all this enmity that is shown him." Also now, "behold, my witness is in heaven." You do not find the others saying that. They did not know as much about heaven as Job; they did not know God as Job did—not one of the three. "My record is on high." It is the beginning of a little light that is piercing through the clouds. "My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor!" How the heart of Job was made to pine for the very thing that Christ must do!

In the 17th chapter Job carries on, and goes back to his dreadful condition. It was not yet a settled thing; it was merely a gleam. "My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. Are there not mockers with me?"—surely there were three of them—"and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?" If that was the case with these three men who had been his friends, what was the feeling of all the people round about that knew? You may depend upon it, it would be quite as bad as that of the three friends, or worse. We must not suppose it is limited to them. It is the natural conclusion of the natural mind, working upon this thought, that God's moral government is exact now, instead of knowing that God on the contrary, is waiting for His direct government, when Christ, who alone is capable of holding the reins and of governing, shall rule. Therefore, even when the church was formed, the church was perfectly incapable of judging the world; and of this Popery is a clear instance. There they have tried to govern the world, and what are they? Why, the most abominable thing in the eye of God on the earth. There is nothing more wicked than Popery. You may tell me about all the horrors of heathenism and Buddhism. Yes, but they do not mix up Christ, or Peter, or Paul, and all the rest. The Papists know enough of Christianity to make them verily guilty. It is a great deal more wicked idolatry to worship the Virgin Mary than to worship Juno or Venus; because the one was pure ignorance under the darkness of the devil, and the other is worshipping Mary after Christ came—after the true light shone. There is nothing more guilty than what people call Christian Idolatry. Worshipping the Mass—what is that? That is not confined to Papists now; now it is unblushingly done—I will not say by Protestants, but by people who masquerade as clergymen. Surely that is not too severe an expression for it?—and at the same time they are perfectly in the error of Popery, only they do not yet own the Pope; but they have all the falsehood of it in their souls.

Well, Job bemoans his condition in a very solemn manner, and compares what he once was. "Afore-time I was as a tabret," i.e., "I sounded music, as it were, in the ears of people as I had to do with them." But now a by-word not merely of the three friends, but "of the people!" "Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow. Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. The righteous also"—you see it is turned for good—"shall hold on his way." That is where he looked onward to. His record was on high; his witness was in heaven; he clung to God. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." That was Job's language; that was his spirit. He had far more faith than any one of the three.

Then, in the next chapter (18.) we have another man, Bildad the Shuhite, and he speaks still more violently than Eliphaz, "How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?" He had no feeling for Job whatever; no understanding. "Mark, and afterward we will speak. Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? He teareth himself in his anger; shall the earth be

forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of its place? Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out.” There was a thrust, and a bitter thrust, at poor Job— “and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.” That is what he counted Job. “The steps of his strength shall be straitened and his own counsel shall cast him down. For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare” —a mere dream of his own imagination! And this he pursues to the very end of the chapter. I do not dwell upon it, in order to come to Job's answer. For it was all a mistake.

“Then Job answered and said (chap. 19.), How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.” And now he takes this ground—Be it that I have sinned without knowing; be it that I have done something displeasing to God!— “mine error,” he says, “remaineth with myself. If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach; know now that God hath overthrown me” —that was his faith. He takes it all as from God, without knowing what had taken place in heaven. He was to be made to pass through the deepest trouble; but the man that was to be proverbial for patience broke out in a total impatience. There came about the total failure of even a pious man; not merely of a man; not merely of Adam—for Adam fell; he was not born after Job, but Job was born after Adam; and yet after all, that a man so noted for his patience should fail when he was tried! Ah! in Christ there is the contrast. That is where people are so wrong to make this one the type of Christ. No, it is a specimen failing, and a man born of God failing. We want Christ, and cannot do without Christ. That is the true moral of the Book of Job.

“Know now that God hath overthrown me” —it is perfectly true it must have been God allowing all this. “Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head.” All this he felt very deeply. What right has any believer to a crown now? What right has any believer to glory now? Has he not an evil nature to be judged constantly, every day? Does this deserve a crown? Or a man that has that nature to contend with; does that deserve a crown? The day when we shall be crowned is when we have I nothing but what is of Christ, every bit of the old man completely passed away. There is where Job had much to learn. “He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree. He hath also kindled his wrath against me” —there he was wrong— “and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. His troops come together and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle. He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.” You know what that is to the heart if you have ever tasted it. “My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends” —he now gets closer— “have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.” “I called my servant” —his man, as we call it, or in modern language, his valet — “and he gave me no answer” (vers. 1-20).

How pitiable! He had come down very low to call upon his dear friends to have pity, and they had nothing but bad suspicion which wounded him to the quick. “Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?” Have not I suffered enough to satisfy you? “Oh that my words were,” &c., not exactly, printed in a book—but that they were impressed upon stone, or what-ever might be the way in which writing was accomplished in those days. He refers to a very permanent

form— “That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.” This is a most wonderful expression of faith, and the more so when we compare it with what we had last Wednesday evening in the 14th chapter—the resurrection of “man” —not the resurrection of “the righteous,” but the resurrection of man. Job, you remember, begins, “Man that is born of a woman” —not a word of anyone born of God. Man without God, man without Christ, and what is the end of all that? A tree cut down to the very root may sprout, but not man; and so long will that sleep be that man will not awake—and the resurrection of man will not be— “till the heavens be no more.”

Is that the case with the resurrection of the righteous? No. That is what he says here. He says, “I know that my Kinsman and Redeemer—the One that will avenge the wrongs of God's people on their enemies; the One that will care for them in the face of every difficulty and every enemy—I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter” —He “the last” is probably the meaning of it, not “at the latter day.” He is the One that when all has failed will appear. The First will be the Last, as it were, to take up not “man,” but the saint, the believer. “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter for, last] day” — as “last” is the word— “upon the earth.” This last word is a little stronger too. It is the “dust” — quite a different thing from the heavens being no more. There will be no dust to stand upon then. The heavens and the earth will all be dissolved, and it will be a question of fire destroying everything, as we are told in more scriptures than one, particularly by Peter. Everything will be dissolved—the very elements. There will be no dust at all. But here He will stand upon it; His power may reach it; and it may for aught I know refer to the dust of his people. He is going to raise them. But at any rate the word is rather vague; and we must not expect more than just a little gleam of light made known in those days. It is reserved for Christ to bring out the life of the resurrection.

“And though after my skin worms destroy this [body]” —i.e., after the skin is destroyed—meaning all the frame of the body. It is better to omit than supply the word “body.” “Yet in my flesh shall I see God.” That is, it will be a real resurrection—not indeed “flesh and blood” —but you recollect it was really Himself when Christ rose. He asked them to feel and know that there were flesh and bones, but not “flesh and blood,” which is the natural life of man now. When the resurrection comes there will be still the flesh in a glorious way, and there will be bone in a glorious way; and instead of it being blood as the source of life, it will be spirit; a divine character of existence will then be. While there is life, blood can be shed, and the man dies. The shedding of blood is the great figure of death by violence, and the blessed Lord knew all that, and passed through it all. But risen from the dead, the body possessed is a tangible body and can be felt; and although that need not always be, there is a power of change in this form; and I have no doubt the same thing will be true of every power. But there is the power. Now we are all limited; so limited that even a powerful man can be stopped by an oak board of only an inch, or two, thick. It stops him. And certainly a granite wall could stop anybody. But when that day is come we shall pass through everything just as our Lord did. Our Lord purposely came in when the doors were shut. You may tell me the stone was removed from the sepulcher; but it was not to let the Lord out; it was to let the disciples in to see that He was gone. What is all the thickness of the earth to Him? The glorified, body has a power of its own, and can pass through anything.

This is not the case with man now. He is very limited and feeble; a little thing stops or even kills him. But not so when the body is raised in power and incorruption and glory; and here then the

Lord comes to claim, and stand upon, the dust as it were. That is the figure, of course, of dealing with the lower state. The body is destroyed; not merely the skin, but everything belonging to man in the natural state. But what then? "Yet in my flesh shall I see God?" Job was to be raised and live again, and to live in a glorious way, and in the way of power and incorruption. "Whom I shall see for myself." Ah, he was not in the least afraid of the Lord. He loved to think of Him, and looked for His intervention with certainty. "And mine eyes shall behold, and not another." What a contrast with Balaam! Balaam could not see except prophetically, but not for himself. He had no part nor lot. But Job, with every part and lot, knew it perfectly. "Though my reins be consumed within me." That will not hinder it at all.

So then you see this was a resurrection of the righteous; it is before the heavens are no more. And though the earth subsists, it will, when it is in a state of ruin, give place to a complete change—not only one affecting the condition of the bodies of the millennial saints, but also the earth itself. All creation meanwhile awaits its deliverance from the bondage of corruption from which it now suffers. And Christ will accomplish it, for this will be His work. No one need wonder, therefore, that when that day comes, there will be righteous government on the earth. No one need wonder that then Satan will be allowed no power. He will be shut up, and not be allowed to deceive another moment until the end of the thousand years, and then it will be to act as a kind of sieve, to separate those that are not born of God from those that are. He will be allowed to do that, and then will be cast into the lake of fire forever. But the righteous will have been reigning for a thousand years before, while the earth still goes on. You see the great force of it there, and of the Lord coming upon that earth in a state as low as it can possibly be reduced to under the power of Satan, just before He comes and delivers it. Oh, may our hearts rest upon Him entirely, beloved brethren. Let us cleave to the Lord now; and let us remember that the Lord is served and magnified by simple faith day by day, having to do with Himself about each thing, and with implicit trust in Him, and judgment of ourselves. Amen. [W.K.]

## Lectures on Job 20-23

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Chap. 20. Job was not a wicked man. There was the great error of Zophar—of this hasty and violent man; for evidently this was particularly his character. He was not so much looking at the long experience of Eliphaz. That was his point—long experience. A valuable thing, but still it may not be the mind of God. It may be right, or it may be wrong; and it was wrong in this case, because Job's trial was altogether peculiar. God had not dealt with any other man in the remarkable way in which Job was tried, and that is the reason why we have a whole book about him—because he was tried so specially. No one save the Lord Jesus was ever tried like Job. The trials of our Lord were far more profound; but in Him there was nothing but perfection, and why? Because, to begin with, there was no sin in Him; there was in Job, and Job did not think about the sin that was in him. Job had no idea of what the New Testament calls “the old man.” He had turned from Satan and from his sins to God; he was a real, true, saint of God. But he had no notion, nor, indeed, had anyone among the Old Testament saints, any definite conception of what our evil nature is. That was a truth that came out after Christ came. It was Christ that made everything clear, and till Christ came things were not plain. There was quite enough light to guide; and for that matter all the three friends were pious men, and Job particularly was; but for all that, Job had to learn that there was that in him which was proud of the effects of faith in his soul. Job had too good an opinion of himself.

This is not a very uncommon thing with a Christian even. I think I know a good many who are not disposed to think very lowly of themselves; but I am quite sure (and I have nothing to boast of myself) I desire to feel thoroughly what I am). Yet I admit we are very often apt to forget it. There was no question of Job's end, no question but that God would receive him, and had already received him in spirit; and therefore there was no fear of death in Job; he looked at it and desired it even; but that would spoil the great lesson. God would allow him to be tried thoroughly, but would not allow Satan so to torment him as to end his life—that would frustrate the lesson he had to learn by agony of suffering and suspicion of his own friends—his dearest friends, those who had most respected him. They all gave him up, and thought there was something very bad behind it—there could not be so much smoke without fire.

That is exactly what people say nowadays when they see anything particular. The eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell must be the worst people in Jerusalem! “Not at all,” said the Lord. God has his own wonderful ways of which we know nothing; but “Except ye repent ye shall all like-wise perish” —by a worse perishing than the fall of a tower upon you. We find how a man was kept—not faultless, far from it—but entirely free from all the hidden evil that was imputed to him because of his terrible suffering, which entirely alienated, therefore, the sympathy of his friends; and instead of getting one grain of sympathy he got a good many tons of scorn, and their suspicion that things were very wrong in him.

This is what entered into all their speeches. And they get worse and worse for a while, and particularly this one. This is the last of Zophar's; he poured it out so strongly, that, somehow or

other, he was afraid to come forward again. We find that Eliphaz and Bildad do follow, and Job disposes of them all. They were completely taken aback by Job's reasoning, and the reason is that there was a truthfulness about Job that was not in them, although a good deal remained for Job to learn. Therefore, in comes Elihu, a new personage in the matter, and after that Jehovah himself. These are facts. This is not an imaginary tale. There was a real person called Job who went through all this trial; and there were these three friends; and there was Elihu too; and, further, Jehovah made His presence and His mind known, and settled the case—brought Job out of all his troubles, and at Job's intercession pardoned the other three for all their bad and groundless ill feeling against Job.

Well now, here Zophar comes forward. "Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste." Yes, and that is just where haste generally lands us. It is easy for those who are not in trouble to speak, and to suspect evil of a man that is in the depths. And that is just what this young man—for he was younger than the others—fell into. "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth" —are you the only man that knows the mind of God? — "that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?" Is that all that Zophar had ever learned? Did he know of no dealings of God for the trial and good of His children here below? Had he no thought of God disciplining us? —even before His proper Fatherly relationship was fully made known and conferred upon us. For now we are brought into that very place of privilege—we are children of God. The Old Testament saints were so, but they did not know it. They were saints of God, and they know very well they were separated to God, and that they were not like the men of the world. They knew that perfectly, and they were waiting for One who would settle all questions and make known all things. Even the woman of Samaria knew that. "When Messias cometh, He will tell us all things." He would clear up all difficulties.

But Zophar had no difficulty at all. That is generally the case with people who know very little; they fancy they know everything. Zophar, therefore, keeps up this—that there is the great fact, there is a righteous God above, and there are un-righteous, wicked people below, and God invariably deals with these wicked people now. That was not true. A large part of the world has always been allowed of God to apparently prosper in their evil, and the reason is that the time of judgment is not yet come. There may be judgments; there may be exceptional dealings with the wicked just as Job's case was a very exceptional dealing in the severity of his trial, and in the manner in which Satan was challenged by God to do his very worst; and God was secretly keeping up Job even when he was finding fault with God and thinking He was very hard upon him to allow all this. But he was kept up not only for his own good, but for ours. Now we have the Book, and are meant to profit by it for ourselves and for other people. "Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet he shall perish forever like his own dung; they which have seen him shall say, where is he?"

Zophar was not at all wanting in power of expression He was what you call an "eloquent" man; in fact, they were all eloquent. They all pleaded their cause with ability—only there was short-sightedness. They had not before them this: that it was out of the goodness of God, and for the blessing of Job himself, that God made Job to recognize his nothingness, and also the evil that was within, which he had never detected to be, as it is, a sin against God, i.e., thinking too well of himself, taking credit for what grace had wrought. For I do not deny that grace had done a good deal for Job. Grace had wrought a fine character, full of benevolence and rectitude of purpose.

Yes, but why did Job dwell upon it, and think so much about it? Why did Job think so much more highly of himself than others? All these things were working in Job's mind, and they must all be brought out. That was a great lesson for Job to learn, and it came out at the very severe cost of Job's trial and suffering. "He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found." That was true of some cases; but where were the eyes, where the discernment of Zophar? and this was all that he saw going on in the world! It was a very narrow way of looking at the dealings of God. "The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him. His children shall seek to please the poor" —he supposes that God would still keep up the family, and would deal with his children—that they would have to restore some of the ill-gotten goods that their father had acquired.

All this was pointed at poor Job, but not a particle of it was real. It was nothing but evil surmises. So, he describes his case in very strong terms, which I need not follow—all his inward trouble, and the being forced to give up what he had swallowed down. "He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter." That is, Zophar recognized that God delights in doing good. Yes, He does; and not merely to the righteous, but to the unthankful and evil. Is it that He has any complacency in them? Quite the contrary, but out of His own goodness, as our Lord put it so simply and so grandly, He causes His sun to shine upon the evil as well as upon the good, and He sends His rain upon the just as well as upon the unjust. Well, before all I say now, he is a most wicked man, the greatest enemy of God alive on the earth, who profits by all these benefits, and never thinks of God at all. There he is, so utterly insensible—more insensible possibly than the brute. There is less gratitude than with even the poor irrational brute who owes his master's kindness and care. This is indeed, an awful thing in a man. You might find men of the greatest education and of the highest ability, who are like a stock or a stone before the goodness of God. That you have now. The New Testament has come in and made it all plain. One word accounts for everything—unbelief.

The beginning of God's goodness in a man is when he comes to the sense of his badness, and that is produced by faith. It is by what God sends. God's word is the foundation and the means by which a man is brought out of darkness into light, and out of death into life eternal. And why? Because the word of God reveals Christ. And the believer receives Christ on God's testimony. Now the great mass of men in our country are rushing either into infidelity or superstition. These are both of them making more progress than the truth, at this present moment. God no doubt converts souls too; but if there are a few souls truly converted, how many go back? and sometimes out of the very families of those that love the Lord! So it has been for hundreds of years. So it was at the beginning; so it is now. Some believe the words that are spoken, and some do not believe them. And as some enter now into endless and eternal blessing, so others will fall into absolute and everlasting ruin.

Here then, we see the all-importance of our getting the mind of God. Neither experience will do, nor tradition. Bildad was as fond of tradition as Eliphaz was of experience; but Zophar, I fancy, was pretty much confident in himself. And this self-confidence is what makes a man still more biased than either the weakness of thinking too much of the wisdom of old age, or of the tradition of the elders before us. No, God will have His own word; and God is honored by our receiving His own word and applying His word, not to other people merely, but, above all, to oneself. Everything issues from this, "I believe." That is exactly where all human knowledge fails. Human

knowledge—science for instance—is entirely founded upon the facts that are before our eyes, or the facts that we gather even if they are invisible to our eyes, that are ascertained through whatever means, sometimes by the microscope, sometimes by the telescope—but however it may be, it is all founded upon what is before man's eyes and before man's mind.

Now the blessing of God is entirely founded upon divine testimony. You honor God by believing God against yourself; by believing God against your sins; by believing God, receiving His testimony about His own Son. But God has love enough in His heart to lay all our case at all costs upon the Lord Jesus; and He has perfectly met all the mind of God about it. That is Christianity now; and this, of course, in Job's days, was yet to be. There was just enough light—a little distant gleam as it were—a rift in the cloud that showed the Messiah that was to come, but that was all. There was a little increase of light in the Psalms, and still more in the Prophets; but the full light was never there till He Himself came. Then it was not merely a gleam; it was not merely a promise; it was Himself. It was the Son of God, and eternal life in the Son of God to be given to everyone who believes in Him. By that I do not mean a mere nominal assent. No, beloved friends, it is always through our conscience that we are brought into the truth. There is no divine link with God unless it be the conscience that acknowledges our sinfulness, and, therefore, casts oneself in faith upon the Lord Jesus.

Well, now, we do not find anything of this in Zophar; it is all looking simply at judging wicked men. The judging of a righteous man never entered his mind, and that was the real question. So he puts to Job the awfulness of what will come to pass upon the man that goes on in his wickedness, and does not allow it, but only is clever in hiding it. And really he had got that in his head about Job, and never could get it out until God brought down everyone of them into the dust, and they were indebted to Job for escaping the severe chastening of God. He finishes, "This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God." Here is not the slightest sense of God having chastening dealings with those that He loves during this time of pilgrimage. Yet this is exactly what God does. This is what He is carrying on today with you and me. The apostle Peter refers to it particularly in the first chapter of his First Epistle, i.e., that after we are born of God we become subjects of the dealings of God as Father. We are judged every man according to his work now. He will not do that by and bye; the future judgment is entirely in the hands of Christ; and it is particularly said that the Father has committed it all to the Son; and it is as the Son, and as the glorified Man too that the Lord will sit upon the Great White Throne, where all the evil of all the unrighteous will be judged finally.

That is the last thing before the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The Father has nothing to do with that; but the Father has everything to do with watching over our faults, with pruning the vine, every branch of the vine, and this is what goes on now. It is the Father who is the husbandman, and He prunes that we may bear more fruit; and if there is no fruit at all, He takes it away.

Job now answers in the twenty-first chapter. "Hear diligently my speech." It was a great relief to the tried man to speak out. He had entirely failed to win their sympathy, but still Job preferred to speak plainly out, and had no difficulty in meeting anything they had to say. "And let this be your consolation. Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on." It was severe, but still it was not more than they deserved. "As for me, is my complaint to man?" In the midst of all

this he has the deep sense of having to do with God, and that is true piety. "And if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?" i.e., I do not understand it; that is the thing that makes it so terrible. "Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth. Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh." And what was it that made him so afraid? Why, he too saw just the very opposite of what Zophar only saw.

Zophar confined himself simply to the particular cases of God's dealing judicially with some specially wicked men. And there are such cases every now and then. A man calls God's name in vain, and swears to a downright falsehood—perhaps theft, or any other breach—and, occasionally, a man drops down dead after it. Well, that is a very unusual thing. Other people swear to it and keep their money, and try to keep their character, but all the while they are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. Now what made Job tremble so when he saw wickedness prosper? As he says here, "Wherefore do the wicked live?" He says—I can understand it so far; I can perfectly understand God casting down wicked men—it is only what they deserve; but it is not the fact, for the great mass of them seem to flourish in their wickedness for the time. "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them." It was not at all passing away like a dream (as Zophar pretended) as a general rule; it was rather the other way. "Their houses are safe from fear." Many a pious man's house is broken into by a robber; many a pious man's house is burnt over his head; and here there might be wicked men of the worst character, and they do not come into these troubles at all!

But there is the awful end that awaits them, the awakening up like the rich man Dives, "in hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Ah! that was a solemn thing, but it was the Lord that gave us that picture. Nobody could speak positively of that till the Lord came. And that is not describing what will be after the resurrection; this is what takes place directly after death. And it was not a wicked man as he appeared in the eyes of the Jews; it was not a man who was a drunkard or a thief, or a robber, or anything of that kind. He was a man highly respected; he was a man characterized by self-indulgence. We do not hear of any swearing; we do not hear of any scoffing. There he was; he acknowledged father Abraham even in the midst of his torments; and the Lord is the One that describes it. Dives is anxious about the souls of his five brethren; he was anxious about them. That is to say, he was a man whom people might consider of high respectability, but there was no faith, no repentance, no looking to God, no waiting for the Messiah. He was quite content to enjoy all his wealth; and, as for poor Lazarus, the dogs might look after him for all he cared about him.

"Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them." Ah! but it will be. "Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf." Everything went flourishing. "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance" —everything prosperous and smiling— "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ." It is rather serious to find all that with such bad company—a solemn check for those that are given up. "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore, they say unto God, Depart from us." Job's words are far more solemn and more true than the violent Zophar had painted. "For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto Him" It is not meant that they say that to man, but that is what their conduct says to God.

Therefore there is great force in what we read: “The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.” Perhaps he never uttered that once in his life, “There is no God,” but it is what his heart says. God reads the language of the heart. And the evil servant says in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming.” Perhaps he preached what people call the “Second Coming”; he may have preached it, but that is what his heart said. He was not really waiting for Christ at all; he was glad that Christ stayed away. There never was such a prayer with him as “Come, Lord Jesus.” So that it is a very solemn thing—the way in which the Lord takes the crafty and reads the heart; and therefore, it is of all importance that we should judge ourselves, and look to the Lord, that we may have Christ Himself before our souls so habitually that we are filled by His mind and directed by His love, and led by the Holy Spirit who gives the needed power and grace to those that look to Christ.

“Lo, their good is not in their hand; the counsel of the wicked is far from me.” Job was farther from these people than his three friends. It is very possible that these three friends liked to be on good terms with people that were so flourishing, for that is a very common snare. People like to be in what they call “good company,” and to be respected by people that are respectable in this life; but where is Christ in all that? Our hearts are called to be with that which Christ values, and with those whom Christ loves. I do not say we are not to have the love of compassion for the very worst of mankind—surely, surely; but this is a different kind of love altogether. It is loving the family of God. This is higher than loving an unconverted wife; higher than loving our children if they are not brought to God. The family of God are nearer to us, and for all eternity, and we are glad to walk in that faith and love now. “How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!” There he allows the other side that they were all harping upon; they only looked at that. “And how oft cometh their destruction upon them!” There were such cases; he had seen and known them, and in no way disputed them.

You see, what Zophar and the others press, was only a half a truth. Now half a truth never sanctifies. What you leave out is perhaps of equal, or, it may be, of still greater importance, and there was just the difference. With all his defect, Job really was cleaving to the truth, and he looked at it with a larger heart and with a more exercised conscience. There are people moralized, or what you call “sermonized”; but this did not come from their souls; it was merely their correct talk according to the thoughts of men. It was not the language really of faith at all. Job's was, in spite of all its defects. “They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction” —he allowed it might run in the family— “and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.” “For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?” i.e., selfishness is at the bottom of all these wicked men that flourish in this world. And even their children are in no way an object to be compared with the number of their own months. That is what they want—to live as long as possible.

“Shall any teach God knowledge?” —now he turns to Him to vindicate him— “seeing he judgeth those that are high. One dieth” —you see he took in the two sides. This very man had spoken of truth being double; but it was all mere talk; it was not put into practice at all. It was a wise saw; it was merely an apophthegm, without being the true expression of his feeling and life. But Job had a reality about him. “Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust” —and the careless world goes to their funeral, and thinks they are both all right, that it is all right with them both. That is what is called “judging with charity”

—charitable judgment! They hope that everybody goes to heaven, unless they are too bad—openly wicked! Now what is the judgment according to God? That if One died for all, then all were dead. That is the state of man. There is no question at all of their state or their end there. And He died for all—all mankind. They are all inexcusable. And the death of Christ makes them in a worse state if they do not believe than if Christ had never come and never died. He died for all, that they which live—ah! there is the difference—they which live—should not any longer live to themselves. That is what they all did. The dead—the spiritually dead—live to nothing but themselves. It might be honor; it might be seeking the applause of mankind and the world; but they live to themselves, not to Him.

But the Christian, the believer, lives to Him who died for us and rose again. That is not said to be for all. The resurrection of the Lord is the pledge that He will be by and by the Judge of those that do not believe. The resurrection to the believer is the sign-witness on God's part that his sins are all blotted out. For the One that became responsible for his sins went down into the grave, and God has raised Him up to show us that our sins are gone. It was for all that believe, and for none others. And what for the others? The risen Man is the One that will judge all. That is what the apostle declared to the Athenians. They were not believers, and therefore he does not speak of any being justified; but he tells them that the resurrection of the Lord is the proof and pledge which God has given that He is going to judge all the habitable world by that Man whom He has raised from the dead. What makes it so solemn is that it was man that put Him in the grave; it was man that slew Him. It was God that raised Him up. And that risen Man will judge them, all that are found alive—all the habitable world. It is not here the White Throne judgment; it is the Lord judging the habitable world when He comes again in the clouds of heaven. He does not speak here about taking up all that are Christ's, but of His coming down in judgment upon all that are not Christ's.

“Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me.” Here you see he is now returning to their fault through this narrowness of their view, and the impropriety of allowing people to surmise evil without the slightest ground in fact for it. No, we are called upon to live what we know; we are called upon to speak when we do know; but where we do not know we look to God. “For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked? Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction?” That is the reason why they flourish now. He laid hold of the great truth morally in a very admirable manner. “They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.” Not a question of now! These friends were all looking at the present time as the adequate proof of what God thought about men—that if He thinks we are all walking well we are flourishing, and if we come into trouble it is because we are bad people. That was their theory, an utterly wrong and corrupt theory. “Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done? Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him” —looking at the outward appearance— “and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him. How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?”

Well now, we begin again with Eliphaz (chap. 22.). Eliphaz takes it up, and he says, “Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?” Yes, Eliphaz, but cannot a man please God? It is not for profit that a pious man submits to God, and obeys the word of God, but it is to please Him, and why? Because He loves Him. That is not working for profit.

That is a way in which a Jew did afterwards. “Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous?” Yes, it was. He was quite wrong about it. God was pleased with Job—that very man that they were so insidious against, and against whom they insinuated all kinds of evil. God pointed out, as you remember, at the beginning of the Book, that there was not a man on earth that was all round like His servant Job; and yet there was something there that God meant to bring out, of which Job had no idea, i.e., that he never recognized that it was wrong. “Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for naught” —now come all his evil surmisings once more— “and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink.”

Eliphaz is just imagining what he thinks Job must have done to account for the troubles that he was passing through. “But as for the mighty man, he had the earth” —Job was the mighty man— “and the honorable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. Therefore snares are round about thee.” You see all the reasoning is quite mistaken. “And sudden fear troubleth thee; or darkness, that thou canst not see; and the abundance of waters cover thee, Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know?” That was not what Job said at all, but quite the reverse. “Can he judge through the dark cloud?” Well, un-doubtedly he was not a scoffer. Nothing of the sort. He was a pious, narrow-minded man; and there are plenty of such individuals. “Yet he filled their houses,” &c. (vers. 1-20). There was a little bit of tenderness in his heart toward Job. “Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth.” Eliphaz certainly was nothing like Zophar, nor even Bildad. “And lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up.” And so it was. Little did he know that that return was about to be made manifest, to their shame. “Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and light shall shine upon thy ways” (vers. 21-28). And so it did, in the most marvelous way, and much sooner than Eliphaz expected. “When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. He shall deliver—”

There is a very odd mistake in this verse (30); that word “island” is all wrong. The same word in Hebrew means “island” and also “not.” To give you an instance—take “Ichabod,” there you get the “I” (ee) —used adverbially, meaning “not,” for “Ichabod” means “not glory,” or “inglorious” — “the glory is departed.” This was the name that the poor wife of Phinehas gave, in her dying moments, to the son that was born to her— “Not glory.” Well now, that is the word here; and if you translate it as a negative particle you get the true sense of it— “him that is not innocent.” “Island” only makes nonsense. Nobody could explain it as given in our A.V.; no person has ever done it nor approached it, and it is an astonishing thing that it remains. I believe it is all right in the Revised Version; but it is well worth knowing, because I daresay you have been puzzled to find where “the island of the innocent” came in. You know there is a proud little corner of Europe that calls itself “the Isle of Saints,” but the isle of the innocent is still more extraordinary. There has never been such a thing. Man lost his innocence, and has never recovered it. Man gains holiness by the faith of Christ, but no recovery of innocence; that could not be. “He shall deliver [him, or] those that are not innocent” —that is the point of it.

Yes, and God did that, and who were they? Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They were the people who were “not guiltless”; they were guilty, they were “not innocent.” So that there are two words rather mauled in this version. The real force is, “He shall deliver those that are not guiltless,” and that was verified in the case of Job's three friends, little as Eliphaz expected it. They were treated by God as being guilty towards their dear brother whom they had so misjudged, to whom they had imputed all kinds of hidden evil, and made him a hypocrite as well as a naughty man. And Eliphaz here unconsciously gives utterance to words that came true. We sometimes find that. Words said passingly by a Christian— they had no idea perhaps that they would ever be verified—and yet how often they have been—as I have known frequently, from very simple souls—perhaps only some poor brother that could not write, or from a poor old sister that could do very little except mend stockings.

So here we find these words were true. God has a great deal more to do with any good words which are uttered than we at all realize. Eliphaz, although he was so wrong, was nevertheless, allowed to say words which came true in a marvelous manner about Job himself. “He shall deliver him that is not innocent,” or “not guilt-less” that is the proper word— “and he shall be delivered by the pureness of thine hands.” This was what God compelled these three men to feel—that Job was more righteous than they; that his hands were cleaner than theirs. They had defiled their hands in setting upon Job so foully and so violently; and they owed it to Job that they were spared their lives.

Job answers in the next chapter (23.), and that is all we can look at to-night. “Even today is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him!” Ah! there was a pious heart, although he felt and smarted under his terrible sufferings. He was so preoccupied that he could not find Him yet. He did, however, before long. “That I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.” Now that is what he desired. He was not afraid of what God would say. He was sure to be good, because He loved, and because of what Job knew Him to be. “Will he plead against me with his great power?” That is what they thought. “No,” said he; nothing of the sort; “but he would put [strength] in me.” “Strength” goes a little too far. It is rather, “he would give heed unto me.” “There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered forever from my judge.” I know it would be all right if I could only get a hearing. If I could come close to Him, then He would listen.

“Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; but he knoweth the way that I take.” There, you see, was a heart always turned towards the center of attraction, always to God. He might waver under the affliction—just as you know the needle may be very unsteady for a little; but leave it to rest, and it always turns to the pole. “My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.” He was perfectly conscious of a good conscience. Yet he had nothing at all, and that was what he had to learn. God had to show him; because it was not a question merely of an outward blemish that anyone would notice. This is what people think very proper.

I have been at dying beds of real Christians, and I am sorry to say, the principal thing that I have heard from them has been, "I look back upon my long life of following the Lord Jesus." If Job had said, "I look back upon the tender mercy and the forbearance of God and His continual support when I never deserved it" —oh! that would have been all right. I ought, perhaps, to add that those whom I have heard speak in that way never have heard the gospel in the way which you all are familiar with. Still, I do not doubt that they were Christians, but misled by bad teaching. "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." "But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth." Job allowed His entire supremacy; he allowed His sovereignty in the fullest degree. "For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence." He was troubled that there was something between God and him; something with which God had a question, but what—he did not understand yet. "When I consider, I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me; because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face."

W. K.

## Lectures on Job 24-28

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### Lect. 7 Chaps. 24-28

Chap. 24. This closes the answer of Job to Eliphaz that we began on last Wednesday. Job makes it perfectly clear that all things now are an anomaly that you cannot judge of God's feeling about the prosperity of man here below, for the righteous are often far more tried; and it is no proof of anything wrong on their part, but, on the contrary, God putting them to the test, to manifest that they really are His; consequently, submissiveness of heart is what we are all called to under trial, and to perfect confidence in God. Still, we have an advantage saints of old had not and could not have till Christ came—not merely Christ's work accomplished, but the light of Christ shining. They had not that. It was before the law. Nevertheless, we see clearly that there was light enough for those that looked to God, and that there was darkness unquestionably, just as there is now, for those that have not faith in God. Only, the great profitable lesson of the book is the difference between believers, and why it is. There was a mighty difference between Job and his three friends, and I have endeavored to point out wherein that difference lay. Whatever might be the mistakes of Job, and whatever his irritation at being accounted a hypocrite by his friends (and if we have ever known anything like that we can know the bitterness of it), there is no blow so keen and so deeply felt as that which comes from those who profess to love us. And yet the devil is always working, and trying to set God's children by the ears.

Well, here we find it in a very extreme form. That is the grand difference between the history of Job and that of other men. They only knew it in a measure; but God brought it out in one great display in the case of Job, who was more tried than any other man ever was. I do not mean that Paul and Peter and others may not have had trials of their own kind, and, particularly, their life in their hand. That was not the case with Job. There was no question of life; it was a question of endurance. His life was not to be touched; it would have entirely spoiled the history if Job had died; but God took care that whatever his sufferings might be, he was preserved; and preserved to pass through such a scene as probably was in no other case since the world began, yet turned to incomparable benefit. That was what God was showing.

Satan never does anything for good—always for evil. But in this case Satan had entirely failed, and it was God that wrought, and wrought particularly by the unfaithfulness and the unspirituality of Job's three friends. That is the great moral of the book. It was only then that he began to curse his day—never before. Whatever came from Satan he bore, and bore it with the fullest courage and with all confidence in God. But when his three friends began to insinuate wickedness hidden, and hypocrisy, that was too much for Job; he could not stand it. He broke out therefore into many a word highly unbecoming; but God made all allowance for that, because in the main Job adhered to God, and whatever came, he desired to accept it from God. He could not understand why, but he still cleaved to God. Now he puts the case himself.

“Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do not they that know him see his days?” i.e., there are these times of evil, and how is it that God, who is a moral governor, and who takes

notice of all evil, yea, even the words of people (words reveal the secrets of the heart) how is it that He allows it to pass as He does, and that there is no day of retribution now? Well, we can perfectly answer that—it is all reserved for Christ. The Father will not judge any man; that is not what the Father will do. He is showing love because He is a Father, and showing love because He is God; because God is love just as much as He is light. And therefore it is reserved for Christ, and the reason is plain. Christ was the One whom, without the very slightest reason for it, without a cause, they hated. They hated both Him and the Father; and therefore it is reserved for the Lord Jesus to execute judgment. All judgment is committed to the Son, because He is the Son of man, and as the Son of man He has been hated; His Deity has been denied, and He was accounted as a companion of wicked people. He was accounted as a Samaritan, and to have even a demon. There was nothing too bad for man to say and feel.

And these were not the heathen; the heathen were never so bad as that. It is God's people when in a bad state that are worse than anybody. That is a thing that many cannot understand and do not believe. There they are beating their drums and blowing their trumpets in Christendom as if everything were going on right. Oh, they are ripening for judgment indeed in England. It is not merely in Kamtschatka or in the center of Africa; all that is quite a mistake. The more light there is, if people are not faithful, the worse they are. And therefore our Lord was very clear in showing that the Jews were the people. It was no question of Sodom and Gomorrah. They talked about the horribleness of Sodom and Gomorrah. 'Oh,' said the Lord, 'it is you that are worse than they. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah and Tire'—and all those places that were regarded as peculiarly wicked—'it will be worse for Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum.' Capernaum was the place where He lived. It was accounted His own city in Galilee. What He thought worse was the rejection of all His light and all His love. And therefore the nearer you are to the blessing, if the blessing is not yours the more guilty you are.

But then comes another very important thing, and that is, that unless our self is judged—unless there is continual self-judgment going on day by day, we get hard; we lose the unction of the truth, we lose the power of it in our souls, and thus we may be very self-complacent, because we know that we believe. That is just where the friends of Job were. They were quite comfortable; there was nothing amiss with them; they were all right, but Job I he must be very bad. That was their entire misjudgment. Now Job faces this question—how is it, if the times are so bad, that the day of retribution does not come? We do not see, it. It is coming; it awaits the only One that can perfectly deal with evil.

We are all apt to be very partial. Sometimes there are certain evils very bad in our eyes—man's eyes particularly. Some people are very hard upon drinking. Well, the same people are not at all hard upon covetousness. Nevertheless I suppose there is no one with any judgment but what avows that the spirit of covetousness is far more blinding and injurious to the soul than even the debasement of a man getting tipsy. No doubt a tipsy man is an object of contempt to those that are temperate, and they pass very severe judgment upon him; and there is where the devil attacks them all. 'Oh, no; I never drink; I never touch a drop; I am a good man; and they are very bad, they are very wicked.' Well, I do not at all doubt that they are bad; but I do say other people are worse who have a good opinion of themselves. There is nothing that God has more an abhorrence of than a man who thinks well of himself; for however lofty his thoughts he is nothing but a poor, lost sinner, and if he has not one particular evil he has others perhaps as bad or even worse. I do not

say that to excuse anything.

There are many other ways in which people show that they have nothing in common with the Lord Jesus, and that they have no knowledge of God whatever. But it is the Lord that will be the infallible Judge. It is the Lord that will never swerve to the one side or the other. Everything that is contrary to God will be met solemnly by His judgment another day; and it is because people did not see God in Him, but only a man, that therefore He as a man will be the Judge of all mankind. All judgment is committed to the Son because He is the Son of man. Well now, Job describes these anomalies that are going on now. He says, 'Some remove the landmarks.' That is not at all an uncommon thing. We have the evidence of it all round about us in London now. There are people that have encroached upon—taken the common land of this very Blackheath. There you see in various parts of it there are people that somehow or other have encroached; they have laid hold upon what does not belong to them. But it has gone on so long that the law cannot touch them. There they are in possession; and we know that is a great thing in the eyes of lawyers, although it is quite contrary to law in itself, but still they cannot touch them. And there are all these anomalies constantly going on—even that in the face of all the center of the law; here we have it. If we were in Cornwall or in the south of Ireland nobody would be astonished; there are plenty of anomalies there; but here you have it in London before your eyes.

And so it is too in many other forms besides land grabbing. But this is what is referred to—a very old trick of bad men, and particularly of men of property, particularly of men of rank and the like, because having land it gives them the opportunity of stealing a little more. And so it is with kings. They see there is a nice province just outside France that would make such a good addition to the Empire, and by and bye it is stolen. Well then again, Germany sees that there is a certain part that gives an outlet to the sea that they have not, and they steal that and find a pretext of war in order to take what belongs to Denmark or whatever country it maybe. In that case it was Denmark.

That is in our own day—both of these things. And so it has ever been; and that is in the face not merely of the law, but the gospel; and these things are done by people that go to church or to chapel and the like, and there they are professing Christians. And all that by the very persons who by their position are the guardians of the execution of the law; yet they are the people guilty of all this wickedness.

And the same thing goes on in the lower strata of society. There they are prompted very often by want; but then what is it very often that is the cause of want? Why, for the most part it is dishonesty; it is recklessness as to performance of their duty. They lose their post. They strive to get rich; they take money that does not belong to them, and they come under public judgment. That is going on constantly in the lower just as it is in the higher strata, and the fact of it is, all is wrong, and will be wrong here below till the Lord Jesus is the One that executes judgment and that reigns righteously. Nothing will be passed over; there will be no favoritism, but all will be according to God, and never before. For any measure of peace or quietness or allowance of what people have—to be in their possession peacefully—we have reason to thank God very much indeed. But I am speaking now of looking into things as they really are, and it does not matter what country you take.

We in England think ourselves a very righteous nation, and there are many that think we are, as compared with others; but I have just been referring to things that prove how very hollow all this

pretension to righteousness is. And therefore there is the greatest possible comfort in looking up to God. There there is absolute righteousness, and not only that, but active goodness. There there is God caring for His own. He chastises them because He loves them—where there is something that they do not see; for very often it is that they do not. Sometimes we are buffeted for our faults. That is a thing that ought not to be. We ought to suffer for righteousness rather than for unrighteousness, because “for sins Christ once suffered, Just for unjust,” Who is made infinitely dear to us. But there we come on Christian ground.

Now Job simply takes up the things that are around him. “They violently take away flocks and feed thereof. They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge. They turn the needy out of the way” —these were what you may call the “respectables” of society, the people who had flocks and herds, but they wanted more. “The poor of the earth hide themselves together.” Well, now we see another class; we see the poor and distressed here below. “Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work” —they are the people that have nothing, now the “masses,” that have no skilled work, but that live merely jobbing about, and in all the precariousness and the suffering that this jobbery produces. “As wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey” —before the light, and a prey, because it is not something settled—it is what they can catch. “The wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.”

Think of that the barren sands of the wilderness, that is the only thing, and why? Because they have got no land of their own. “They reap every one his own corn in the field” —that is the corn of the rich man— “and they gather the vintage of the wicked.” Now they are called not “rich” but “wicked.” “They cause the naked to lodge without clothing” —that is what these wicked rich do: They have no pity for them; they make use of them for their work. “They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains” —describing still the indigent class that had scarcely any regular work to do— “and embrace the rock for want of a shelter. They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. They cause him to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry.” There might be a sheaf or two forgotten in the case of harvest, but they have found it out, and they are at them to get back their sheaf. “Which make oil within their walls.” They are employed for their abundance—they make the oil, but they never have a drop of it for themselves— “and tread their wine-presses and suffer thirst.” There is no wine for them. “Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out; yet God layeth not folly to them.” God does not take any notice of it, and the reason is that He is waiting for that day.

Now what a wonderful love it is to the very persons to whom the gospel is preached. It was to the “poor” the gospel was preached; they were peculiarly the object of the Lord Jesus. There never was such a thing before, since the world began. Nobody ever made them his grand object, and that for eternity. But Job could not know anything of that. “They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.” Then he describes a still worse class. That is a man—whether higher or lower it does not matter—a man of violence, the murderer. The man who has got his quarrel, and the man that nothing will satiate but the life of his victim. “The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief” —who will be ashamed to show that he was robbing the poor. “The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me” the corrupt man—violence and corruption, the

two great characteristics of human evil— “and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through the houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time; they know not the light. For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.” They cannot bear to be known, what they are and what they seek. There he pursues this terrible picture down to the end of the chapter, showing that there is an internal misery and a consciousness of guilt—for that was a very wonderful working of God.

When man was first created, he did not know anything about good and evil. He did not know the difference between them, because no such thing here existed. He was made perfectly without any evil. There was no evil in man when God sent him forth from His hand. But directly he fell into sin he acquired the power of judging what was wrong, and what was right in itself. That is conscience. There was no need of conscience judging of what was right and wrong when all was good; but directly man fell, he began to judge good and evil. That is what God does perfectly— man does it in an unhappy, miserable way. It is because he knows of what is within that he detects it without, and pronounces judgment, but man is none the better. Now when man is unconverted, he goes on in that kind of misery, and his use of good and evil is this—there are other men he considers as bad as, or worse than, himself, and he excuses himself on that ground, and so he goes on. But when a man is converted conscience turns its eye upon himself. That is the reason why repentance is indelibly and from the very beginning bound up with the believer in Christ. Faith and repentance go together, and the fact of our receiving Christ makes us judge self, and not merely to spot other people's evil or excuse ourselves.

You see it in the poor tax-gatherer. When the Pharisee was saying, “God, I thank Thee I am not like other men; I am a better man; I do not drink; I do not swear; I do not go to gamble or anything of that kind; no, I am a good man, much better than other people” —there was the poor tax-gatherer, to whose soul God had spoken, and who, instead of looking to find other people as bad or worse, can only say, “God be merciful to me the sinner!” It is not merely “to me a sinner.” For many, many years I have been struck with the great beauty of that expression. “God be merciful to me the sinner, if ever there was one. I know my sins and they are so over-whelming I do not think about others. God be merciful to me the sinner; me only.” That man went down justified rather than the other. It is not what is called “justification by faith”; but it was the right thing that always takes place in a converted soul—self-condemnation before God. And it is the light of Christ, somehow entering, that produces that. And therefore now that the work of Christ is done He is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins to every one that looks to Him.

So that repentance is a gracious work; the very opposite of men having a bad conscience. It was man, at any rate, having his conscience set right to condemn himself. He did not know it yet. He did not know his sins gone—that is the consequence of redemption. That could not be till the work of Christ came in. There might be a looking onward to Christ and His work. Some had a confident hope that the Lord would take their sins away; they did not know how. But now the gospel is the proclamation on the part of God of that which clearly explains and fully accounts for it. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.” We are glad to believe that— “from all sin.” If all our sins are not blotted out none of them are. If one sin is gone they are all gone. It is only through Christ, and never does Christ do a thing in a half or niggardly way, as man does. No; it is complete. Here then Job is simply looking at the terrible state of these bad consciences, and then goes on to his death, and there the worms have their feast; that is all he says about it. And if the

wicked are exalted, it is only to go down the more.

Well now we come to Bildad (chap. 25.). And Bildad only barely gives the appearance of a speech. It is a very short one, and it has no kind of application really to Job. They are evidently obliged to give in, and Bildad, the second of them, he it is that now descants upon the glory of God. And it is all perfectly true, and very finely stated too. There is a great deal of what is very beautiful in what Bildad said, only it had no bearing on the matter at all. "Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places." Yes, but what troubled Job was that he had anything but peace in his low place. There he was in this terrible humiliation and suffering, and he could not tell why it was. "Is there any number of his armies?" That is all very true; was that any comfort to Job, or any answer? "And upon whom doth not his light arise?" Well, there might be an implication that Job was all wrong because he did not enjoy the light, and it was not that Bildad did. The fact is that he was quiet; he was entirely without any trial; and he could therefore talk reasonably, and so far quietly; but he had no understanding of Job.

"How then can man be justified with God?" That is exactly what Job had said in the ninth chapter, so that he was only repeating what Job had said a great deal better than he. Job enters into it in a very full manner, and so strongly that he even puts forth the need of a daysman, i.e., a mediator, between God and man. He had far more spiritual light than any of them. "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" That again is what Job had already taught. "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight; how much less man, that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?" That was all true, but had no bearing.

Job answers (chap. 26.), and certainly with quite sufficient keenness, "How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength?" He was like the poor publican, the tax-gatherer. "How hast thou counseled him that hath no wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? To whom hast thou uttered words?" He was talking in the air. "And whose spirit came from thee?" Now he showed that he entered into God's dominion far more fully and extensively than Bildad had admitted. "Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" —a very remarkable anticipation of modern discovery. "He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them"—i.e., whether it be the little rain or the great rain, all is under God's control. "He holdeth back the face of his throne," etc., etc. (vers. 8-13). "Lo, these are parts of his ways" —they are only the fringes of his ways, which would give the idea— "but how little a portion is heard of him?" It is only the whisper that we hear now— "but the thunder of his power" —oh! that is reserved for the day of judgment— "who can understand?"

Well, in the next chapter (27.) would have come the time for Zophar; but although Bildad had very little to say, Zophar had nothing. He is fairly out of the debate; and we shall find that Eliphaz does not return. Job has it now all to himself, and accordingly he gives here what might have been an answer to Zophar, but there was no Zophar to answer—he was silenced. They felt now they were fairly out of court. They began with great vigor; full of confidence that their judgment was a sound one; but Job had completely answered all their foolish talk, and there they were silent. It is not that they were yet convinced that they were wrong; but they do what many people do—they shut up, and have not a word to say, and still are of the same opinion. But God would not allow it to rest

there. God brought them out of their hiding place, and pronounced upon them; and it was through Job, as we shall find by and bye, that they were saved, either from a terrible judgment or death itself.

“Moreover Job continued his parable and said, As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.” He still stands to it that all their imagination was false. He said now more solemnly than ever—it was a kind of swearing to it—As God liveth this is true. “God forbid that I should justify you.” Now he turns upon them; he says “You are the culprits, not I.” “Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” They were, on the contrary, imputing what was very bad to him in most of their speeches. “Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.” That is what he says. ‘It is you that are acting the part of wicked men without knowing it. It is you that are the unrighteous, not I.’ “For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?” It shows that he had a great abhorrence of it—quite as much as or more than they had. “Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?” Here he describes it to the end of the chapter. ‘Do you think I am going to fight against God in that way?’

“Will he delight himself in the Almighty?” That is what Job did. “Will he always call upon God?” He called upon God even in that terrible distress. “I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal. Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are we thus altogether vain?” ‘You know very well that I have been cleaving to God; you have heard my confession, and why do you impute such a thing as hypocrisy?’ “This is the portion of a wicked man with God and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty.” And even if they go on and have their children multiplied, it will only be deeper sorrow in the end. “If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread,” no matter what he may be appropriating (and so to end of verse 19). This is all totally opposed to their reasoning, and Job rather triumphs over them in this way. “Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.”

And now in the next chapter (28.), Which will close to-night, we have a very remarkable addition—one of the most striking in the Book of Job. It seems very abrupt. He now turns away from man altogether in his bad ways, or from vindicating those who really looked to God; and he looks at the general state of mankind. Not any particularly evil class or righteous class.

“Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it.” Gold is not found in veins like silver, it is in quite a different way—very often in the form of dust, and sometimes of nuggets. But silver is found in large and rich veins. “Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.” That is just exactly where copper is found. Where we read “brass” it is very often “copper” —chiefly so in the Bible. “He setteth an end to darkness.” He now gives us a remarkable sketch of mining in very early times. “He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection” —in quest of these precious metals, gold, silver or the like— “the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death,” i.e., he goes down to the depths of the earth after them. “The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant” —water there is very dangerous, and so the great point is

to get rid of it safely—to drain it or turn it aside so that they may work their mine. “Even the waters forgotten of the foot.” That is, waters that people do not walk beside; not the rivers and rivulets and the like, but water deep in the earth. “They are dried up; they are gone away from men.” There is the drainage in order to carry it on.

“As for the earth, out of it cometh bread; and under it” —that is deep down in it— “is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires” —precious stones as well as these metals— “and it hath dust of gold.” They do not enter into these depths; they go up into the heights, and they traverse all the surface of the earth, but the fowls do not venture into the mines where man goes down. Not even the vulture. The vulture has a keen sight, as we all know, especially for a dead body, and there they are—God’s natural scavengers for this poor world of death. “The lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.” “He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing.” They get a great sensitive understanding of what is worth—not by any means that they are always right. Sometimes the miners in our country have thrown away as rubbish what was quite as valuable as all that their mind was set upon; but as a general rule they learn what is valuable. “He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light. But where shall wisdom be found?” No, there is no wisdom in all that. There is self in all that. There is what will make a man rich; there is what will bring money and perhaps distinction; but where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?

Well, it is not on the earth, and it is not down in these mines of darkness where man is so prompt to follow for that which he values. Where is it to be found? “Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living.”

What a very solemn thing that is! True wisdom and true understanding not found in the earth at all! It comes down from heaven. It is found only in Christ; and Christ had not yet come; and further, this is what came out still more by Christ’s rejection and Christ’s death. “Therefore the depth saith, It is not in me.” There are silver and gold in the depth, and other like commodities, and precious stones. “The sea saith, It is not with me.... It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.” It is not in the skies as far as they are open to the eye. “Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.” Yes, it was just that very thing. There was a report of that One who is Himself wisdom, and who is the giver of wisdom to the meek. It was by death that it came to us, but they did not know it.

“God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds.” It was many hundreds, yea, some thousands of years after that when man discovered that the atmosphere had weight. But it did not enter into the philosophy of the philosophers then; they knew nothing about it. Here is mentioned the weight of the wind. “He weigheth the waters by measure,” so that no matter what comes, the sea is never too full. There is always going on, the circle of waters—waters rising up in the form of vapor, and in vast quantities; for the power of the sun acts upon the waters, and there are many tons going up every day. There was a measure for it all, in God’s mind. “When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said” —there is a wisdom above man— “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is

understanding.” And that is just exactly what is felt when a soul is converted. He may know nothing more than that; he sees how he has been in almost all evil, and he departs from it. A real sight of Christ is enough to do that by the spirit of God, and the fear of the Lord. That is what is abiding even when souls are not occupied with their evil, and speaking of it—the fear of the Lord and departing from evil.

But that is not the same thing as the gospel; it is not the same thing as knowing that all our evil is judged already in Christ's person on the cross, that our sins are completely gone, and that we are brought in as children whiter than snow through the blood of Christ before the eye of God. That is the gospel; and it is after his reception of the word of truth that man receives the Holy Ghost, to delight in it, and to be the witness of it; but enjoying it first. Not to speak unto other people at first; oh, no; that is not the first thing. That is what the vanity of youngsters very often thinks—but to enjoy it with thankfulness and praise of God, and in worship of Him; that is what we come to. That is the true effect of the Spirit of God working. But then there is often a great deal of energy, and people are often more occupied with the wants of other people than with the infallible grace and truth of God. If the Lord will, I hope to continue on next Wednesday evening.

W. K.

## Lectures on Job 29-32

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### Lecture 8 Chaps. 29-31

This is the beginning of Job's last argument. The friends were quite silenced; he now makes his final confutation; and, indeed, it is more an appeal than an argument, for he rises above all that they had been pleading and insinuating.

Here he gives us in these chapters 29-31 a very interesting pouring out of his feelings. The first of these chapters reviews his early days of prosperity, and we can see the very great complacency that he had in all that grace had wrought in him. But, alas! there was another thing that ought not to have been. He took pleasure in his good character. He was therefore in spirit too much of a Pharisee. "I thank thee that I am not as other men." It was not but that there was great grace in Job, and that there was a very admirable character sustained; but why should he talk about it? why should he think upon it? why should he not think of the source of all the blessing? Why should he not be boasting in the Lord—instead of an implied boasting in himself? There was the very thing that God had a controversy with. And we see that up to this time Job had not got; to the bottom of that which God was ferreting out. Satan had completely disappeared. He is always defeated with the children of God. He may appear to gain a battle, but the campaign is always against him; and so it is very marked in the case of Job.

But the second of these three chapters looks at his downfall; that is the great topic that is in it. He bemoans his terrible state; and up to the present he could not withhold the expression that he thought God dealt hardly with him, and was arbitrary. He could not understand His ways in the slightest degree; nor did he take in the motive that God had—the gracious purpose. In short, he had not reached the end of the Lord, because he had not done with himself. That is the real secret of it.

And the next chapter—the last of his appeal—is a most impassioned setting himself before God, and implicating judgments on himself. So thoroughly was his conscience good, that he goes over all the various snares of a man, and especially a man of position and wealth like Job; because that always increases the danger, and always makes the difficulty more. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that poverty is the hard place in which to serve God. On the contrary, it is when people are no longer poor, and no longer feel the need of continual dependence upon God—when they begin to be independent—for the world is not ashamed to call it that. I am sorry to say that Christians even drop into the language and the spirit of the world. Job calls solemn judgments upon himself—looking at the various snares—if he had been guilty in this or that or the other and so on—and the upshot of it all is that "The words of Job are ended."

We have no more of Job now in the way of self-defense. We shall find a very interesting new speaker on which I may say a few words on the next chapter to-night. But now, first of all, Job says: "Oh, that I were as in months past." Now it is always a bad sign when people look back to dwell on the past. Are people not to grow? Are children of God merely to be occupied with the

immense favor of God? No doubt it is very true that one is plucked out of the teeth of Satan; but what is that compared with the positive knowledge of God? It is a great thing for us; but is not the knowledge of God infinitely greater than merely the action of divine grace in rescuing a poor wretched sinner? It is an admirable thing for the sinner always to feel it; but it is a sad thing when he looks back to it as the brightest of all things. Why, that means he has been making no progress at all; it means that he has been all these years afterward looking back upon that as the divine moment. Surely divine life ought to be a growing enjoyment; and the more so as you know of Christ and of God—I am speaking now to Christians, of course.

But even for Job God never left himself without witness—and God always met the souls that really walked with Him. Who can doubt but that Enoch walked with God, and do you suppose that Enoch looked back at the first glimpse he had of God, and would say he knew God by that? No, far from it, and shame on all people who talk such language. I do not deny that it is the language of many a Christian, but that is the most sorrowful thing now—that Christians forget what it is to be a Christian. They only think of the moment of becoming a Christian, and they seem to think that that is the great thing. No doubt it is passing the border, but it is certainly not going into the brightness beyond it. Where is the feast; where is the joy of the Father; where is the best robe, and all the other accompaniments? Is that nothing? Well, that was after. And that is what in an image presents us with the positive place of blessing. The “grace wherein we stand” —not merely the grace that rescued us, but the grace wherein we stand. It is a continual place of grace to be enjoyed more and more as we learn more of God and judge ourselves. But there is where Job failed. Job admired himself. And so he looks back. “Oh, that I were as in months past.” God was going to do far better. It is true that Job went through very severe sifting, but that was all for his good; and more than that, it was for your good and my good, and the good of every believer that has ever profited by this book since God had it written down. It was meant for the blessing of all. It was not intended that there should be perhaps another man to go through the same. God has His economy of good; God has His reserve of grace; God was pleased that one should have had a, very broad back to bear the trial. We have heard of the patience of Job; but that is the very thing wherein he broke down, so that he became impatient at last even with God. And the reason was because he was not yet an utterly broken man—he was given to knowing about himself.

Oh, how very rarely one finds a saint of God even now what every saint of God ought to be; but it is a rare thing even among Christian people. “As in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth.” Why, that is a strange thing— “my youth.” No getting on with God in his maturity or in his old age! What was Job about? “When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.” Was not He with him then? That is just what he did not see or know. “Whom He loveth He chasteneth”; and that is one of the great lessons of the Book of Job. I admit it was terrible chastening. And that is where the friends were all wrong; it was so terrible that they thought it was retributive, and that it was impossible for a person to suffer to such an extreme degree unless he had been extremely wicked. And what made it worse was that he looked so good, and therefore they thought he must be a hypocrite. There they were completely wrong; and the consequence was that they had to go down lower than Job, and that Job had to pray for them that they might be spared. And this he did. But, however, I anticipate what we will have another day.

“When I washed my steps with butter” —of course it is not literal— “and the rock poured me out rivers of oil.” You see that petroleum is an old affair in this world! “When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! The young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose, and stood up.” All that was exceedingly pleasant to Job. And we are apt to think so too—there is nothing, they say, that succeeds like success, and there is not a more wicked maxim or one more entirely contrary to God; nothing more thoroughly denying that we are now in the place of suffering, and of being despised and rejected for Christ's sake. But that is a worldly maxim, and it is just what the world delights in. Men will praise you if you do well to yourself, that is, if you are successful—make a good fortune, and have nice dinner parties, and so on. “The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.”

Now one of the beautiful features about Job was that he did not pretend to be noble, and he did not seek to be a prince. He was like a king in the nobility of his character—what a king ought to be—he was truly noble in his ways; and all that would have been admirable if he had not said or thought; for that is the important point. “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” It does not mean that other people do not know it, but the wrong is that our left hand should know what our right hand does, i.e., we ought not to think about it. It is done to God; and it is merely returning a very little interest for the wonderful capital for the spiritual capital that the Lord has put in our power.

Here you see it was not so. Job was highly pleased, and took great pleasure in the world thinking so much of him. “When the ear heard me, then it blessed me” now he is looking at what you may call the objects of his kindness and love. For there was both kindness and love in Job. “And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me.” He was referring to the people that had been helped out of their manifold afflictions. “Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.” And that was really true. God delighted in Job; that was all right; and he found at last that God did delight in him, but he did not find that till after the trial. He was buoyed up and raised above the ordinary occupations of men by the homage that was paid him and the perception of his exceeding kindness. All that lifted him up. Well, that is a very natural thing; but it is not spiritual; and it is the very thing that God was putting down severely in him; much more so than in a very inferior man. The greatest trials that God inflicts are upon the strongest, those that are able to bear them. Those that know most of His ways—they come in for it. And that was the case with Job.

“The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” —that was very true, and he looked at his clothing too— “my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.” Yes, very pleased was Job. “I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest.” No, no; God was going to disturb that nice nest of his that was so warm and comfortable. “And I shall multiply my days as the sand.” Why, he had been very desirous that God should cut short his days; for that was the only way that he saw out of all the trouble he was passing through. “My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand. Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their

mouth wide as for the latter rain. If I laughed on them, they believed it not” it is too good to be true— “and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.”

You cannot be surprised that the Jews were the first rationalists; they were the higher critics of a former day. They did not believe that it was a true story the philosophic Jews—they did not believe that. How far it penetrated the synagogue generally we cannot say. I presume there were simple-hearted men that fully believed every word of it. But one of the great reasons why the Jews did not accept this history was that Job was not a Jew. “Oh! that cannot be; why, they are all dogs. Everybody but a Jew is a dog.” And the idea that God did not say it of Abraham that he was of such integrity that there was nobody like him in all the earth—nor of Isaac, nor of Jacob! No, this they could not believe. They knew that it was of a patriarch of those days, and therefore they were dead set against the possibility of such a thing as God extolling one who was not of the chosen race, one of the family and of the nation that had the promise.

What is it that makes people higher critics? It is that they prefer their own thoughts to the word of God. That is what it is to be an unbeliever; and if it is carried out thoroughly you are an infidel; you are a lost man. I presume that these Jews fully held to the other books of the Bible. It is to be presumed so. Perhaps they did not like some others. I can understand their no more liking the prophecy of Jonah being given to a Gentile city than that Jonah liked to be the prophet sent there. He did everything to turn away from it; and when God told him to go east he went west. When he was told to go to Nineveh he took a ship at Joppa to go west—just in the very opposite direction.

Well, now, in the next chapter (30.) we have a totally different story. Job now says, “But now they that are younger than I have me in derision.” You can suppose how very painful that was to a man that had been living a good deal upon the witness of these grand deeds and the high opinions of him, and the humbler classes, for once in a way, being entirely along with the grandees. For at times they do truly love to differ. “Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.” Ah! Job, you can be cutting; you can strike deep if you are so disposed. He would not have set their fathers with the dogs of his flock! Just think of it. And he gives his reason. He says, “Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me?” Job was a wise man, and if he had servants he had servants that could do their duty. But as very often happens with the most miserable of the world, they are weak, and unable to do a good day's work, nor a good hour's work. Whatever they do, they do in a manner that is enough to provoke any person to look at them. And so he says, “For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilder-ness in former time desolate and waste. Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat. They were driven forth from among men (they cried after them as after a thief)” —they were most disreputable, and Job would not have had one of them on any account to serve him. He would be very willing to give them food if they were hungry; and if they had no clothing he would surely have abounded even then. But he felt it very much that these men should mock him, and should do everything to deride his sufferings, and not only that with these men in general, but that the young men tried to trip up his tottering steps! For you know the soles of his feet were intolerable—from head to foot not only was every nerve, as it were, active, but the very worms were beginning to prey upon him while he was alive, through all the sores that were open. It was a most awful case.

Yet what is that compared with moral suffering? Do you suppose the apostle Paul did not suffer much more severely than with any bodily trouble? He suffered from false brethren a great deal. And I think he must have suffered from true brethren very often—perhaps even more, but in a different way. “To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed.” He will not allow that they talked—they brayed. “Under the nettles they were gathered together. They were children of fools, yea, children of base men” i.e. of fathers that had not a name themselves— “they were viler than the earth, And now am I their song; yea, I am their byword. They abhor me.” Think of that—these words were all true. “They flee far from me.” They could not bear to look at him—at the agony, and the terrible effect of all these sores on his body. They could not go near him. “And spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord.” There was after all what grieved the heart of poor Job more than anything. It was God. He does not mean the devil; it was not the devil. “Because He hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me” (and so to end of verse 16).

You see there is no reference to his three friends now. He is looking really at this tremendous trial that afflicted his body, and that exposed him to all this disrespect and contempt of the very lowest creatures on the face of the earth. “My bones are pierced in me in the night season; and my sinews take no rest. By the great force of my disease is my garment changed; it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.” Look at the pain all that would occasion. “He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. I cry unto thee and thou dost not hear me.” But God did hear him. There was a reason why He did not answer; but God did hear. “I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me.” There he was quite wrong. “With thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me. Thou liftest me up to the wind: thou causest me to ride upon it and dissolvest my substance. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death” —there he was wrong again. God had good things in store for Job. “And to the house appointed for all living. Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?” he goes back to that. “My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.”

Well, there is a third chapter (31.) to which we now come, very distinct from either of these, and this is his final appeal to God. This is all said not so much to his friends as to God; but he still was harping upon the past in the first of these chapters; then upon the present misery; now he appeals solemnly to God, and in the presence of them all.

“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?” None whatever for a corrupt man, to take advantage of another. “Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways” —he was a thoroughly pious believing man— “and count all my steps? If I had walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit, let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know mine integrity.” He had a perfectly good conscience, but that is not enough. There is the great principle of self-judgment; there is the grand principle also of entire submission to God and vindicating Him—that He is right and wise in all, not only in what He does, but in what He allows. It is all for good. It may be very bad on the part of others, as it was on the part of Job's friends, but God had a good purpose for Job in it all.

“If my step hath turned out of thy way,” etc., etc. (vers. 1-12). It is clear that Job was a most blameless man in his conduct, and even in the state of his heart. “If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or of my maidservant” —he now goes to other duties— “when they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and, when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?” etc. (vers. 13-23). “If I have made gold my hope” —now he turns to a third kind of snare— “or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great” —and how many do— “and because mine hand had gotten much,” etc., it was not inherited merely; but it was acquired by his own industry and God's particular blessing upon him.

Now he looks at another thing quite different— “If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness,” i.e. in the way of any adoration; in bowing down to the sun or moon, which was the earliest form of idolatry. We do not hear of Baals or Ashtoreths or any of the disreputable vanities and wickedness of heathen objects of worship; but here was a work of God of the highest nature, but no leaning to it in any way — “and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand” —even the slightest form of acknowledging the creature! — “this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: For I should have denied the God that is above.” There we have very sound doctrine. “If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him” a very common snare for people. They have a little pleasure when their adversaries come to grief, or are troubled. “Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh, that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveler. If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: did I fear a great multitude” —you observe he was perfectly acquainted with the very interesting and profitable story of Adam's fall. There we have just what anyone now, looking back with the light of Christ even, sees. There was the great sin of Adam. Instead of humbling himself to God, and going to meet God to tell Him how he had disgraced himself, Adam hid himself away; and the clothing that he put upon him showed that he was no longer innocent.

“Oh, that one would hear me!” Now here is Job's final appeal. “Behold my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me” —Job wanted to hear His voice about it— “and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it” —if anyone that wished him ill laid charges— “I would take it,” he says, “upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me” —because he was confident that it was false. “I would declare unto him,” i.e. unto the Almighty; it would seem possibly “the adversary” — “the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.” I think it is “to the Lord.” “If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.”

Well, it was very magnificent; as it had been a justification of himself. But it was a great mistake as to the secret of God's dealings with Job, and accordingly a new interlocutor appears. We have not heard of him. It is a remarkable indication of primitive habits and feelings. He was a young man. And this absence of any notice taken of him is just in the spirit of olden manners. And he shows that he perfectly enters into it himself, and in no way complains of it. Elihu, however, was a man put forward by God, to bring to naught the pride of age and experience, observation and tradition. Because there you have what belonged to each of those friends. They were old men, and they were proud of their place. And Eliphaz, as we know, was a man that strongly stood upon the

judgment and feeling of public opinion—of pious men, no doubt, but, after all, it was only men's. And one of the wonderful ways of God is this: that no tradition can ever meet present circumstances. The same facts even may occur; but they are in a different light, and the circumstances modify them enormously, and all that has to be taken into account.

Who, then, is sufficient for these things? Our sufficiency is of God. There is the need of dependence upon God. You cannot pile up wisdom in that way for divine things. It is all very fair in science, or knowledge, or art, or literature, or anything of that kind; but it is nothing in the things of God. Zophar seems to be more confident in himself than in anybody. And Bildad was one between the two. He was a man of keen observation and good power of expression. But, however that might be, all had failed, and now Elihu comes forward.

“So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes” (chap. 32.). That was their idea, and there was some truth in it. “Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram.” He belonged to the family of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. He was not properly one of the chosen family, but he was closely connected, like Laban and others. He belonged to another branch. “Against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.” Well, that was true. He did justify himself. The last chapter which we have just read is self-justification from beginning to end. It was quite true, as a matter of fact, but was entirely improper in a question of God's dealings, and why this great affliction had come upon him. “Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.” What was it that hindered these three friends from understanding him? The same thing that hindered Job—self. Self was not judged. Self is one of the greatest difficulties in the way of a Christian—in the way of a sinner of old, and now still among Christians.

“Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were older than he.” Well, that was very proper. “When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.” Why? It was not for himself at all. He was displeased with them all for God's sake. “And Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you my opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom” —and so it should be. “But there is a spirit in man” —there is something higher than experience— “there is a spirit in man” —it is the highest part of man's nature. The body is the outward vessel, and the soul is that which makes a man to be a man. Every man has his own spirit, but soul is that which may be in common among men. For instance, John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias. He could not come in the soul of Elias. Everybody comes in his own soul; that is the seat of individuality. But spirit is a man's capacity. You might find half a dozen men with the same capacity; and we say sometimes, “That man spoke like a Luther; that man wrote like a Calvin; that man was as earnest in his work as John Wesley; that man was as diligent in preaching as Charles Spurgeon” —and so on. The spirit of these different men might be similar in other men, but it is that which gives them their particular power (or character). But the soul and spirit go together so closely that no human wit can ever distinguish between them; they are so welded together, being of a spirit nature. When a man dies, his soul goes up and his spirit too; they both go up; they go up together necessarily.

And so then it is that we can understand that there is a spirit in man. Spirit is expressive of spiritual capacity, and that is not to be measured by the question of experience. A man might have much more spiritual capacity who was young. That was the case with Elihu. And he says, "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." It was God that breathed into man the breath of life; and in that breath of life there was not only the soul but the spirit; and that is the reason why man alone has an immortal soul. God never breathed into a horse or a dog, or any other animal on the earth, but only into man; therefore, man's soul and spirit are immortal. But it may be immortal in hell, or it may be blessedly immortal in heaven! It does not deprive a man of his being a sinner, nor of his bearing the consequences of it; neither, on the other hand, does it deprive him—still less—of receiving eternal life from the Lord Jesus. Then there is another life given to him. "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment." Far from it. "Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion. Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say." He never ventured to interrupt; he never said one word.

Sometimes people are astonished to find this young man coming forward, after not only the three friends were silent, but Job too. Then he speaks, and he apologizes in these words that I now read. That is all that I am noticing tonight. "Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words." And that was perfectly true. "Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom." He saw that it was a question of God. They had not really brought in the true God as He is. "God thrusteth him down, not man." That is what Job had said. So far, Job was far more right than his friends. "Now he hath not directed his words against me." So he says—I am in a position to be able to speak dispassionately. If he had attacked me because of anything I had said it might seem self-vindication. But here I must speak for God, young as I am. "Neither will I answer him with your speeches." They were entirely powerless. "They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking" (vers. 1-15). He was full of indignation that they went on still blaming Job, and could not convince him of anything wrong. They had entirely missed their way. "I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my maker would soon take me away" (vers. 16-22).

And there we may leave it for the present. If the Lord will, we shall have the rest of Elihu's admirable address, where he touches the real roots of the question for the first time—an interpreter who was one of a thousand, as he says himself, though not referring to himself.

W. K.

## Lectures on Job 33-37

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### Lecture 9.-Chaps. 33-37

It is remarkable how worldly minds dislike Elihu. It is a very old story. It began with some of the famous Jews, and it has gone down to the present day. They regard him as a particularly forward young man, and also as full of self-conceit, after all with very little in it. Now nothing can show more a mind unacquainted with God; because Elihu has a most valuable place in this book. It is he that for the first time brings out the blessing of affliction-affliction turned to the profit of the soul. This was not very much known even in Israel afterward; for in Israel God was showing His government of a nation; but that is a totally different thing from what we find in Job. What Elihu shows is a government of souls, and that goes on now more than ever in Christianity.

This is what is found in the 15th of John: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husband-man." And what does the Father do? "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it." He purges on the one hand, and He takes away on the other. If there are those who are totally insensible, He takes them away; more particularly if they bear His name

But those who do bear fruit He purges, that they may bring forth more fruit. That was exactly the case with Job. So also Peter takes it up. He knew what that was. Satan desired to sift him as wheat. But the Lord prayed for Peter, not merely for "you;" but for Peter. And why? Because a dead set was made against Peter. Peter was lifted up as Job was. Peter was quite sure of his own great love for the Savior, and he trusted in his own love-not Christ's love to him, but Peter's love to Christ; for no matter what the difficulty he might be in, he would be faithful! Whereas, on the contrary, he slighted the word of the Lord that warned him of his danger, and that night before the cock crew, he denied Him—that is, he broke down exactly where he thought it was impossible that he could.

And so did Job. Job had shown himself a most gracious man in prosperity, and a most patient man in adversity; and if the trial had rested there Job would have been more pleased with himself than ever; for what could we expect more than that a man should be exceedingly kind, and, as men thought, humble, and always occupied with the activities of benevolence and of compassion towards the suffering, when he had nothing to trouble him? Then when he was more troubled, perhaps, than any other man ever was before, he first lost his property, then lost his children, and then lost all his bodily health and was reduced to being one of the greatest of sufferers; so much so that he would have been delighted to have died, but that would not have answered the end of the Lord. The Lord intended that he should live and consequently that he must accept the trial from Him; but Job did not understand that. No doubt, although his wife did not—as a wife nowadays very often does help her husband to get wrong, she told him to curse God and die—make an end of it all. Women are sometimes very impatient; so she was, any way, and gave right bad advice. He rejected it, but he could not stand his friends' insinuations. However, as I have gone through that pretty carefully before, I need not dwell upon it now. But here we have come to Job triumphant

over his friends. They are perfectly silenced. These men of age, experience, and wisdom, did not understand the case even as well as Job. And the reason why they did not understand it was that Job had more sense of grace in God, which is the real key of all the dealings of God. They thought everything must be shallow and on the outside, and yet they were true saints.

But we have to learn, as one of the great lessons of the Book, that we cannot glory in saints—we can only glory in God. Though not a few are brought before us, yet they all come short of it. Even Job, although he found it an easy matter to confute them (and he seems to have had considerable pleasure in reducing the three, one after the other, to total silence), he had not yet got to the root of the matter, and that was—a little complacency in himself—a most insidious evil, and only to be learned in the presence of God. And now there is no excuse for us; because the very object of the death of Christ is not merely that we should be forgiven and made happy; but it is that we should walk in self-judgment, and also in confidence in God, and in these two things Job failed; and we are in danger of failing too. We stop short, just getting the heart and the conscience, when they have been awakened, to feel what sin is. But that is only the threshold; that is only the way in which we enter into the blessing, and the blessing is, to be brought to God. No doubt there is a great deal in being brought to God; and we are brought in a very wonderful way to God, on which I do not dwell now, because it is not what we have here.

But as to Elihu, he lifts up the veil for the first time off the riddle which none of them had been able to solve—neither Eliphaz, nor Bildad, nor Zophar, nor even Job. The last words of Job were that he would not give up his integrity, no matter what came, till cockle grew instead of barley...a thing that could not possibly be. He was determined to stick to it; and he was quite sure they were all wrong in thinking that there was anything wrong in him. And yet there was. Not at all in the way they thought; but it was the pleasure that he took in what grace, which the Lord had bestowed, had produced in his ways. There was no doubt about that; but why did he think about it? Why did he not think of God? Why was he not filled with the wonder of God producing anything that was good in such a wretched creature as fallen man? Now Elihu comes in; and he had evidently great difficulty in holding his tongue for a good while. And he showed his great humility. Because we should not have known he had been there. He suddenly comes forward at this critical moment, when not only the three, but Job, were silent; and it was a very hard matter to get Job silent; for he was an excellent speaker, and he had a great deal to say that was very true; but he did not yet know himself as God meant him to—as God means us to learn ourselves. That is the reason the book was given to us—not to learn ourselves in a human way by our thoughts, but to learn ourselves after a definite sort by the light of God detecting what nothing else can.

Well, Elihu had been silent. He was a young man compared with them, and he had a very strong sense of propriety; and accordingly he would not think of interrupting, or of entering in, even when, one after another, the others subsided. He might have spoken then, but no! he waits till the whole thing was closed by Job's fervent utterance, in which he showed that his good opinion of himself was as great as ever it was, and all that God had done had not brought him down in his own opinion of himself. This was what roused Elihu. He was indignant that the others could not see. He saw it clearly enough; that Job was insubmissive to God, and that Job spoke in a very improper way about God. Afterward he said the right thing. You must not suppose that when God compared him with his three friends it was with regard to these speeches. No, no; Job had a wrong spirit while they were going on, and resented in the highest degree the bad thoughts the others had of

him. But does that make a man bad? What is the opinion of another man? what does he know about it? So that if a person is quieted before God, he can afford to take it all quietly. It is very bad for the others; but it does not make him a bit worse. Job, however, had not learned this; he broke down in the very matter of patience. Yet we have heard of the patience of Job. There was nobody like him for it; but he broke down in the very thing in which he was apt to be a little proud.

Elihu makes a great deal of apology. That is what these proud men do not like. They are men inflated with the pride of man's heart; and scholars—even scholars in the Bible, learned men in the scriptures—are just as apt to be carried away by notions of their own importance as other people are; and that is what is the key to all these depreciatory views of Elihu. They know nothing about God. They are eloquent of the wonders of a man's mind and perhaps the outward works of God; all that, they may be, but they do not know anything about the dealings of God. There are thousands of men that have written of the scriptures who have never seen their sinfulness before God, who have never been brought to measure self in the presence of God. And accordingly these men all hate Elihu, and speak with the utmost contempt not only of him as an upstart of a young man that was full of himself, but also of what he said; thus deprecating his speaking at all. For he was very sorry to be obliged to speak. He had no desire to put himself forward; but there he was, quite contrary to all his own intentions or his own desire, compelled to speak on God's behalf against that which he felt was so unworthy in Job even. Indeed, he does not say much about the others. They were silent; they had passed away just as Satan had previously. Satan disappears and we do not hear of him after in this book; he was thoroughly beaten; and then the other three evidently had to give up and surrender; they had nothing more to say. Indeed, they had said a great deal too much.

But now was Elihu's turn (chap. 33.); and after all, Job had not said the thing that was right. So he begins here. The 32nd chapter was merely a preface, speaking of his own shortcoming, and at the same time, of his entire conviction that he saw a truth that neither Job nor the three friends had seen; and this he must have out.

“I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, now I have opened my mouth” —he had been very slow to do it— “my tongue hath spoken in my mouth. My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart” —it is all genuine and sincere, whatever these physicians of no value say, these higher critics— “and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.” And so they did. “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead.” Job, while his heart went out towards God, was afraid that it would be too overwhelming; and yet he wanted to find Him; but still he was afraid. He wanted some one that could speak in a human tongue to him—could speak thoroughly for God. Well, Elihu does that in his measure. Elihu is an interpreter, one of a thousand, and he therefore does speak for God—just what Job had wanted, only very far short of the Great Interpreter—very far short of Him who is the chief of the Prophets, who is the Lord God of the Prophets, as well as a Prophet. Very short, indeed, of Christ! Still the presence of Elihu is a witness to sovereign grace. It is the rarest thing in the world to find a man that has learned so of God as Elihu had. And it was purposely intended to bring down the pride of the older men. And Elihu felt that; but still he made them apologies; for he was very unwilling indeed to appear to be setting them in order and correcting the folly that had come from them. He is occupied with Job rather—and that is a very fine trait in him. He does not

go round Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and show how wrong they had been; but the great point remains still to be settled.

There was no solution of the riddle yet. Elihu contributes for the first time. Not completely—it required God to do that—and God did appear; I do not say how long. I do not say that He took the shape of man, as He often did in the Old Testament. We do not read of anything of that here. It may merely have been a voice for that matter. But we shall see, when we come to that part, that it was a divine voice; there is no mistake about that. Here, however, it is a man, as he says, and a young man, too, “I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee,” etc. (vers. 7-11). Job had complained of God's hand. There were two great faults in what Job had said. He thought too well of himself, and he found fault with God. That is what is clearly put here by Elihu. “Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.” He had entirely fallen short of the reverence due to God—entirely forgotten the infinite distance between God and man; the majesty of God; and therefore, instead of finding fault with himself for being so far short, he found fault with God. He did not understand His ways fully. Now he ought to have credited, though he did not understand them. “For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not” (vers. 12-14).

Now he brings in the fact that God carries on His wonderful way in the midst of all, in a ruined world with everything out of order and Satan triumphing, and in fact the prince of the world, and the god of this age, as scripture calls him, at any rate in the New Testament; although they very little understood that yet. But we ought to know it. Well, God, in the midst of all this, carries on His wonderful way, and did so before there was a Bible. You must remember that when the circumstances of Job occurred there was no written revelation. Genesis and Job were probably written very near one another: practically at the same time. There is no reference to the law; there is no reference to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, in Job; and although there was some distance between Job's country and Egypt, the Book of Job shows that he was well acquainted with the great features of Egypt; that he was well acquainted with the crocodile and the like. There is a magnificent description of it in this very book, and many other things that show that the country of Egypt and its people were quite familiar to Job. He only lived on the edge of the desert, and a little, therefore, to the east of the Holy Land; perhaps the north-east; but at any rate, it was in that part of the country. Elihu belonged rather to another part. He was the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram. “Ram” is the same word (only another form) as “Aram,” i.e., Syria, that part of the country of Asia north of the Holy Land. He belonged, therefore, to a race akin to the Holy Land, but not belonging to it strictly, and that is what makes the great interest of the book—it is God and man. It is not Israel at all; it is purposely God dealing with man, and God dealing with man's soul. It is far more important that the soul should be right, and this we find most carefully shown in this book. So much so that Job was brought into the best blessing he ever knew while he was still under the effects of his trial, and the external blessing had not yet been conferred; but it followed immediately he could bear it.

God therefore, Elihu says, often deals in a dream of the night (ver. 15). I dare say some of you have had these visitations. It is certainly not for me to boast of anything; but I think that I have had consciously God whispering little things to me about myself, and advising me to take care what I was about, and compelling me to judge myself in a way that I had not done before; and I conceive

that it is very probably so in this case. It is nothing miraculous at all. We may perhaps not count with God; but this no doubt is just where we fail, in not attaching the importance that we ought to do, and this although we have His word. But still God is a living God, and God has to do with every one of us in this way. There can be no doubt that here Elihu speaks about it as a certainty in those days; and why it should not be in our day, I, for one, have never learned. I believe it is all a mistake to imagine it is not so. The great point is that it is altogether inferior to the word. This is where we have our great advantage; and all these excellent people that come before us in this book had it not. Oh no, scripture is of enormous value, and we show our great lack of faith by not estimating it, and making it the grandest point of every day's life—to learn God more and better by His word, now especially as we have Christ, who is not merely the Interpreter, “one of a thousand,” but alone; alone, above all—Moses, Elias, no matter whom—Jesus only. Well, “In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men” —it is not seeing a spirit, as Eliphaz did. That I do not pretend to. It has never been my lot, nor, I suppose, yours; but here it is another thing. It is in sleep; and it is a dream; plain, simple, positive fact, but still it is God deigning to help us. And He loves to do that in ways that we do not always perceive, but He is always doing so in one way or another, except where Ephraim is joined to his idols— “let him alone”! That is a terrible word.

“Then he openeth the ears of men” (ver. 16). That is what is shown in this chapter. It is not “believing” men; it is any man, in order that he might believe. But still, when we do not behave as saints, we may get a little word just showing us where we are, that we are “walking as men,” as the apostle said. “That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man.” You see, it is one that had never yet been broken. “He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.” He was on the straight way to it. “He is chastened also with pain upon his bed.” It is not only these dealings with the soul, but also with the body. There he touches the very case of Job. “And the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away” —how true it was of poor Job “that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen, stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him” —that is exactly what Elihu was— “an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness “: i.e., what becomes him. And what is it that becomes a man? Self-judgment. He is a fallen man. He may be a believing man, but still, he is a man, as we can say, with the flesh in him; and that flesh may be working strongly, as it did in Job as well as the others. “Then he is gracious unto him.” Directly the man bows, directly there is submissiveness to God—that is the uprightness of man. This is what is done when a man is converted, i.e., he bows to God, but also when a man gets away, like Peter, it may also be said, “When thou art converted.” For the restoration of a man is very much of the same character as when a man is converted. He is turned back to God. He has been forgetting God, and he turns back and remembers Him. That is how it was with Peter; and that is what we sometimes find also. “Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom” (vers. 17-24).

Now I do not think you could find in all the rest of the Old Testament such a description as here of God's dealing with the soul that is wrong, or that has got wrong. I do not remember any so graphic, and so personally applicable; and it would be hard to find it in the New Testament, except where the Lord gives us the Prodigal. There I admit that we have a perfect picture. We could not have here all that the Lord shows of the prodigal son; but here it is a wonderful thing, especially so

precious at the early day. But it does not mean that the ransom was yet offered; but there it was before God, answering to that word in Romans 3: “the pretermission” of sins—a passing over, not a “remission,” for this latter could not be true of an Old Testament saint. “Remission” is what particularly belongs to the New Testament. But there was a “pretermission” —a “passing over” by God. It was like a bad debt, and the creditors saying, “It is no use; we must pass it by; we must not expect anything.” That is what God did. There was “the forbearance of God.” But now it is not the forbearance of God at all; and it is not “pretermission.” It is “remission” now. It is God's righteousness clearly manifested, and that is, that Christ has borne our sins, and therefore it is a righteous thing to blot them out. It is not merely saying, “Poor fellow, he cannot pay”; but here is One that has paid, and paid in the most glorious manner; more wonderful a great deal than if there had never been sin; more glorious to God and more blessed for man. Because, on the contrary, it was giving us up as a bad job where it was merely “forbearance” and “pretermission”; but now it is triumphing.

You recollect that remarkable word which I think is quite misunderstood— “come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Does this apply to the believer? On the contrary, no believer comes “short of the glory of God.” And how is this? Why, because there is One in the glory who bore my sins on the cross. And He who is in the glory of God is my life and my righteousness. Therefore it is that we, believers, do not “come short of the glory of God.” There was that great fact, not merely a mighty work upon the cross, but the Lord Jesus connecting that work with the glory of God, and giving us the wonderful impulse and strength of knowing that we do not come short of the glory of God. There was a thing that could not be at the beginning. It could not be without—not only sin forgiven, but—Christ glorifying God about sin, and consequently going up Himself into the glory of God, and this as our Savior. Well, we have not this here; nothing like it at all, but simply “I have found a ransom.”

“His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth; he shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy.” We have here nothing at all about the two natures. That the Old Testament saint never understood. There is no such thing as the intelligence of that great truth in any part of the Old Testament. And man is incapable of profiting by, or understanding, it until he sees Christ by faith; sees the Son and believes in Him. Now we are capable. Now we are made to understand it simply and fully. “He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not” — there you see, is just what the repentant soul says. It is not called “repentance” here. It is in Jeremiah. Jeremiah brings it out very beautifully in the 31st chapter, before he introduces the new covenant; but here we have the thing, repentance, although the word is not employed. “He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man” (vers. 25-30). It is very comforting to think that that was what God was doing, and was known to be doing, in those days. Because the gospel was not preached then. There was, no doubt, the precious revelation of “the Seed of the woman” that was to be bruised, and which was to bruise Satan; but after all, although that is a most wonderful word, and not less wonderful now than it ever was—most wonderful to think of now—yet it was almost all they had then.

There was a little more that came in with Noah, as a type—the deluge, and man passing out of it; and then Abraham as the chosen one, and the seed that belonged to that stock; because they all

knew that thence was to be the Messiah. All the believing Jews were perfectly aware that Abraham's Seed, represented by Isaac, was to be the Messiah. And how beautifully it was confirmed by Isaac being the one that was offered up in a figure, and was received, as it were, from the dead, God forbidding Abraham to put him to death! but he was under sentence of death for three days, and then it was, at the very critical moment, he was delivered!

Not so with Jesus. Here everything was perfect. Everything here was carried out in all its fullness of blessing, but it could not be in any other than Jesus. So Elihu calls Job (ver. 31) to mark all this, and hearken; and then if he has anything to say he would be very glad to hear, because he wanted to justify him. There is, you see, the great difference between Elihu and the others. The others wanted to condemn him. They were quite sure there was something altogether bad there, and they wanted to have it out. Therefore they were on their mettle to try and discover what it could possibly be; and so they grew more and more angry with Job, because instead of acknowledging it he told them that they were botchers. Instead of being physicians of any value they were mere bunglers, and everything was a mistake and a blunder on their part, and no doubt they were very angry.

Well, Elihu proceeds (chap. 34.), and now he blames Job again. He says, "Hear my words, ye wise men, and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge. For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat. Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good. For Job hath said, I am righteous" (vers. 2-5). And he was, in the sense in which his three friends denied; but, he was not righteous in glorifying God. No, he found fault with God. "For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression." Well, he says that is insufferable; such language is highly improper. "What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water"; for there was a good deal of the pride of his heart that came out in Job. "Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity." He says: 'It is bad enough for unbelieving men to say something like that; but you—Job!' "Therefore hearken unto me," etc. Now he appeals to Job. "Who has given him a charge over the earth, or who has disposed all the world?" Who is one that has committed anything to him, to dispose of the whole world? Who has done that for God? "If he set his heart upon man" —He has only to leave man, and he perishes.

You see, Elihu had not in the least that idea which many pious men have now, that all the world goes on well by the principle of gravitation. Well, there is not a doubt God gives an impulse to all the heavenly orbs, and the earth among the rest. He gave them their motion; but then it is God who keeps it up. Men attribute this to second causes. But it is not in the way of motion to be perpetual. That is all a great mistake; there is no such thing, and God it is that keeps everything going, and if God were to withdraw for a moment the immediate action of His power, everything would collapse. That is what Elihu teaches here. "If he set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath—all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust. If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words. Shall even he that hateth right govern?" That is, he shows the monstrousness of Job finding fault with God. "And wilt thou condemn him that is most just?" "Why," he says, "it is not fit to say so to a king." A king may have his faults, but his office is one that demands reverence from men. We are not only to fear God, but to honor the king. Here you have it. He was anything but, what people call, in these days, "a liberal." "Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked?" etc. (vers. 18-21). Every now and then God

does allow, and what is the effect of it? A revolution. People do not know why it is; but when men are always crying for some change, or something new, God allows it to come, and they are overwhelmed. It is the very thing that they do not want; because the upshot, almost always, of a revolution of men against government is that there is a worse government that follows. But there is a true despot at the same time flattering the people while he is taking advantage of them in every possible way. "For he will not lay upon man more than right," etc. (vers. 23-27).

Then he shows another side, when God gives quietness. God, after all, spite of the restless wickedness of the devil, is always above him. Not only above man, but above Satan and all his power. "When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only; that the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared. "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement" —that is what he was pressing upon Job. "I will not offend any more" etc. (vers. 29-36). Job had spoken very unguardedly. "For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God."

Now again, we come to a further step (chap. 35.). "Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst My righteousness" —which was not only that he spake against God, but he thought so much of himself— "My righteousness is more than God's." That is what he practically meant, although he would not have said it. But Elihu put his finger upon the spot. "For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin? I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. Look unto the heavens, and see, and behold the clouds which are higher than thou." Can you bear in the face of that to speak against Him who is above them all? For man cannot look the sun in the face; who then is he to look God in the face? "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him?" etc. (vers. 6-16). So that whether it was decrying God, or setting forward himself, Job was wrong on both counts.

Well, he goes on further still (chap. 36.) "Elihu also proceeded, and said, Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. For truly my words shall not be false; he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any" (vers. 1-5). What a wonderful saying! People might have thought, and do think, that the greater the majesty of God, the less He takes notice of the very smallest thing on earth. It is all the other way. And God shows His might by His being able to grasp everything, and take notice and show His concern about the smallest insect. "He preserveth not the life of the wicked" —His great concern is man, but He takes in everything— "but giveth right to the poor. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." That is the great point of this chapter. In the 33rd it was "man," but here it is "the righteous" man that He more particularly looks at. The discipline that God exercises over man in order to win him to God is far more strictly over the righteous man, to keep him right; that if He has justified him it should not be to His dishonor. For it is a terrible thing when a saint of God gets wrong. "But with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them forever, and they are exalted. And if they be bound in fetters and be holden in cords of affliction" —and sometimes kings come under these things very decidedly— "then he showeth them their work" (vers. 6-12). It is not entirely occupied with the righteous; but it is particularly with kings. "But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them. They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean." But what He has pleasure in is this: "He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

Even so would he have removed thee” —he applies it to Job— “out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness, and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.” It was to be accomplished strictly, exactly, as Elihu explained it. “But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.” Job was not yet right. There was a process going on under Elihu, and it was shown by this—that he never interrupts him. It is not without a little proof that Elihu saw signs as if he were going to speak, but he stops him. I need not enter into the proof of that now.

Then he says: “Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke” (vers. 13-26). He is infinitely above our thoughts. “For he maketh small the drops of water.” Elihu illustrates it by God's power with outward things. And if that is the case with so small a thing as the rain, how much more with a thing so great as the soul of man; the soul of man that is due to the inbreathing of God Himself? “They pour down rain according to the vapor thereof, which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of his tabernacle?” The speaker takes up the same line of argument that Jehovah does when He speaks out of the whirlwind in the latter part of this book. “Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it,” etc. (vers. 27-33). For the cattle are very sensitive to a thunderstorm, and show that they regard it as a very serious matter; there are men who only harden themselves. But here Elihu gives his last words, and is very much occupied with describing a thunderstorm. For he had proper thoughts about God even in outward matters.

“At this also my heart” —that is a very different thing from the mere instinct of the cattle my heart trembleth,” etc. (37:1-8). Even the beasts have more sense than some men. “Out of the south cometh the whirlwind,” etc. (vers. 9-12). That is, he shows the absolute sovereignty of God. And if that is true about natural things, is it not still more necessary in spiritual things? “He causeth it to come, whether for correction” —that is, what he was showing about the dealings with Job— “or for his land, or for mercy. Hearken unto this, O Job; stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?” What do you know about it all? “Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?” etc. (vers. 13-19). That is, that with even those men of God, it is only in part we know. There is great darkness even now. “Shall it be told him that I speak?” “Oh,” he says, “I should be frightened if such a thing were to be. I speak in the presence of God.” “If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up,” etc. (vers. 20-24). There was just where Job had made a mistake. He was wise of heart, and he admired the fruits of grace, and all that was quite inconsistent with what was due to God. And here ends Elihu. Immediately we find the Lord interposing; that I reserve for our next occasion.

[W.K.]

## Lectures on Job 38-41

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### Lecture 10.-Chaps. 38-41

Chap. 38:1-38. The last three verses of this chapter properly belong to the next chapter, as we there enter upon animate nature. All that we have here is in regard to what is called inanimate nature. Yet it is a part of the creation of God quite as truly as is animate nature. Still, this latter rises above everything that is without life. For life is a very wonderful thing, even in an animal, however small, and distinguishes it from all that never had life. But here we have Jehovah speaking, and it was Jehovah who spake at Sinai and in a way suitable to the law. Because the law of God if given to man—sinful man, as it was—must be a ministration of death and condemnation. It is because of defect in human law that a bad man escapes, and therefore the better the law the greater certainty that it will reach one who deserves to be punished by it. And God's law is perfect for the object for which He gave it as the rule for fallen man upon the earth, to curb and restrain him; and if he be not curbed or restrained, to condemn (and in effect ending in death).

But here there was quite a different reason why God spoke; because there was an end, for those who believed—to know that God cares for them, and this too, entirely independent of Israel and the very special dealings of God for the chosen people. God's eye and God's hand too are ever in exercise over every creature on the face of the earth. It does not matter how small or how great; it does not matter how violent or how peaceful; this makes no difference, they are creatures of God. And God has to do with them, as He shows here. This was a grand lesson for Job. He had forgotten that God has to say to the very hairs of our head, for they are all numbered; and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing. But God takes it in according to His own grandeur, and His grandeur is quite beyond man's ability to comprehend, and this was exactly the object—to show the folly of Job venturing to judge God's dealings, venturing to pronounce, or to find fault for a moment. In an early chapter of the Book you may remember that Job wished that God would only lay aside His alarming nature, and allow him to approach Him that he might plead his cause, and that he might defend himself before God. Here came the answer. I need not say it was to be an answer to every person, to everyone that has the fear of God, in all ages. The value of this Book does not at all diminish by the light of Christ. On the contrary, we ought to understand the Book a great deal better for that light.

Here, then, we have Jehovah—you observe this name has not appeared after chap. 2 (except in 12:9) in the historical part. But now before the proper history is concluded (the last chapter is the concluding chapter of the history), before that it brings Him in again. We have Him speaking according to His authority, according to His relationship; and that is just exactly what "Jehovah" means. It is God not merely in the abstract, but God in relation to man upon the earth. And hence He answers Job. But He answers him here because it was a rebuke out of the whirlwind. "Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind." It was meant to be a rebuke and that Job should really feel it and profit by it. And it is a terrible thing where God does not rebuke a soul upon the

earth. What does it mean? It means judgment by and by forever. Those that are brought into relationship livingly with God have His interference—not merely the fact that they are in relationship, but the proof of it. And He was giving this grand light upon how it acts and how Job ought to have been—if he did not enter into it—ought to have been on his guard against setting up his own judgment about God. This is what He is overthrowing, in these chapters.

“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” He does not mean that Job did not know Him at all, but He did mean that his knowledge was limited, and that he had no adequate knowledge as to the dealings of God. “Gird up now thy loins like a man” —like a hero— “for I will demand of thee and answer thou me.” That was a remarkable word. God is going to ask him a number of questions. Job had been questioning the dealings of God. Now God retorts upon him; now He says, I am going to ask you, and answer Me like a man if you can. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?” What an overwhelming question What did Job know about it? “Declare, if thou hast understanding.” He had none. “Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?” He did not know. “Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?” Because there are two things true of the earth. Stability for the time—that is what is referred to here, and why foundations are spoken of; and there is another view given in this very Book of Job, that it is suspended upon nothing. That never entered into the mind of anyone until comparatively late. Even the men of science have only just come to that. But there it was in Scripture before them. It is hung upon nothing. So that it has great stability and regularity in its course, so firmly are the foundations laid; but on the other hand the mighty power of God is shown, because, although it is hung upon nothing of the creature, it hangs entirely upon God's power.

“When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” The angels were made before the earth was made, but this is not at all referred to in Genesis 1; and the reason is plain. The point in Genesis 1:1, is simply to give, first of all, the creation of all the universe where there was nothing. I do not say out of nothing—that is folly; but where there was nothing, God created the universe, the heavens, the earth, and all their host, but in a very different state from what it is in now. Then the next verse shows a complete collapse that subsequently took place—what people call chaos; and the heathen always began with chaos, but we begin with God the Creator. But that chaotic condition was of all importance for man when man should be created upon the earth. Because how was man to get down to the bowels of the earth? How was he to know that there were treasures of gold, silver, precious stones, and marble and slate, and granite, and all the other most useful things that God had created? They were down deep in the earth, and the only way in which man could even suspect and learn certainly of their existence, and, consequently, to look for them, was by that confusion which brought up some part of that which was buried deep in the earth. So that all mining was founded upon that very fact of the power of God that caused the inner contents of the earth to appear, at any rate, on the earth's crust. Because what is deep in it no one can tell; no man can tell. Man has never penetrated but a very small way—I suppose not more than the thickness of an orange peel compared with the orange so little, into the bowels of the earth. What fills it, therefore, they do not know. They may reason; and as to what one man reasons, another man reasons to the contrary. They really do not know; and this is the thing that Jehovah was causing Job to realize-his total ignorance.

What is the effect, then, on a pious man that really believes in Him and His guidance? What is the effect of knowing our ignorance to be so immense? Reliance upon God. There was the great thing in which Job failed, murmured and found fault. He could not understand it. He might have believed and ought to have believed, and that is where we find our failure too, for we are quite as ready to reason and murmur as Job. Well, now, He speaks here clearly of the creation, and He carries that on in the verses which follow.

“Or who shut up the sea?” He had looked at the earth, and now he looks at the sea. “Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I make the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it.” Well, it was a very bold child, this new ungovernable creature that came into existence! And therefore He speaks about covering it up and swaddling it. “And brake up for it my decreed place and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed”? For who can control the ocean? “Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days”; now He looks at the vicissitudes of day and night, and He says now, “Was it you that set this all agoing, or do you know anything about it, how it was done?”... “Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the day-spring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth” —that is, when the sun rises to gild it as it were— “that the wicked might be shaken out of it?” Because the darkness of the night is exactly what gives the opportunity for murder and burglary and all the other knaveries of men more than any other time. “It is turned as clay to the seal” —because when the earth is in darkness just like that, no more can you discover it than the clay before it is impressed with the seal.

But the moment the light shines, there you find its conformation and its beauty as God fixed upon it—but in the dark there is nothing to be seen. “And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.” Then He turns to the sea again in another way. Not the rushing of the waters controlled by the power of God; but here He looks at the source of it. “Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?” —the abyss.

Now He goes down lower still, because Sheol, or Hades, as we have it, that is, the receptacle of departed spirits—is represented under the figure at any rate, and it may be the reality, of the heart of the earth. It is not the same thing as the lake of fire, but here we have a prison for those that have died. “Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?”

Now He comes up to the surface. “Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?” What do you know about it? “Declare if thou knowest it all. Where is the way where light dwelleth?” (vers. 18—21). And he shows that God has a store that man knows nothing about, which is caused to act whenever it pleaseth God. “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow; or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?” Look at the case of the Amorites, who, on the way to Beth-horon, fell by the hail stones that God rained upon them. And, again, He rained fire and brimstone, in other cases, on the cities of the plain. “Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters; or the way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is?” Well, God does think of animals, He thinks of even the insect; He thinks of where no man is; there He has His thoughts and His plans and His goodness.

“To satisfy the desolate and waste ground and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?” And it is remarkable how much rain has to do. People have been lamenting the immense and abnormal rain that we have had lately. But I saw a letter of an expert upon it, who looks forward, if God is pleased to give a good spring, that there will be an exceptional harvest. The fruit of it will be far beyond what has been had in England for many a day and many a year. That is in the hands of God. I do not pretend to say; let these men fight it out. “Hath the rain a father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?”

Then He looks also at the various stars and constellations. He asks, now what have you to do with them; do you know anything about how they came there, and how they have been ranged there? “Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades” —it is rather the bands of the Pleiades—at any rate it is a counterpart of the bands of Orion— “Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season?” They say that the signs of the Zodiac are here referred to, but whether that is the case is very uncertain. “Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?” “Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?” Conditions have an immense effect upon the earth. All is having an influence either of a terrible kind or a beneficent kind. Who is it that has fixed all that? Was it you, Job? “Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?” It comes down to man now. “Who can number the clouds in wisdom? Or who can stay the bottles of heaven” —well, all that is perfectly simple to God, and God has command in every whit of it— “when the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?”

Well, now we come to animate nature. Clearly these three verses (39-41) ought rather to be the opening of the 39th chapter. “Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?” It says, That is what I do, I find food for the lions and for the young lions too. There they are crouching in their dens, “and they abide in the covert to lie in wait.” I do not allow them to die for want of proper food. “Who provideth for the raven his food?” It is not only the great lion, but the comparatively small raven when his young ones cry unto God—there it is, they cry unto Him. They do not murmur; they cry. They tell their want, God has put that into them. It is a cry, and God hears it as directed to Himself. “They wander for lack of meat.” But He hears and answers.

“Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth” (chap. 39:1)? They are very inaccessible as a general rule to man. They are found in the great heights of the mountains. “Canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the months that they fulfill? Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? They bow themselves; they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows; their young ones are in good liking” —though they are hunted to death, and man is fond of feeding on them, yet God provides for them— “they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them. Who hath sent out the wild ass free?” That is also an animal that shuns the human race. “Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?” (vers. 1-8).

Thus we have had the wild goats, and then, the wild ass; and now, what is called here, a “unicorn.” I do not know why this name has been given to it. There is but one animal with a single horn, the Indian rhinoceros, found only in Southern Asia, but here it should be the wild ox. “Canst thou bind the wild ox with his band in the furrow?” We have the wild goat (ver. 1), the wild ass (ver. 5), and

now the wild ox (ver. 9). They follow one another in rotation. This is a more powerful animal than either of the others. There is a rising in the scale. "Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? Or wilt thou leave they labor to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed and gather it into thy barn?"

Well, now we come to a very peculiar phrase. There is really nothing here about peacocks at all. It is a mistake. A peacock we find for the first time in Solomon's day. They were brought from India or from Ceylon; and it is curious that the name of the peacock as given in Kings and Chronicles is Sanscrit, not Hebrew. It is the language of India, the old classical language of India. But this is quite a different thing. It should read, "The wing of the ostrich waveth joyously; is it the pinion and plumage of the stork?" (ver. 13). It is really the ostrich in the first part of the verse, and the stork in the latter. There is a kind of contrast of the ostrich with its great fluttering and also its stupid indifference to its young with the stork. The stork is the most affectionate bird that God created. There is no bird that has such a great care for its offspring; and for that reason there are people in the world who allow them to be kept and honored, and not a soul must injure them under penalty. I believe, in Holland to this day, that the storks are found in buildings of any height; and they are allowed not merely on the firs of the forest, but they are very fond of being near mankind, and they often build their nests in chimneys and the like, and in lofty places; and people have such a respect for a bird marked by such affection that they will not allow anyone to shoot or injure them in any respect.

Now that is the bird that is contrasted with the ostrich. The ostrich on the contrary leaves its young just to get through as they can, and exposes its eggs in the sand and leaves them there to come to maturity or to be destroyed. She does not care about them. And this is referred to— "which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labor is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom." And who is to dispute with God? The God that gives one bird its remarkable character of affection takes away the commonest sense even from another bird of immense power and great swiftness so that an ostrich could outrun a racehorse for a while— "she scorneth the horse and his rider."

Now he comes to the horse itself; and the war horse in particular. "Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?" What have you to do with it? "Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible" (vers. 19-25). Well, it is a splendid description indeed, but it is all for the purpose of overwhelming Job with the folly of his pretending to talk about God. Now He looks at the hawk, and the eagle more particularly. "Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?" Who was it that conferred these peculiar powers on all these animals and birds? "Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?" (vers. 26-30).

And at this point Jehovah appeals to Job again (chap. 40.). "Moreover, Jehovah answered Job and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it." Then Job does answer. "And Job answered Jehovah and said, Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." Jehovah repeats what He said before, "Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?" That is what Job had done. "Hast thou an arm like God?" Who are you to talk to God about Him as you have done? "Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?" Well, now, "Deck thyself" with the

excellency of God if you can. There was Job—a poor woebegone man with all his flesh corrupt, and the very worms feeding upon him before he had died—in the greatest possible misery of his body. “Deck thyself with majesty and glory.” “Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath; and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.” Why do you not put down all the bad people in the world? “Look on every one that is proud, bring him low” (vers. 1-14). But he was entirely dependent upon God.

That is the reverse of the picture. God now takes up in the latter part of His discourse but two animals, and of an amphibious nature. They were neither among the beasts of the earth proper, nor were they birds of heaven. They were a mixture of animals that could enter upon the land, and could also betake themselves to the waters. And these are described under the name, first, of “behemoth,” and secondly, of “leviathan.”

“Behemoth” means what is called the hippopotamus. It ought not to be called a river-horse, at all, which is what “hippopotamus” means. It is a river-ox. It is like an ox rather than a horse; of course, with its own peculiarities; and they are very peculiar. But still it is very much more after the appearance and habits of an ox than it is of a horse. And these two creatures were well known, particularly on the Nile. Both of them were familiar in the waters of the Nile; and in Arabia in the desert, to which these speakers belonged more or less—the edge of it or beginning of that which abutted on the desert—they were familiar by report, if not by actual visit to Egypt. They were familiar with these animals. They have been very much misunderstood by learned men. They have called them all sorts of strange things. For instance, many will have it that “behemoth” means an elephant, but when you read the account you will see it is very unlike an elephant, except that it is a big creature and with enormous strength, but beyond that, nothing.

“Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee” (vers. 15-24). When I made you I made him. “He eateth grass as an ox.” I have, therefore, good reason for saying that it is a river-ox, and not at all a river-horse. “Lo, now, his strength is in his loins and his force is in the navel of his belly.” I rather think that the expression in the 19th verse means, not that he makes the sword to approach unto him to kill him, but that He that made him made him a sword—made him a scythe; it is a scythe rather than a sword, and that is pretty much what the tusk of a hippopotamus is. It has great power in cleavings of all kinds, and in cutting. “Surely the mountains bring him forth food” —he can go to the mountain if he likes, in the neighborhood of it— “where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees” —that is where he loves to be— “in the covert of the reed, and fens”

Well now, in chap. 41, comes a still longer description of “leviathan,” and I understand that to be the crocodile. The crocodile is a very formidable beast. It is not so shy of the human kind; on the contrary, it preys upon men, women, and children, if it can get hold of them. It is not therefore at all so strange as the “behemoth” that we have been reading about.

“Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? You that can do such wonders; you can talk about God; and you can judge for God, and you can find fault with God! Well, can you catch leviathan with an hook? You ought to be able to do that. “Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?” (vers. 1-8). Be off with you! Do not you fight him. “Behold, the hope of him is in vain.” Spears or arrows are nothing to him and even a musket ball has no power to pierce the skin of a crocodile. “His scales are his pride,” because it is not only his enormous strength, and his practical invulnerability to any ordinary weapon, but there he is so confident in it himself.

So that here we may stop tonight. It suffices to show what God uttered to overwhelm Job in his self-confidence, and to show that his ignorance was so great, his powerlessness was evident; his lack of wisdom to enter into even the outer works of God. And, after all, what was God speaking about? Earthly things. Everyone of these things is merely of a natural kind, and has to do with what is visible, with what is seen and temporal. And if Job is so utterly unable to answer one of these questions—and in point of fact they are not answered to this day with all the brag of science—still, if that is the case about earthly things, what about the heavenly? What about the eternal things? There we are entirely and absolutely dependent upon God. We know nothing but what He tells us, and this is all our blessing—this is what we are waiting for—the unseen and the eternal, and, consequently, we of all people ought to be thoroughly dependent, looking up, confiding, and believing.

If the Lord will, next Wednesday evening I hope to conclude the Book, and to say a little of its general character also, besides saying what is necessary upon the particular chapter itself—the 42nd.

“Behemoth.” The name is, as competent men believe, an Egyptian designation (p-cho-mo, literally, water-ox) of the hippopotamus in Shemitic form.”

“Leviathan.” The leviathan here described (Job 41) seems to be, beyond doubt, not the dolphin or the whale, as some learned men have argued, but the crocodile. So most have been convinced since Bochart (Hieroz. 705, &c., 737, &c.).”

W. K.

## Lectures on Job 42

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### Lecture 11-Chap. 42

We have now the great object of God manifested. It would not at all have been so well for Job to have heard it before; but he had to walk very simply, and to learn to confide in God; to be perfectly sure that God could not fail to be faithful and gracious. Yet the trial was severe; and we know that Job broke down, as every one since the world began has done except the Lord Himself. And indeed, it is very instructive to contrast where the Lord speaks of His suffering, with the irritation that was shown by even so admirable a man as Job. But still we have had the whole case out; and nothing can be more beautiful and striking and instructive than the book looked at as a whole.

You will observe that it is only in the closing chapter that we have the story and bringing in of Jehovah in the dealings with Job. No doubt in what the Lord said to Job, we have it too, but that is coming to the conclusion of the book. In the parts of the book that precede we have nothing of the kind except in the first two chapters. There we have Jehovah the moral Governor, and that not in the way of a nation, but applied to one single soul, yet no doubt other people were tried and brought into blessing; or, at any rate, they had mercy shown to them, as in the case of the three friends. But what we find is that everyone concerned, except Elihu, has to be truly humbled. Elihu is very peculiar, because he takes no part, and we should not have known there was such a person; and he only, and suddenly, appears when the friends of Job had all been silenced, and Job had nothing more to say; for when Elihu spoke, Job was silent still, he could not answer. Still all was not yet wrought completely in his soul till Jehovah appears.

But now it is very striking to see that in this book we have all the great elements that appear in the rest of the Old Testament. We should not have known there was an Israel from this book. We have no reference to the law that was given by Moses, nor to the peculiar place in which the sons of Abraham were set. The very object of the Book is to show that God remains God, and more than that, that "Jehovah" (the covenant name of God) would show He had intimate personal dealings with a pious man, and in point of fact one that was chosen by God for this great trial—the most faithful man then found upon the earth. Even Jacob was not one fit for such a trial, even supposing Jacob and Job had been contemporaries. For although there was a great deal that came out very beautifully as Jacob grew older in the way, there was an immense deal that had to be sifted; there was a great deal that he had to be sorry for, and that he was chastised for at various times of his life, from early days comparatively till his later ones. So that Jacob was not at all as suitable a person as Job.

Job seems to have been a man sheltered (if I might so say) by God, so that he knew very little of the corruption that was in the world through lust. As far as he was concerned he seems to have prospered in a way that very few men have been; for although he was a pious man, and therefore liable to be imposed upon by the wicked men of that generation, as such men usually are, yet he was really a prince among men. But the sorrowful thing was that Job thought a great deal of it; he admired himself a great deal too much; and further he liked his "nest." He hoped that

he would never have that nest disturbed, and that he would die in his nest, as he said. But God intended to teach him a very severe lesson before that came to pass. In point of fact he became more blest than ever; and there we find ourselves very much upon Old Testament ground. He got large flocks and greater herds; and he had possessions too in the way of love; everybody could not do too much for him after he came into prosperity. That is the way of this world, and that was the way of even Job's friends. But he had more camels, more horses, more herds, and fairer daughters at the end than at the beginning. That is all entirely outside what we know.

In short, we do not find suffering with Christ, or suffering for Christ, throughout the Old Testament. Nor is it the ordinary way in which God acted then. I was only reading this morning in a little paper that came from Spain; and the great object of the person who wrote that paper—who has been seen in this room, too, though not in communion with us—was that the ways of God were always the same. That is where our good sister is altogether wrong. The ways of God differ greatly; the ways of God were quite different in paradise from what they were outside paradise; and they were different after the flood from what they were before; and they were different in Israel again from what they had been before the law was given; and they are still more different now that Christ is come and that redemption is accomplished. I suppose people mean by it that God's character is always immutable. Certainly that is all right; God does not change; but God in His sovereign wisdom takes different ways in dealing with every one of us. At the same time there are general ways that subsist at particular times. There are deeper ways now than ever since Christ came, and we are expected to enter into the ways of God, as well as His counsels which are now revealed for the first time. Heavenly counsels they did not know anything about in Old Testament times. They knew the purpose of God for the earth; they gradually knew that better and better as things went on, and as the regular prophets who wrote their prophecies began to appear. But the ways of God are always according to what occupies Himself, and what He is doing in a general way. Yet at the same time He carries on a moral government with every one of us, so that we have to do with Him.

And that was what Job had to learn—that there was, unknown to himself, what was inconsistent with the presence of God. It was not that he doubted a Redeemer; he fully believed in one; but that was a different thing. And people may believe in the Savior now, and yet may never have been brought personally into the presence of God as a practical thing. It is quite a different thing to have it, as the philosophers say, “objectively,” from what it is to make it our own “subjectively.” That was just exactly where Job was. He had no subjective knowledge of it; he had not appropriated it to himself. He rejoiced in the goodness of God. He was a faithful man. We see him acting as a priest, but not as a king; and we have it in a more glorious manner at the end of the book than at the beginning; because we find he had certain fears about his sons and his daughters, but when he had gone through all, he had no fear at all. There was no reserve; he was not at all afraid of anything coming. But he was put into the extreme suffering that might belong to any man. At first the sufferings were such as were common to man. It is not an uncommon thing for a very rich man to become very poor. It is not an uncommon thing for a man to lose all his property. It may be not merely by robbery, but by other means—sometimes through lack of wisdom and other people taking advantage, and so on; there are many ways in which there may be a very great reverse; and further, a person might be suddenly changed from glowing health to be the most miserable object possible.

But I do not call these spiritual sufferings; they are what are common to man. It might be so with an unconverted man; only there was this peculiarity about Job, which he did not know at first—that God was allowing Satan to bring all these things. Satan's pleasure and hope was to entangle Job's feet and cast him down, and that he would curse God. That was what Satan dearly longed to bring about. God allowed him to have his way, but not to kill Job. That would have been agreeable to Job; but it would not have brought out the great moral of the tale, which is, blessing brought into his soul by the very things that seemed to be against him, and not merely by the things that he experienced. When he began to find fault, he had to learn that that very God was One who never could swerve from what was excellent, and that in all this He had a purpose of blessing for Job. Not merely in his having outward blessings, i.e., of a temporal kind, but blessing for his soul.

And all this is very striking in so early a book as this of the Old Testament. For there is no reason to doubt that it is quite as early as the Book of Genesis, and very probably written by the same man. It is earlier, I do not hesitate to say, than the Book of Exodus. It may have followed Genesis or not; that I cannot say. They may have been comparatively together. It might even have been before Genesis, as far as that is concerned; but it is extremely early, and before Israel's history as a nation began. There is, in the book, no coming out of Egypt, crossing the wilderness, and going into the land—not even the slightest allusion to any of them. Had these things then taken place an allusion would have been very highly appropriate; but there is nothing of the kind.

Still, there we have the great elements that we find elsewhere in the Old Testament. The place of sacrifice—you know how very early that came in—from the Fall; and how the first great action of Adam's sons was decided by faith or the lack of faith—Cain bringing a mere offering which would have been all very well after a sacrifice, but showing a total lack of sense of sin, and also of what was due to God. Abel on the contrary brought his sacrifice; there was death brought in between him and God. That looked onward to the death of Christ; but I am speaking now simply of the sacrifice; and Abel's faith, therefore, offered that sacrifice. That answers to the death of Christ now. Any attempt to stand before God without that now, shows that I have no proper sense of sin, or of God's holiness. I neither know myself nor Him; else I should surely look to the one great sacrifice that completes and terminates all others—the sacrifice of Christ.

Well, then again, we find another very important truth from the beginning of it, and that is, the connection of heaven with man upon the earth, and that which is about to take place in man on the earth, arranged in heaven before it reaches the man himself. Well, that is true now; that is going on still. We find that is carried on afterward. We see it in David—another phase of it—Satan's opposition, in the last chapter of 2 Samuel (and in Chronicles, repeated in another form); and, further, in the Book of Kings we have it. But this Book of Job was written hundreds of years before. So that it was perfectly original in Job's case. It had not been written in any other book until long after. And there we find another terrible personage; not only the angels, familiar with the presence of God, and God telling out before them what is going to be upon the earth; but the devil, man's great enemy; yet withal the perfect supremacy of God in His love and in His power. He particularly brings Job's case before Satan; and He (what we may call) glories in Job before the devil; and the devil, of course, is excited to every kind of spite and jealousy because of that very thing; and God allows all this to be, knowing perfectly well, but always working by His own; grace, that in due time all would be set right. It might require His own personal intervention, and that is one of the great peculiarities of the Book of Job.

But we find the same thing in Zechariah—Jehovah speaking to Joshua, and Satan resisting; and this in one of the latest books of the Old Testament. So that here we find that Job has the same great truth in an earlier form—at the beginning of the Old Testament—of what afterward is found near its end. Because Zechariah was only just before Malachi, and in fact they may have been contemporaries. They were post-captivity prophets. And then comes the great trial. And the remarkable thing is, first of all, Satan was entirely defeated. Satan could do nothing with Job. He did his worst, and all that time Job was seen at his best.

But there was that in Job's heart that must be got out somehow; and it is remarkable that the friends of Job, not the enemy, seem to have been the means. And God has a very humbling lesson for them, as He has a humbling lesson for Job. They got it all round; and, in point of fact, Job's friends were more ignorant of God's ways than Job; and they took a very bad view of his case, and this, when it is about a good man, is always a danger. There may be something that the Lord has to chastise; but very often those who try to do it only show their own shallowness, and also that they are very unspiritual—that they do not enter into the mind of God about it. That was the case with the three friends of Job. I have no doubt that they were highly respectable, and that they were also thought to be very pious men indeed. And I do not doubt it. But pious men have to find their level.

And so it was with Job and his three friends, and the great debate goes on; and they are sitting, who had come to sympathize; and the end of their looking at him and seeing the terrible state in which he was, was that they had not a word to say to him; and Job could not understand that. If they had not been there he might have stood it. But sometimes we can bear alone what we cannot bear in the presence of other people, and that was the case with Job. And Job accordingly, after bearing this for seven days and nights, their sitting demure, judging him all the time, with not a word of sympathy this aroused Job, and he broke forth into expressions that were certainly very unlike his habit, and anything but glorifying to God. And then came their doubts of him, growing more and more passionate, until they began to think he must be a very wicked man. They went upon the ground that what occurs now is according to the absolute character of God.

Why, it is not so at all. If things were according to God's mind now, there would be no such thing as war; there would be no such thing as intriguing; there would be no such thing as people taking advantage one of another; there would be no such thing as robbery or drunkenness or any other kind of wickedness allowed. There will be a day when that will be the case, and when the state of things on earth will answer to the mind of God in heaven. Why, that is what is expressed in what is called "The Lord's Prayer" — "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." That will never be till the Lord reigns. And these men had the very foolish notion that no pious man walking properly could ever suffer, and that if a person came into very great suffering it was because he was a very great sinner, and, if nobody knew it, he must be a hypocrite.

That was the "amiable," or "loving," or whatever you call it—self-righteous really—the "self-righteous" judgment, with gross ignorance of both God and man, of the three friends of Job. Well, he resisted it and resented it; and he accordingly told them very plainly that they were physicians of no value at all; that they, instead of giving him comfort, on the contrary cauterized his wounds, and that they only inflamed them—in point of fact, that they were comforters of no value whatever, at the same time that they thought they were the wise men; and so he stopped, and

whenever they uttered a word, he uttered a better; and so at last compelled them to silence. Then it was that we find Elihu, who appears very opportunely, and in what is very beautiful to a spiritual mind who would understand it, for he was a young man, and they were old—he had kept silence until they had not a word to say—not only the three men, but Job also, for he had come to the end of his long parley; and until that was the case Elihu never opened his mouth. But when he did, he told them plainly that he was obliged, young man as he was, to speak for God; and that he was indignant, first that the three men had entirely misinterpreted Job, and secondly that Job had misinterpreted God; and therefore that Job deserved to be rebuked, and that he must tell him plainly where he was wrong. But after he did that he disappeared. So that he plays the part of an interpreter, one of a thousand. This is what Job had wanted at the beginning because he was terrified when he thought of the majesty of God; and he wanted some one that was of clay like himself.

'Well,' says Elihu, 'I am a man of clay like you; and there is nothing to frighten you in me, and therefore I will tell you the truth, that you have been speaking in a way altogether unbecoming a saint of God. You have allowed yourself to be roused and inflamed by the bitter reproaches of others and you have vented it upon God; your proper place was to remember that God was carrying on His discipline—that He does that even with the unconverted, and still more with the converted, that they might walk consistently. This is what He was doing with Job; and Job's place should have been to judge himself, and submit to God. Well, that was exactly true. And the Lord then intervenes in the case; and He overwhelms Job by a succession of questions that one of the most scientific men that ever lived could not answer.

One of the things in which the Germans have been successful—not about the Bible; there they are nowhere; but about matters of science on this earth; they have had some very able men of late years, and nobody perhaps was a greater oracle in science and in knowledge of the world generally than the famous Baron Alexander Humboldt; and these words of Jehovah astonished him; and he acknowledged that what Job could not answer, the men of science cannot answer yet. It is overwhelming to them; because although men of science are very clever about secondary causes; they are always stopped by primary causes. They never can arrive at the great cause, and they do not want the great cause. The reason is this—that nobody ever learns God by knowledge or by wisdom. We learn God by our want of Him. We learn God when we are poor sinners overwhelmed in our souls. And who can meet us but God? Repentance, therefore, is always toward God; and repentance means that I take the place of nothing but a sinner; for God will show me mercy; and God shows it in our Lord Jesus. However, Job did not know and could not know the Lord Jesus as we know Him; but he was waiting for Him. That is another grand truth that comes out.

No doubt the way in which Job looked for the Lord was rather as a Kinsman-redeemer who would also be an avenger on the enemy. Well, that is very natural. "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That is the proper Old Testament idea. But he could not enter into it as yet. It was not given for a great while after. There is a most remarkable Psalm of David—the 22nd, and the most remarkable in the Book of Psalms in that way. And it is not the only one. We have a companion one particularly in the 102nd Psalm. And we have another that is more with reference to the Avenger in the 69th Psalm. And there are two others that I need not dwell upon now; but at any rate, in the Old Testament there is One that is coming to avenge. And therefore Israel looks, at

the coming of the Lord, for their enemies to be destroyed at the same time that they themselves are delivered. That is not our faith at all of the Lord's Second Coming. We look to go up to heaven as the Lord went up to heaven. It will make no difference to the earth, and men will not see it; they will know that we are gone somehow or other, as they knew about the Lord.

That was a nine days' wonder, and was soon forgotten. And so it will be then. One would think that it would make a great impression all over the world as to the saints disappearing; but it will be a day when they are given up to hardness of heart, and when judicial blindness will fall upon them, so that God will not therefore be working to awaken their souls. He will, by converted Jews, send out the everlasting gospel to the Gentiles, and there will be a very great gathering of converts, Jews as well as of the Gentiles too; but that is during the time that we are up in heaven before the Lord appears. But the view of the Savior as dying for us, and consequently giving the meaning of all the sacrifices—all this was very much hidden from the Old Testament saints. Why, even the apostles did not understand it till the Lord rose. They had no idea of it, and did not believe He was going to die; and I have very little doubt that Judas flattered himself, when he was getting the money for selling the Lord, that the Lord would escape out of their hands; and when he found that the Lord was going to die, he committed suicide. He gave himself up entirely to despair and to the devil.

But in the 53rd of Isaiah we have a very luminous prophecy. Yes, it is all very luminous to us now; but what was it in Isaiah's day? It is very doubtful whether any of them understood it. Look at that good treasurer that came up from Ethiopia to worship at Jerusalem, reading from that very chapter, and not understanding what it meant. He did not know at all. It is very possible that the treasurer had heard of the death of the prophet of Nazareth, but he did not connect it with the chapter at all. And as I have said, the apostles themselves were never clear about it till the fact had taken place. And it was only after the Holy Ghost was given that there was any power to proclaim it; but after the Lord breathed upon them, they do seem to have entered into it during those forty or fifty days—forty while the Lord was with them, and ten days later before the Holy Ghost was given. So much as there is even of types of it in Scripture, so little does man put things together; and so much are we beholden to the Spirit of God for giving us to understand the Scriptures.

Now, I refer to that because we have again, let me mention, another thing very remarkable, as showing how far they had got—the two resurrections—the 18th chapter, as I have already pointed out, is with reference to the resurrection of man, and this is only when the heavens are no more. But in the 19th of Job it is the resurrection of the saint; and there is brought in the Redeemer, and the Redeemer standing upon the dust of the earth; that is before the heavens are no more. You see that exactly agrees with the two resurrections in the 20th of Revelation; the resurrection of the saints while the earth is still going on, and the resurrection of the wicked after heaven and earth are all completely dissolved, and are to reappear as the new heaven and the new earth. But Job does not speak about that. Isaiah does, but applies it to Israel. He takes a very contracted view; he was not allowed to see it fully. But the 3rd chapter of the 2nd Epistle of Peter brings it out fully as a matter of doctrine; and John, in the 21st of the Revelation, has a heavenly vision that manifests it to us and makes all plain.

Well, Jehovah overwhelms Job; but even He does not speak of the sacrifice of Christ. What Job confesses is, his impropriety, the forgetfulness of his own ignorance and of God's omniscience—for Job had pretended to understand what God had not yet revealed to him. It was not yet revealed. It was after this. But what is a man to do when he does not understand? Why, to look up confidingly to God; and secondly, to judge himself, lest he might allow any thoughts that were wrong. Job was wrong in these two ways, but is completely set right; for these wonderful questions of the Almighty laid Job in the dust for the first time. And the Lord stopped in the middle of it and addressed himself to Job, and even then Job said, "Behold I am vile." He now had come down to a thought of himself. It is not merely that I was vile before I knew anything of Thee, but, in spite of all that Thou hast been to me, and in spite of all the grace shown I am obliged to come to this, "Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer Thee?" Well, nothing at all. That man that was such a fine answerer of others, and particularly eloquent about himself! For there is as grand a description as you can have of an admirable saint, in the 31st chapter of this Book. But the misfortune is, it was Job talking about himself. Now, it is a fine thing to be eloquent about other people's goodness; but it is not a fine subject for oneself, and there is what betrayed Job. He had the greatest pleasure in thinking of the great honor showed him, and how the nobles held their tongues when Job uttered a word, and how everyone bowed down to Job. And now it had come to this! that he was the ridicule of all the naughty little boys, and that the bigger boys tried to entangle his feet and push him down—and all the rascally ways of a wretched world just such things as would be now if people saw a grandee that had come down to be going in filthy rags in the street, and all his body a mass of corruption!

Oh, it is a terrible plight, and an awful thing! But how good the result was! Well, now, he says, "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth" —that mouth that talked so well! "Once have I spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." That was one good sign. But now after the Lord had brought it fully out, what He dwells upon are two things in particular—His supremacy, and also His power, accompanied by the most tender care; not merely of good animals, such as sheep and lambs, or the like, but of lions and lionesses, which certainly are very redoubtable. And the eagle—an object of interest to God particularly; yea, and further, He had chosen to make the ostrich; and although the ostrich is no bird of flight, but simply a very fast runner, still, there it was, and could beat a race-horse for a good while. Who is it? —was it you, Job, that managed all these things? Was it you that cared for them all, provided for them all? Were you born when they began? In fact, Job was thoroughly laid low on every point, and, in every possible way, overwhelmed with the sense of his ignorance and presumption in talking about the far more wonderful ways of a God dealing with a man's heart, man's soul, man's circumstances now. The Lord does not express that last part. It was God showing His majesty, power, wisdom and goodness in outward things. If that were true of God, how much more in spiritual things? And this is the great lesson of the book that Job had to apply. And it had its effect.

"I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." Not only no word; he had spoken wrongly. "Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?" Why, it was himself; he owns it. This is his great confession, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear" —I knew it objectively; but now that I have made it my own, applied it to my own soul, my own circumstances, my own state— "now mine eye seeth thee:...I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." There was the great moral victory that God had accomplished in the face of Satan and in

the face of the three friends of Job, and in the face of Job himself. For what he had said might have provoked anyone but God. And so it is that we see the wonderful goodness of the Lord in the midst of it all.

“And it was so, that after Jehovah had spoken these things unto Job, Jehovah said to Eliphaz the Temanite” —why did He speak to him? He observed that none of these three men said a word. They did not profit by it like Job. If they had properly profited by it they would have joined Job and said, ‘O Lord, forgive our folly; we have sinned not only against Thee, but against our dear friend Job.’ But no, they held their tongues, as so many people do when they are very wrong. They say nothing. They ought to speak out. “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.” When was it that Job spoke the thing that was right? The first statement which I have just now read from the 40th chapter, after the Lord had first spoken; and then the second statement that the Lord added. It was not his fine speeches. That was not the thing at all that the Lord valued. It was his humbling himself and taking the true place. And the Lord put the others in their place. They did not humble themselves. But the Lord threatened them, and told them—not that they had spoken now, for they had not spoken— “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you” (vers. 7, 8). He had to become an intercessor for them. “For him will I accept.”

It was all perfectly clear now; so clear, that he could act for those who were wrong. “Lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.” Now they were bowed; and accordingly they that were sitting in judgment upon Job, took the place of being offenders against God, and looked to Job to entreat the Lord for them. “And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.” There was the returning them good for evil. He prayed for his friends. “Also Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before.” Then we find everybody turning round (ver. 11). “So Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep” —just twice what he had before. Now that will be accomplished—what answers to that—on the earth.

This is not heavenly recompense at all, but what will be the case with man on the earth. The Old Testament does not take you off that ground, and even in Job, who was not a Jew, we find the same thing. The time when Israel will be blessed will be the time when the nations will be blessed. Israel is the first-born of the nations, and they will come in subordinately to the Jew. But that time is not arrived, and it will be the perfect contrast of this time. Our place is in Christ, just as, figuratively speaking, mankind was in Adam, as being the one who was the father of them all. Now there is another head, and we are spoken of as being in Him—in Christ. And another thing is true “At that day, ye shall know.” The great truth of the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, is that in Ephesians we are in Christ for all our blessing; and in Colossians it is Christ in us in order that we may fulfill our responsibility “of manifesting Him who is in us. So that if the one is the great comfort of the Christian, the other is the solemn reminder to the Christian. “Ye in Me” —there God was blessing; “I in you” —that you may count upon Me, to fulfill your responsibility here below. Well, we have nothing of that kind here; but we have everything that heart could wish here below. Job was a far greater man than ever—if you count that to consist in the vast things that he

possessed; and, further, he was blessed in his family particularly.

“After this lived Job an hundred and forty years.” I do not mean by that, and I do not think the words are intended to convey, that Job lived 140 years after this was over, but that the whole life of Job was 140 years; a very respectable age—very. It was not so long as that of Abraham or Isaac; but it was, I think, something about as much as Jacob's, thereabout in a general way, and greater than that of Moses. So it was before Moses, who in his psalm (Psalm 90.) tells us, that “the days of our years are threescore years and ten,” etc. Moses seems to have been the writer of the Book. He and his brother Aaron did not arrive at 140, but Job did. But if you suppose him to have lived 80 years before the 140, it would make him far older than any of the patriarchs. I do not mean some of the elders before the Flood, but after the Flood people did not live to such great ages—except immediately. And so the Book ends with Job dying full of years.

W. K.

## John's Vision of the First and the Last—1

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This afternoon reference was made to the comfort afforded at the present time to God's people by the book of Revelation, and this use of the Apocalypse is an undeniable fact, which might be better recognized than it is. The book was written for this very purpose at a time of great distress and tribulation in the history of the church.

There is much in the special features of the book of Revelation which at first sight is apt to deter people from reading it and studying it. But there is undoubted help as well as comfort to be obtained by the simplest, if they only approach it in the right manner. And indeed there is but one suitable manner in which properly to approach any part of scripture, and that manner is to have an earnest, reverent, and consuming desire to see in that particular scripture some special communication concerning the Person of Jesus Christ.

The great lesson of the holy scripture and the great subject of God's teaching by His Spirit throughout all the ages is that there is but one Person who can adequately help the youngest and oldest, the feeblest and strongest of His people, and that Person is Jesus Christ. Now it was particularly for John and for the saints who were tried like John that the vision of Jesus Christ which we have in the first chapter of the Revelation was given and recorded.

### JOHN AS AN EXILE

Let us think for a moment of John and the circumstances in which he was found. It is fairly clear from scripture that John was the last survivor of the Apostolic band. He was a young man as a disciple of Christ in Galilee; he was an old man in Patmos. He had seen many changes in the interval, and had suffered many vicissitudes since he first saw the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Let us suppose that this vision was granted to John toward the end of the first century. Now think of some of the important events of the first century. Let us for simplicity's sake take it that in the year 30 our Lord was crucified; thirty years after that would be the year 60, when the apostle Paul came to Rome as a prisoner, and all the work of the Spirit of God of which we read in the Acts had then been accomplished. During that period the gospel had gone abroad in its fullness and power all over the known world, and people came into the church of God by myriads. Ten years later, in the year 70, Jerusalem, the city of the great King, the earthly center of Israel's hopes, was destroyed, and was left a heap of smoking ruins by the Roman army. About the year 80, John, the old apostle, wrote those three tender letters that we still have, full of affection and truth, and applicable to the family of God everywhere and at all times.

Here, when those crowded years had all passed, we read of him as a lonely exile. He had seen so many divine wonders, seen the church of God arise, develop, and spread, seen also evil creep into that holy church, seen men giving up, turning aside, becoming corrupted by the influence of evil doctrine, seen, moreover, the persecuting power of Rome devastating the church of God, as it had done the Jewish nation, and now he himself in his old age is banished to the Isle of Patmos.

How full that hundred years was to him of sorrow, regret and disappointment! What had looked so fair in prospect had now withered; the gospel which went out to conquer the whole world was now as it were a failure, he himself was held prisoner by the civil power of Rome, exiled from the society of his friends, and of his children in the faith, left to die alone in Patmos, forsaken of all.

John's was a sad experience for an old man of piety and of such repute in the church. When he was young and impulsive he had said to the Master, I can drink of Thy cup, Lord, I am able to be baptized with Thy baptism. The Lord had said to him in effect, Thou shalt indeed drink of My cup. As thou wilt see, I shall go to Golgotha, My service a failure, what I have labored for producing nothing; the years of My ministry all barren to human sight; and I Myself forsaken, given up by My nation, handed over to the power of Caesar to be crucified. Thou too shalt drink of that cup, and see thy service a failure too, thyself a prisoner of Rome unable to testify for thy Master. Did John in Patmos recall the words of Jesus? (Matthew 20:22, 23).

But the Lord knew that when He was at Calvary, when His nation had turned away from Him, and delivered Him to the Gentiles to be crucified and spit upon, when many of His disciples feared, and forsook and even denied Him, there was one who came near Him that day; there was one that did not utterly forsake his Master; there was one found at the lonely cross, upon whom He looked, and to whom He spoke, and that disciple was John, come there to drink, if he might, of his Master's cup.

The Lord does not overlook any act of faithful adherence to Himself, and so years afterward when John was banished from Christian intercourse and society, with no earthly friend to solace and comfort, the Master, according to promise, did not leave nor forsake him. The Master came to visit His servant in the Isle of Patmos. He came, but what for? Why does He come to those who are cast down? He comes to illuminate the hearts of those who are, as it were, shrouded in darkness, those who are feeling the cruel power of the world, and the pressure of adverse circumstances. He came to John to lift up, to reveal Himself, to stand before this sorrowing disciple and to reveal afresh to him His glories, and His unchangeable Person. Beloved friends, it is so that He will come to us also in these hours of stress and sadness which have come upon the world and the church.

We are today face to face with the great ruin in the church of God. By the ruin I mean that the power of the evil one has invaded the church of God; the companies of Christians are not everywhere pure and holy; sin is present and permitted in many companies, and in the conduct of individual confessors of Christ it seems to have its sway. We know from scripture that this must be so because the terrible declension was foretold from the beginning. But there are many who are cast down because of these unhappy conditions. There are many also who even say it is now time that we let things take their course. But it is never too late to make a bold stand for Christ, and those who are cast down should remember what the Spirit of God has recorded here for our instruction, help and comfort.

### THREE VISIONS OF CHRIST

The vision given to the apostle was a glorious one. And since it was placed on record we are privileged to spend that Lord's day with John in the Isle of Patmos. We can as it were hear what he heard, and see what he saw.

It is a way of God to reveal Himself at the great epochs of man's history suitably to the occasion. You will find in the Revelation that there are three visions of Christ given in connection with the three great divisions of the book, for the Apocalypse is divided into three parts. First, there is the part which deals with present things, that is, with the church conditions which began at Pentecost, and which will continue until the rapture of the church, and in the first three chapters we have the way in which Jesus Christ is revealed in connection with these present things. Secondly, there is the considerable part relating to the providential judgments falling on men when the church is gone. Accordingly, we find in the fifth chapter the vision of Christ as the slain Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, prevailing to open the sealed roll. Thirdly, there is the part dealing with the epoch of Christ's appearing and reign. This begins with the nineteenth chapter, containing as it does the introduction of the day of the Lord's personal judgment. There you have a vision of Christ in heaven upon a white horse, displayed as coming to the world as the Warrior-Judge.

You will see on study that in each of these cases Christ is revealed in a character suitable to God's dealings with the world portrayed in the particular vision. What we have to consider briefly for our special comfort and help at the present time is the vision of Christ as He appeared to John on that Lord's day in the Isle of Patmos.

#### THE TRUMPET VOICE

I think, as I said just now, that John's thoughts must have been very sad ones, as he looked across the sea, probably to the coast of Asia Minor. There he could see, with the mind's eye at any rate, that portion of the country where so great and grand a testimony had been given of Jesus Christ, and where the power of God's Holy Spirit had gathered many to worship the Father and the Son. There before him were the seven churches in Asia. John might, as was said, almost have seen them. And he thought what a difference had come about since the day when they first heard the sound of the voice of Jesus in the gospel call. How sadly different they now were in faith, in zeal, and in holiness! And while he thought in sadness of this declension, John heard a voice behind him as of a great trumpet.

There was One who had heard his thoughts; One knew what was passing in his soul; and that One had now drawn near to him and spoke with him. While John listened to what the Lord had to say, he found He had something for His servant to do. The apostle was to write; but he was first to write in a book what he saw, and send it to each of the seven churches. The first communication to the assemblies was not a matter of doctrine or exhortation, but the vision of the living Person of the Son of man in His power and glory. For we must not omit to observe that the seven epistles as contained in the second and third chapters were additional communications, one for each assembly. The first communication was concerning the vision which John saw for his own personal comfort and instruction (verse 11).

Beloved friends, I would that I might impress upon myself and you the same great fact, this vision of the Christ of God. Young men and women, old men and women should for their spiritual strength see before the soul this vision of the living Person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Should we not? Is it not a fact that Christ makes Himself known, that He makes His voice to sound as a trumpet in our ears? But often it is with us as it was with John that He speaks behind us.

John heard a voice behind him While he was looking, as we have supposed, at the seven churches, Christ was behind him. He was looking at what most depressed him. Is it not so with many of us today? When we look around, what leanness, what carelessness, and what indifference we see

Then we begin to be sad. We say Christian effort is of no further use. Let us give it all up, for as we look at the churches and the world we see nothing but sorrow, strife and sin.

But there comes a voice behind us as of a great trumpet. There is One who is speaking to us. He has a special message for us. Let us then do as John did. He turned to see the voice that spake with him; until he turned he could not see the Speaker. Are you looking in the wrong direction? Are you looking at circumstances, or at Christ? There was a man and an apostle who walked on the waves; but he looked at the waves and sank immediately. And so John, looking away from Christ had no strength, no power. He was simply a prisoner in Patmos, while decay was spreading in the Christian assemblies he loved so well.

#### THE LIGHT AND THE LAMPSTANDS

It was a marvelous revelation that the Lord made here of Himself. When John turned he saw seven golden candlesticks or lampstands. They were grouped in this manner for a purpose. A lampstand is evidently for use as a light bearer. There were seven of them, and they were golden, indicative of the holy work they had to do in divine ministry. Theirs was a sacred office; they had to diffuse the light of grace and truth in this world; and John saw that there were seven. The lampstands refer, as we learn, to the seven churches of Asia, but figuratively they refer now as then to the church in this world as the medium through which the sevenfold activities of the Spirit of God are expressed in witness to Christ during the night of His absence.

W. J. H.

(To be continued)

## John's Vision of the First and the Last—2

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In the Epistles of Paul you have the church spoken of in its unity as being associated with Christ in heaven. This heavenly calling of the church is most important for us to know. But although in the purpose of God the church is even now in heaven, in daily practice the saints are here in this world and constitute the assembly of God. And His people are sent here and there on divine service as it pleases Him.

Of course, the number seven is figurative, but still in broad significance we may be sure it represents among other things that God in His gracious purpose has taken various companies of believers, and has set them where it has pleased Him, for the express purpose that they should shine for Him in a united capacity in the darkness of an evil age. And in their representative character they are linked with the seven Spirits of God spoken of in the earlier part of the chapter (verse 4).

A golden lampstand is clearly of no use whatever without its light. John saw seven candlesticks, but the light of the seven churches of Asia was dim. They did not shine well for the Master, and their faint flickering would cause the apostle sadness and grief. But he saw more in his vision. In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks there was One like unto the Son of man.

### THE SON OF MAN IN THE MIDST

It is to this central feature of John's vision that I would direct your special attention this evening. The apostle's eyes were opened to see who was among the lampstands. The same fact is true now. In the midst of the professing church of God on earth today, there is standing One like unto the Son of man. You may say the church is in the heavenly places, and it is true, and Jesus Christ is revealed to us there, glorified before the eyes of faith. But He is equally here also as the glorified Son of man. He is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, which are all united in this respect, that they surround the adorable figure of Christ as the Son of man.

We are reminded by this title of John's testimony in the fifth chapter of his Gospel concerning the Lord and His teaching about Himself. A great deal is revealed there, but there are two things especially prominent, to which I now refer. The Lord is there shown to be the Life-giver and the Judge. Jesus exercises divine functions. God quickens-gives life; the Son also quickeneth whom He will. Thus the Son of man is the Life-giver. Moreover, He is the Judge of all the earth. The Father Himself judgeth no man; all judgment is given unto the Son (John 5:21, 22). Now in Patmos John sees the blessed Jesus among His churches as the Son of man, as the Life-giver, the One who bestows life, and the One who sustains life. But more than this, He is also the One who marks that which is wrong, discerning and condemning all that is evil.

And He appears, moreover, to the eyes of the apostle as One clothed with a garment down to the feet. This flowing vestment would indicate the grace and dignity of His person in repose rather than in active service such as would be set forth by girded robes. John might recall His active service on that last passover supper when Jesus arose from the table, and having girded Himself

with a towel, took a basin, and cleansed His disciples' feet. Now He appears again in the midst of His own, not as One to cleanse their feet, but in the calm dignity of His Person who is Lord of all the saints, clothed with a garment down to the feet. As Priest and Advocate He serves on high, but in the midst of His own assemblies He is an object to look upon with wonder and delight, and an object to worship and to adore with fervent and unceasing praise.

#### GIRDED FOR LOVE

Further, we are to mark that the Son of man was girt about the breasts, not the loins, with a golden girdle. This feature of the vision has an important significance, especially as we remember that the Lord is revealed in this chapter as the Judge. We learn that His repression of evil in the churches is exercised in the energy of His love. To a person who does not know the love of Christ, His aspect may seem a little forbidding.

Years ago I was speaking to a Cingalese barrister, who was a Buddhist. The subject of our conversation was the truth of scripture. He had imbibed the infidel notions which are so rife in this Christian country. He had visited England and had learned them here. At the time he was returning to Ceylon fully persuaded that Great Britain was rapidly giving up its national religion. One of the objections he raised to the Christian faith was the subject of this very chapter. He said with scorn, "You speak to me of your Jesus! The Bible speaks also of your Jesus, and how does it speak of Him? It presents Him as a Great and Awful Judge, as One clothed with a long garment and His eyes as fire, with a sharp two-edged sword in His mouth. This terrifies me; Buddha is so calm." I might have said to him that the same Jesus whom he feared suffered little children to come to Him, and they were not terrified.

But the Buddhist had a bad conscience, and hence arose his thought that Jesus was One to terrify a man. I do not, however, see that aspect in this scripture. Jesus is in the midst to oppose evil, but He is girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. In the midst of His assemblies His breasts are girded for activity. He is there to exercise His love, and the energy of His love has not failed throughout the centuries. There is One still in our midst who is girded to love us, and the bond of His love is the bond of righteousness, for His is the golden girdle of Divine righteousness. We cannot exhaust the love of Him who has saved us and washed us from our sins in His precious blood.

#### HOAR HEAD AND HAIRS

But further, His head and His hairs were white as wool, as white as snow. "The hoary head is a crown of glory." White hairs are significant of wisdom, such as was associated in Daniel's vision with the Ancient of days (Dan. 7:9). But do you ask what poor distracted churches want with One such as this? Did not the Lord say to His disciples I send you forth as sheep amongst wolves, and are we not His sheep? Weak, silly, wayward? We are fond of our own way, we are without the wisdom we require. But when we look at the Lord Jesus we see Him endued with all power and wisdom. The hoar hairs tell us of that wisdom which comes from above and is first pure. He it is who is made unto us wisdom. James says, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally to all men. The treasures of wisdom are in Him who passed through this world as the Son of man, and suffered as no man ever did nor could suffer. Look then at Him who is in our midst full of wisdom to guide and control the assemblies.

## EYES OF FLAME AND FEET OF BRASS

Moreover, His eyes are as a flame of fire, discerning and criticizing our thoughts, words and actions, looking upon us and searching us through and through. Do we not need this scrutiny? There is no more necessary devotional service for us than to be at the feet of Jesus, and to ask Him to search us thoroughly, as the Psalmist did of old (Psalm 139:23, 24). Let His eyes of flame search us to discover and consume every hateful motive. We are apt to deceive ourselves, but when we feel that His eyes are upon us we make no mistake, for the search-light of His presence shows us truth in the inward parts, or error.

And His feet too, of what do they speak? John saw that they were like unto fine brass as if they burned in a furnace. Did I not say just now that the church of God at that period was passing through a furnace of affliction and persecution? There were Christians shortly before who had been made into bonfires in the pleasure gardens of Rome, and where was Christ amid those horrible sufferings which His servants endured? His feet were walking with His own. in the furnace, as it were. Did not the same One walk in the furnace of old with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego? When Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace he said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the furnace? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the fourth is like the Son of God." As it was with the faithful witnesses in Babylon so it is true that when the church of God passes through the hour of trial, there is One who walks with the saints, His feet burning as if in a furnace.

I would ask you whether you personally believe that the Lord veritably walks in the midst of the persecuted and suffering church, and also walks with each tried and sorrowing individual. Sometimes we find we must go through the furnace of affliction. The fire is before us and we must go forward, but here we learn that there will always be One with us, sometimes behind us, sometimes before us. When He is before us, happy are we, for we know by joyful experience how His power and strength work for us.

## SEVEN TWINKLING STARS

John saw then in this vision that the church of God was not forsaken. The feet of the Master were walking with the saints in their fiery trials. But there was something further. The seven golden lampstands were there, but John's eyes left these. His eyes were turned upon the Lord Himself, and he saw in the right hand of the Master the seven stars which are the representatives of the seven churches. The fact thus illustrated made all the difference between defeat and victory. The seven stars, despite the feeble and broken condition of the assemblies, were held and maintained in the right hand of power, in the right hand of Jesus. Was not this a comfort to the beloved apostle, grieving in that last time when there were many antichrists? Should it not be a comfort to us also?

In the darkest days God will have a light to shine for Him. There is One, the glorified Son of man, who takes care that the light of testimony is shining in this world all the time. We need not, therefore, be cast down, beloved friends. The Lord Himself holds the complete testimony, the seven stars, in His own hands, and therefore the matter of light-giving is perfectly secured. What you personally have to be careful about is that your own light is shining. If your light is not shining, the Lord will use someone else. If one man does not shine, another will be chosen to shine. Happy

the man who shines for Christ in the world and the church. Sad the man who is dark and dead so far as testimony for Christ is concerned: Let us then see to it that we are letting our lights shine, while for our comfort we also see that a perfect testimony is maintained in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, where are the seven stars.

#### THE SOUNDING WATERS

The voice John heard was as the sound of many waters. In this figure I think we may have a reference to the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is the sound of His name going out into all the earth. As the wind blowing where it listeth represents the activities of the Spirit, so the many waters may set out the activities of the Son. We hear the sound of the Spirit of God at work testifying of Christ. The mighty waters are the multitude of those potent agencies which give eternal life. By the living water of the word men are born again. In the sound of the gospel, in the sound of the revelations of scripture spreading abroad everywhere in the earth, men hear the voice of Jesus.

That voice heard by the apostle in Patmos was to him like the voice of many waters, majestic in its might, calling back to his mind perhaps that night long past when he heard the voice of Jesus rising above the roaring storm on the sea of Galilee. There was then power in His voice over the raging deep. The power is such that still the dead hear the Son of God, and they that hear live. Most certainly this is so for both body and spirit. There are dead souls now as well as then who hear the voice of the Son of God and live.

[W. J. H.]

(Continued from page 352)

(To be continued)

## John's Vision of the First and the Last—3

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### THE SUNSHINE IN ITS STRENGTH

After observing that out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, symbol of the penetrating power of His word, John saw that His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. In this all-glorious Lord we have the glory that excelleth. Think of the golden lampstands, think of the seven stars, and then of the mid-day sun. Where is your torch-light, and where is your star at noonday? Think how everything fades in the exceeding brightness of the meridian sun. Is it not so also in the face of Jesus Christ where shines the glory of God? There, for men of faith, is the great power of testimony in this world today. There is the one thing which makes the man of God calm and peaceful in the presence of tremendous odds. In the radiant glory of the face of Jesus Christ we find a ground of confidence and assurance, while we ourselves are transformed thereby.

Did not Saul of Tarsus see that glory? It shone down upon him while the madness of persecution was still filling his soul. He saw the face of Jesus, and he was at once blinded to all else in the world. He felt himself a lost soul in the presence of the Lord of glory, whose voice like a double-edged sword, penetrated his conscience and heart. Long after, Paul wrote "Have not I seen Jesus Christ the Lord?"

Many are walking in the light of a vision of Christ today, and I think this experience worth cultivating. There is no greater power for testimony and service to be found in this world than that which emanates from the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking at Him with that earnestness which Paul enjoined upon himself and the Philippians we catch something of His glory. On reflection you will remember that this was so in Old Testament days with Moses in the mount. He came down from the mount a singular man in the eyes of the people, and his singularity was that there was heavenly glory shining in his face.

It is possible now for us to reflect the glory of the unseen Lord and Savior. Those who in the privacy of their chambers look upon the effulgent countenance of the Son of man, shine themselves with a glory which is unmistakable in this dark world, being changed into the same image from glory to glory. There is nothing like it in this evil age, nothing whatever to compare with it. Every child of grace can in this manner be a witness for Christ, for every child knows what it is to draw near to the Person of the Lord Jesus, to speak with Him and to hear His word. By this means the stamp of long-suffering, meekness and grace characteristic of Jesus is imprinted upon the follower of Christ, and the men of the world say, "There is something about this man that is different from us all." They own in effect that you have been with Jesus and have learned of Him. May we know more of the transforming power of His presence!

### JOHN PROSTRATE AND POWERLESS

The effect upon John of this vision of Godhead glory was surprising, and yet as we consider further it is not surprising. The aged apostle fell down at the feet of his Master as dead, and that attitude was proper and right. It was just the posture that he ought to take under the

circumstances.

When John thought of the glories of Jesus as they were thus unveiled before him he said, What am I before Him?

John, no doubt, may have thought of that time at the Lord's supper when he had reclined on the bosom of Jesus, and tasted of the sweetness of His love on that night of His betrayal. He had long known the Master's care for him, and he remembered often those gracious words of farewell that then came from His lips. But now he was looking at the glorified Christ with the eyes of flame, and so he fell down and worshipped Him to whom belongs all power and wisdom and glory and dominion

When the apostle fell at the feet of brass as dead he acknowledged that in himself there was no life, but all life was in the Son. John took a position of utter powerlessness before the Lord. This is of the essence of true service, for when a person is in a condition to say, "I can do nothing at all," he is just the very person the Lord will use. We stand in our own light when we think something of ourselves, and forget that we can do nothing at all except He is pleased to take us up as empty vessels and make us of some service for Him.

#### THE LORD'S HAND AND WORD

The Lord did not leave the humble and helpless servant at His feet. He had come not only to unveil His glories to the exile as of old they had been unveiled to other men of God, but to be in personal contact with the disciple whom He loved. He laid His right hand upon him. I ask you to consider what is meant by the Lord of glory laying His right hand upon John, the right hand of power that held the seven stars. It means that He conveyed power to him. He bestowed new strength upon this poor faint and weary pilgrim by laying His right hand upon him.

But more than this, the Son of man spoke to the prostrate man, and the very words He uttered, "Fear not," were just those He had more than once spoken on earth. The glorified Man of the vision was Jesus, Jesus Christ who "is the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

How often during the course of His ministry had the Lord said, "Fear not!" I think very little of persons who never tremble. They are bold, ignorant people, who think they are always right. We ought to feel our weakness, and to tremble because of it. And the blessing of trembling is that we shall then get the word of Jesus coming to us, saying, "Fear not," and His word in this case, as always, carried effective power with it.

And then in addition to this word of comfort, He revealed Himself as the First and the Last, for He is the Self-revealer.

If you look in the prophecies of Isaiah you will find that on three occasions (Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12) God speaks of Himself in this particular way, indicating His Godhead and His sovereignty as being over all. Jehovah is the First and the Last, the all-supreme One. Jesus said to John, "I am the First and the Last," and three times also in this book (Revelation 1:17; 2:8 22:13) this phrase occurs in connection with our Lord Jesus Christ—once in the first chapter, once in the second, and once in the last.

Do not think of "First" as meaning just the commencement. The earliest is not always the most important, and the elder may serve the younger. "First" often in scripture means the chiefest. Thus it is applied in this sense to men, Mark 6:21; Luke 19:47; Acts 13:50; 28:7; to Philippi, Acts 16:12; to Paul as a sinner, 1 Timothy 1:15. And when the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of Himself as being the First, He sets Himself forth as the Supreme One. There is none higher than He. He is the First-born from the dead, and of all creation, both old and new; for in all things He must, by inherent right, have the pre-eminence.

I think we may note here in passing the frequent reason of failure in Christian life and testimony. The Lord is not given the first place, that is, the chiefest. You may put Him first, but not chief.

There was a servant who said "I go," but went not. The Master's will to him was not predominant. You may put the Lord first, and yet give Him the second place. He must have the chiefest place, and be supreme in everything. Let Him be to you the First and the Last, as He is called in scripture.

All is the Lord's. There is none and nothing worthy beside Himself. All is summed up in Him. The beginning and the ending, first and last, all is wrapped up in the glorious and blessed Christ of God. He is the living One who became dead; He has the keys of death and of hades, and all things are in His hands.

Beloved friends, why need we fear because of the enmity of the world and the frailty of self? The Lord says to us as to John, I am He who has supreme power. I am the One who is looking after assembly and national affairs. I am the One who will see things through to the end. Every true disciple shall be brought safely home. Not one member of the body of Christ will by-and-by be missing. There will be a perfect church in glory.

#### THE LORD'S KNOWLEDGE AND THE LORD'S REWARD

I have two other things to mention before closing. They arise out of the communication to the seven churches. The Lord said to John: "Write the things which thou hast seen and the things which are" (verse 19). The things John saw were comprised in his personal vision. The things which "are" were in contrast with the things which should be hereafter or "after these" (verse 19). Of the latter we read in chapter 4.

The things which "are" refer to the things of that present time which are in view in the epistles which follow, addressed to the seven churches. The messages to the seven churches present among other special features two which we may now briefly consider.

The first is the revelation that the Lord is in the midst of His church as the silent Scrutator, continually surveying the works of His people.

Just read through these seven letters, and over and over again you find a recurrence of the words, "I know thy works." Individually and collectively, the glorified Son of man knows your works and mine. Our works yesterday, our works today, He knows them all. He knows them in the manner of their execution; He knows the object that we had in them. I ask, Is the plan and operation always such as would satisfy the eyes of fire? We are dealing with the living Lord, that One at whose judgment seat we have to give account. His message through John is that He knows our works already. Therefore in this sevenfold message to the assemblies the Lord calls to us to have a care

as to what we say and do.

Time is short, for the Lord surely is at hand. Our testimony here cannot last much longer. Therefore let our works be such as will shine for His glory who is ever with us, and knows our works.

The second predominant feature I would now mention is that the Lord in these epistles holds out the promise of a reward to those who conquer in the strife. The reward is promised to the individual victor. In every case, "he that overcometh" is addressed (Revelation 2 and 3.). We each have our responsibility for earnest and faithful effort, and we are each pledged to victory and not to defeat. A Christian need never be defeated in his testimony. There are truly powers that seek to destroy your testimony and make you a weak thing without influence and energy for the truth, but it is for you to claim the victory. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

We have personally to overcome evil with good. It is for you to gain a victory. According to the Lord's promise you shall have a reward in the day that is coming, but you must conquer. There is the evil one to overcome by the word of God. You have to meet him. There is also the world that is saying all manner of evil things about the name of Christ. What do you do if they are said in your hearing? Stand by and say nothing, or act as a loyal disciple? Will you deny Him by a guilty silence, or will you speak for Him? Will you in other words be the overcomer? Having an Omnipotent Savior to strengthen us in our weakness, we shall be more than conquerors through Him that loves us. W. J. H.

(Concluded from page 368)

## Joy, Prayer, and Thanksgiving

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### Brief Notes of a Reading on 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

I think we might profitably dwell on these important verses. They are so sweet and precious especially to the young believer. These Thessalonians were Paul's joy and crown of rejoicing, and we cannot read these Epistles and not notice the spirit in which they were written.

In these verses we have the normal state of the Christian—perpetual joy, perpetual prayer, and perpetual thanksgiving. What do we know of perpetual joy, of a joy that never wanes? If we were marked more by these three things what a different people we should be!

If we turn to 2 Kings 18:14 we find Hezekiah not prayerful, and the means God took to make him so. He never turned to God at all when the king of Assyria first came up, but God would not let this go on. The devil tried to hinder his confidence. After Rabshakeh's insolence Hezekiah went into the house of Jehovah (19:1). What a pity he did not go before! Hezekiah was learning a profitable lesson, but it needed to be deepened; so he gets the letter which he spreads before the Lord, and gets God's magnificent answer. Does not this show how much better it would be for us if we were more constantly in prayer? Hezekiah had beautified the house of the Lord more than any; but after opening the house, through not praying, he had to cut off the gold.

In the order in Thessalonians, joy comes before prayer; and the question is, Where is true Christian joy to be found? The joy of the Lord is our strength, and how is this joy to be maintained? Paul had this joy in prison and he told the Philippians to rejoice always. It is only to be found where the Lord Himself found it. He found it through obedience, and as we are obedient we shall prove it likewise. The dependent Alan could say in Psalm 16, "the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places." We are no doubt living in the last moments of the church's history, and it is only conscious communion with the Lord that can keep one happy. If you meditate on the Lord, even through a heavy day's work, you will find joy.

Next we have "Pray without ceasing." "Open thy mouth wide," He has said, "and I will fill it." The Lord does not want us to close our mouths. The answer in Malachi is, "I will open the windows of heaven." Don't we want that? In Acts 16 we find the Lord opened Lydia's heart. If you and I open our mouths wide the Lord will fill them. Then He will do what we cannot do. He will open hearts.

In Luke, the Lord is seen praying more than in any other Gospel. At His baptism He comes up praying. So on the mountain top, or in the garden, He is always praying. Confidence and dependence mark Him all through. Only in that Gospel too is it said by Him, "Men ought always to pray."

"Pray without ceasing" does not forbid the thought of definite times for prayer, nor does it detract from the proper carrying out of our service to the Lord. Prayer should indeed have the first place in all our service. Then are we strengthened of God, for whatever He gives us to do. But alas! are we not ready to put our work in the front place, and to give a subsidiary place to prayer? Not so the

apostles, but “We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4).

In ver. 18 we have “thanksgiving.” How the Lord loves to hear it! In Hebrews there are three sacrifices; one never to be repeated, two never to be left off. The Lord's one offering can never be repeated; then in chap. 13 “by Him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually,” and, “to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Four times in our Lord's own life He gave thanks. With five thousand starving men before Him, He gave thanks because He knew what He would do. When His testimony was rejected (Matthew 11) He gave thanks. At the grave of Lazarus He gave thanks, before He raised him. And in the presence of His own death He gave thanks (Luke 22:17-19). “In everything give thanks,” but that is not so difficult as “giving thanks always for all things.” This is God's will for us.

## Keeping in the Love of God

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There are two things we may observe in connection with, or as brought out, in this scripture. The one is the interest of God—Father, Son and Holy Ghost—in His own; and the second, in the midst of all here, the heart bounding in the competency of Him Who is able to present us faultless. Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for us, in us!

We may, at times, be ready to take a somewhat despondent view of things, and to look back on days that have gone. I do not deny there were bright days which even we have known; I do not deny that corruption had set in even in apostolic days, and is still more manifest now. The mystery of lawlessness already wrought then, and never more than at the present time. Man does not like any god but himself. And we need to take care that we come not under these powers of evil. There is abroad, even amongst the children of God, a spirit of insubjection to God's word, and there is danger of that word being given up.

A Christian wrote recently that in Scotland the thought of inspiration was pooh-pooed, but that we in England were far behind. I am not sure that we are. There are very few books that issue from Oxford or Cambridge which we can read with profit in the things of God, because of this latent, if not full-blown, unbelief. We should not underrate the corrupting influence of the day, but there is what still abides. God is the unchanging one. The Lord Jesus is "the same." The Holy Ghost is eternal. I do not say our outward privileges in all respects are the same. But if we have not the apostles' presence and vigilance, we are commended to God, and the word of His grace, and these abide. We ought to feel for the people of God everywhere, and should seek to warn those who do not know whither they are drifting, and if any of us, through the mercy of our God, have been kept from the whirlpool, may we seek grace and strength to rescue others who are equally dear to God.

What assurance of God's unfailing interest in His own, we have here, in the very opening of this epistle! "To them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and kept for Jesus Christ (R.V.). "Beloved." What! Are we still beloved of God? Yes. We know the Father's love, and the love of Christ. Does not this fall in with Revelation 1:5., where it is "to Him that loveth us" (R.V.). "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." He "loved me, and gave Himself for me." But it is not only what He did, but what He does. "To him that loveth us." And now, in this verse of our Epistle, we are assured that we are, still, "beloved in God the Father." How sweet is all this!

Then amidst all the corruption of the present scene, we are "kept" or "preserved" for the Lord Jesus. When the Lord was here, He could say of His disciples, "I have kept them"; but now, no longer in the world, He prays the Father to keep them, and not them alone, but others who should believe on Him through their word (John 17). So here, having been espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ, we are kept for the Lord Jesus Christ and shall be presented to Him gloriously.

Having loved us, He loves us still. His love is unchanging, eternal. Oh, that we were ever mindful of this, and more constrained by this love of Christ, a love without change indeed.

There is a world within a world, a circle, a redeemed company here in the world, precious to God—the church of God. Where do we find this? Not in heaven, but on earth. And we are called to walk in the truth of it, in the reality of it, for it is a divine fact. This we can only do as Christ is our object. If our object be the saints we shall be disappointed. Christ is the same at the beginning, at the end, and all along the course. The world knows nothing of this. Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Every Christian on the face of the earth forms a part of it. If alas! you give up your confession of it, yet the truth remains. However dim our eyesight we are called to rise above and walk as heavenly men in the light of Christ risen. We believe in God, but we have not seen Him; that is faith. “I am going away,” said our Lord; “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” In the consciousness that He was going to God as He came from God, so He shows His interest in His own and gives them part with Him, although we are here in a corrupt scene. Cannot we honestly confess to our shame, that we are not so anxious for communion with Him, as the Lord is for ours? How many things fleeting draw our hearts! What abides? The earth? No, that is what scoffers may say, but we know it shall be burnt up. The heavens? They shall pass away. What then, should our hearts covet? Should it not be the growing knowledge of Him with whom we are going to spend eternity—even the Savior?

Do you think the world a pleasant scene, or is it to you a dark or squalid place, as Peter calls it (2 Peter 1:19)? Our home is not heaven exactly; the Father's house is our home. What would heaven be without the Savior? Here we are brothers and sisters, the family of God, but is this our home? We are looking to be in the Father's house where is the Savior. The Father's house is in heaven.

In verse 20 we read: “But, ye beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” There is no legitimate ground for despondency or discouragement. There is, after all, a power within us greater than that in the world, for have we not the Holy Ghost? Why, then, should we shake like an aspen leaf when in face of danger? If our faith is in God, are we not exhorted to press through all difficulties and go forward?

Perhaps you have thought that this was a day of scattering only—that it was now too late to build with everything in ruin. No, the call remains; “Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.” There is a divine way in every difficulty, in every circumstance. Here it is we are to build up one another; we are never called to walk as independents. There is in this world a “habitation of God,” and for this we are being builded together through the Spirit; and we are instructed how we ought to behave ourselves in this house of God (not meaning “a place of worship” so-called), in what is divinely formed of “living stones.” The building is not one of earthly material, but, if we look at it from God's side, of “living stones,” “whose house are we,” whether “assembled” or not, yea, every day; for the truth of God is not like sugar or salt that is subject to atmospheric influences. Truth is not merely for the time; we want all the word at every time. We cannot afford to surrender one little bit of God's truth. All scripture is profitable.

“Praying in the Holy Ghost.” Here is divine power. We are called to pray in the power of the Spirit. God would not put an embargo on our prayers. He says: “In everything by prayer,” etc. In every trouble go to Him. If my request be in the Holy Ghost, He will give it. If not, He will throw the refuse away; but go to Him. He delights to give what is good. “Keep yourselves in the love of God.” Is not this something like being keepers “at home”? Young women are exhorted to be “workers at home”

(Titus 2:5, R.V.). "The love of God." "The mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Praying in the Holy Ghost." What a sufficiency is here!

We need mercy still. Are we apt to be lifted up? Not when we are conscious of our need of mercy. This we need as much today as when we first found it. Not always of the same character, perhaps, but God is rich in mercy of every kind. This is so grand we must treat every saint alike! Must we? I don't think so. I once heard it said, They never, when children, got what they cried for, but a rod. Petulance should meet with correction, not with encouragement. We cannot act towards a naughty brother as to one walking well. There are the responsibilities of the family and of grace.

"Unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before His glory," etc. Can He not do it—a God of illimitable power? You might not think it, but the heart believes it, because He has said it. Is it enough to wait for it when the church shall be presented faultless? Surely not. We want to walk according to it now. I know all will be faultless then, but should it not be my ambition (as the apostle Paul says) to be well pleasing to Him in all my ways now?

"To the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and forevermore. Amen." Is He not worthy?

## Labour

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In Proverbs 14:23, we read: "In all labor there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury." Even as regards prayer, in which we are exhorted to continue and to watch therein with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2) there is such a thing as "laboring fervently," as Epaphras did, of whom the apostle writes as "a servant of Christ," whose heart's desire was that his Colossian brethren might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (4:12). It will be no talk of the lips, if, instead of thinking of our prayers as something meritorious, we remember the One we are privileged to address, the Name we are authorized to plead, and who has said, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." What an immense comfort is this! To doubt would be to dishonor Him who "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all," for "how shall He not with Him also, freely give us all things." Paul to the Corinthians speaks of himself as "in labors more abundant," and to the Colossians, in whom was Christ, the hope of glory, he says: "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ, whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working which worketh in me mightily" (1:27-29). Let us remember that the reward in the coming day will not be according to the success which the servant may here have seemed to have achieved, but "every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor."

In Romans 16:12, amongst the salutations, Tryphena and Tryphosa are alluded to as, "who labor in the Lord," and "the beloved Persis who labored much in the Lord," and in Philippians 4:3, these "women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life," which blessed fact as to themselves had not rendered them careless about those who have no hope. The apostle "labored and suffered reproach because he had his trust in the living God who is the Savior (or Preserver) of all men, specially of those who believe," a ground of confidence infinitely to be preferred to uncertain riches "Your work of faith and labor of love" are remembered along with "the patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of God and our Father" 1 Thessalonians 1:3). "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister" (Hebrews 6:10). Truly labor in the Lord has many a sphere for its activities.

Besides the foregoing there is a labor we are apt to neglect, namely, a labor to enter into that rest "which remaineth for the people of God." Doubtless we shall better do so if "we labor that whether present or absent we may be accepted of Him," or as another has translated it, "Wherefore also we are zealous, whether present or absent, to be agreeable to Him" (1 Cor. 5:8). If we wish to serve well our God and Father and the Lord Jesus, such service has, of course, its cares, but these are included in the "casting all your care" upon Him. It has its secrets, as John 2:9 shows: "the servants who drew the water knew," and in result it should lead to increased communion. Much more might be written on this subject, but let this suffice: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:38).

W. N. T.

## The Institution of the Lord's Supper: 1. As Recorded in the Gospels

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Notes of an Address on Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19, 20

It is a striking circumstance that in the New Testament we have very few ordinances of any sort prescribed for the believer. We have baptism, and we have the Lord's Supper, but nothing besides. This absence of ritual is in great contrast with the religion of the Jews. Under the Mosaic Law, there were many sacrifices to be offered daily, and throughout each day, and these sacrifices were of many kinds. There was a gorgeous and ornate building in which men were to worship. There were priests specially delegated for the purpose of ministering in the holy things and in the holy place and in the various holy services. There were also the Levites with definite duties in the Temple precincts; there was in short a great host of rites and ceremonies to be performed. But when we come to the New Testament, we find that this order of things disappears, and that worship in spirit and in truth takes the place of worship by rote. The Lord's Supper is mentioned definitely in a few places only, but always in the simplest language, while the service itself is distinguished by its simplicity. There is nothing difficult in its observance. There is nothing costly in the bread and the wine which constitute the Supper. They are just inexpensive articles within the reach of all. There is no priesthood, as distinct from assembly, authorized for its administration; and the prescribed ritual, if we may call it so, is very simple indeed.

### CHRIST HIMSELF—NOT SHADOWS OF HIM

Why is there this striking contrast? There may be many reasons, but I would like this evening to mention only one, which I think may be sufficient for the occasion. Under the law, the sacrifices and 'the services of the priesthood all pointed down the Old Testament ages to One who was coming, and who was to do the great and sufficient work of making an end of sins and of introducing righteousness. But in the New Testament, we find that Person has made His advent into the world, and has accomplished the work of redemption. Moreover, He makes His presence known and felt in connection with this simple service. And when you have the substance, will you care for the shadow? When you have the antitype, where is the need for the type? The Lord's Supper brings the hearts of the children of God into close and living association with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and having Him, all legal symbolism is superseded, as the Epistle to the Hebrews shows in great detail. It is the Lord, then, who gives the Supper its essential character, and therefore He is able to make His own people recognize His presence under the most adverse and difficult circumstances. They may be scattered and separated, they may be persecuted, but wheresoever they may be in the wide world, let them only be gathered to His name, let them but be desirous to "do this in remembrance" of Him, and He is there in the midst; and His presence amply compensates for every other disability. The presence of Christ Himself enables the believer to rise superior over all outward circumstances, whatever they may be.

I know that eating the Supper is not individual communion, and we will, perhaps, touch upon that part of the subject later. But it should be clearly understood by all that no person can properly enter into the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and that no Christian can experience the blessed

fullness and joy of its observance apart from the recognition of the presence of Christ Himself, verily in the midst according to His word, not cognizant to the senses, it is true, but cognizant in spite of the senses. Oftentimes there are matters arising in connection with the observance of the Lord's Supper which may tend to distract or turn away the heart and the thought from the subject of the moment, but when Christ's presence is realized all these things lose their influence, and dwarf into their proper insignificance.

#### THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE INSTITUTION

It is interesting to look at the institution of this Supper with particular reference to the circumstances under which it was inaugurated. This will help us, I think to gain a view, a right view, of this memorial and of its spiritual import. It was upon the eve of the great climax (shall I say?) in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ that this Supper was instituted. He had been in this world, the Son incarnate, passing through its varied scenes, the wonder of the angels, and the scorn of men. What that passage through this world meant to Him we shall never know. But there was always before Him during His ministry that crisis to which He alludes as His "hour." There was an hour, a fixed moment, to which He was advancing. Everything concerning Him had been pre-arranged; all the events were determined beforehand, and He knew the future. He was never taken by surprise, as we are, but consciously facing the difficulties, the sorrows, the agonies of Calvary, He went forward, unchanged in heart and purpose and action by what He knew was coming. His love never diminished in the slightest; His works of mercy were never left undone because of the greater work of atonement before Him, but with imperturbable grace He proceeded continuously day after day, night after night, in pursuance of His lowly service. His days were filled with beautiful expressions of heavenly love in this dark and evil world, set forth for man's faith and knowledge.

But when He drew near to Calvary, He was in the very shadows of that oppressive darkness which enveloped Him on the cross. And it was on the eve of His departure from this world that He instituted this Supper. On the passover night itself, on that night so full, too, of events of universal importance, He instituted this Supper. You will remember that He was together with His disciples in the upper room expressly to keep the passover supper. The company was Jesus and the twelve. They were twelve distinguished men, but distinguished in a special manner. They had been called out to be His apostles, His beloved followers and His witnesses. They were selected to see more of His face than any in the world besides, to hear more of His words than others, and to be admitted by Him into scenes of closest intimacy.

#### DISCIPLES CONTENDING FOR PRECEDENCE

The disciples were around the table, and Jesus at the head, looking upon them, as, indeed, He is looking now upon us, He saw all that was within them, and Scripture records that during that memorable night they showed that they were men of like passions with ourselves—changeable, unreliable, sometimes impulsive in love and earnest zeal, and at other times carried away by foolish and wicked thoughts. The disciples should have known what was before their Master. Only a few days previous Jesus had said to the twelve, "We go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify" (Matthew 20:17-19). That the Jews and Gentiles would unite in His crucifixion and death, He told them on three occasions. You would have thought that their interest and expectation of these events: would have been quickened on

that night—the passover night. What did the blood of the lamb signify? Did it not recall the hour of judgment and death passed long ago in Egypt? Had they considered the Lord's words seriously, would they not have entered that room with solemn hearts and chastened spirits? Would they not have been filled with a foreboding sense of sorrow and pain before their beloved Master? We find, however, that they were engaged in petty quarrels, struggling among themselves as to who should be greatest amongst them. Observing, I suppose, the disciple whom Jesus loved taking the place nearest to Him, their jealousy was aroused. Why should he be there? Why not they?

What was this painful altercation to our Lord? He was contemplating the morrow when He would bear their sins in His own body on the tree—just such sins as these. They could not understand His loving purpose. They were unable to enter into the grief before Him. Such lack of spiritual feeling was the sorrowful result after three years' service with them. There was for Him no comforter, no sympathizer, none that cared. Do not let us judge them too harshly; let us rather judge ourselves. Are we never guilty of the indulgence of unworthy thoughts at the table of the Lord? In the most solemn moments, when the Spirit of God is making to live again before us the hour of suffering at Calvary, thoughts may even then arise in our hearts, altogether out of harmony with the subject of the Spirit of God. We must know that we ought to bow our heads in shame when our Lord looks round upon us as we are eating His Supper, because things are sometimes in our hearts which ought never to be there at such a holy season.

#### THE SERVICE OF JESUS AT THE SUPPER

Jesus rose from the table, He laid aside His garments, He girded Himself with a towel, knowing, as the beloved apostle said, that the Father had given all things into His hands, that He had come from God, and was going to God. He then went round as the servant of them all to wash their feet. Was not this a sight to move their hearts? The Lord of glory, whom angels delighted to serve, was there meekly serving twelve men of humble birth—Peter, James, John, and Judas too. The Son of God had come down to serve them all! “I am among you as He that serveth.” The word, the act, form a rebuke for us all. Let us remember that on no occasion in our spiritual experience do we see the glory of humility exhibited more than at the Lord's Supper. That loaf, that wine—what do they tell us? Of the One who came down from above to serve, of the One who did serve in life and death; of the One who went under the cloud of wrath to serve, and to the death of the cross and into the grave to serve. Let us, then, never be ashamed to serve this Christ, for has He not served us, even to the death of shame?

#### JESUS AND JUDAS

All these circumstances are associated with the institution of the Supper, which forms a contrast in its calm beauty with what was around Him in Jerusalem, and what was before Him on the morrow. In the little company itself there was willfulness as well as weakness. One was altogether divided in interests from the Lord. For Judas was there. “Ye are clean,” says the Lord, “but not all.” In the little circle, there was this spectacle of direct apostasy before the eyes of our Lord. This man had been able to withstand the benign rays of heavenly glory shed directly upon him for three years. His heart was not softened by the ministry of grace, but hardened. The love of Jesus had never penetrated his soul. It had, on the contrary, become a stronghold of sin, of shameful deeds, of Satan himself. The betrayal was an exhibition of the power of Satan, overcoming one in that small apostolic band. The Lord appealed to the traitor. He gave him the sop, and Judas took it, but

withstood the overture. All the love of Christ was thrown away upon him; his soul was completely devastated and ruined. "That thou doest," the Lord said, "do quickly." Then he arose from the table and went out, and Scripture adds, "it was night." He went out into the blackness of night's darkness to do a deed of blacker darkness. Judas was at the table, but went out from the presence of the Lord, to go to his own place. He was not "clean," as the Lord had said.

But he having gone, the Lord, as they were eating, took bread and the wine, and instituted the Supper. This done, He went on to speak those valedictory words we have, and which we love so much, in the Gospel of John. These discourses speak, not of the forgetfulness on the part of the disciples, not of the evil within them, but to their hearts which were full of love for Him, and of sorrow, because He was about to leave them. He knew that they truly loved Him; He knew that in spirit they were prepared to renounce everything for Him. He knew that they were exposed to danger, and that they were feeble in action but fearless in spirit. He said 'I am going away. You are filled with sorrow. I know that you love Me. I know that you will lament when I am gone from you, but I will come to you again.' So He brightened the future for them by the promise of His return, and thus buoyed them up with the glorious hope of His returning, having first taught them the remembrance of Himself in the Supper.

All these circumstances tend to give a special character to the Supper of the Lord. They all combine in an appeal to our affections that we should value its observance. There is no engagement more solemn or serious, and nothing more blessed as a spiritual occupation. I do not know what we can do or say that calls for more earnest examination of our own hearts than the participation in this feast. Yet the service is simple and accessible, and, while we are assured of the Lord's presence, there are no terrors set before us as there were at Sinai—no clouds of darkness, no thunderings or lightnings. On the contrary, we have the sweet and loving invitation of the Lord Himself, "This do in remembrance of me."

#### THE LORD TOOK BREAD AND BLESSED

Now let us notice for a little the actual institution of the Supper by our Lord. The details are all familiar to us who are present, no doubt. While the disciples were eating, the Lord took bread. This act was not associated with the ritual of the passover supper; it was an act quite separate, of course, and quite distinct from it. The passover supper was kept, the ceremony was maintained in the prescribed form, and then the Lord instituted a new Supper, and one that would supersede it, because the passover was about to be fulfilled by the sacrifice of our Lord Himself, and having been fulfilled, it disappears, as it were, from the round of appointed feasts.

The Lord took of the bread that was before Him, and He blessed. We do not read that He blessed it. You will observe that the word "it" is in italics in our version, and therefore the significance is not that He took a piece of bread, and made it something else. He did not transform it. He blessed. He blessed God. He recognized the Giver. His heart went up, as He loved it should, in thanksgiving to Him that was above. No occasion too great, none too small, for each and all things He would bless, and would give thanks. If you compare the account in Luke with those in Mark and Matthew, You will find that in Luke the parallel words are, "When He had given thanks." Blessing, therefore, is equivalent to giving thanks. There is no support at all in Scripture for the notion that the bread mysteriously and wonderfully became something different from what it was before.

The Lord blessed, as we find He did on other occasions. It was a relief to Him to look upwards. He could find nothing of joy in what was around Him, but He could turn to God, and to the joy set before Him. His link with the Father was close, His fellowship was intimate and precious. It was His habit to look up and give thanks.

There is no doubt that there is more involved in the act than the mere giving of thanks for the reception of the bread. There was about to be sacrifice and bloodshedding, and both were before the holy soul of our Lord. This bread was to be His body. It had long been before Him to do this deed of redeeming love.

(To be continued)

## The Institution of the Lord's Supper: 2. As Recorded in the Gospels

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He had come into the world to inhabit the body prepared for Him and to taste the vicissitudes of life among men, and now He had come near to the accomplishment of the work given Him to do. He could bless God that it was so. Presently He would wrestle in agony in the garden of Gethsemane with the power of darkness in full view. Wrath was before Him in vision, and then He would struggle, as it were, at the prospect which was so abhorrent to His holiness. Here at the table, He was about to say, "This is my body." The joy that was before Him of having accomplished the Father's will, and of having rescued from terrible destruction myriads of the souls of men, filled Him with delight, and He looked up and blessed, and He broke the bread and passed it to them.

Not that He partook of it Himself. He desired to eat the Passover with them before He suffered, but this Supper was something new and different. This was something for them to do for His sake. This was to be a memorial for them. Did He Himself require a memorial? Does He need some tangible token to keep us before His heart? some memorial to bring us to His remembrance? Never; our names are engraved upon the palms of His hands, but do we not forget? Do we not often need reminding? He knew our weakness, and He took the bread, and said, "Take eat, this is my body." And by these simple words He joined us up, so to speak, with Himself in His great work at Calvary, and in its results. It is as if He said, 'Make this your own, let this truth be yours, let it be within you, let it be assimilated in your very being; take, eat.'

Hence it is, beloved friends, that we come so close to the blessed person of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Supper. "This is my body," are the Lord's words. There is no need, however, for fanciful notions with regard to the bread. Let us be clear that the material is bread, and that it remains bread. He said, "This is my body," using, of course, a figure of speech, such as was often upon His lips. He spake in the manner of that nation to whom He came. When He said "This is my body," He thereby attached a special significance to the loaf. This, and nothing else, was to be the emblem which should set forth His body, and should for this reason recall to their minds His body.

### THE BREAD A MEMORIAL

Let us be clear with regard to another point. When the Lord said, "This is my body," He held the bread in His hands, and handed it to them. He handed it to them to eat. But He was still there before their eyes. He administered, if we may use that technical term, the bread before them. But He was distinct from it Himself. The bread was a memorial for them, and given to them by the Lord, He being separate from the bread which was and is emblematical of the body in which He suffered and completed the work of atonement. This feature of the Supper is ever true, and is an important one for faith to realize. He Himself, the living glorious Lord, the One into whose hands all things are now given, is present to preside at the feast, to superintend, if He will be allowed to do so, on the occasion. But He is separate from that which is His memorial. The living Lord conducts us in our remembrance of the Christ who died.

There is a reason I have for referring to this distinction now. I have found that some persons regard the Lord's Supper as if it were a means of causing them to remember someone they have in some measure forgotten during the previous week. For six days, or some part of the six days, they have been so busy with other things that the Lord has been out of their thoughts. The memorial is valued because it brings Him back to mind. This is a false view of the Lord's Supper. The Supper is to remember the Lord as He was, in His sufferings and in His death. It is a shame that any Christian should require something to cause him to remember the Lord as He is, in the glory. Can it be that we are so far removed from the sense of the living joy of knowing Christ Himself that He passes out of our hearts, and we need something visible, like the breaking of bread, to bring Him to our minds? We do not assemble to remember Christ the glorified Christ, we come to remember the One who died. There is but One adorable Person, of course. Jesus Christ, who is on high is the same Jesus who was crucified, but we meet to go back to the past. And the Spirit uses that marvelous faculty of memory which we possess, the power we have of making yesterday live again, so that the events of long ago become as fresh as ever in our hearts. We know we all have that power in some degree, and this power of remembrance is turned to account by the Spirit of God in connection with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is something further stated about the bread, which is His body—which, as Luke says, “is given for you.” If you compare the accounts carefully in the three Gospels (which it is always profitable to do), you will find that there are some words in Luke which are not in Matthew or Mark. Luke adds just those words which lay hold of our hearts, and draw us into close communion with the Master Himself. “This is my body, which is given for you,” and as He said this He could apply the words personally to any one of them that sat at the table. “It is given for you.” ‘For me,’ says Peter, ‘For me,’ says James. They could each and all respond thus and say, ‘It is given for me.’

The Lord meant to quicken the pulsation of their hearts towards Himself. He wanted to draw to Him the devotion of their souls, as they should realize that the sufferings through which His holy body would pass would be on their account. The great work would be for their benefit and blessing. I know therein was the accomplishment of the will of God; I know the death of Christ has very wide-reaching results. We shall never measure it ‘properly,’ nor understand it fully. But at the Lord's table, while there may be loftier thoughts, is there anything which can touch our hearts more deeply than the remembrance that He suffered for me? He died for me. “My body is given for you,” He says. The whole man was given. The blessed Person who surrendered Himself as an offering, a sacrifice, held nothing back. Such is the sacrifice the Lord loves—the whole burnt-offering, everything completely rendered to God. “This is my body, which is given for you.”

#### THE CUP AFTER SUPPER

But the Supper was not confined to the loaf only. Subsequently the cup was given also. He took the cup and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, “Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new testament.” In these words the Lord shows us unmistakably that the particular event in His history to be remembered on these occasions is His death, because there were the two elements. There was the bread, and there was the wine. The bread was the body, and the wine the blood. Separate as they were in that emblematical form, they truly set forth thereby the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the body, as we know, the blood is the life. So it is expressed throughout the Old Testament. But when blood is seen distinct, it is the witness of death. So it came about with our

Lord historically, for we read, the soldier came with a spear, and pierced His side, after He had delivered up His spirit. Forthwith there came out blood and water. This token of death was registered upon earth as evidence that the great work of life-giving had been accomplished. The supper reminds us that there was veritable death in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we think that Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord: did indeed taste death, bowing to the king of terrors, who brings paleness to the cheeks and tremors to the hearts of multitudes of men, we are filled again and again with amazement. The Lord tasted death, and yet He had displayed such power over death, making the grave yield up its victims, young and old. He could speak, and the dead lived again. Yet now He says to the apostles, "This is my body; this is my blood."

How full of wonder must have been the hearts of those men as they pondered over these words. What did the Master mean? It was not the first time He had spoken of giving them His flesh to eat. He had often spoken of His death. It was now come very near at hand. "This is my body which is given for you." There is no other way of life for you; it must be this way of death for me. In my life, in my incarnation, I am altogether separate from you. It is only through my death that you can participate. Only thus can you be blessed; hence I give my body and shed my blood for you. The Incarnate Son was here in this world, but His death was necessary for man's salvation. God had said, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Here then was pictured the sinless One giving His life and going down into death for the blessing of those who were around Him, and of those who should believe on Him through them. He took the cup, and gave thanks, and they might all drink of it. Judas was not there. Jesus had washed Judas' feet with water, but his heart was left unclean. What would be the use of his eating and drinking with an unclean heart? It is worse than useless to drink the cup if the heart is estranged from the Lord. The hearts of the eleven were true to Him, and He invited them to take and drink. 'You can share, you can participate. Drink ye all of it.' Moreover, the Lord added, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood," speaking of that new covenant of which the prophets had foretold, of the covenant which would be yet made with the house of Israel and Judah and which will be seen in all its glory in days yet to come. But the blood, as the basis of that covenant, was about to be shed, and the cup is the memorial of it.

#### SINS FORGIVEN. CHRIST REMEMBERED

"This is my blood which is shed for you for the remission of sins." You observe the Lord's Supper is not a place where the children of God come together to remember their sins. Their sins are remitted. The institutions of the law differed in this respect. When the sacrifices were offered of old, there was a remembrance made of sins every year on the day of atonement. But believers are not invited to the Lord's Supper to remember their sins. They come to remember Him who died, having borne their sins in His own body. It is not that we are not conscious of having sinned—for such a person there could be no supper in its true sense. The supper is for those for whom Christ shed His blood that their sins might be forgiven. Jesus, looking upon the company in the upper room, saw the indelible marks of disfigurement that sin had wrought in their moral characters. They were clean by His word, but He came not by water only, but by water and blood, and He was about to shed His blood for the remission of their sins. So when we drink the cup, we are reminded of His blood shed, and we are then indeed on holy ground. We are together in close fellowship with our Lord and Savior. Hence we cannot but think what it is that has brought us there so near to Him.

The disciples did not enter into the true character of the cup. They could not anticipate the value of the blood of Christ to them. But we know it. Why is it we come together? To remember the Lord in His death. Being there, the cup brings before us that precious blood which has cleansed us from all sin, and made us suitable to sit in the presence of the Lord. Judas had gone out, but Peter and James and John and others remained, and they were made the recipients of this communication from the Lord, in spite of the activities of Satan, and the weakness of the flesh. And why is it they were there? Why is it they were maintained in such hallowed society at such a time? Because of the precious blood of Christ about to be shed that their sins might be removed.

Oh, beloved friends, how wonderful this theme is for our meditation when we are together to remember the Lord Jesus Christ! Can it be possible that we appear on such occasions to lack subjects for thought and worship? Can it be that the trivial happenings of the past week occupy our hearts, and obliterate every holy memory of Christ and His passion and death? Is there not enough in the death of Christ to engage our hearts for one brief hour? Do we chafe because there is a long protracted silence? Is there not sufficient love and interest in our individual hearts to cause us to be absorbed with the Lord Jesus and what He suffered for us? Do we find it irksome because there is no audible voice? It is a happy thing when a man breaks the silence by the Spirit of God, expressing what is on the hearts of all, but it is happy also, when there is no voice, to recognize the supremacy and sufficiency of the Lord Himself.

Beloved friends, let us think again of the night of the institution. Here is the Lord of glory, here in this world, where for three years He! labored in active ministry. He is about to die. He gathers around Him just before He leaves the world eleven men out of the millions of the world's inhabitants—eleven men who, because of previous training, might at least have been expected to enter into what was before Him. But there was not one who rose to the real facts of what was before the Lord. They were all very far away in spirit from the burden of His heart at that time. Is there not still an astonishing lack of interest, in the death of Christ? Out of all the millions upon the face of the globe at the present time how many are there who meet together habitually for the sole purpose of fulfilling the Lord's word: "This do in remembrance of me"? They are very few, comparatively, who show any regard for His will in this respect.

Do we not care for His death? Did He anywhere prove His love for us as He did upon the cross? Shall we tire of this holy theme? Is once a week too often to remember Him? Oh, beloved friends, what must the indifference of His own have been to the Lord on the night when He was betrayed? What, then, is it now that so many can be indifferent, careless, regardless of the memorial of that infinite work which cost Him so much to accomplish?

We can, of course, think of the Lord at any time, and in any place, but we ought to have the Lord's words written upon our hearts, "This do in remembrance of me." The remembrance is a question of doing. It is not a sacrifice to be offered, but it is an act to be performed. He has definitely said this, and it is not for us to take away from what He has said. "This do in remembrance of me." 'I shall leave this world that does not want Me. I shall return to the place I had with the Father before the worlds were. I want you to raise a memorial to My death here in this world, not in marble, not in costly architecture, not in anything which can be measured by the riches of this world, but by a simple act, of no external value in itself, by nothing impressive in the nature of its ceremony. Do this in remembrance of Me. I call for this act of obedience on your part.'

Beloved friends, unless we eat the bread and drink the cup, we cannot “do this” in remembrance of Him. You may make excuses, you may raise objections and difficulties, but you cannot carry out the word unless you eat the Supper. His words are simple and easy of understanding, as we have reiterated this evening, and because they are simple, their claim is irresistible. The Lord does not ask us to make a great sacrifice, but He does ask us to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him. Let your whole heart and soul ever be in the observance of His will. Let all that is true and spiritual and begotten of God within you be concentrated upon the performance of this act. If we honor Him, He will honor us. If we are true to Him, He will be—I was about to say, true to us, but He is always true to us whatever we may be. If we deny Him, He is still faithful which is all the greater reason why we should so far as in us lies, carry out this word of our Lord, laid by Him upon the loyal hearts of those who love Him, and who follow His footsteps through this world.

W. J. H.

(Continued from page 196)

## The Institution of the Lord's Supper: 3. As Recorded in the Acts and the Epistles

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Notes of an Address on Acts 2:41-47; 20:6, 7; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 17; 11:20-29

Last week we read the passages from the Gospels which record the institution of the Lord's Supper. There we had the account of the actual circumstances under which the Lord spoke to His disciples on that evening, and set apart the bread and the wine as emblems of His body and His blood, desiring them to eat the bread and drink the wine in remembrance of Himself. It is of interest and help to find that we have also in Scripture instances of the actual observance of the Lord's Supper, showing that the early disciples understood what the Lord wished them do, and that they very rightly and naturally and spontaneously responded to His desire, and habitually commemorated the Lord's death in the appointed way. And these records shed their light upon the practice that we ourselves should adopt today in observing the words of our Lord.

### BREAKING BREAD IN JERUSALEM

We find from the first Scripture that I read in the Acts that the disciples in Jerusalem immediately after Pentecost were in the habit of breaking bread together. It was a practice that they all speedily adopted as a company. There were the apostles who preached, there were disciples who had known the Lord in the days of His flesh, there were others who had believed the preaching of the apostles by the Spirit of God, and these were all banded together by the same Spirit who came down on the day of Pentecost, and were given by Him a unity of mind and a unity of purpose. All their hearts and affections were concentrated upon the Person of Jesus who had risen and who had ascended out of their sight. He was out of sight, but not out of mind, nor were His words out of mind. And they were together, being all of this common persuasion, that there was none upon earth and none in heaven comparable to the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and whatever had been said of old through Moses or through Isaiah had no greater claim upon them than the words of the Lord Jesus. There was something in the heart of each one of them that desired to carry out the express wish of the Lord. They had His word handed to them, and they felt that that word had authority over them, and that it was therefore incumbent upon them to answer to His word. He said, "This do in remembrance of me," and they therefore continued in the breaking of bread. There were other things of the apostles mentioned which they were careful to maintain—doctrine, fellowship, as well as prayers, but bound up with these church observances and of equal importance, there was the breaking of bread.

I think, beloved friends, that we ought to note well with regard to the breaking of bread that it demands the personal love and devotion of a heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. The ceremony is nothing, the actual act of eating and drinking is nothing in itself, and as we find from some of the Scriptures that I have just read, the mere form may even mislead, and bring a person into a position full of danger and peril to himself. But if the Supper is observed in its simple character, there is nothing sweeter, while there is nothing more powerful on this earth as a spiritual service

than the breaking of bread. The observance does not require spiritual advancement and growth, but it does require that the heart of the individual participant shall ring true to the Lord Himself. The Lord's word must be recognized behind the bread and the wine. The Lord Himself must be present to our faith, giving us to realize His approval of our presence and of our actions as well as His acceptance of the love and devotion of our hearts. It is a worship-service designed by our Lord to knit up our hearts to Himself. In our general walk the Lord comes before our hearts in His glory, as the One who is on high, as our Captain, our Lord, as the One whom we shall be like eventually, and He directs to Himself, as the ascended Christ, all our energies and all our services.

But at the Lord's Supper our position is different. We are not then looking at Christ in glory, as the One whom we are serving, and the One to whom we shall go, but at the same Lord conducting us to the foot of the cross, Himself there as the victim, as the Savior, as the One who suffered there with our sins upon Him. Then He, as it were, crushes within us by this remembrance all movements of sin and selfishness, and draws out to Himself those new affections, those new movements of our hearts begotten in us by the Holy Ghost. For this reason, the Lord's Supper is of the greatest value to young Christians, as to old. Could you have younger Christians than these of whom we read in the Acts? Just born again by the Spirit of God, but they nevertheless continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Their hearts were brought to realize in these occupations the living presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. I will repeat that this realization is of essential importance in the spiritual life of every believer. It may be said that there is no occupation on earth of collective character in which the spiritual life is brought into closer touch with Christ than at the proper observance of the Lord's Supper.

I only allude to these verses in Acts 2; they can be studied at your leisure, but we do find from them that the disciples, being all together in Jerusalem, were enabled day by day to break bread. They broke bread from house to house, or rather, at home. They met together in the Temple; they broke bread at home. They assembled in many places, but at home in their upper rooms they broke bread, and day by day was not considered too frequent to remember the Lord Jesus in breaking bread. The Lord had said, "This do in remembrance of me." These words are a deathblow to the notion of those persons who sometimes assume an air of superiority and say, "I can remember the Lord anywhere. I can sit in the privacy of my chamber and remember Him. I can walk along the street and remember Him." This may be so, but this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. "Do this for a memorial of me," It is therefore only in the doing that the obedience is rendered. The Lord has not given us a thousand acts to do in His name. He has not surrounded us with manifold rites and ceremonies, but there is this one thing specially specified for us to do in remembrance of Him.

#### BREAKING BREAD AT TROAS

In the second passage that I read from the Acts, we have a very interesting record. There we find the apostle Paul at Troas, and evidently Luke, the writer of the book of the Acts, was also of the company, for he speaks, as you notice, in the first person. They came together on the first day of the week to break bread. It was not possible for the disciples to be together for this purpose every day as they did in Jerusalem. There were many who had come to Jerusalem to keep the feast of the passover and the feast of weeks and were free from secular occupations and duties, and they had special opportunities to meet together every day, but it was not so at Troas. We find that the

apostle had to wait there until the first day of the week in order to break bread. It was striking that the apostle did so, because he was in a great hurry. He was bound for Jerusalem, and his time was precious. His time was so pressing that he could not visit the important assembly at Ephesus, but sent for the elders to meet him at Miletus. But Paul abode in Troas seven days for the breaking of bread. The great apostle waited seven days so that he might enjoy the incomparable privilege of breaking bread with the disciples.

We find from the narrative that the definite purpose for which they came together was to break bread. The Revised Version reads, "When we came together to break bread," expressing the unity between the visitors and the local believers. Yet the occasion of the gathering was quite unique. The great apostle to the Gentiles would be there. The disciples would hear something valuable from his lips. Paul was a man worth listening to. We might have supposed, therefore, that they would have come together specially to listen to those precious exhortations and instructions that would be sure to fall from the lips of the apostle. But they came together to break bread. They came together to meet the Lord of the apostles. They realized that there was an order in divine things, and first and foremost in divine things is the Lord Himself. Happy the man who always keeps first things first. Christ is first; the Lord is first. His claims must be supreme. Let us everyone here to-night make this our life's motto. Let the Master be first.

And so, when they came together on that first of the week, the one object before them all was to carry out the Lord's word. It was as if they said: 'We shall get a word from the apostle, but let us fulfill our responsibility to the Lord first of all!' Beloved friends, let us all strive to have within our habits and dispositions continually the consciousness that the breaking of bread must stand first and foremost in the claims upon us. Let us feel that the Supper is the Lord's wish, it is His word. It is His claim that is laid upon us, and we must not deny Him the worship of our hearts. Let us agree that we will put ourselves to all kinds of discomfort, but we will not miss the breaking of bread, and when we come together, we will come together with this object before our minds. Do not wait until we enter the door and our eyes fall upon the bread and the wine that then for the first time we think of the breaking of bread. When we come together, this should be the object filling our hearts; we should all come to break bread. Let there be ten, twenty, or an hundred or more, and if we all come to break bread, what a meeting there will be! What power there will be, because all hearts will be united with the common purpose and aim of breaking bread. All will be desirous of fulfilling the word of the Lord. Will any then miss a sense of that joy and peace whose source is in heaven? Not one.

#### THE FIRST OF THE WEEK

This example at Troas is of special interest because of the association of the breaking of bread with the first of the week. There is a beautiful bond, as it were, existing between the first of the week and the breaking of bread. The first of the week was it not then that our Lord rose victorious from the grave? Did He not come forth and make Himself known to His disciples on that memorable first of the week? And He also made Himself known, we are sure, there at Troas on that first of the week. It is the day when He loves to display Himself to the faithful hearts of His disciples. It is a day that stands out notably in the Christian's history, because of its hallowed association with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord in His rising power and glory makes Himself known on the first day of the week. And so at Troas they came together on that day

for the breaking of bread, and afterward the apostle delivered a discourse to them, it being the eve of his departure on the morrow, and he continued his speech until midnight.

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER AT CORINTH

Let us now come to the Epistle to the Corinthians. There we have very full instructions with regard to the breaking of bread. In the 1 Corinthians 11, you have them set out in detail, and they repay close attention. You find that the breaking of bread is here called the Lord's Supper. They had been coming together, but they had not been eating the Lord's Supper in a true sense. I wish you to notice in this chapter the recurrence of the title of the Master as Lord—the Lord's Supper, the Lord Jesus, the Lord's death, the Lord's body. And the reason for this repetition is easy to find. Because they had forgotten—perhaps—nay, they must have forgotten, that He was the Lord. The Lord Jesus conveys to us as an expression His power and authority which are not absent when we remember Him as the crucified One. Jesus was there at Calvary. He went into that place of seeming weakness, “crucified in weakness,” uplifted between the two malefactors. But God raised Him from the dead and made Him Lord and Christ. He is Lord of all, Lord of every one of us, and has the right of perfect control and command over everything that we have and are. There is not a pulse of our beings but is under the strict supervision of our Lord. And we are always responsible to Him for what we do, what we say, and what we think. Much more then when we “do this” are we responsible to our Lord. The Corinthians had forgotten Him in this respect, and they had made the Supper their own supper. They had looked upon their own things and had lost sight of the things of the Lord. It is easy to forget the Lord's presence, and then it is that the true value of the Lord's Supper is lost.

It is natural for persons to be attracted most by extraordinary acts and uncommon scenes which appeal to the senses. In the absence of such it is difficult for many to concentrate their hearts and thoughts in remembrance and worship. There is one object, however, that will command the attention of the most careless and fitful persons, and that is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. He collects wandering thoughts; He subdues the restless spirit. He speaks, as it were, within the tumultuous heart, and says, “Peace, be still.” And so, when we are together, on the occasion of the Supper, the Lord Himself comes into vision. I am speaking, of course, of the faith of the heart. Observing the Supper develops this faculty of our faith. Since we come together to think of Him, to remember Him, it develops our hearts and minds in the memory of Himself and in the sense of His presence. The oftener we do this, the better we should do it.

I do not know what words I can use to impress the importance of this feature of the observance of the Lord's Supper upon all who are here to-night—the great importance of being able to realize on such occasions the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know that a person can go away into his own room and shut the door, and know the secret presence of Christ with him. That must surely be in accordance with the experience of us all. But that experience should also be true collectively when we come together, and it can only be so when our hearts and minds are set on the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not on our own things and the things around us. There is, as we know, a continual effort to draw away our thoughts from the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is always something apt to arise between our souls and Him, to fill our minds with matters not proper to the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Table, and therefore continual effort and watchfulness are needed and prayer to the Lord Himself, who will never fail us. The

Corinthians had absolutely broken down and failed in this particular. They had fallen so far as to desecrate the Lord's Supper, reducing it to a common meal. Oh, how the heart of the apostle was horrified by what they were doing. He writes to them urgently, impressively, to win their hearts back to an apprehension of the real character of the Lord's Supper.

#### THE LORD'S SUPPER AND THE LORD'S DAY

We find this phrase, the "Lord's Supper," is a peculiar one in Scripture usage. It is a term which in the original text is not applied to anything else except to the Lord's Day. The Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper are therefore two opportunities which are sacred to the Lord Himself. It is the Lord's day, it is no one else's. The day is hallowed because it belongs to Him, and wherever you are you can never destroy that bond between the Lord and His own day. This term is full of meaning to a Christian. It is the day of resurrection. If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins; but He was raised, on the Lord's day. Everything belongs to the Risen One, and that day, the first of the week, is His day, the first of a new order of things, the beginning of the new creation of God.

But there is the Lord's Supper too. That simple homely meal is His. He is there. It is His feast, He presides, He makes the Supper what it is ideally. Take the Lord away, and what is it? Well, for Corinth it was an occasion for gluttony amongst the rich, and for envy and dissatisfaction amongst the poor. Instead of holy thoughts, instead of worship and prayers and thanksgiving, instead of bowing at the throne of glory and grace, they were carried away by earthborn feelings, and so it became to them an unholy occupation. But the Lord by His apostle recalls their hearts to Himself in words which are familiar to us.

We gather from these verses what is really important instruction. The apostle Paul received special revelation with regard to the Lord's Supper. He says, "I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." You know that the apostle Paul was not one of those who saw Christ in the flesh, but he saw Him in the glory. The Lord communicated direct with the apostle of the uncircumcision. He had special work for him to do, and He gave him special instructions. The Lord could have made this memorial service known to him through the twelve, of course, but it was so ordered that the instructions with regard to the Lord's Supper should be communicated personally to the apostle Paul by the Lord Himself. Does not this fact strike you as strongly emphasizing the importance of the Lord's Supper as a Christian institution? We saw last week the beautiful and affecting picture of the Lord Jesus in the upper room, dispensing the bread and the wine to His disciples, and giving to them a significance they never had before. We also recalled the solemn associations of the institution of that Supper, what was proceeding at the table itself, and what was immediately before the Lord, and so our hearts were directed by these circumstances to its beauty and value. We now learn something fresh. Not the Lord at the table, but the Lord on the throne communicated with the apostle the details with regard to the breaking of bread. The Lord in His glory thought it needful to speak directly to Paul and to tell him His mind with reference to the Supper. Was it not of the highest importance, therefore, since the Lord made it the subject of special revelation? It is indeed of importance. The Lord is continually teaching our hearts to feel its value and importance in an increasing degree.

The apostle said, in effect, to those men at Corinth, "What are you doing? I cannot praise you in this. You have altogether strayed from the real meaning of the Lord's Supper. Do you know that I received it from the Lord? It was not my own ordinance. I did not receive it from Peter, James and

John 1 received it direct from the Lord. It has therefore the utmost claim upon you. Do not think it is anything which can be undertaken lightly. It is solemn, it is holy, and the Lord Himself has desired that your whole hearts should be in it." The apostle spoke by the Holy Ghost, of course, but here he says, "I am speaking to you not merely as an apostle. I am communicating to you that which I received from the Lord Himself." Always remember that this Epistle to the Corinthians was not only to the saints at Corinth, but to all calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus everywhere (1 Cor. 1:2). As Gentiles we come within the scope of this communication made to the apostle of the Gentiles. The Lord's Supper comes to us, therefore, from the Lord Himself through the apostle Paul.

#### THE NIGHT OF THE BETRAYAL

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed." Have you ever at the Lord's Table pondered upon this expression? — "the same night in which He was betrayed." Why is it brought into this passage? The betrayal is mentioned, I think, so that they might recollect that the Lord's Supper is to be observed, not in heaven, but on earth. The betrayal was a fruit of sin. In heaven there will be nothing of sin, nothing of self; hence nothing will be necessary to recall wandering hearts there. But here upon the earth, even at the Lord's Supper, there is a possibility of the presence of that which is not of God, that which is of self, that which is sinful making its appearance. It is painfully true that you may go where you will, but you can never escape from the danger of your own natural heart and the natural hearts of others.

"On that night in which He was betrayed, He took bread." These people at Corinth were exposed to the danger of doing, not to the same degree, but the same kind of thing that, in its full development, led Judas to betray his Master. We must not execrate Judas and forget ourselves. The Lord did not speak harshly to him. His deed of shame is recorded in holy writ for our warning, not, however, that we should gaze upon Judas, but rather upon the Lord, and think what sorrow it was to Him to say, "One of you shall betray me." He cared for Judas, and yet Judas betrayed Him. Recall what He has done for you, for me. Is it possible that I can forget Him even in the solemn moment appointed for remembrance? that I may be engaged unworthily even at such a time as that? that my eyes may be drawn away from Him to consider others, and that I might even think evil thoughts at such an occasion as His Supper? What would it be to the Lord's heart if I should forget Him when I am together with others to remember Him in the breaking of bread?

Beloved friends, it magnifies in our eyes the Christ we adore and serve that in the night in which He was betrayed He took means to awaken the weak and forgetful hearts of His own lest they should wander farther and farther from Himself, and from the remembrance of His coming cross and passion, and so He established this feast of bread and wine. Not that Judas was present at the Lord's Supper, because we find from these verses that the Supper, the Lord's Supper, was instituted after the passover. It was "when He had supped" (verse 25), and Judas went out directly he received the sop from the Lord. The Lord gave him the sop, and said, "That thou doest, do quickly," and after the exit of the traitor this ordinance was founded. Can you think of the Lord requiring Judas to do this, "in remembrance of me"? No, it is true hearts He wants. He wants your worship, your fellowship in His sufferings. "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" the Lord said to Peter in Gethsemane. Shall it be that we become tired of being together to think of Him, and when there is silence and opportunity for deep meditation upon the holy theme of the Lord's Supper, we fretfully wish someone would speak, or sing, or pray? Let the Lord's word come home again to

you: "Could ye not watch with me one hour?"

[W. J. H.]

(To be continued)

## The Institution of the Lord's Supper: 4. As Recorded in the Acts and the Epistles

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### “THIS IS MY BODY”

“The same night in which He was betrayed, He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.”

I love that sentence, “This is my body.” I know that the verse has been misinterpreted and abused to induce men and women to indulge in idolatrous practices. It is not implied that the bread becomes the body of Christ. The bread is bread continually. The Lord said, “This is my body.” What did He mean? He was referring to Himself, and referring to Himself, as it seems to me, in all His absolute perfection and completeness. “This is my body,” wholly, completely, and unreservedly given up in sacrifice to God for them and us. “This is my body”; think of Him, the blessed Lord, the Holy Christ that He was here in the days of His flesh, perfect man and perfect God, walking through this world filled with all the perfection it was possible for man to have and to exhibit. He came at last to the cross, to the altar, and laid Himself completely upon the altar, and His body, soul and spirit was offered up in sacrifice. He held nothing back. He was the complete burnt offering, ever acceptable and fragrant to Jehovah.

We know that it is our natural tendency to hold something back from the Master. It is a great day when through the grace of God a man comes to the point that he is able and is willing with his whole soul to give himself up to the Lord, as we are all enjoined to do in Romans 12, rendering spirit, soul and body to the Lord for His service and praise. People talk about consecration as a great event, and so it is, but in point of fact we are consecrated from the beginning of our spiritual history. We are the Lord's by purchase and by sanctification. We belong to Him entirely every part of us. But often there is the disposition to keep something in reserve for ourselves, to do something or other just in our own way. For instance, to give the Lord one day in the week, and perhaps use the other six for our own pleasure and purposes.

“This is my body. It is for you.” The Lord has in this great renunciation set us an example. He has given everything for us. What have we given for Him? What have we done in return? When you look upon the cross, His body was there offered as a sacrifice for sins, for my sins, for your sins, for you. This is a wonderful word, of our Lord, beloved friends: “This is my body,” and this body is for you! God had prepared that body for Him. It was a holy thing born into this world, never tainted with sin; and the Lord from first to last kept it in this world pure and unspotted, and when He came to the end of His ministry, He said, “This is my body. I have kept it so that it might be sacrificed for you. I am about to lay down my life. No man can take my life from me. I give it up for you.” If such self-abnegation does not speak to a man's heart, what will? If this perfect sacrifice does not call out praise and worship, what will? We shall not learn any greater wonder than this in heaven. More fully, no doubt, we shall know it, but we begin to learn the great lesson of it here. We do so

especially at the Lord's table. We come there, and the Lord tells us what He did for us at the cross. There are some present, perhaps, who have been several hundreds of times to the Lord's table, but if I were to appeal to any of them for their experience, I think they would say that they have every time learned something fresh, something they had not known quite in the same way before. Something has come with greater vividness than before. The Lord's Supper is always fresh and new and beautiful and joyous to those who realize the Lord's own words addressed to them, "This is my body, it is for you. This do in remembrance of me."

#### THE CUP AND THE COVENANT

"After the same manner, also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood." Thereby He brings before us the important truth that He offered Himself, and made an atonement for our sins. The cup is the new covenant in His blood. It is a frequent scriptural expression, the cup referring to what is in the cup. "This cup," that is, the wine, "is the new covenant in my blood." The special reference is to the covenant promised of old through Jeremiah which God will make with His repentant people, when their sins will be done away, and Jehovah will write His laws in their hearts.

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood," and when we come to these words we learn the ground upon which we can be at the Lord's table at all. The Lord in the midst is speaking to us, and we are enjoying His presence. He is telling us secret things about Himself and His sufferings; which are hidden from the world. Why is it that we are in such sacred nearness without fear and dread? Why is it we are not ashamed, and our eyes filled with tears because of our sins? The answer lies in the words, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of your sins, that your sins might be removed, that you might be here with me, a blood-washed company, a part of that ransomed throng that will sound my praise through all eternity." Thus the deepest realities in the foundation of our spiritual lives are brought before us in this wonderful Supper.

#### FOR A REMEMBRANCE

"This cup is the new testament in my blood. This do in remembrance of me." The apostle reproaches them afresh by this repeated phrase. They had forgotten Him. There was the bread and the wine in which they shared, but they did not remember Him. The Lord was not before them. They thought of themselves, and of their own supper, and consequently, they did not eat the Lord's Supper. This is a fault to which we also are liable, beloved friends. You may think I am reiterating this warning unnecessarily about our danger, but if you will confer honestly with your own experience, you must admit the necessity for yourself, if not for others. We do require to be reminded of our weakness. Besides, let us remember also that there is a personage who tempts us to ignore this danger. Remember that Satan was at the passover supper, and that there he entered into the heart of Judas. And in our own case Satan would always distract our hearts and take away our thoughts if possible from the real object of our assembling, that is, the remembrance of the Lord in His death. The death of Christ was the defeat, as it will be the ultimate destruction, of Satan. At Calvary he made his most stupendous effort against the One who came to destroy his works. He failed. But now he seeks to draw the hearts of the faithful away from the Lord Jesus, particularly those of the unwary on the occasion of the Lord's Supper. Oh, beloved friends, I think we shall do well to admit this weakness, and to remember that we may easily be

tripped up if we are not watching, as our Lord enjoined us to do.

## EATING UNWORTHILY

And now, we come to the latter part of this Scripture. We eat this bread and drink this cup to “show the Lord's death till He come.” From the time of His betrayal until the time of His coming again, the observance of the Lord's Supper is to be maintained.

Then the apostle proceeded to speak a special word of reproof to the Corinthians who had so misbehaved themselves at the Lord's Supper. “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.” Now we ought to recollect that in these words, the apostle wrote directly with reference to the manner in which the Corinthians had been eating the Lord's Supper. I say this because it is quite a common mistake to suppose that the apostle is speaking of the worthiness or otherwise of the persons at Corinth. But it is not so. If eating depended upon personal worthiness, where would worthy ones be found? Not on this globe surely. There are none worthy, no, not one. The very fact of the Lord by this memorial directing our attention to His body and His blood shows that we are not worthy. We are only worthy in the sense that He has taken us in our degraded condition, and that He has cleansed us by His precious blood, and thereby He has fitted us to be a kingdom of priests to God and His Father (Revelation 1:5, 6). In this manner He has given us peace of conscience, and the right to partake of the supper. But the right is the result of what He has done. It is what His work has procured for us, not our own personal fitness.

The apostle was not speaking of individual worthiness at all. here. He was speaking of the manner in which these saints conducted themselves when they were together. How did they conduct themselves? They acted with reprehensible carelessness. They ignored what the bread meant and what the wine meant. They forgot the solemn realities that were expressed by the emblems, and they partook of them as common, meaningless things They missed, therefore, the whole purport of the Lord's Supper, and that was a serious lapse, as you will see, if you think of their conduct in the light of the solemn verses which precede.

Take yourself to task in this respect. Ask yourself in the day you come to the Lord's Supper, “What am I here for?” Because someone else comes? Because it is customary to attend? Is this, or something like it, your reason? Such are all very poor and insufficient reasons. The real cause of assembling is that the Lord has invited us to do so, and that He is present, and that in the bread and the wine He by the Spirit brings to our view His body which was given for us, and His blood which was shed for us. Having that purpose before us, we discern the Lord's body. It is not that we believe that the bread becomes the body of the Lord, or the wine His blood; such is the wicked opinion of some in Christendom. Nevertheless, it is the Lord's word that comes to us as we are participating. We hear Him speak, and the eyes of faith behold Him, and we are occupied with Him and He is talking to us of His decease, which He accomplished in His body at Jerusalem.

## PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

Do not let these words of the apostle keep anyone away from the Lord's Supper. It is an occasion for you to fulfill His desire, but also to think of what you are doing. Do not be light about it. Let it be a serious matter. Let a man examine himself. Let him be careful of his thoughts and acts. Do you

not think there is great need on the Lord's day to be thinking beforehand of the Lord's Supper? I am not speaking of that very unwise and improper practice of looking out some scripture to read aloud on the occasion. This is feeble and wrong. What is the proper way to prepare for the Lord's Supper? What is the theme that will then be specially before us? The Lord's death. Who is there that fully understands what the Lord's death signifies? No person knows anything a part from the revelation of Scripture. The proper preparation for the Lord's Supper is to have before our minds some of those numerous passages of Holy Writ which are inspired by the Holy Ghost so that we might have right and holy thoughts about the sacrifice and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saturate your mind with the words of the Holy Ghost in reference to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Never give yourself up to your own thoughts on that sacred subject. The person who thinks his own thoughts about the death of Christ is sure to end in error and delusion. The one who most rightly appreciates the death of Christ is the one most subject to the word of God, and who will not trust himself to express views about that death in terms other than scriptural.

Throughout the Scripture, in both the Old Testament and the New, we find the great theme of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ recurring, and we have it presented in divers ways. The prayerful study of such passages prepares our hearts so that when we are together we are kept in accord with God's revealed truth about His beloved Son. Let us therefore examine ourselves with regard to this practice, and so let us eat the bread and drink the cup. We are kept by the word of truth, and we may know that the Spirit of God is assuredly directing our thoughts when He brings before us His own words about the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### ONE LOAF, ONE CUP

We also read one or two verses in the tenth chapter, but they refer to the bread and the wine in their symbolism of unity. We see that the loaf sets forth not only the body of Christ that was given for us, but also that it is a figure of that spiritual body which has been framed by the Spirit in this world. All believers are by Him baptized into one body (1 Cor. 12:13). This truth is set before us in the loaf. We, being many members, are one body in Christ. This aspect is subsidiary to the central feature of remembrance. It is just touched upon in this chapter, but we ought not to overlook it, because in partaking of the bread and the wine, we share the one observance in which all believers everywhere are entitled to unite. It is there they meet. It is there that the most spiritually minded of the members of the body of Christ are to be found. What is the state of the believer who does not rejoice in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ? It sets forth the fountain of every blessing for us.

The one loaf speaks of the invisible unity of the mystical body of Christ, and it is an important thing to remember that there is no thought of division expressed in the appointed emblems. There is one cup and one loaf, both showing that imperishable unity which remains true in spite of the undeniable disunion existing in the professing church. These are silent witnesses to the blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But do not let us forget the main object of these Scriptures we have been considering, beloved friends. Do not let us forget the teaching of the Holy Ghost as to the Lord's Supper. The Spirit is present on that occasion to weld our hearts together into holy unity in spiritual worship and joy, and in power of holy recollection with reference to the death—the sufferings and death of our blessed Lord and Master. We need to have this theme brought over and over again before our

spirits to fill our souls again and again with devotion and with praise. Why is it we are slow to praise? Because we are slow to realize the value of His death. It is the sense of what He has done that centers our affections upon Himself; and depend upon it, it is worth our while to be together in this prescribed manner to praise our Lord Jesus Christ. One has sometimes heard the painful remark by believers that it seems a waste of time to come together only for the Supper, the time could be made so profitable, there could be such exhortation, but the hour passes, and nothing seems to be done, and there is nothing forthcoming to feed the new man! Oh, what a low view to take, what an altogether misshapen thought of the Supper of our blessed Lord! What can be better than to listen to Him and to hear the whisperings of His love in our hearts? Do we not on such occasions give our hearts over to Him? If so, a human voice, so far from being essential, may obliterate the heavenly voice of our Master. The voice of the Lord's apostle himself could be quiet until the bread was broken at Troas in remembrance of Him. Therefore, let us strive to see more and more in the simple observance of the Lord's Supper, and to maintain a sense of His presence with us in it and of His voice speaking to us concerning His sufferings on our account.

W. J. H.

(Concluded from page 237)

## Studies in Mark: 57. Vain Ablutions

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7:1-8

“And there are gathered together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashen, hands. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders: and when they come from the market place, except they wash themselves, they eat not: and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brasen vessels. And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? And he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, hypocrites, as it is written,

This people honoureth me with their lips,

But their heart is far from me.

But in vain do they worship me,

Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.

Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men” (7:1-8, R.V.).

Attention has already been directed in previous papers to the manner in which a general opposition to the progress of the gospel of the kingdom was foreshadowed by the wind-storm which swept down upon the apostolic band of its preachers during their voyage across the Lake of Galilee. The adverse forces depicted by this sign-miracle possess the distinguishing feature of being external to the kingdom itself. The winds and the waves therefore would be figurative of violent powers of evil which would assail the “little flock” of disciples from without.

We now come to a section in this Gospel which still deals with threatening dangers, but points in this case to that form of evil which would arise from within, that is, to an insidious and corrupting foe to the truth of God which in its attacks would be masked under the guise of piety. Hypocrisy, garbed in exceptional religious zeal and austere devotion, had even then corrupted the Jewish nation beyond remedy, and the record forewarns that a similar dead formalism would not fail to envelop Christendom—that form of the kingdom of God which would immediately succeed the earthly people in its responsibility to maintain the light of testimony for God among men. Man's natural heart, the ever-present and ever-active fountain of evil, would then, as it had done in the generation of that day when Christ was present, elevate to the seat of supreme authority its own deceitful imaginations, displacing the commandments of God by the traditions of men.

It is not to be imagined that evil is any the less effectual in destroying the accredited witness for God because its attacks are subtle and not openly violent. The great enemy of the truth adopts tactics of both kinds, seeking either to affright the followers of Christ as a “roaring lion,” or to insinuate his deadly errors among them in the guise of an “angel of light.” And we may remark for

our personal profit how the Lord on this occasion showed that a punctilious formalism expressed in the form of an inordinate piety was, even then, nullifying the authority of God in the house of Israel.

#### THE ACCUSATIONS OF THE PHARISEES

The disciples were accused of eating bread with unwashed hands. This criticism of their behavior was made by certain Pharisees and scribes who had come up to Galilee from Jerusalem. Among the simple and unlettered peasantry (John 7:48, 49), they assumed the professional role of authoritative exponents of the law of Moses, and of the whole body of precepts contained in the Old Testament scriptures. In the exercise of this judicial capacity they condemned the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom of God as being contrary to the first principles of Jewish knowledge. Confronted with the undeniable fact that multitudes of the Galilean folk were flocking to hear the Prophet of Nazareth, they had come down from the center of religious learning and zeal formally to investigate the claims and teaching of Jesus, and to denounce the preacher and the doctrine as being contrary to the approved standards of the Sanhedrin.

Such official inquiries with regard to the ministry of our Lord seem to have occurred at intervals throughout the term of His ministry in Galilee. It is recorded that on previous occasions He had been charged by the Pharisees and the scribes as follows—

- (1) With blasphemy, for pronouncing the forgiveness of sins (Mark 2:7).
- (2) With keeping evil company, because He ate with publicans and sinners (Mark 2:16).
- (3) With neglecting the customary fasts (Matthew 9; Mark 3:18).
- (4) With desecration of the sabbath day (Mark 2:24).
- (5) With being possessed by Beelzebub, and casting out demons by him (Mark 3:22).

These charges were to all appearance serious, and involved questions of godliness, such as, (1) blasphemy, (2) "sitting in the seat of the scornful," (3) avoidance of the self-discipline of the fast, (4) disregard of Jehovah's holy day, and (5) direct service to the prince of the demons. Every one of these false and wicked accusations the patient Servant of God refuted with gentle and holy wisdom.

The indictment now made against Him was founded on a trivial point in itself, and seems to have been intended to show how Jesus came short of the standard of devoted sanctity practiced by the Pharisees and scribes. These pietists would not permit themselves to eat bread with unwashed hands. They found that some of the disciples of the Lord did so, and in this particular they therefore fell below the conventional standards of religious practice established among the Jews by their religious chiefs. "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders."

The charge made against the Lord on this occasion appears to have arisen mainly out of His practice of mingling with the crowds in the exercise of His ministry of teaching and healing, accompanied by His disciples. At the close of the previous chapter, these activities of divine mercy are summarized and described. Wheresoever the Servant of Jehovah was to be found—in country, or village, or town—the people brought their sick into the marketplaces, that they might touch the

border of His garment and be healed (Mark 6:56). In this service of healing the disciples may well have borne an active part. And it was after this promiscuous intercourse with many classes of sick and needy folk that the Pharisees, having seen that some of the disciples ate bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, found fault. Such an omission, they asserted, was in direct contrast with the tradition of the elders and with their own practice, for when they came from the marketplace where people congregated most, they would not eat until they had washed themselves (vers. 3, 4; cf. vi. 56, R.V.).

The pious Jews were careful to observe this ceremony whether they were conscious of having contracted defilement or not. But the followers of the Lord deliberately came into contact with all sorts of persons in the exercise of their office, in the marketplaces and elsewhere, and yet failed to purify themselves according to the recognized ritual. The Pharisees therefore embraced the opportunity, and sought by means of this charge to depreciate the value of the services of the apostles, since the latter openly disregarded the tradition of the elders, and therein fell short of the recognized Jewish canons of piety. On another occasion a similar charge from the same source was made against the Lord Himself (Luke 11:37).

## THE JEWS

The evangelist explains that the custom of washing was not peculiar to the sect of the Pharisees, but was common among all the Jews, He says, "For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not." In this sentence we have an instance of the use of the term, "Jews," which is rare in the Synoptic Gospels, while of frequent occurrence in the Gospel of John. In the latter, this term is found about seventy times, but in the first three Gospels only seventeen times; some of these being parallel passages. All four evangelists, however, record Pilate's question to Jesus, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" and also that this title formed part of the superscription placed on the cross.

Of the seventeen occurrences of the word "Jews" in the first three Gospels, twelve of them consist of the title, "King of the Jews," applied to our Lord

- (a) By the wise men of the East (Matthew 2:2).
- (b) By Pilate, in the course of the trial (Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2, 9, 12; Luke 23:3)
- (c) By the soldiers (Matt. 27:29; Mark 15:18; Luke 23:37)
- (d) By Pilate in the superscription (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38).

The other occasions in the narratives are of its ordinary historical usage, such as, "among the Jews," "all the Jews," "elders of the Jews," "a city of the Jews," etc. The passages are the following—Matthew 28:15; Mark 1:5 (Judea); Mark 7:3; Luke 7:3; 23:51.

The term "Jews" does not arise in the divine history until after the deportation of the ten tribes by the king of Assyria. It is then applied to those of the seed of Abraham who continued in the southern part of the land of the promise, under the rule of the descendants of David, and consisted mainly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin (2 Kings 16:6; 25:25 Chronicles 32:18): The use of the name is specially characteristic of the writings of Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and Jeremiah in the Old Testament, as it is of the Gospel of John in the New Testament.

Israel is the name connoting the divine promises to the earthly people, and the future day of their national blessing during Messiah's reign is associated with this name. It is to the Israelites that pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises (Romans 9:4). And before the millennial day, Jehovah will bring the children of Israel from among the nations, and Joseph and Judah shall be one nation, and the sure mercies of David shall be their portion forever (Ezek. 37). So shall all Israel be saved, and not the Jews only.

#### THE WASHING OF HANDS

The Jews had fallen into the prevalent and perilous snare of performing their acts of divine service for the sight and approbation of their fellows. They were attracted by the instant recompense which is "awarded to a man by his friends and neighbors for deeds of a religious nature" done under their notice. For men readily and unstintedly avow their appreciation of acts of almsgiving to which their attention is directed by a flourish of trumpets, of prayers performed at the street-corners in public view, and of tithes of goods voluntarily extended in scope to include even the lesser herbs of the garden. The synagogue and the street alike observe and generously appraise such deeds. And the Pharisee of every age seeks with much pains to obtain this praise of man rather than the praise of God. Mostly he is successful in his pursuit, and secures the adulation of his fellows, according to the words of the Psalmist, "Men will praise thee when thou doest well to thyself" (Psalm 49:18). Herein, as the Lord said, the Pharisee receives his reward, i.e. the glory that comes from men, but misses that glory which comes from above, which the Father who sees in secret will bestow upon those who serve Him in spirit and in truth.

In His reply to the Pharisees the Lord did not pronounce any decision as to the legitimacy of their practices, but showed that they had invested the rite of washing with a spiritual significance and value which were unwarrantable. For the alleged principle involved was one not of physical cleanliness on sanitary grounds, but of ceremonial pollution. "They shrank not from dirt, but from defilement." They considered it possible that they might have come into contact with a Gentile or a tax-gatherer in the public footways. They might have handled something ritually unclean. Their cups might have been touched by the lips of strangers. Their couches might have been used by those who, according to the tradition of the elders, were defiled. These and many other things they had "received to hold," their elaborate ritual for maintaining "purity" being enforced by them with the inflexibility of a divine mandate.

Writers on Jewish customs tell us how elaborate the traditional rite became.

"It was laid down that the hands were first to be washed clean. The tips of the ten fingers were then joined and lifted up, so that the water ran down to the elbows, then turned so that it might run off to the ground. Fresh water was poured on them as they were lifted up, and twice again as they hung down. The washing itself was to be done by rubbing the fist of one hand in the hollow of the other. When the hands were washed before eating they must be held upwards, when after it, downwards, but so that the water should not run beyond the knuckles. The vessel must be held first in the right, then in the left hand; the water was to be poured first on the right and then on the left hand; and at every third time the words repeated:

'Blessed art Thou who hast given us the command to wash the hands.' It was keenly disputed whether the cup of blessing or the handwashing should come first; whether the towel should be

laid on the table or on the couch; and whether the table was to be cleared before the final washing or after it.”

The answer of the Lord to the question of the Pharisees stamped this rite with its true character. In essence, it was a commandment of men, not of God. And their ablutions had an external effect only, not an internal. The six stone water-pots, each holding about twenty gallons, standing empty during the marriage banquet at Cana of Galilee, illustrate what ample provision it was customary to make for the sacramental purification of the guests (John 2:6). Yet to the Omniscient eye, this ritual so scrupulously enforced by the Jewish elders contemplated nothing further than the purity of the hands and of domestic utensils, the outside of the cup and the platter (Matthew 23:25), while it ignored the condition of the heart, that ever-flowing, and over-flowing spring of pollution.

#### DIVERS WASHINGS UNDER THE LAW

In the Mosaic ritual various ablutionary rites were definitely prescribed, and the brazen laver, which was a prominent feature of the court of the tabernacle, was an abiding witness to the necessity of cleansing by water before there could be approach to God in sacrificial worship. The holocaust or whole burnt offering, particularly, was to be purified thoroughly by water before it could become upon the altar a fire-offering of a sweet savor unto Jehovah. And by other similar ceremonies, including the washing of garments (Leviticus 13:6; 14:8), the nation was taught symbolically that the removal of defilement was an essential preparation for intercourse with God. See also Exodus 30:17-21; and compare Psalm 26:6.

But these ritualistic performances, while they were based on divine authority transmitted through the mediator, Moses, were imposed for a limited period only. Types and shadows of deep moral and spiritual realities, they constituted as a system “a parable for the present time,” looking forward in their typical scope and application unto the time when the promised Christ should come. As ceremonies of divine origin, they were insufficient to perfect the conscience of the worshipper, the entire scheme, with its “meats and drinks and divers washings” being but ordinances of the flesh, imposed until the time of rectification (Hebrews 9:9, 10). And even the Psalms and the Prophets united to teach how inefficient were the ceremonies apart from the inward change of the worshipper (Psalm 51:16, 17).

There had arisen, however, at the time of our Lord, a foreign accretion upon this body of Mosaic rites. It was now enjoined (but not through angels, by the hand of an appointed mediator, as the law at Sinai was) that men must wash before eating after visiting the marketplaces, and that cups and pots, and brazen vessels must be ceremonially cleansed.

These injunctions were founded upon the opinions of the elders of Israel, and, by a spiritual authority unwarrantably assumed by the rulers, were made binding upon the people equally with the commandments of God. Sitting in Moses' seat, the scribes and Pharisees invented these heavy burdens “grievous to be borne” which, without mercy, they bound upon the people's shoulders.

This punctilious but misdirected zeal was founded upon hollow pretense, which the Lord of truth and grace unsparingly exposed (Matthew 23). Those who outwardly appeared so righteous unto men were inwardly full of hypocrisy and iniquity. To the pure and fiery eyes of heavenly holiness, they were neglecting the weightier matters of the law of God—judgment, mercy and faith, while

insisting upon trivialities of conduct which were but human in their origin. The spirit of the divine commandments was ignored, while their authority was supplemented and therein usurped by the tradition of man. The Pharisees had forgotten the solemn warning through Moses of old: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you" (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32). Into this snare of meddling with God's word, man of every age is liable to fall; hence we find in the conclusion of the Apocalypse, similar warnings addressed to any who should add to, or take away from, the words of the prophecy of that book (Revelation 22:18, 19).

The particular sin of the Jews condemned in our chapter was that of adding to God's word. Legal ablutions were definitely prescribed in the Pentateuch, and had their temporary use as well as their pictorial significance. The error of the Pharisees and of all the Jews consisted of the extension of those rites beyond the provisions of the law, and also of the merciless condemnation by them of every breach of their man-made rules with reference to purification by water.

### HYPOCRISY IN DIVINE THINGS

The Lord did not reply to the Pharisees in His own authority, but condemned the cavilers by a citation from the prophecy of Isaiah. He did not discuss with them the legality of this particular tradition, but brought the written word of God to bear upon their spiritual state. They were manifesting an undeniable zeal, but it was not according to God. With much earnestness they were going about to establish their own righteousness by works which were outside the Mosaic ritual. They were deceiving both themselves and others. And the Lord said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men."

This prophecy of Isaiah was delivered at a time when religious formalism pervaded the life of the people. Their land was menaced. Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, threatened the destruction of Jerusalem. Jehovah for His name's sake promised to frustrate this purpose of the enemy (29:7, 8), but the prophet did not conceal from the people their terrible moral condition in His sight. There had been an outward cleansing from the abominations of idolatry. During the reign of Hezekiah there had been a considerable reformation. There was a suppression of open idol-worship (2 Chronicles 31:1), and a revival of the passover, and of the sacrifices, and of the temple services.

Thus there was a general outward conformity to the provisions of their ancient law, but, alas, to the eye of Jehovah this was but a form of piety without the power. The prophet declared that a spirit of deep sleep was upon them and their rulers and their prophets, and the vision of Jehovah was a sealed book to the learned and to the unlearned alike. And the Lord said, "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precept of men: therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isaiah 29:13, 14).

Thus in Isaiah's day there was an outward regard among the people of Judah for the law of Moses, and for the worship of God, but no inward reverence for Jehovah Himself. In the Lord's day

it was so again with the people. Their house was swept of idols and garnished with “pious” deeds, but it was an empty shrine. Though God was on their tongues, He was not in their thoughts. Hence the Lord delivered this solemn warning to, those who were walking in a vain show. How could the lip-service of the Pharisees, and the eye-service of the men-pleasers be acceptable with Him who looks not on the outward appearance, but judges the heart?

It will be seen that two evils are indicated for condemnation in this citation-

- (1) Insincerity before God—honoring Him with the lip, but not regarding Him in the heart.
- (2) Substitution of human authority for divine, seeking to worship Him after the commandments of men rather than according to His own will.

Into one or both of these pitfalls man in his religious service is liable to fall. For the person who forgets the Omniscience of the God to whom he comes is also likely to forget the supreme authority which belongs to Him. “He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). When the Pharisee, praying in the temple, said, “God, I thank thee I am not as other men are,” his lips betrayed the fact that his heart was far from Him who desires truth in the inward parts. But the man who had learned by bitter experience to have high thoughts of God and low thoughts of self, said in the presence of the Lord, “Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee” ( John 21:17). And Simon Peter's heart and lips having been brought into unison as a worshipping servant of the Lord, he was in a fit spiritual condition, recognizing the authority of His Master, to receive after such a confession His command to feed His sheep and His lambs.

We may be sure that the poor and contrite spirit trembling at the divine word will not mistake the commandments of men for the commandments of God. And we may guard ourselves from the twofold danger specified in the citation from Isaiah (1) by that self-discipline which tends to keep the soul in a, true sense of God's greatness and of man's unworthiness, and (2) by unqualified subjection to the scripture, which is our sole guide to the revealed will of God for man.

#### PILATE'S HAND-WASHING

Before leaving this section we may briefly refer to the striking public act of the Roman governor before he pronounced sentence that Jesus should be crucified. This took place after the proposal of the procurator to release Jesus instead of Barabbas had been refused by the priests and the people. “So when Pilate saw that he prevailed nothing, but rather that a tumult was arising, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it. And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us and on our children. Then released he unto them Barabbas: but Jesus he scourged and delivered to be crucified” (Matthew 27:24; 26, R.V.).

Scripture is silent with regard to the inmost motives of the unjust judge in performing this futile ceremony. Since, however, Pilate was the accredited representative of the responsible Gentile authority in the tragedy of that day, we may seek whatever light is thrown upon his conduct by the narrated events. It is unquestionable that he sought by this means to transfer from himself the blame for the crucifixion of Jesus. This much is implied in his language: “I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man,” and this significance is confirmed by the united rejoinder of the Jewish

multitude, "His blood be on us and on our children."

But amongst other inquiries we may ask why he sought to emphasize his words in this particular manner-taking water and washing his hands very assiduously (■πεν■ψατω) in the presence of the assembled people? Did he adopt a symbolical practice prevalent in his own Gentile lands? or did he imitate the rite of purification so widely practiced in the land of the Jews?

Moreover, what prompted Pilate to this action? Was he full of forebodings that this was no ordinary magisterial inquiry? and was his conscience uneasy with regard to his own share in the matter? Twice in his judicial capacity he had definitely declared of Jesus, "I find no crime in him" ( John 19:4, 6). Now, sensible of his own weak inconsistency, he may have sought by this public avowal to silence the accusations of his own conscience, awakened by the injustice of condemning to death a man in whom he could find "no cause of death."

Again, the warning of his wife increased the apprehensions of Pilate, and he may have hoped by an open disclaimer of responsibility to satisfy the scruples raised in the minds of them both. She had "suffered many things" that day in a dream because of Jesus, and her message to the governor was, "Have thou nothing to do with that righteous man." We cannot but note the echo of her warning in Pilate's official declaration. The wife testified that the prisoner was a "righteous man," and Pilate re-affirmed this verdict when he said, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man."

Further, it has been suggested that Pilate adopted this public device with the intention of making a final and effectual appeal to the eyes as well as to the ears of the infuriated Jews. He had made previous efforts to release Jesus, expostulating with them upon the baseless nature of the charges they were bringing against the prisoner, and their final reply to these efforts was, "If thou release this man; thou art not Caesar's friend." Pilate, seeing a tumult arising, yielded to their clamor, but sought by this public sign to impress upon them that the entire responsibility of the crucifixion would be upon them. In case the imperial government of Rome should institute judicial inquiries regarding this criminal deed, it was to be understood thereby that the Jews, not Pilate, must bear the political penalty. Before the eyes of all assembled, the governor washed his hands of all complicity.

But if Pilate hoped to influence the people by this dramatic appeal to their fears of the pitiless power of their conquerors, he was mistaken. The people were in no sense deterred by the prospect of any civil punishment to which they might be subjected by their cruel rulers, for they answered him unanimously, recklessly defying all consequences, saying, "His blood be on us and our children."

Still remembering that we can do little more than suggest what were Pilate's real motives, we recall that he had displayed the characteristic Roman contempt for Jewish customs, and that he loved nothing better than to outrage where he might the susceptibilities of the people whom he governed. It was he who mingled the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices (Luke 13:1), thus adding sacrilege to massacre. And on this very morning he did not conceal his scorn for this vassal people. After his examination of Jesus in the Pretorium he brought Him forth to the people assembled without the hall, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe (John 19:5). It was as if he had said, This is your Prophet, This is your King. And by this parade of the Teacher who had

become so popular in Judea and Galilee Pilate mocked at the people whom he knew were eager above all things to throw off the yoke of the Romans, and to be governed by one of their own nation. In the same spirit of cynical disdain, he wrote the superscription for the cross, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," refusing to modify the terms of the taunt, which in their very protest the Pharisees had to confess they admitted to be such.

The governor detested the people with all the strength of his Roman pride, and the attitude of the Jews at this inquiry brought Pilate into renewed contact with the irritating exclusiveness of their religious practices. They had led Jesus to him from Caiaphas, but they would not enter his palace lest they should be defiled, and be thereby prevented from observing the great festival of the passover. It became necessary, therefore, for the Roman governor to go out to them to hear their charges. Such a concession would be galling to the Roman soldier accustomed to compel unqualified homage to the Imperial eagle whose representative he was. Who were these Jews who affected to become polluted by entering the halls of imperial justice? Moreover he well knew that this was no isolated instance of their fanaticism. He was not ignorant that every time they returned home from the marketplace they were in the habit of washing themselves that they might be freed from any possible defilement contracted by contact with the Gentile. This domestic rite of the nation was therefore a daily witness by the Jews to the "uncleanness" of the uncircumcised Gentile. The governor saw an opportunity for retaliation. In solemn irony he washed his hands before this multitude too prudish to enter his palace lest they should be defiled. If the Jew claimed to cleanse himself by water from the taint of uncircumcision, could not the Gentile in like manner rid himself by water of the guilt of the blood of a righteous man condemned by him under protest?

[W. J. H.]

(Continued from page 202, VOL X., N.S.)

(To be continued.)

## Studies in Mark: 58. Vain Ablutions

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7:1-8

This may be the explanation, but whatever the Jews thought of Pilate's act, they accepted full, responsibility. Whether it reminded them of the provision of the law in the case of an uncertain homicide (Deuteronomy 21:6) or not, they cried out, in reckless hardihood, "His blood be on us and on our children." Theirs therefore was the greater guilt, though the Gentiles were not exonerated, as the Lord said to Pilate, "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

In conclusion, let us observe that whatever else is not fully established, it is certain that material water could never remove the defilement of the Jew, nor the blood-guiltiness of the Gentile (Job 9:30, 31). And the appeal of God still goes forth, "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thine evil thoughts lodge within thee?" (Jeremiah 4:14). "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes" (Isaiah 1:16). "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded" (James 4:8). But there can be no real national response until they look to Him whom they pierced. Then will they mourn for Him. And "in that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1). Then Jehovah Himself will undertake their purification, as He promised long ago to do, saying, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols, will I cleanse you" (Ezek. 36:25).

W. J. H.

## Studies in Mark: 59. Word of God and Tradition of Men

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7:9-13

“And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, He that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to say, Given to God, ye no longer suffer him to do ought for his father or his mother; making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do” (7:9-13, R.V.).

On the ground of its purely human origin, the Lord declared the true relative value of the rite of purification by water, of which the Pharisees were making such improper use in their doctrines. Moreover, He went further than the condemnation of this particular item of their religious practice, which was not authorized by the law, and showed that the whole system of Judaism was corrupt and hypocritical before God. Using the written word for their convictions, the Lord adduced the testimony of Isaiah the prophet to show that they, the favored people, outwardly nigh by national election, were far off from God in heart and spirit, as much so as the Gentiles, who were without law, being both Jews and Gentiles, equally under sin, as the Holy Spirit subsequently demonstrated to all men by means of the pen of the apostle Paul (Romans 3:9).

In the words cited at the head of this article, the Lord of light and truth pronounced solemn judgment upon the profession made by the Jews that they were the accepted worshippers of God. In the divine estimation they were but dead formalists, and, worse even than this, they were active rebels against the truth of God. For, under an assumption of excessive zeal for the commandment of God, they destroyed its real value by the adoption of human tradition, which was in effect an evil and destructive substitute for the holy law.

On consideration of the Lord's words, it will be perceived that His charge here, as elsewhere in the Gospels, was that in the matter of the possession of the law, which was their proud boast, the Jews has corrupted themselves. The Pharisees are accused, not of a riot of their carnal passions, but of religious hypocrisy. The law was in their mouths, but not in their hearts.

It is strikingly true that in the general decadence of their national history the custody of the living oracles of God, retained in their original purity by the Jews, constituted their chief remaining glory. What other institution for their boasting remained to them at that time? The temple of Solomon had long been desolated, and the building then standing on Mount Zion was erected by that foul Edomite tyrant, Herod the Great. The Aaronic office was occupied by two high-priests of evil fame, Annas and Caiaphas. The sacred character of the Levitical services and of the round of feasts and sacrifices was obliterated by the violent contentions of those powerful fanatics—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The land of promise itself groaned beneath the iron yoke of a heathen empire, and many of the seed of Abraham were scattered as strangers in strange lands.

But while it might be truly said that Ichabod was written upon the people and upon their ancient institutions, they, in spite of all their vicissitudes and of their spiritual declension, had faithfully preserved the manuscripts of the law, the prophets and the psalms. And the apostle was careful to note the fact of this sacred trust when summing up the respective responsibilities of the Jew and the Gentile and their failures therein, at the tribunal of divine inquiry. Paul made no reference to Mosaic ritual or sacrifice; but, having asked, "What advantage then hath the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?" replied: "Much every way; first of all that they were intrusted with the oracles of God" (Romans 3:1, 2). There were, undoubtedly, other privileges, some of which are enumerated later in the same Epistle (Romans 9:4, 5). But while much had been debilitated or lost, the Jew had some ground for his boast that the law had been maintained intact in spite of its oft-threatened destruction. If there was no Shekinah of glory in the Holy of holies, the voices of the prophets were still read in the synagogue every sabbath day.

It is sad to reflect therefore that the Jews, highly-favored as the custodians of the word of God and jealous to conserve its every jot and tittle, should stultify this priceless benefit by human glosses so that its inward power and sweetness were no longer known and enjoyed.

#### THE TERMS OF CONDEMNATION USED BY OUR LORD

Collating the words of Matthew with those of Mark, we find that this sin of the Jews is described by our Lord in a fourfold manner. By the undue prominence given to their tradition (a) concerning the rite of purification, and (b) concerning the manner of release from filial obligations, He declared that they had—

- (1) laid aside the commandment of God (Mark 7:8);
- (2) rejected the commandment of God (Mark 7:9);
- (3) transgressed the commandment of God (Matthew 15:3);
- (4) made void the word of God (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13).

And by these four terms employed with reference to this particular transgression, there appears to be indicated an ascending scale of error. At the point of departure, as it were, the commandment is (1) left on one side or ignored; it is then (2) rejected and its claims refused; next, the commandment is (3) traversed and violated; while, lastly, it is (4) rendered ineffective and void by the substitution of a human ordinance.

Let us briefly consider each of these terms.

(1) The Lord said to the Pharisees, "Ye leave [or, lay aside] the commandment of God and hold fast the tradition of men." In these words is to be traced the primary cause of the failure of the nation as a faithful exponent of the divine ordinances of old. Theirs was not a sudden and violent rebellion against the authority of God, but a quiet and gradual declension from their fidelity. Turning aside, almost imperceptibly at first, they had wandered out of the way of God's commandments. Their regard and reverence for the expressed will of God was allowed to weaken, and they strayed from the green pastures and the still waters, forgetting His precepts. Forsaking the voice of Jehovah their Shepherd, they followed the voice of strangers. Slipping away from the commandments of God and leaving undone the weighty matters of the law, judgment and mercy

and faith, they clung with the greater tenacity to the tradition of men (Matthew 23:23).

A similar departure is a continual menace to the people of God. Silent deterioration and decay creep upon the Church as they stole upon Israel. The assembly at Ephesus did not make a formal and deliberate renunciation of her profession, but she did, nevertheless leave her first love (Revelation 2:4), as the Jews “left” the authority of God's command. Individually, we are still exposed to the same danger, and we should take to ourselves the warning of the apostle to the Hebrews: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them” (Hebrews 2:1 R.V.).

Further, these boastful zealots had rejected the commandment of God. The sense of the verb used in the original appears to be that of slighting or disregarding the claims the law had upon them, as if they were unworthy of recognition (cp. Hebrews 10:28, Gk.). The Lord also used the same word in His address to the Seventy with reference to their preaching, saying to them, “He that despiseth [rejecteth] you despiseth [rejecteth] me, and he that despiseth [rejecteth] me, despiseth [rejecteth] him that sent me” (Luke 10:16). On another occasion Jesus spoke of one who rejected Him and received not His sayings (John 12:48).

These were the words of Him who was Himself the despised and rejected of men, by whom He was regarded as “a root out of a dry ground.” There was thus on the part of the nation no recognition of the claims either of Himself or of His words. The rulers formally refused to accept His teaching as the “counsel of God.” Luke says of the Pharisees and the lawyers, in contrast with the people that they “rejected” for themselves the counsel of God (Luke 7:29, 30).

We see therefore, that those of New Testament days who ignored the word of Jehovah through Moses of old, also ignored the word of Jehovah spoken by the Son of God. Lifted up with pride of heart, they despised the commandment of the living God. Such is also the spirit of those condemned by the apostle for setting aside their “first faith” (1 Timothy 5:12), as well as of those who set at naught dominion and rail at dignities ( Jude 8), the same Greek word occurring in these passages, all of which show how prevalent is this tendency of the human heart.

Clearly then, to despise the commandments of God is an indication of greater intensity of opposition to His will than to lay them aside. And those who despised Moses' law died without mercy on the word of two or three witnesses (Hebrews 10:28).

We now come to the third stage of departure from God, viz.-that of positive transgression. In this charge the Lord made use of their own term addressed by them to Him. The scribes had said, “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?” The Lord answered by asking them, “Why do ye also transgress the commandments of God because of your tradition?” Transgression is that form of sin which involves the willful disregard of known instructions; for where no law is [i.e., no prescribed rule] there is no transgression (Romans 4:15). The Pharisees were guilty of transgression, for while they raised the question of the violation of a human tradition, the Lord brought home to them the startling indictment that in and by means of that very tradition they who boasted in the law had become transgressors of the law (Romans 2:23, R.V.). In their inordinate zeal for the human innovation they have dishonored the law of God, given through angels, every transgression and disobedience of which would receive “a just recompense of reward” (Hebrews 2).

Transgression then, is the fruit of passing by, and then of despising the explicit commandment of God. It is in fact the willful infraction of a known rule of conduct. Such was the form of the sin of Adam and Eve (Romans 5:14; 1 Timothy 2:14). Our first parents violated the single restriction laid upon them in the garden of Eden, Adam not being deceived, but partaking of the forbidden fruit with his eyes open to the fact of the disobedience involved in the act.

Transgression, therefore, constitutes a grave and serious offense. It is the sin of the servant who, knowing his master's will, nevertheless disobeys, and on that account must be punished with many stripes (Lu. 12:47). The sin of Israel was transgression in distinction from the sin of the Gentiles, which is lawlessness. The sin of those who gloried in divers washings and in votive offerings to their temple, but who in these very things contravened God's holy law, was also transgression. And by that transgression they not only dishonored their parents but God also (Romans 2:23).

Fourthly, these formalists among the Jews had disannulled the word of God by their tradition. The Lord had made three previous references to the "commandment," viz. to God's precise and definite injunctions. These He declared they had (1) neglected, (2) rejected, and (3) transgressed. He further referred to the divine oracles as "the word of God" (see also John 10:35; Romans 9:6), and charged them with canceling it or making it void by their tradition. This change of designation for the law is significant. We are carried back to the Author of the Scriptures, which are the communication of His mind and will concerning men. The "word of God" expresses the spiritual intent of the "ten words," for instance. It points not so much to the letter of the law, as to its inmost interpretation—its spirit. Thus, by this expression the Lord showed that, in addition to the transgression of God's commandment, their tradition rendered void or disannulled the essential mind and meaning of His communications to them.

It was possible, we learn, for the letter of the law to be exceeded, while its spirit was maintained. This the Lord enunciated in connection with His own acts of healing on the sabbath day. But the scribes were guilty of the infraction of both the word and the commandment of God. The two terms applied to the divine communications are distinguished elsewhere in the New Testament. And the greater depth and fullness of the former may be observed in a passage of the Gospel of John (14:21-23). Herein we are instructed that to keep the word of Christ is evidence of greater fidelity than to keep His commandments, and the more faithful correspondence to the Master's will implied in the former case will receive the greater reward. Of one case the Lord said, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." This is commendation, but not of such a high degree as that awarded in the second case. In this instance the Lord promised the signal honor and felicity that the Father and the Son would dwell with the one keeping His word: "If a man love me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Keeping the commandments is a proof of obedience; but keeping His word is a proof of devotion.

On reflection upon our Lord's words to the Pharisees, it is startling to learn that it is possible for puny man to render ineffective the word of the living God. We know that word is eternal, immutable, "settled in the heavens," its stability exceeding that of the heavens and the earth. Its inward power is illustrated by the figure of the living and incorruptible seed. This is its true and unique character; and yet, such is the seeming paradox of the truth, as expressed in a notable

parable of our Lord's, birds of the air can carry it away, the sun can wither it, and thorns, springing up, can choke it.

(To be continued)

## Studies in Mark: 60. Word of God and Tradition of Men

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7:9-13

The word “tradition” occurs in scripture both in a good sense and in a bad sense. Broadly, the usage of the term is with reference to religious instruction passed from one to another. The root idea is of something delivered to men. If the instruction is derived from God, the tradition is obviously of supreme and undeniable authority; but if derived from a purely human source, its authority is questionable, and its truth requires to be substantiated, before it can claim our acceptance.

Before the canon of holy Scripture was completed and became accessible in a written form, much of the apostolic teaching was circulated in the early church in the form of tradition either by word or letter. Hence we read of Paul exhorting the Thessalonian saints to “hold the traditions wherein ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 15); similarly also in 2 Thessalonians 6. Again, the same apostle, writing to the Corinthians, praises them that “ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2). Whatever truth was delivered to the saints through the medium of the apostles was necessarily a tradition, whether written or oral, and being inspired, had a paramount claim over them (1 Cor. 11:23; 2 Peter 2; Jude 3).

But our Lord here spoke of Jewish tradition which emanated, not from holy men speaking by the Holy Ghost, but from fallible Rabbis who foisted upon their fellows their own views and interpretations. And on account of their human origin, the teaching and ceremonies of the Pharisees are described by Him as “the tradition of men,” “the tradition of the elders,” and as “your own tradition.”

These traditions were held with great tenacity by the scribes and others, and, so far as reputation among men was concerned, a Jew became distinguished in proportion to his zeal for their propagation and development. Saul of Tarsus before his conversion acquired distinction in Jerusalem by reason of his devotion to the tradition of his fathers. Alluding to this feature of his early days, he wrote, “I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my country-men, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers” (Galatians 1:14, R.V.). Tradition, therefore, acquires its evil sense when it is formed by an addition to, or a subtraction from the word of God, and, when fully developed, it becomes a pernicious substitute for the word of God. The scriptures, however, constitute a permanent standard of reference, and are always available for the correction of the vagaries of tradition, if we will but use them for this purpose.

We have in the New Testament an instance of the origin and spread of an unwarranted tradition. At the Sea of Gennesareth, Simon Peter, having received from the Lord some particulars relating to his own future life and service, made inquiry concerning John, saying to Jesus, “Lord, what shall this man do?” Jesus saith unto him, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow

thou me.” Such was the word of the Lord to Peter. But from it the erroneous tradition arose that John should not die. For we read in the Gospel, “This saying therefore went forth among the brethren that that disciple should not die: 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?” (John 21:21-23).

For our warning this instance, occurring in the earliest days of Christianity, is recorded of a false gloss put upon our Lord's words gaining currency among the saints either in an oral or in a written form. We are, moreover, shown by the same incident that the correct version of our Lord's words formed a criterion for the false tradition which said what Jesus said not. The report that the Lord would return in the lifetime of the apostle John was an incorrect deduction from the Lord's words to Peter. The effect of this un-authorized tradition upon the hearts of the disciples would be to deaden the hope of the Lord's return as an ever imminent event. Human tradition is in essence an enemy to divine truth, and it invariably comes about in practice that man's inclination is to side with the former rather than the latter. Hence the apostle, writing to the saints at Colosse, exhorts them against the evil influence which man's tradition would exert upon their allegiance to Christ: “Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of man, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8). In Colosse therefore, as well as formerly in Judea, there were many who were “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

In pursuance of this subject, it is instructive to observe that a particular and uncommon Greek word is used in the New Testament for commandments when derived from man. The usual word so translated is **■ντολ■**, but **■νταλμα** occurs three times only, viz., in Mark 7:7; in the parallel passage, Matthew 15:9; and in Colossians 2:22, in each case forming part of the phrase rendered “the commandments of men.” This word also occurs three times in the LXX. One of the passages (Isaiah 29:13) was quoted by our Lord on this occasion (Mark 7:6, 7; Matthew 15:7-9). In all these passages the word appears to be used with special reference to those ethical maxims and formularies of conduct which men sought to lay as heavy burdens upon the shoulders of their fellows, but which the Lord showed to be lacking in authority.

## FILIAL RESPECT

The ablutionary rites introduced by the elders and maintained so rigorously by the Pharisees were of the nature of pure ceremony, but the Lord also charged them with a serious abrogation of the moral law. Not that they sinned under this head in one respect only, for there were “many other such like things” of which they were guilty (ver. 13), but the destruction of the filial bond which their tradition permitted, if not enjoined, was the one selected by the Lord for their condemnation at this juncture.

The conclusion of the incident shows that, in result, the religious leaders who came to the Lord to convict Him as a Teacher of the people were themselves convicted by Him. It affords an instance, in accordance with the special purpose of Mark's narrative, of the absolute perfection of the Servant of Jehovah, in that He used the written word of God as the instrument of conviction, rather than His own personal authority. Matthew, setting out the King of the Jews come to administer the kingdom of the heavens according to the law and the prophets, records the same instance (Matthew 15). When, therefore, the Lord spoke as the Prophet like unto Moses, and brought out of His treasure-house “things new,” His utterances were in His own authority, and not like those of

the scribes of the day. On such occasions He taught after this manner: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time... but I say unto you..." At such times He was depositing with the people the word of Him who sent Him—a word which in the course of the progress of Divine revelation was given to supplement and to amplify the communications of old. But when the Lord opposed the false teachers of Israel His appeal was to the Scriptures. To their confusion He confronted them with what was on record and what was read by them on sabbath days in their synagogues. The proud Pharisees then found themselves in the presence of the One out of whose mouth went a sharp sword, and for their condemnation, as it were, the books were opened, and they were judged out of the things written in the books.

Accordingly, the Lord then referred the Pharisees and scribes to the law which they professed to teach. What was found in the book of Moses? How did they read therein?

The specific command was, "Honor thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16). This was one of the "ten words," and is called the "first commandment with promise" (Ephesians 5:2), for this injunction was specially distinguished by the assurance of Jehovah, that prosperity and longevity should be the portion of those obedient to it. See the special reward granted to the house of Rechab for filial obedience (Jeremiah 35:18, 19).

Further, the Lord quoted to the Pharisees the severe sentence pronounced by the same law against the one who did despite to his parents: "Whoso curseth (or, revileth) father or mother, let him die the death" (Ex. 21:17).

Thus, as not one of His hearers could deny, had Jehovah encouraged and warned every son in Israel to keep the commandment of his father, and not to depart from the law of his mother (Proverbs 6:20). The word of God declared there should be prolonged and prosperous days in the land for the obedient, but a criminal's death for the disobedient (cp. Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 27:16; Proverbs 20:20; 30:11). And the solemn charge uttered from Mount Ebal was, "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother" (Deuteronomy 27:16).

But what said the elders? They contradicted both the letter and the spirit of the law of God. They devised, in the name of piety, a wicked scheme whereby a man might release himself from every obligation towards his parents. Whatever benefits were due from him to his father and mother, let him consecrate those benefits to the service of the temple, and the Jewish council would thereupon absolve him from all filial responsibilities. "But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, it is Corban (that is to say, a gift) by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me.... And ye no longer suffer him to do anything for his father or his mother."

Having thus contrasted their practice with the original precepts of the law, the Lord summed up the effect of their conduct in one of His pregnant sayings, charging His accusers with making the word, of God of none effect through their tradition. They virtually repealed the law from heaven, and at the same time outraged the instincts of nature. It was not meet that they should take the parents' bread and devote it to the altar. In the Proverbs it was written, "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer" (Proverbs 28:24).

We learn, therefore, from this portion of the Gospel that the Lord condemned this innovation, so inimical to the reciprocal duties of family life, on the ground that it contravened the tenor of the law

given by Moses, which was their boast. But, reading the Gospels as a whole, we also know that the tradition of the Jews was contrary to the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. The Lord did not come to bear witness of Himself, and He did not in this instance refer the Pharisees to His own example in the home of Joseph and Mary. But human history knows no instance of filial perfection to set alongside that seen by men and angels through long years in the carpenter's house at Nazareth. Scripture says little of the youth of Jesus, but that little means much. We read that He went with His "parents" to Jerusalem, and that He returned to Nazareth, and was "subject to them," thus "rendering honor to whom honor was due" (Luke 2:39-52). The Evangelist who records that Jesus, said to Mary at Cana in Galilee, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" also records His words to her at Golgotha, "Woman, behold thy son" (John 2:4; 19:26) "Corban" applied to the service of our Lord in the fullest sense of the term, for He devoted Himself in sacrifice upon the altar, yet the committal of His mother to the care of the beloved disciple proves that, even upon the cross, He did not neglect to make provision for her future; magnifying the law in this respect and making it honorable (Isaiah 42:21).

We may note in passing that the obligations of Christian children to their parents are stated to be equally binding with those of the Jews (Ephesians 6:1, 2; Col. 3:20; 1 Tim. 5:4, 8).

It has sometimes been alleged that there is inconsistency between the Lord's defense of filial ties on this occasion, and His call made elsewhere to His disciples to forsake father and mother for His sake. This inconsistency is, however, only an apparent one.

The Lord said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matthew 10:37); and again, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). In these words the Lord declared the condition of discipleship. This condition was based upon the acknowledgment of His authority as paramount and absolute. No human tie should have a superior claim to that of the Lord Jesus. And in the utterances quoted, He contemplated a case where family authority sought to override His word as Master. Even in national government parental claims or filial responsibilities are not allowed to absolve a subject from allegiance to the Crown, or to screen a criminal from retributive justice. Must the Lord of all ask less than this from the subjects of His kingdom? If patriotism demands that a man shall leave all to serve his country, who should complain when the Master calls His disciples to leave all to serve Him?

There is, therefore, no inconsistency in our Lord's teaching. In the one case, He set the divine call above the claims of filial duties, while in the other, He condemned the Pharisees who set human tradition above filial duty, an inversion for which there was no adequate warrant. The question of mutual obligation in the family is one which can only be finally settled by divine authority. God alone, who established the responsibility of children to their parents, can abrogate that responsibility, and from the beginning He recorded His permission that a man should leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife (Gen. 2:24). The parental home might be quitted to form a new relationship of a natural order. In the New Testament we have a relationship of a spiritual order entered by a similar renunciation. At the call of Jesus, James and John left their father Zebedee in the ship with their hired servants and went after Him. It was so with others, as Peter said, "Lo, we have left all and followed thee." But we read that the Lord said to another, "Follow me," and he was ready with an excuse. He took refuge in his filial responsibilities, and

desired that he might be allowed to wait until his father was dead and buried. Clearly this man, judged by his own confession, was not prepared to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And accordingly the Lord said to him, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:59, 60). He had yet to learn the absolute supremacy of the One who said to him, "Follow me."

## CORBAN

"Corban" is a Hebrew, or rather an Aramaic, word whose equivalent in Greek is δῶρον, which means a gift. In the Old Testament the word is used in connection with the service of the law, and is translated "offering" and "oblation" (Leviticus 2:1, 5; Numbers 7:35). "Corban" was applied to the offering especially in the aspect of its dedication to Jehovah. In this sense the word was applied at a later day to the sacred treasure of the temple; and to that consecrated store the chief priests decided that Judas' pieces of silver might not be added (Matthew 27:6). Compare the distinction made by the Pharisees between the temple, and the gold of the temple, and between the altar and the gift on the altar (Matthew 23:16-22).

Apparently the Jews were urged to contribute dedicatory offerings to the temple service, and out of an inordinate zeal on the part of the teachers which was not according to truth, the traditional custom arose. If a man said to his father or mother, "That wherein thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban," that is Given to God, his goods were regarded as consecrated by this formula to the service of God, and, according to the tradition of the elders, might not be thenceforth diverted to the relief of his parents. It is said that the scribes held that if this word was pronounced over any of a man's possessions he was exempt from the performance of any natural duty, even though he withheld the goods temporarily from the service of the temple. This accords with our Lord's word, "Ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or mother." A writer commenting on this practice of the Jewish leaders remarks, "A more striking instance of the subversion of a command of God by the tradition of men can hardly be conceived."

But the Lord's warning to the hypocrites of that day has its application equally to the conditions of the present day. "May we all bear in mind how deeply we need to watch against the spirit of tradition. Wherever we impose with absolute authority a thing that does not proceed from God Himself, it is a tradition. It is all very well to take counsel of one another, and it is not a happy feature to oppose others needlessly; but it is of all consequence that we should strengthen each other in this, that nothing but the word of God is entitled or ought to govern the conscience. It will be found that when we let go this principle, and allow a rule to come in and become binding, so that what is not done according to that rule is regarded as a sin, we are gone from the authority of the word of God to that of tradition, perhaps without knowing it ourselves.

"The Lord here shows convincingly where these Pharisees and scribes were. They had never considered that their principles of Corban made void the word of God. But let us, too, bear in mind that after we have had any Divine truth pressed upon us we are never the same as before. We may have been simply and honestly ignorant then, but we are thenceforth under the increased yoke of God's known mind, which we either receive in faith or reject, and harden ourselves by rejecting in unbelief. Therefore, let us look to the Lord, that we may cherish a good conscience. This supposes that we have nothing before us which we cleave to, or allow inconsistent with God's will. Let us desire and value nothing but what is according to His word, lest peradventure any of us

be left where Christ leaves these Pharisees, under the terrible censure that they made void the word of God through their tradition. If but one example was taken up it was a sufficient example of the things they were doing continually.”

## THE WORD OF MOSES

In a day of declining regard for the great law-giver of Israel, it is instructive to recognize the manner in which our Lord paid honor on this occasion to Moses, as the accredited representative of God in his time. Even in quoting from the decalogue itself, written as it was by the finger of God upon the tables of stone, Moses is named as the honored medium through whom the law received in the holy mount was promulgated. The Lord declared to the Pharisees, “Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother.”

We are not to suppose that the Lord in any sense detracted from the purely divine origin of the law. On the contrary it is dear that Moses was at the same time presented as the mediator between God and His people. This we may see by comparing this passage with its parallel in Matthew. The report of the words of Jesus there given is, “God said, Honor thy father and mother” (Matthew 15:4. R.V.). Both records are, of course, true, the full statement of our Lord being that (1) God spake and (2) He spake by the mouth of His servant Moses. Each evangelist embodied that portion of the Lord's utterance which was most consonant with the purpose of the particular narrative. Matthew shows that the tradition of the elders was in conflict with the words of God, while Mark lays stress upon its discordance with the sayings of the law-giver of the nation.

Remembering that the Second Evangelist is used by the inspiring Spirit to portray the humble servitude of Jesus, we discern a beautiful touch of His perfections in this part of the narrative. The Prophet's championship of the truth of God was undertaken in meek unassertiveness of His own personal glory and authority. As the Servant of Jehovah He did not strive nor cry, but paid, if we may so express it, a dignified deference to Moses that former servant of God (Revelation 15:3), whom He was to resemble according to the prophecy of Moses himself (Deuteronomy 18:15; Acts 3:22). God had honored Moses, as the scriptures testified, and the Son of man honored him too, teaching us also, by a quiet example, to render honor to whom honor is due. The Lord maintained that honor must be paid to the word of Moses, while He condemned utterly the word of the elders. The word of Moses was the word of God (cp. ver. 10 with ver. 13), while the tradition of the elders was but the word of man, and more unreliable than that—of misguided man.

The Lord approved of whatever was true and commendable in the belief and conduct of those who came within the scope of His ministry, and He fully recognized their professed regard for Moses. He said to the people, “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat” (Matthew 23:2), and they said of themselves, “We are Moses' disciples. We know that God spake unto Moses” (John 9:28, 29). But on account of the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, the word of God became, as in this instance, the instrument of their condemnation. They misused their boasted privileges to the destruction of their souls. Having Moses and the prophets, they had in them sufficient witness of the eternal verities to compass their salvation if they would but hear them (Luke 16:29-31). In the holy oracles were also written the “things concerning” the sufferings and the glories of the Messiah, as Jesus Himself showed both before and after His resurrection (Luke 18:31; 24:27, 44). But in this very thing their blindness was made manifest. Professing to believe Moses, they failed to perceive Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets wrote. Moses accordingly became,

not their savior, but their judge, as the Lord said to them, "Think not that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" ( John 5:45-47, R.V.).

W. J. H.

## Studies in Mark: 61. True Source of Man's Defilement

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Chap. 7:14-23

“And he called to him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. And when he was entered into the house from the multitude, his disciples asked of him the parable. And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him: because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out into the draft? This he said, making all meats clean. And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:14-23, R.V.).

The Lord on this occasion unsparingly condemned the traditions of the Jews which, though totally unauthorized by divine authority, were rigorously imposed by the religious chiefs upon the people of the day. But He established truth as well as exposed error. In His doctrine the Great Servant-Prophet of Jehovah was destructive of all evil forms and corrupt tendencies, but was also constructive of what was good and of God, preaching continually the gospel of the kingdom of God. He swept away the delusion of a cleansing from spiritual defilement by material means, and proclaimed the deep-seated cause of man's moral uncleanness. There was, He taught, an overflowing spring of pollution within, and men were self-deceived by the habit of attending solely to external means of purification. Even if all avenues of contamination from without were closed, man would still possess the inward disposition and desire and impulses to sin which spread corruption through his being.

In this manner of teaching we find no pandering to the notions of the times; and herein we see one notable difference between the false teachers and the True. The false prophet prophesies smooth things and deceitful things which conceal the ugly facts of sin and judgment. But the Servant of Jehovah unveiled the whole truth before the eyes of priests and people alike, and this plainness of speech incurred the bitter hatred of that evil generation. “Now ye seek to kill me,” said Jesus to the Jews, “a man that hath told you the truth” (John 8:40).

### THE SAYING ADDRESSED TO THE CROWD

Both in word and deed, the Lord displayed a special loving interest in the welfare of the masses, oppressed as they were by the Pharisees and scribes who shut up the kingdom of heaven against them, neither entering themselves nor suffering the people to enter (Matthew 23:13). It was foretold that a characteristic feature of the ministry of the Messiah would be that the poor should have the gospel preached to them (Luke 4:18; 7:22). The humble in heart often have a poor purse, and Jesus said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).

The Lord, then, had been speaking to the teachers of Israel and reproving them for foisting an empty tradition upon the people to the displacement of the law and prophets of God. They were not true men but evil shepherds of the sheep—thieves and robbers indeed (John 10:8-13), since they had taken away from the people the word of God which was their heritage and their salvation. But the Lord was the Good Shepherd of Israel. It was His delight “to stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD.” He had come out of heaven to give His people the true bread of life—the word which proceeded out of the mouth of God.

Accordingly, the Lord called the crowds together again and communicated to them the truth on this subject in simple and concise language such as they might “hear and understand.” He spoke to the multitudes direct without an intermediary, so that these simple peasants of Galilee were able to drink from the well-spring of truth itself. Everyone was called to give heed to Him, and to seek to lay hold upon His words. Hearken unto me every one of you, He said, and understand: “there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man.”

The Lord's subject in this saying is not the means of cleansing, but the cause of defilement. He does not here speak of the futility of ceremonial purification, and of the use of water to remove immoral stains (Job 9:30, 31). Of this He had already spoken to the Pharisees, but He now instructs those uninstructed in the law with regard to the true source of defilement. Cleansing pre-supposes defilement. How then does man become unclean? Is it by the polluting influences of external things entering his physical organization? The Lord declared that the inner motives from which man's words and actions spring are the cause of his uncleanness, none being able to bring a clean thing out of an unclean.

The soul was distinct from and superior to man's body, and what went into a man was for the nourishment and maintenance of his body—the tenement of the soul and spirit. The things which mattered most were those which proceeded from a man. His schemes, his motives, his desires, his character, his moral color—these made a man a center of power, radiating influences either for good or for evil.

In speaking to the multitude the Lord did not enter into any details of the controversy recently held with their teachers, but placed the truth of the subject before them in a simple, antithetical way after the manner of many of the Proverbs of Solomon so that by this means its wisdom and truth might be retained with comparative ease in their memories.

Moreover, the style of His speech was not after the manner of the scribes but with authority: “there is nothing from without the man which going into him can defile him.” He did not, as in His discussion with the scribes, cite scripture to support His statement, but delivered the truth as one who taught of His own inner fullness: “We speak that we know, and bear witness of that we have seen” (John 3:11). The Master knew so well the source of corruption which was “in man” (John 2:25). He saw not as man sees, for He looked not at the outward appearance, but on the heart (1 Samuel 16: 7). His words, accordingly were words of truth, and, by reason of this testimony from Him, His hearers were left without excuse. As He said, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for sin” (John 15:22).

#### FURTHER INSTRUCTION IN THE HOUSE

A fuller explanation of this teaching was made to the apostles at their own request. They came to Jesus privately in the house, saying that the Pharisees were stumbled at His saying with regard to washing (Matthew 15:12). With all the technical knowledge of scripture which the religious leaders possessed they failed to comprehend the Lord's utterance. This failure proved their incompetence and indeed their added guiltiness, since they were the appointed custodians and expositors of the oracles of God. The Lord pronounced their coming doom. Every plant, He said, not of His heavenly Father's planting (cp. Isaiah 61:3) should be rooted up. The ax was laid at the root of the trees. The fig tree should wither away and become a dry tree. They had not profited by Moses, neither would they by the Messiah. They were to be let alone. They were blind leaders of the blind who said, We see, but their sin remained, and both teachers and taught would fall into the ditch. (Matthew 15; John 9:41.)

Peter said to the Lord, "Declare unto us the parable" (Matthew 15:15; cp. 13:36). It was the same apostle who afterward at Joppa and Antioch failed to put into practice this teaching of the Lord (Acts 10:14; Galatians 2:12). He was now the spokesman for the rest, all the disciples making inquiry through him, as Mark informs us (7:17). None of them had grasped the significance of the Lord's saying, but they differed in spirit from the Pharisees, inasmuch as not knowing they yet desired to know. They came questioning therefore, believing the Lord would make the matter plain to them, and that they would then see a beauty and value in the Master's teaching which at the moment was not clear to them. Like multitudes since they had much to unlearn before they could learn. Their habits of mind and trend of thought induced by their instructions from childhood in the law of Moses and in the rites and ceremonies of that law blocked the way for the entrance of the Lord's words into their hearts, giving them the needed light and deliverance.

We find the Lord said to the disciples who thus came to Him, seeking further instruction, "Are ye so without understanding also?" There seems some reproach in this question. The Pharisees had not understood; the populace did not understand (Isaiah 6:9; Mark 4:12); but how was it the Lord's own company did not understand Him? He said to the people, Hearken and understand (ver. 14), but the apostles also failed to understand. And the Lord by His question to them implies that it was blameworthy on their part to confess such ignorance. Why was this?

The explanation appears to be that in New Testament usage lack of understanding **■σ■νετος** may arise (1) from a lack of capacity to receive divine truths, and (2) from the non-employment of this capacity by those who possess it. Thus, in the first sense (1) this lack is true of the whole world, Jews and Gentiles alike, for "there is none that understandeth" (Romans 3:11). The same sense is also attributed to the word in the Lord's parable of the Sower and the seeds: the wayside hearer receives the word of the kingdom, but understandeth it not, and the wicked one catches it away (Matthew 13:19). But the term is used in the second sense of those who were brought into the kingdom, but yet failed to receive its wisdom. For example, the stilling of the night-storm on the Sea of Galilee followed immediately upon the feeding of the five thousand, and yet the disciples failed to reflect upon this marvelous exhibition of the power and goodness of the Son of God in their midst. "They considered [understood] not the miracle of the loaves for their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:52).

Now in the sequence of his narrative the Evangelist proceeds to show that, having failed to understand His works of mercy and power, the apostles had also failed to understand His words

about purification. There were hindrances, such as infirmities of nature, carnal prepossessions and selfish interests; these clouded the spiritual vision. But the Patient Teacher was ready to repeat His words and to amplify His teaching, so that hearing yet again they might understand. The things of the Lord were hidden from the wise and prudent (the understanding ones of this world, Matthew 11:25; Luke 10:21; 1 Cor. 1:19), and revealed unto babes. Simplicity of heart was the character suited to the kingdom of God. The disciples though they had entered the kingdom were not maintaining the childlikeness of those to whom it was given to know the mysteries of that kingdom. Moreover, all knowledge would be partial until the Spirit came at Pentecost, when the truth would be declared in parables no longer. "These things have I spoken unto you in parables [parables]: the hour cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in parables, but shall tell you plainly of the Father" (John 16:25; cp. also Matthew 13:35).

#### GOD'S KINGDOM NOT EATING AND DRINKING

The Lord stated afresh to the inquiring disciples the law of that kingdom of God which He had come to establish. Its essence was spiritual not carnal. It was founded not on temporal matters such as food and drink, but upon spiritual truths which affected the inner life and relationship of man to God, in whose sight the state of the heart is of greater importance relatively than the state of the body. Apart from the question of artificial restrictions which the Lord had already condemned in their hearing, He would have them know that "whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him." A man would not become morally unclean by the consumption of certain meats, as the Jews held. From the bondage of this tradition, the truth which came by Jesus Christ set them free.

This deliverance is an important doctrine for the followers of the Lord to maintain today as ever. The Son has Made us free, and we are exhorted to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). The ordinances to handle not, nor taste, nor touch, are after the precepts and commandments of men, from which we have been delivered by the death of Christ (Colossians 2:20-23).

So far as partaking of food is concerned the Christian is enjoined to discharge this as well as every other physical function in a manner becoming to one whose body is a possession of the Lord, a member of Christ, and a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:13, 15, 19). The glory of God should be our ultimate object in the maintenance of physical vitality; "whether ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). On the other hand, the absence of self-control and the abuses of the appetites are positive sins, and the glutton and the drunkard alike are the subjects of the stern reprobation of God (Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23:21; Philippians 3:16).

W. J. H.

(To be continued)

## Studies in Mark: 62. God's Kingdom Not Eating and Drinking

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7:14-23

The kingdom of God therefore concerns itself with matters above the range of eating and drinking. Its domain, as the apostle Paul says, is characterized by righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost (Romans 14:17). The moral and spiritual traits of the sons of the kingdom abide forever, but foods of whatever nature perish in the using; "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall bring to naught both it and them" (1 Cor. 6:13).

### THE FOUNTAIN OF UNCLEANNES

We have in the verses which follow (vers. 20-23), a second statement of our Lord introduced in the narrative by the words, "And he said," the preceding statement being prefaced by the slightly different phrase, "And he saith unto them" (ver. 18). The first deals with the truth that man does not contract spiritual defilement by means of his material food and drink. In the second saying the complementary truth is presented that spiritual defilement is contracted by the evil thoughts, words, and deeds which emanate from the heart within: "That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed...."

Therefore, whatever ethical teachers may say, the heart of man is the seat of his uncleanness. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). This was so from the beginning, for before the flood God declared of man that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5; 8:21). In consequence of his overt acts of wickedness men of that epoch became so perniciously corrupt that the direct judgment of God swept the ante-diluvian world away.

Always and everywhere scripture testifies to this inward taint. Man is said to be shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, and estranged from the womb (Psalm 51:5; 58:5). It is in the heart that man erred from the ways of God (Hebrews 3:10), for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9, 10), being filled with all unrighteousness (Romans 1:29). "Ye are they," the Lord said to the Pharisees, "which justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts" (Luke 16:15).

Unquestionably therefore, man's heart is regarded by God as the source of evil, and because a man's sinfulness arises primarily from within himself he is held personally responsible to bear his own burden of guilt before the Judge of all the earth.

### MOUTH, TONGUE AND LIPS

"Proceeding out of" is a simple but expressive term occurring three times in this short section (vers. 20-23), and is used in connection with both thoughts and acts. Elsewhere in the New Testament it is frequently used with reference to the spoken utterance, and in a good as well as in an evil sense. Thus, we learn that the scriptures form the spiritual food of man who lives by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4). The Lord's solemn

pronouncements of righteous judgments upon human sin are likened to a sharp sword proceeding out of His mouth (Revelation 1:16; 19:15, 21), But the term is also used with sinister associations. as, for instance, when the believer is warned to be careful lest any corrupt communication should proceed out of his mouth (Ephesians 4:29). And in the lurid visions of the Apocalypse John saw the destructive powers of judgment proceeding out of the mouths of the appointed agents in the emblematic forms of fire and smoke and brimstone (Revelation 9:17; 6:5), John further saw unclean spirits proceeding out of the mouths of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, that trinity of evil power which may soon appear (Revelation 16:13).

The tongue therefore is regarded in scripture as a mighty instrument which a man may wield for good or ill among his fellows. Speech is the great means for the publication of the thought which arises in the heart and of the dissemination of its purifying or defiling influences among others. The mouth is the medium whereby man may worship God or blaspheme His holy name. So James says, "Therewith bless we God, even the Father, and therewith curse we men who are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be" (Jas. 3:9, 10). Hence, he that ruleth his spirit is mightier than he who taketh a city, and "whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (Proverbs 16:32; 21:23). But who can bring a dean thing out of an unclean? The seriousness of this problem James teaches when he says, "The tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly member," and, further, "So is the tongue among our members that it defileth the whole body" (James 3:6, 8). In the sense of this guilty contagiousness, Isaiah confessed that he was a man of unclean lips, and accordingly it was upon his mouth that the coal of cleansing was laid (Isaiah 6:7).

Clearly, it is in agreement with the whole tenor of the word of God, that in the matter of guilty uncleanness, the functions of the mouth in speaking are of greater moral importance than those for eating, for "meat will not commend us to God: neither if we eat [things offered to idols] are we the better: neither, if we eat not are we the worse" (1 Cor. 8: 8), but for "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36).

## THE ISSUES OF LIFE

In reply to the questions put to Him in the house, the Lord declared to his disciples (1) what was the root, and (2) what were the fruits of evil in men. The root was the evil thought of the heart, and the fruits were the specific acts of wickednesses some of which He named. In the evil thought therefore the evil deed is contained in embryo. Jesus said to them, "From within out of the heart of men evil thoughts proceed...;" then He enumerated a list of some of the vile deeds which spring from man's inner motives, adding, "all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man."

Evil thoughts.-These are the inward reasonings and debates of man's mind. Within himself he deliberates, he calculates, he plans his schemes of sinful indulgence or willful rebellion. "Things come into his mind, and he devises an evil device" (Ezek. 38:10.; Micah 2:1, 2). Thus, in describing the appalling moral degradation of the human race, the apostle traces it to this inward source: "knowing God they glorified him: not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings [thoughts] and their senseless heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21). Hidden within the heart, it is one of man's strange delusions that his thoughts are thereby concealed from Omniscience, yet it is written, "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise that they are vain" (1 Cor. 3:20; Psalm 94:11). The incarnate Son possessed and displayed this omniscience; indeed,

according to the word of Simeon to Mary, one of the purposes of His mission was that “the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed” (Luke 2:35).

There are several recorded instances wherein our Lord showed an intimate acquaintance with the secret workings and motives of men's minds—that is, their inward thoughts and lusts whereby they are drawn away and subdued (Jas. 1: 13). Jesus perceived those of:

(1) the disciples when He bade them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees (Matthew 16:7, 8; Mark 8:16, 17);

(2) the scribes when He forgave the sins of the palsied man (Mark 2:6-8; Luke 5:22);

(3) the scribes when He was in the synagogue where was a man with a withered hand (Lu. 6:8);

(4) the disciples when they had been discussing who should be the greatest (Lu. 9:45; Mark 9:33).

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(To be continued)

## Studies in Mark: 63. God's Kingdom Not Eating and Drinking

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Chap. 7:14-23

40.—God's Kingdom Not Eating and Drinking

The use of the word “thoughts” (διαλογισμο■) to express inward cogitations is illustrated in the following passages, in which the same Greek word occurs, though it is not always translated “thoughts.” (1) Mary “cast in her mind” what manner of salutation that made by the angel was (Lu. 1:29). (2) The people “mused” in their hearts whether John the Baptist was the Messiah or not (Lu. 15). (3) Jesus said to the disciples when He appeared in their midst, Why do thoughts arise in your hearts? (Lu. 24:38).

When the chief priests asked Jesus concerning the baptism of John, they “reasoned” with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven: he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe on him ? But if ye shall say, Of men; we fear the people, for all hold Jesus as a prophet (Matthew 21:25, 26). (5) The rich man whose crops were plentiful elaborated his plans for future ease after he had “thought within himself” (Lu. 12:17).

The wicked husbandmen, when they saw the heir of the vineyard, “reasoned” among themselves, saying, This is the heir: let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours (Luke 20:14).

Caiaphas advised the council to “consider” how expedient it was that one man should die for the people (John 11:50).

In these instances the inward tendencies of the thoughts of men's hearts are plainly indicated. They are opposed to God, and also to His Son. In this latter respect the Messianic prophecies were fulfilled which said, “All their thoughts are against me for evil”; “their thoughts are thoughts of evil”; “all their imaginations are against me” (Psalm 56:5; Isaiah 59:7; Lam. 3:61).

Evil deeds.—There now follows after the mention of “evil thoughts” a brief catalog of sins, springing out of the evil heart of man, enumerated by the Lord to His disciples on this occasion. Comparing the first two Gospels, seven evils are named by Matthew (15:19) and twelve by Mark. The agreements and differences in the two lists are as follows—

(1) Six are mentioned by both Evangelists, viz., adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, wickednesses, blasphemy.

(2) One by Matthew only, viz., false witness.

(3) Six by Mark only, viz., covetousness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, pride, foolishness.

(1) The six sins recorded by both Matthew and Mark are the grosser forms of man's evil doings, and, with the exception of blasphemy, which is Godward as well as manward, they relate to the ways in which man does hurt to his neighbor. In the variety of action here specified man shows his habitual breach of the second table of the law, the provisions of which are mainly manward

(Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31). Love is the fulfilling of the law; it thinketh no evil, and no harm. Love of one's neighbor therefore secures the observance of the several prohibitions against trespassing upon his rights. The apostle Paul sums up obedience to these particular commandments in this one act. He writes thus to the church at Rome: "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Romans 13:9). This is the "royal law," which if we fulfill, we shall do well (James 2:8).

This commandment is "good" (Romans 7:12), but the will of man is opposed to obeying it. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be (Romans 8:7). The inward impulse is to infringe its precepts, and this unruly disposition results in a succession of overt acts of a gravely criminal nature, such as are here specified for condemnation. This disobedient nature is characteristic of all the sons of Adam, who in consequence are in absolute contrast with God's Righteous One of whom it was prophetically written, "The law of his God is in his heart: none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31).

(2) False witness.-This form of sin is named by Matthew only, and while it is at all times prevalent among all men, it is specially characteristic of the Jews as a nation. A man or a nation may become false as to witness (1) for God, or (2) in the mutual responsibilities among men. Thus (1) Israel was as a nation selected to become the depository of the truth of Jehovah's Godhead and of Jehovah's law, and to testify to these great truths among other nations who were idolaters. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am God" (Isaiah 43:10, 12; 46:8). In this trust however, they notoriously proved themselves false witnesses, for they openly worshipped idols in imitation of neighboring nations, and dishonored the law. In the points of Israel's failure as a witness for the truth, because of their evil heart of unbelief, their Messiah was perfect throughout; and when the righteous government of an evil world is to be undertaken, He is introduced for the purpose, and one of His titles which express His competency is that of the Faithful and True Witness (Revelation 1:5; 3:14).

Untrue testimony by one man against another (2) is also pernicious. The law of Sinai expressly forbade the Israelite to bear false witness against his neighbor (Ex. 20:16), and it was written that a false witness should not go unpunished, (Proverbs 19:5, 9), but should perish (Proverbs 21:28). He was a menace to the nation, and is figuratively described as "a maul and a sword and a sharp arrow" (Proverbs 25:18), for lying testimony bore down its victim by sheer force, and cut asunder the very vitals, and wounded even from afar.

Moreover, as a nation, Israel was specially guilty of false witness against the Messiah. This sin was foreshadowed by the Spirit of Christ in the prophets: "False witnesses are risen up against me, and such as breathe out cruelty": "they laid to my charge things that I knew not" (Psalm 27:12; 35:11). And so it came about when in the fullness of time the Anointed One presented Himself to the chosen people, not the rabble, but the religious chiefs of the Jews sought to find false witness against Jesus to put Him to death, themselves breaking in this respect the law they were set to administer (Ex. 23:1); as we read, "Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put him to death: and they found it not, though many false witnesses came. But afterwards came two and said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days" (Matthew 26:59-61; Mark 14:56).

On this false evidence, the Lord was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin. Taken next to Pilate, the chief priests themselves bore equally lying witness against Jesus before the Roman governor in order to secure His crucifixion (Lu. 23:2). This sin against judicial equity lies even now upon the nation, and upon them will yet come the just retribution of God. Under the law it was enacted that if a man “be a false witness and hath testified falsely against his brother, then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to do unto his brother” (Deuteronomy 19:15-19). And if false witness against a man's neighbor was regarded with such gravity, of how much greater guilt was it to deny the Holy and the Just One? As Jesus was betrayed into the hands of the Gentiles, so Israel is trodden down of the nations until their times be fulfilled.

(3) Sins named by Mark only.-These six offenses—covetousness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, pride, foolishness—are intimately associated with the inward workings of man's heart. If the others previously named may be described as the lusts of the flesh, these are the desires of the mind (Ephesians 2:3); if they illustrated the filthiness of the flesh, these show the filthiness of the spirit (2 Cor. 7:1). These inward propensities are the dead bones, the uncleanness of the hypocrisy and iniquity within the whited sepulchers, of which the Lord spoke in another place (Matthew 23:27, 28).

Covetousness.-This is the selfish greed within a man's heart which desires to appropriate other things than those God has given him and are therefore his legitimate possession. The Gentiles fell into this snare no less than the Jews (Romans 1:29). The covetous man is called an idolater (Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5), for he sets up another god within himself whom he serves with his whole heart. Hence the apostle John exhorted the followers of Christ, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21)

Deceit.—This word is often translated “guile” in the New Testament, and is expressive of cunning, of craftiness, of plotting to deceive, while it is usually associated with a person's words. There was no guile found in the mouth of Christ (1 Pet. 2:22), nor will guile be in the mouth of the future Jewish remnant who follow the Lamb (Revelation 14:5), of whom Nathanael was a figure (John 1:47). But it was by guile that the Jewish council sought to arrest Jesus and put Him to death (Matthew 26:4; Mark 14:1). Elymas the sorcerer was full of it, for it was part of his nefarious stock-in-trade (Acts 13:10). While it is declared of Jew and Gentile alike that “with their tongues they have used deceit [guile]” (Romans 3:13), the apostle Peter quotes the Psalmist who says, “He that would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (Psalm 34:13; 1 Pet. 3:10).

Lasciviousness.-The indulgence of impure subjects in the imagination promotes the performance of corresponding acts of impurity.

An evil eye.-The eye is the principal organ whereby impressions from without are received by us. And an “evil eye” would seem to be one habituated to seek out and dwell upon unworthy and noxious objects. The epithet, “evil” is πονηρ■ς (malignant), and not merely κακ■ς (defiled, corrupt). The same term is applied to Satan as the principal agent in the infliction of harm upon man. He is called the Evil one (Matthew 6; 13; John 2:13, 14).

The eye, therefore, is a main thoroughfare to and from the heart. Through the eye sinful lusts are awakened and put into exercise, so that as the Lord taught on another occasion, “If thine eye be

evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness” (Matthew 6:23).

In the Scriptures, the evil eye is frequently regarded as a close companion of covetousness and selfishness and envious jealousy. The sufferings of others are disregarded by the evil eye if personal gain is thereby secured. Jehovah warned the people of Israel against having an evil eye towards a poor brother in need and withholding due succor from him (Deuteronomy 15:7-9; 28:54, 55). Men were counseled to avoid stinginess of spirit and to cultivate the bountiful eye which gives liberally to the needy (Proverbs 22:9). The eye is never satisfied with riches, and the man, hasting to be rich and having an evil eye, is warned that poverty shall come upon him (Proverbs 28:22; Ecc. 4:8).

King Saul is a personal example, for he was filled with jealous hatred against David because the daughters of Israel praised the slayer of Goliath more than they praised himself, and he “eyed David from that day forward” (1 Samuel 18:9). A similar spirit of envy against others who appear to have been better favored than themselves was displayed by the laborers who murmured against their fellow-workers who having been hired only at the eleventh hour received as much as those who entered the vine-yard at the beginning of the day. “Is thine eye evil,” said the householder to one of the grumblers, “because I am good?” (Matthew 20:15).

Another and somewhat different example of the evil use of the eye is recorded in the history of the crucifixion of our Lord. This is an instance, not so much of envy and jealousy, as of a morbid interest, if not a pleasurable satisfaction in viewing the sufferings of another. We read that while the rulers derided and the soldiers mocked the Savior on the cross, the “people stood beholding” (Lu. 23:35). To the multitude the occasion was as a public show. They had come to, Golgotha for a holiday spectacle.

Many eyes saw the Holy Sufferer on the cross, as many will see Him on the clouds of glory. By-and-by they will see Him with guilty fear and trembling, as of old they beheld Him in callous indifference. Then their vulgar gaze gave an added pain to the sensitive spirit of the Christ, as we learn from the plaint of the prophetic Spirit of the Messiah recorded in the Psalm — “All they that see me laugh me to scorn”; “They look and stare upon me” (Psalm 22:7).

Pride.-There are several words so translated in the Greek Testament. The one used here (■περηφαν■α) conveys the sense of a spirit of self-exaltation in a man coupled with the disparagement of others. The Pharisees who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others (Luke 18:9) are flagrant examples, but the Gentiles are not free from guilt in this respect any more than the Jews (Romans 1:30). This arrogance displays itself in boastful words and vainglorious deeds, but its origin is within the heart, as is shown by that sentence from the Magnificat: “He scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart” (Luke 1:51). This particular form of haughtiness is obnoxious to God and amenable to His summary judgment, for both James and Peter write that “God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5).

The root idea of the word is that of lifting up oneself to show oneself off above one's fellows, a personal puffing up which brings into the condemnation of the devil (1 Timothy 3:6). The full development of this sin of unmitigated arrogance in man was not seen in the Pharisee, but will be fully displayed in the coming “man of sin,” the son of perdition, who “opposeth and exalteth

himself" exceedingly against everyone that is called god, or object of veneration: so that he sitteth down in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (2 Thessalonians 4). That great personage having exalted himself to heaven in the folly of pride, will be brought down to hell in swift abasement by the epiphany of the coming in glory of Him who humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

Foolishness.-Folly or lack of sense closes the catalog here given of the foul emanations of man's evil heart. It does not follow, as some have thought, from its position on the list that foolishness is the most serious sin' of all, as if the list was arranged to express degrees of gravity. Neither, on the other hand, is foolishness negligible in importance, so that it may be passed over without concern.

Foolishness seems to be that gross form of stupidity which excludes God from the regulation of the life. In the words of the Psalmist, "The fool hath said in his heart, No God" (Psalm 14:1). Though the natural heart is the seat of uncontrollable passions which impel the whole man into courses of vile action, the senseless refuse that divine help and guidance which alone can enable them to live lives of purity and obedience. Can there be greater folly than this? Foolishness is placed last in the list, says one writer, because it renders all the others incurable.

This foolishness arising from man's own nature is defiled and defiling, in contrast with that wisdom that comes down from above and is "first pure" (James 3:17). Counsel and instruction are to be had of God for the seeking, but the natural man willfully disregards them. This is his foolishness. He allows himself to be carried away by the violence of his sinful desires, and ignores the mercy and grace of God which would lift him above himself into the plane of light, life and holiness. Such is his foolishness.

#### PURE IN HEART

"All these things proceed from within and defile the man," were the Lord's concluding words to the disciples here. How futile therefore was it for the Pharisees to contend for the ceremonial washing of the hands and the person, forgetful of that inward defilement which is moral and from the heart, and cannot be cleansed by the washing of water. The Lord's teaching with regard to the kingdom of the heavens was opposed to this, for He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

And the Jews should have known how this essential purification of heart could be effected. Ezekiel had declared that the cleansing of the nation was Jehovah's work and promise: "And I will sprinkle clean water upon you and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezek. 36:25, 26). The water is a figure of the word of God, as the Lord Himself shows, referring to the effect of His own word upon the disciples who received it by faith. He said, "Already ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3).

But the ritualistic practices of the Pharisees in this respect were vain and delusive as the Lord taught, yet in spite of that teaching, and heedless of His warning, some in the early church fell into the snare of relying upon human ordinances for purification. Against such Titus was warned: "Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. To the pure all things are pure; but to them that are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their mind and their conscience is defiled" (Titus 1:14, 15). According to the "proverb of the ancients,"

quoted by David to Saul, "Out of the wicked cometh forth wickedness" (1 Samuel 24:13).

Religious lustrations are highly esteemed among men, but not seldom they are an abomination to God in their vanity and hypocrisy. James writes "Pure religion and undefiled before God and our Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

W. J. H.

(Continued from page 310) (To be continued)

## Studies in Mark: 64. Crumbs of Grace for Gentile Dogs

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Chap. 7:24-30

“And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tiro and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it: and he could not be hid. But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet. Now the woman was a Greek, a Syro-phoenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs. But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And he saith unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the devil gone out” (7:24-30, R.V.).

The time was now approaching when the Servant of the Lord would complete His ministry of grace in Galilee, and would go up to Jerusalem to deliver His final testimony to the “daughter of Zion.” And we find from the Gospel records that in the later journeyings of Jesus in Galilee, there were some notable occasions when the grace and truth of which He was “full” overflowed to those of Gentile blood. These examples, amongst which that of the Syro-phoenician woman is not the least striking, were foreshadowings of the (then) coming time of unrestricted grace when it would be proclaimed to all men that the Lord of all is rich unto all that call upon Him (Romans 10:10).

At Capernaum the Pharisees in their religious pride stumbled at the saying of the Lord (Matthew 15:12) that the heart of man is the true seat of his spiritual defilement, sin spreading outwards from this inward source like a leprous disease. These Jewish teachers refused to believe in Jesus and in His word, condemning their tradition as it did: hence they were “confounded,” and missed receiving that purification of heart which comes alike to Jews and Gentiles who believe (Acts 15:9).

But it was made clear in the days of the Lord that if they of the favored nation stumbled at the Stumbling-stone through unbelief, heathen strangers, humbly Confessing the extremity of their needs, would stretch out arms of entreaty and faith to the mercy of Jehovah that was then visiting the people of His covenant. And in His zeal to help the needy He showed that no plaint for pity should be addressed in vain to the just and lowly King of Israel, not even the voice of a Canaanite. In accordance with this purpose we here read that “from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tiro and Sidon.”

### TIRE AND SIDON

The geographical limits of our Lord's ministry were much circumscribed in comparison with those assigned by Him to His followers at His departure. His own service was confined to the “cities of Israel,” that of the apostles in His absence was extended to the ends of the earth. When Paul and Barnabas were preaching the word of God to the Jews in Antioch, and the audience refused their testimony, the apostle said to them, “Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46). But though our Lord's words and deeds

were rejected in Capernaum and elsewhere in Galilee and Judea, the Lord did not Himself preach the gospel of the kingdom to Gentiles, nor did He enter Gentile territory. He, however, on this occasion approached the borders of His own country. The branches of the fruitful bough ran over the wall of partition (Gen. 49:22), though the millennial day was, in fact, far distant, when the leaves of the tree of life would be for the healing of the nations everywhere (Revelation 22:3). Nevertheless, those of Tiro and Sidon, who even then cared to seek help and healing from God's Minister of grace, would not be denied, as the record of the Evangelist proves.

Tiro and Sidon, or Zidon, were cities of great antiquity, the latter being the elder; for Zidon, the first-born of Canaan, founded the city, and called it by his own name (Gen. 10:15, 19). Hence, in Matthew the woman of Tiro and Sidon is called a Canaanitess (15:22). In the time of Joshua, it had grown to be a place of considerable size and importance, and was known as "great Zidon" (Joshua 11:8; 19:28). Zidon was included in the inheritance apportioned to the tribe of Asher (Joshua 19:24-31), but the Asherites failed to take full possession of their inheritance. They did not drive out the inhabitants of Zidon, but dwelt among the Canaanites (Judg. 31, 32).

Tiro, twenty miles distant, though the younger city, excelled its neighbor in commercial prosperity and influence, and its worldly grandeur is described in vivid terms by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. 27), and Hiram its king was a useful ally of David and Solomon, and provided workmen and materials for the building of the royal palace and the temple at Jerusalem.

But Tiro broke away from the "brotherly covenant," and incurred the divine displeasure (Amos 1:9). Because of their sinful pride God's judgments came upon these two cities, according to the prophecies of Isaiah (23) and Ezekiel (26-29), by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and subsequently by Alexander the Great of Greece. This punishment came to pass in the words of another prophet: "Tiro did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold, the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire" (Zechariah 9:3, 4).

Their wickedness was so great that they are classed by our Lord with Sodom as monumental examples of the world's iniquity and departure from God (Matthew 11:22, 23). And yet the Lord also declared that if the mighty works done by Him in Chorazin and Bethsaida had been done in Tiro and Sidon they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes, even as Nineveh did at the preaching of Jonah.

#### THE HOUSE OF MERCY

"And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid." At the dedication of the magnificent temple on Mount Zion, Solomon, contrasting its significance with the infinite and essential glories of Jehovah, exclaimed, "Will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee: how much less this house that I have builded" (2 Kings 8:27). Neither could the house on the borders of Tiro and Sidon contain nor confine the glory of Jehovah's Servant. "He could not be hid," though in His humility and the lowliness of His heart, He retired from the populous districts bordering the Sea of Galilee, where He was unwanted, and sought some privacy in a house (as Mark alone tells us) near the land of the Gentile.

This voluntary seclusion illustrates to us the amazing perfection of this Servant of God who accepted so meekly the rebuffs to His service. Though arising directly from the men of Israel, the

hand of His God was seen by Him to be above all. He bowed to them therefore, as to the will of Him that sent Him. Finding Jerusalem and Galilee leagued against Him, He sought a secret place away from the face of His enemies, where He might spread out the disappointment of His heart of love before the face of His Father. There was a further display of the same spirit later, when the crucifixion became still more imminent, and we read that as the Lord and His disciples “passed through Galilee, he would have no man know it” (Mark 9:30, 32).

This self-abnegation was of great moral beauty. The act of self-effacement, but most of all the spirit of the act, was rare and choice among men. It was not yet the effulgence of the glorified Son of man shining upon the willing and unwilling, like the lightning from the east unto the west, nevertheless, the glow of this heavenly gem in its earthly setting “could not be hid.” It was not yet the appointed time when all flesh should see the glory of Jehovah, but one here and another there, like this Canaanite, discerned and owned in Jesus the Hope of Israel, and the Blessor also of all men.

Lingering still, for a moment, over this phase of moral glory, it will appear to us to be a special feature of Mark's Gospel to record occasions when our Lord withdrew Himself from men because of their opposition and persecution, and when the very act of retiring before the power of His enemies was accompanied by further witness to His glory from needy suppliants who pursued Him unto His solitude. Thus, when Jesus withdrew from the synagogue of Capernaum to the sea, great multitudes followed Him (6-8). When he crossed the Sea of Galilee to the wilds of Gadara, a man with an unclean spirit met Him for healing and conversion (5:1, 2). When the Lord with His apostles went apart into the desert place after the execution of John the Baptist, great multitudes followed Him (6:30-33). And in this instance, when Jesus retired to a house after encountering the willful obduracy and blindness of the guides of Israel, as well as the ignorance of His own disciples, the Syro-phoenician stranger sought Him out, and by her earnest solicitations obtained mercy and found grace to help in time of need.

This unnamed house on the borders of Israel became by reason of the Illustrious Presence tarrying there, a tenement of heavenly mercy — a Bethsaida indeed. The house itself, honored as it was, has passed into oblivion, but the fame of its Heavenly Visitant abides. To this house the woman of Canaan came, lifting up her hands in dim but true faith, not to the temple on Mount Zion where no Shekinah then dwelled, but to the Word of God made flesh and tabernacling among men. In the millennium the house of God “shall be called of all nations the house of prayer.” And in these requests made by Gentile strangers direct to Jesus we have individual instances of Jehovah's comprehensive reply to the petitions of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, when he besought the LORD, saying: “Concerning a stranger that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake (for they shall hear of thy great name and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm), when he shall come and pray towards this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for” (1 Kings 10:4.1-43). When this “stranger” woman “heard of Him” she, who was forbidden to enter the temple at Jerusalem, came to Jesus as to the true Temple of God upon the earth, and He answered her according to all that she sought of Him.

W. J. H.

(Continued from page 330)

(To be continued)

## Notes on Matthew 1

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Of the four Gospels only two give us a genealogy. We may have many genealogies in the Old Testament, but only One Person has a genealogy in the New Testament.

Matthew presents the Lord as King, and so the genealogy is traced to David, proving Jesus the Christ to be the rightful Heir to the throne; further, going up to Abraham, as showing His right of title to the land.

The Old Testament is more quoted in Matthew than in the other three Gospels. It stands first, and is thus quite a connecting link with the Old Testament.

This chapter reminds us of the wondrous working of the veil. No doubt the four colors correspond to the four Gospels. No genealogy is needed for a servant, so in Mark He comes forth girded for work. In Luke He is traced up to Adam as Son of Roan; but: John presents Him as Son of God.

In Luke the genealogy is traced through Mary; here, through Joseph, by Jewish law heir to the throne.

The Lord's divinity is markedly brought out in every Gospel. As another has said, If we have a Savior, He must be God: if God is with us, it must be as a Savior.

People may think a genealogy dry bones. This is a great mistake. It will always pay to go into it carefully—it is God-given, Spirit-breathed. No man would have written it thus. There is a blessed design throughout. Things altogether are arranged dispensationally in Matthew—in Luke morally. In this genealogy it strikes us at once that we have the names of four women—three of them, at least, Gentiles, and the fourth the wife of a Gentile. Of none of them would a Jew be proud. They are all very humbling, and marvelous in showing God's grace.

These four are so arranged that we have in miniature the early chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, where we find the foundations of Christianity.

In Romans 1 you get a very, very dark picture of human depravity. Some people say the Bible is a filthy book, and none of us would like to read that chapter in public, but it is not filthy. A Christian once heard a man say so publicly, and challenged him thus, "If it is a filthy book, why do not filthy people love it?" Instead of which they hate and shun it. It shows their evil up. Why is that chapter given? God never gives a useless thing. He would let us know that He at least knows the deepest depths of human depravity, and provides for it a suited remedy. You have Romans 1 in Tamar. It is a black picture indeed which is given us in Genesis 38

Then in the next one, we get the truth of an expression which only occurs once in Scripture—"faith in His blood"—Rom. 3. That is what is brought out in Rahab. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not." She is always called "the harlot." Her sin is not toned down. She was no mere lodging-house keeper. God would have us know that His grace goes out to the most unlikely and unworthy. What she wanted was "a true token": she got it in the scarlet thread. She

calls it “a line “; the spies, a “scarlet thread.” Did they remember Jehovah's words, “The blood shall be to you for a token” on the night of the Passover? The scarlet line of Redemption runs through the whole Bible. In the early books, it is typical redemption; in the historical books, historical redemption; in the Psalms, redemption experimentally expressed; in the Prophets, it is prophetic redemption; in the Gospels, personal redemption; in the Epistles, doctrinal redemption; in the Revelation, the eternal results of redemption.

Rahab married a prince of Judah. Sin brought Tamar into the line; faith brought Rahab. “Faith cometh by hearing.” She heard and believed. There is all the difference between a human and a divine standard. It is very beautiful to see how God honors her faith.

The next one is Ruth, and there we see the distinction between law and grace. Law never brought salvation; it demanded righteousness but never got it. Its weakness was in the material it had to deal with. Grace, unmerited favor, suits man. “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” —truth as to God, and as to man. Law excluded the Moabite; hers was a hopeless case. But we have a beautiful type of Christ in Boaz, the “mighty man of wealth,” and “strength is in him” —the Lord in resurrection, with all things given into His hands Ruth comes in after Judges, and she “finds grace in his eyes.” Elimelech and his family went away from Bethlehem, the “house of plenty.” True there was a famine, but that should never be an excuse for going away. A time of pressure took Abram to Egypt; he lost his strangership and ceased for the time to be a worshipper. If you have only a tent, it is formal. A tent marks separation from the world. The altar marks separation to God. Lot had no altar; Abram had both. “Grace reigns through righteousness.” This is the teaching of Ruth. Grace brought in one whom law excluded, as it would every one of us.

The next—her name is not mentioned here. But it is singular how David is here repeatedly called “David the king.” He has great prominence in this chapter. We get justification by faith in “her who had been the wife of Urias.” There had been terrible sin, and no one was ever chastised as David was. Forgiven he was, but the sword never departed from his house.

Sin in the believer is a thousand times worse than in the unbeliever; for it is sinning against love and light. It would have been a bad thing for any of us if that provision, “He restoreth my soul,” had not been made! David was in a miserable condition; his moisture turned into the drought of summer, etc., a fearful experience. Then the prophet came with the parable of the ewe lamb. David was indignant, but “Thou art the man!” Yet David was a man after God's own heart, and there was a nimbleness of faith in him that always turned to God. He makes confession, “I have sinned,” It was not like Saul or Judas, because God saw that his repentance was not to be repented of, and “God hath put away thy sin.” How should we do without Psalm 51? Oh, the blessedness of the man whose sin is forgiven! “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned.” Was it not against Uriah? Sin is always in relation to God. It is well to remember there is no such thing as little sin. There is “great sin,” and “greater sin,” but no little sin, because there is no little God to sin against.

The side of grace is what we have had, but besides this there is government, and every child of God is under it. It is prominent in Peter's writings; in the First Epistle we have the government of God's house; in the Second, of the world, In 1 Pet. 1:14 we are called “children of obedience.” We have been dealt with in grace, and what must characterize us now is holiness. So in vers. 17 we are under the government of God. So, too, David was disciplined here in this world. There is no

discipline afterward—1 Cor. 11. “Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” As regards one's soul's safety it is sin for a believer to fear; but there should be infinite respect. It was the triumph of grace that Solomon should be born of that marriage—the type of our Lord in millennial glory. David and Solomon both together are types of Christ, David putting down enemies; Solomon reigning. So you see how you get in miniature in the names of these four women the outstanding truths of the Epistle to the Romans.

There are some names omitted in this genealogy in connection with Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel. In each division there is a double seven—the perfect number; but to make these sevens, three names are left out. The government of God had great prominence in the Old Testament. That will account for those names being omitted; the house of Ahab was horrible to Him.

People who want to find discrepancies here will find plenty; those who want food will get it. God has permitted it that there have been faults of transcribers, and the Revisers had 30,000 various readings to choose from. People might think such a task almost hopeless, but God had been watching over it, and in the great bulk of it they could easily see how the mistakes had come in. A copyist might leave out a word, or skip a verse; or sometimes someone put a note in the margin; the next one who makes a copy from that roll, perhaps 100 years after, sees this note in the margin, and embodies it in the text. In this way we can easily see how a vast number of these readings occur.

But suppose instead of having all this vast number of MSS. to compare, they had only had one, and that one copied 100 times—all previous copies being destroyed when a new one was made in the one surviving they would have had all the mistakes with nothing to check them! It is a rule with critics that if of two readings one is plain and one difficult, and they have no other guide, they should accept the difficult.

God does preserve His word for His people. Really in the dark ages the monks were used in God's providence to hand it down to us by transcribing it. “The words of the Lord are pure words... Thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever” (Psalm 12:6, 7); given to us, preserved for us....

Mary here is regarded as Joseph's wife. Mary's line is traced through Nathan; Joseph's, through Solomon. Mary is prominent in Luke; here Joseph. But it is remarkable how he disappears in the Gospels.

It is very beautiful to see how God, after being silent 400 years, breaks the silence to Zacharias in the temple about the Forerunner, and the curtain is lifted, and we are permitted to see the remnant. There had been a remnant all through those 400 years. Simeon is in the secret of the Lord. Anna, a widow indeed—really devoted; Zacharias and Elizabeth, both righteous; Joseph and Mary—there was a precious simplicity in her, in marked contrast to Zacharias. What a mistake to make her immaculate! She was only the vessel, the Babe was holy, without sin, apart from it.

It is very lovely to see the gradual unfolding of the word. The first intimation from God Himself of the Seed of the woman is in the garden of Eden; then the Seed of Abraham, through Isaac, through Judah; then the Seed of David; then born of the virgin, the word given to Isaiah. Wonderful. The Jews did not realize who their Messiah should be—Emmanuel the Son of God. They looked for some great deliverer from their enemies. All speak of Him as God over all. It is “an angel” in verse 20. Often in the Old Testament “the angel” is the Lord Jesus. “The angel of His

presence saved them.”

Dreams have a very important place in the Old Testament, not so much in the New. The time is coming “when your old men shall dream dreams, etc.” It speaks well for Joseph, and what grace had done for him, that he bows to the instruction; there is a graciousness about him, though he is called a “just” man.

Jesus a Savior. They did not think much of their sins and being saved from them. Yet Isaiah 53 speaks of them.

Israel will get the blessing of the new covenant and there will be a people who will love the Lord with all their heart, etc. They will have the stony heart taken away. We have no new heart. Our old nature is as bad as or worse than when we were converted, and has a wider scope to display itself in. God has saved us from the guilt of sin, we have no more conscience of sins, but He has perfected in perpetuity, without a break, those who are sanctified. So sin can never be charged against me as guilt, but if I sin “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the whole world.” The ground on which God deals with the whole world is propitiation. “But these things have I written unto you that ye sin not.” Never lower the standard. Beside that, though we are not delivered from the presence of sin, the evil nature in us, yet we are from its power, its rule, Romans 6 We shall never have done with its presence till we are at home with the Lord or changed into His likeness. If a believer sins he cannot go on and be happy with the Lord. Be careful not only what you say and do, but also of your spirit.

He died not for sin, but to sin. He died for our sins. Sin has been judged and Christ has died to it. “Therefore reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” There is all the difference between being the judge and the prisoner. Once I was the prisoner; now I am to judge myself. It is very blessed to know that we are married to another to bring forth fruit unto God. “Ye have your fruit unto holiness.” We are not only saved from the consequences of our sins, but the power of them. In ourselves we have no strength to stand for a single moment.

In verse 22 His word is fulfilled. It was primarily written for the Jews. He came by the door and to Him the porter opened. Here first is pressed upon us that it is fulfilling several leading prophecies. Ahaz would not ask a sign; God was inviting him, yet he puts on a pretense of piety and refuses; then God Himself gives him a sign. Isaiah 7:14 speaks of the same glorious person as Isaiah 9:6.

It is very beautiful to see “God with us.” He is not content to be apart from His creatures, He tabernacled among us—He shall be with them their God.

Verse 25—Her firstborn son. There are evidences in the New Testament that Mary had other children. These were the Lord's brethren according to the flesh. Terribly unbelieving during His life, the cross brought them out. James the Lord's brother had a distinguished place, but was content to speak of himself as a “servant.”

## Notes on Matthew 2:1-8

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We do not get an account of the infancy of the Lord Jesus in Matthew as we do in Luke. It is the presentation of the King in the first Gospel. There are the names of a large number of kings mentioned in chap. 1, but only one is called "David the king." In this chapter we have One "born king of the Jews." All the intermediate links are passed over. As in Psalm 72: "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son" —to Him Who has universal sway.

We were speaking last week of the omission of three kings in chap. 1. This was God's government, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, the sons of Athaliah It is worthy of notice that in that chapter we have "Emmanuel, God with us." This is essential, the foundation of everything. In Mark we read, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." In Luke, "that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." In John, "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." Compared with Luke we have here no Simeons, no Annas. Coming to His own His own will not have Him.

In chap. 1 the Jewish side is very bright, the Gentile very black; but in chap. 2 it is reversed. If He came unto His own possessions—His crown and kingdom—His own people received Him not; but God prepared Gentiles, who should own and welcome His advent. Out of that which was the Jew's chiefest possession the oracles of God—are culled these evidences of who He was. There was no gainsaying their correctness; no one disputed their accuracy. Jacob had prophesied "the Scepter should not depart from Judah until Shiloh come; and Balaam too had predicted a Star to arise out of Jacob, and now was fulfillment. He of Whom Jacob and Balaam had spoken was now come. The Magi came to do Him homage. Where can we get another "born king"? David alone is called king in the preceding chapter, as here our Lord Jesus. What a testimony to the people's condition—all Jerusalem troubled! No wonder Herod was! But he who was so cruel knew not what he would do. There was a general feeling that some one was coming, and there was such remarkable care in studying the letter of the word, that it could be said where the Messiah should be born; yet that study was lifeless. Unless we connect all with Jesus, we fail to get the profit from any portion of scripture. Herod was very crafty. He knew of whom to inquire. He does not expect to get the information where from the wise men, but the when He was born he does inquire of them.

Bethlehem is a very interesting place. Near there Rachel died; thither Ruth came. But its greatest interest was that it should be marked out not only as David's birthplace, but that of his greater Son. God is overruling all, He brings this about. Joseph and Mary are at Nazareth, but Christ must be born at Bethlehem, and the decree goes forth from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. All the machinery of that vast empire is set in motion to bring God's purpose about. This is very comforting to His own. Let us turn to the quotation in Micah 5 The Holy Spirit often quotes scripture differently. Why are the words "unto Me" omitted? Often a quotation is from the LXX., but this is not. The Holy Spirit knows all that the word contains. In Psalm 40 we read, "mine ears hast thou digged." This is quoted in Hebrews 10, "a body hast thou prepared me." That thought was

contained in it. Here the thought is He was coming to those who would reject Him. It is very seldom that a quotation is given exactly, because, as another has said, "In the quotation you have New Testament drapery." This is God's own way.

How you see Satan acting here as the liar and murderer! Herod had no intention of doing homage to the King born. He thought he would be sure to succeed in getting rid of Him when he murdered the male children under two years old. Traveling was slow in those days. No one could be dogmatic, but there are those who think that these wise men may have been taken to Nazareth. At any rate it was not the inn, it was a house. But it may have been a different visit. The Star re-appeared. We can see this star was no ordinary one, but something sufficiently low down to indicate the house. There are no difficulties in the word of God to faith. If we believe in the resurrection of Christ, it prepares us to believe all that God says.

All Jerusalem was troubled; some Gentiles were made exceedingly happy. It was something like what Peter says, "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." It must have been a very important matter to these men from the east to have caused them to take this very long journey. They naturally thought that Jerusalem, as the capital, would have been the birthplace of the King. And now to see the star again, it was a great cause for rejoicing. The expression "young child" shows He was not an infant as when Simeon took Him up. They make no fuss over Mary. The Lord Jesus is never called the child of God. In the early chapters of Acts it is Servant; not "child" — translated Son. The first time the Lord Jesus is called "Son" of God, in the Acts is by Paul in chap. 9. In connection with the Son the church comes in. Though Peter made that confession to Him as Son in connection with which the church is first named, there is nothing of the Son in his testimony.

They saw the young child, the One they had been looking for, and fell down and worshipped Him. (What a rebuke to those who give Mary the holy character of Him Who was born of her!) They don't even give her the gifts to give Him, they tender them to Him. God felt strongly about the idolatry of His ancient people, but Mariolatry is far worse. In the future, to Him shall be given of the gold of Sheba and daily shall He be praised. Prayer also shall be made for Him continually—a puzzle to many. Did He need their prayers? The force is that it will be a time of such blessing that there will be those who will pray for a continuation of it. Gold—a kingly gift. Frankincense was connected with worship. It was all the Lord's in the meal offering. It told of the intrinsic excellencies of that blessed One to God. Myrrh was used in the holy anointing oil, and for embalming. And so we have the recognition not only of His advent, but of His death, the basis of all blessing to man and His preciousness to God. God is graciously acting here to guard Him and to save them. God turns Herod's way upside down. The Magi don't want to see him again; they depart home another way.

How many have gone wrong over verse 13! People have reasoned and said that the Lord Jesus was taken to Egypt to escape the sword of Herod. But if you see Him identifying Himself with His people in everything, how different! There was the murderous hate, but it was not possible for Him to be touched until the hour had come. Look at Nazareth, where the Lord told them that in the days of Elijah no widow of Israel got blessing, etc. —it is wonderful the Lord revealing that the little captive girl had never known one leper cleansed, yet had faith for her master! they sought to throw Him over the hill, but He passed through them unscathed.

It is an angel in ver. 13. Joseph is the principal person in these chapters as Mary is in Luke. Through him the Lord Jesus was the legal heir to the throne. He was not Joseph's child, but Joseph could stand in the relation of parent. He does what he is told. In the light of the New Testament we can enjoy the prophecy of Hosea, "When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." But what a scene of rejection in this chapter! How humbling it will be to the Jew in the day that is coming! The Jew always gets his proper place through repentance on his part and judgment on his enemies.

The great point here is the fulfillment of many leading prophecies, vers. 6, 15, 18: in the last verse He shall be called a Nazarean. Nazareth was the despised place. It is in keeping with the prophets generally; there is no special quotation. It is a general term of reproach. The prophets show generally that He should be despised and rejected. God was arranging it all that He should go to Nazareth.

Why are Ramah and Rachel brought in? Ramah was in Benjamin, and Benjamin was the son of Rachel. Benjamin is a beautiful type of the Lord, exalted by His right hand and to His right hand. He is the right hand of the Lord that triumphed gloriously. The word was kept that was spoken in ver. 13. In ver. 20 the angel brings the word again. We must keep before us the thought of this wonderful King. He had almost 30 years of silence. It has been said that the first advent of the Lord Jesus is divided into two stages; so is the second advent. The first advent is referred to in Micah 5. But it says later in this book, "Behold thy king cometh unto thee," quoting from Zechariah. What does that refer to? The first advent. But 30 years lie between the fulfillment of these two prophecies. Many prophecies speak of His birth and then of His presentation with an interval between. There is also an interval between His coming in the air for His own and His appearing in glory. He is born King, proved King by their own registers, but if He reigns over them, there must be a moral preparedness in them. So the Baptist is sent. There must be the trying experience of repentance, for this is the path to blessing. The Ten tribes have not had Him presented to them as their King; Judah has, and refused Him, and will go through the great tribulation; not so the Ten Tribes. Judah said "his blood be on us"; Judah shall yet have the spirit of grace and supplication poured on them.

## Notes on Matthew 2:19-23; 3:1-17

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### Chaps. 2:19-3:1-17

The great point where we begin is to bring before the Jews that the King thus presented to them fulfills many leading prophecies. Some judging humanly say that the Lord Jesus was taken to Egypt to escape the sword of Herod; whereas it was for the fulfillment of prophecy, as is stated in verse 15. Joseph comes up out of Egypt, and it was so arranged that the door was shut for him to dwell in Judea, so he goes to Nazareth. God's hand was in it, for it was a place of ill repute, and the testimony of the prophets was that He should be despised. There are many Old Testament prophecies which speak of Him as "despised and rejected of men." It is interesting to notice that the Holy Ghost is perfectly free in the way He quotes Scripture. The very words were given to these writers by the Holy Ghost. He indited them all. There may be, and indeed it is so, that what is given takes its form from the individual through whom it comes to us, just as water flowing through a square pipe comes forth square, and from a round one, round; but 1 Cor. tells us that even the words were given by the Holy Spirit. So in this chap. 2, He is bringing out the fulfillment of well-known Scriptures. He Who gave them is showing us the very One of Whom they spake.

In chap. 3 we get the Forerunner. As we said last week it would be impossible for the Lord Jesus to reign over the world as it is. There must be a moral fitness in His subjects. God had said in the closing words of the Old Testament, that He would send Elijah; but here it is Isaiah 40 that is referred to. Repentance is required from man; in his fallen condition he is not a fit subject for the kingdom—repentance must be wrought. In Acts 2:38 Peter says, "Repent." God is waiting still for Israel's repentance. It will be wrought. There will be very real repentance. Repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are for us now. Here we have the preparation for the coming King. It was a moral wilderness He came to, but the wilderness was better than the city with its temple, where they were all spiritually wrong. The Psalmist says, "Oh that I had wings like a dove" —to get from the city to the wilderness. Luke says, "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low," with great moral beauty, because there the Gentiles are contemplated. We ought to think a good deal of John the Baptist. Moses had special honor as a ministering servant, but none born of women was greater than John; nevertheless, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

It is not a question of comparing a saint now with an Old Testament believer, but what God is pleased to do in honor of His Son. It is not an exalting of ourselves, but we are called to bow to and accept what He has revealed, and there is abundant evidence to show that those saved from Pentecost to the Rapture have the most blessed place of any saints. I was talking once to a Wesleyan who thought that the world would be converted through the preaching of the gospel, so I put a little dispensational truth before him, and then spoke of the blessedness of the millennium. As I went on quoting Scriptures describing it, he exclaimed, "I should like to be living then!" I would not prefer it, i.e., to be there in my natural body, but glorified I shall not enjoy that day the less, for as members of the body of Christ we have now a higher place. "In that day (after Pentecost) ye

shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me and I in you” —the truth of Ephesians and Colossians. This is a far greater blessing than we could have had before the Lord Jesus was glorified and the Holy Spirit given to indwell the believer. The Lord did not say, “I will send you a Paraclete,” but “another Paraclete.” Himself when here on earth a Paraclete, He does not cease to be one in heaven, Who comforts and takes charge of us and our affairs. A solicitor taking care of a minor and guarding his interests may serve as an illustration. In the Lord's prayer, so called, there is nothing asked in His name. Now we are to ask “in His Name.” Going before God with our petitions in all the acceptance of Christ is asking in His Name.

“The kingdom of heaven” is a dispensational phrase. The kingdom of God in Mark, Luke, and John, would cover what we get in the kingdom of heaven, but the two are not synonymous. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” could not be applied to the kingdom of heaven. You get hints of the kingdom of heaven in the prophets, as in the expression “the heavens do rule,” but the kingdom of heaven could not exist till Christ was gone to heaven. Israel was the center of God's government on the earth. Christ is never called the King of the Church. Such an expression is quite contrary to the teaching of the Bible, He is our Lord. Continually in the Psalms Jehovah is called their King. We can think of Him as “the King eternal,” “the King of kings,” “the King of glory,” etc. If we look at ourselves as the church, Christ is the Head of the church, but He is Lord of the individuals that compose it. Mary said, “Rabboni,” i.e., Master, or Teacher. John came in the way of righteousness— severe. The Lord Jesus came eating and drinking. But that is not brought in here. John's testimony had effect (vers. 5 and 6). The baptism of John was

the baptism of repentance, and they were baptized to a living Christ. Christian baptism is to His death. It is not a life-giving ordinance at all. Now, there is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and this is “into one body.” It is strange how people put one thing against another and deny water-baptism because of the baptism of the Spirit. Jews were baptized by water before receiving the Holy Ghost. The Samaritans did not receive the Spirit, though baptized, till the apostles had come down to them. Gentiles received the Holy Ghost while Peter spoke, and baptism followed. Suppose a Jew heard the gospel and confessed the name of the Lord, but refused to be baptized, you have no title to acknowledge him as a Christian. For he is bidden to “Repent and be baptized” for the remission of sins, and then it is that he receives the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38) and so becomes a Christian. For us Gentiles, having the Spirit before baptism (Acts 11:44, 47) it is not presented as a command to be baptized, for obedience to an ordinance—but as a privilege rather—an answer to His grace Who has saved us. And its place is at the beginning, not in the middle, much less is it at the end, of the Christian life. “Buried with Him by baptism into death, that, like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father; even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6.). This walk in newness of life is then entered upon, and never to be given up.

The “command,” therefore, is to the baptizer to baptize (to the evangelist, or teacher, etc.), not to the convert to be baptized; except in the case of the Jews, as we have seen. If Romans presents our burial with Christ by baptism, and walk of a new life, Col. 2 goes further and brings in our being risen with Him (ver. 12), with its necessary obligation to “seek the things above” (.chap. 3.).

The Pharisees were the Ritualists, and the Sadducees the Rationalists Of that day. The Pharisees were particular about little things, taking mint and anise and cummin, but they were careless of the weighty matters of the law. But there is wrath, and always “wrath to come.” He who refuses to be

subject to the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him.

To show the reality of repentance there must be fruit. If I am a subject of God's saving grace, I must also be of His teaching grace. If there is faith, there are works. In Luke 3 the Lord draws Simon's attention to the woman's deeds, not so to the woman. To her he speaks of her faith; to him of the results of that faith. The Sadducees would say, "we have Abraham to our father." Yet, "ye go about to kill me." But there the Lord exposes, and so John here, the emptiness of resting on natural relationship. "God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." These stones are what we were, stones without life, inanimate, but now we are children of Abraham, children of promise, accounted for a seed. If I want to find my inanimate condition I go to Ephesians 2, but in Romans 4 Abraham is the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised.

The ax is laid to the root of the tree for judgment; thank God it does not say by your fruits ye shall know yourself. But we are right to form our judgments of people by what we see of their ways—to know the power and not the speech. The whole argument here is that if there is not repentance there is judgment-fire. In ver. 2 we have baptism with the Holy Ghost and fire, as also in Luke—with the Holy Ghost alone in Mark and John. As Messiah He will pour out His Spirit in the millennial day, but He will also judge. In Mark He is the servant; in Luke He is Son of man, and as such He judges. As Son of God in John He quickens. The thing is now to believe that He who is Son of man is Son of God. It is very sweet to see this one (John the Baptist) of whom it could be said none greater, born of women, now in presence of Messiah confessing himself not worthy to undo His shoes, or even carry them. This word "fan" is a winnowing fan—discriminating, dealing with wheat and with chaff; and He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire at the harvest in the coming day. Meanwhile, the Christian is called to judge whatever he finds in himself to have been grieving to the Holy Spirit of God by whom he is sealed. Thus repentance goes right through a Christian's life. We have not to eat carrion. Self-judgment is not comparing ourselves with others, but with Christ. We ought to have a good conscience in all things, but we are not thereby justified.

"Gather His wheat into the garner," not a grain will be lost. All is of grace and on the ground of redemption. This is what the Lord does. He will make no mistakes. The chaff is for judgment. Their worm dieth not, man's conscience—and the fire is not quenched. Man had no conscience till he fell, then he knew good without the power to do it; he knew evil and was enslaved in it. When Jesus came to be baptized, John urgently forbad Him. No repentance could be for Him. He "knew no sin"; "in Him is no sin"; "He did no sin." He could say "I have set the Lord always before me, etc."

Very blessed truth is brought out here in connection with His baptism. It is the fulfillment of Psalm 16 The Lord is the truster there. He goes down into death trusting. To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, He says, "In them is all my delight" (vers. 2, 3). In Proverbs 8 we are taken back into eternity (there are very few places in the O.T. where we are; Psalm 40 is one). "My delights were with the sons of men" (ver. 31). Who? Adam unfallen? He was no son of man. Who then are these? These who have found out how bad they are, in whom God had wrought repentance. The Lord had no trust but in Jehovah. How often we fail here!

When is there joy in heaven? Over a sinner made happy? Well, no doubt there is—but here it is on the first right step taken, repentance, for there can be no true blessedness to the soul without this. What infinite grace in the Lord to say "us" (ver. 15). They had done the right thing, and the

Lord takes up the case of repentant sinners. They were fit subjects of His kingdom. There had been a time of silence for just thirty years. The Lord was walking in seclusion, but what was that life to the Father? —a continual meat offering! He looks back over those thirty years and He bears testimony to it. These very people had owned their sins, and some of them were very bad, and yet He will identify Himself with them; but what does God think? “My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” Heavens were only once opened in the Old Testament, and that in judgment; but here God's heart finds a resting-place. You don't get the Trinity definitely brought out in the Old Testament; with the light of the New you can see it in such passages as: “Let us make man;” or Isaiah 6; or Zechariah 3 The Lord Jesus is the Holy One, the Harmless One, the undefiled One, etc. When the Holy Ghost came down at Pentecost it was as a rushing, mighty, wind; but here it is, “as a dove”- emblem of purity—coming on One who needed not redemption as we, for He was holy. Now, we, having redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, can be, and are, sealed with the Spirit, and so are called to be harmless as doves: “Oh, that I had wings as a dove,” separate from sinners.

(To be continued)

## Notes on Matthew 4:1-11

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It was after the Lord Jesus had been baptized and anointed and publicly owned to be the Son of God, that this temptation came. And with us, after we have been born again and know redemption Satan tempts us, and we know his wiles. By nature we are his captives, but after we have been taken from his kingdom he attacks us. But we meet a defeated foe. The strong man was bound in this temptation. No king that had ever reigned had been a match for Satan. This One was about to show His superiority. In chap. 1 David alone is called the king; in chap. 2. One is born "King of the Jews." David was no match for Satan; he fell into his snare again and again. Satan stood up against Israel, and tempted him, and he numbered the people to his sorrow. He was not on the watch. Even Joab saw the wrong of it. He was a shrewd man though not a saint of God. In everything David put his hand to, he prospered till the end came.

What a contrast is in this chapter to the first man in Genesis 3. The wilderness speaks of the fall. How great the contrast between the garden of Eden and this wilderness where, according to Mark, the wild beasts were. We have not all the temptation. He was tempted in a way we know nothing of. There hath no temptation taken us but such as is common to man. Forty days signify an adequate time of probation. The three seen on the Mount of Transfiguration had each one passed through forty days to be tested. The Lord here, Moses on the mountain, Elias in the desert. We also get a picture there of the kingdom both in its earthly and heavenly departments. All connected with the heavenly department have part in the first resurrection. The saint who does not die and so is not "raised," is amongst the all who shall be "changed," and that is equivalent to the first resurrection. In the temptation here we have instruction for ourselves. Satan would instill doubt. Never give way to any insinuation that throws doubt on God's word. Whenever a saint by grace in any way shines, he is an object of the devil's malice Look at David how he shines when Saul is in the cave! Immediately after, he says in his heart, I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul. Here the Lord had been singled out as the object of the Father's pleasure. After that life of seclusion, those thirty years on earth in which God had found His delight in the Son, the devil chooses this time to try Him If God gives faith He will always test it. He upholdeth all that fall. As to my salvation, I have not a shadow of a doubt, but if the devil attacks me as to myself and my ways, "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." If you have ground to think a person is a believer never insinuate a doubt as to his standing.

There was nothing in the Lord Jesus to respond to the temptation, for in Him was no sin. We can never be like Him in this. He was apart from sin, there was nothing in Him to answer to it. He alone could say, "I do always the things that please Him." To have Him before us as our example is right; to say we come up to this standard is wrong.

He was in the wilderness forty days and forty nights, and He hungered. There is no sin in hunger; no sin in sitting weary at the well. The world as an evil system was made by the devil. The beautiful world around us was made by God. Satan wanted Him to take Himself out of God's hands. Whilst Paul could heal Publius' father, we have no record of his healing any of his own

companions. Saints should remember God can do everything, but we should have confidence in His wisdom as well as His power. There are preventive mercies. If you get a trial it may not be in chastisement, but because God sees trouble is ahead, and it is sent to keep you from it: as with the apostle, “Lest I should be exalted,” etc.

With our first parents there was the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—the things that make up the world, and the three main weapons of Satan. The greatest lesson we can learn by this, is that the enemy can never touch us if we are obedient and dependent. That made the Lord victorious; He overcame by dependence and obedience. He quotes from Deut. 8.: “Man shall not live by bread alone.” Here was man, perfect man, the only perfect man.

Luke gives things in their moral order. Here in Matthew it is their actual order. In Luke the order corresponds with the temptation in Gen. 3., but here the Lord is tempted first as man, secondly as Messiah, and thirdly as Son of God. “Man shall not live.” He was truly man. His answer ought to tell us we have inestimable treasure in the word of God, all of it; we ought to appreciate every part, and to profit from all. This is our safeguard. “Command these stones” —he knew he was speaking to the Creator who could do so; but would He be tempted from the place of obedience and dependence? He would not exercise His own will. The Lord “suffered, being tempted”; it was painful to Him. Sometimes temptation is not painful to us. If we are suffering from it we are not sinning.

“Then the devil taketh him into the holy city, and setteth him on the pinnacle of the temple.” A pinnacle of the temple is a very dangerous place—ecclesiastical pride. Some may wonder why Jerusalem should be called the “holy city.” Even at the time of the crucifixion it is called “the holy city” (chap. 4:5; 27:53) —but the word “holy” has two different meanings. Sometimes it means holy in nature, as God is holy. But it also means “set apart,” or devoted, as the temple, the city, the land—holy because chosen by Him. In the second temptation the Lord will not be led astray.

The idea of testing God is utterly repugnant to a child of God; what was it to Him! This temptation tempted Him as Messiah. Ps. 92 is Messianic. He knew it was true, He did not need to test God; and we ought to trust the word and not put God to the test. “It is written” was sufficient to determine. He would not be forced from it. “It is written again” —we must never use one Scripture to neutralize another. It never contradicts itself. We may not always understand it and may have to wait for light upon it, as we read in Rom. 15:4—“that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” For the present time, and always, we need the word to guide us—we are to be subject to the powers that be. But there are many other Scriptures that should guide my conduct also. To take one, I am to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus. The world cannot be governed on Christian principles. It is vain to tell the world what my prospects are; it is throwing pearls before swine. If people will spread their own precious promises before the world, let them not wonder if the world turns again and rends them.

It is one thing for God to try us; quite another for us to try Him. Wicked Ahaz was invited by God to ask of Him a sign; but said, “I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.” The Christian has not to ask Him to “be gracious unto us”; for, redemption being accomplished, God has now met us according to the riches of His grace. The Lord very well knew who it was that was tempting Him, but He does not disclose it until the devil thoroughly manifests himself by saying, “If thou wilt fall down and worship me”; then He calls him, Satan. “Devil” is the accuser, “Satan” the adversary.

The Lord in no way refuses the testing.

He allows Satan to take Him up into the exceeding high mountain. As Son of man everything will be put under Jesus' feet. In Luke, Satan shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. Another has said, "It did not take Satan long to show all that he possessed!" What will he not say to us, if he dared to say this to the Lord? He will be permitted to confer the throne and great authority on the beast (Revelation 13:2). How this shows us that the devil for the first time meets a Man stronger than himself. So this King can bind the strong man and spoil his goods. He is superior here, and then casts out demons. The Lord quotes from Deuteronomy 6:13.

Had the third temptation been before the second you would have the anomaly of Satan staying when the Lord told him to go; but in Luke it is the moral order that is given; and so the words "Get thee behind me, Satan" have no place there, for Satan himself was never bidden to "get behind" the Lord, but to "Go hence." Satan acknowledges his defeat; he leaveth Him for a season. He had used his utmost form of subtlety, and been overcome. He comes back and tries the Lord by terrors at the end. "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." Satan is no more successful at the end than at the beginning.

"Angels came and ministered unto Him"; but one only in the garden to strengthen Him. "He was seen of angels" —He will be seen of them in a day to come, "angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto Him." Now they all minister to the heirs of salvation, not one exempt. Though we have salvation now, we are also heirs of the salvation which is nearer than when we believed. Here is a fallen angel suggesting to the Lord that He should pay him homage! But God says of Him in Psalm 91, and the devil knew it, "Let all the angels of God worship Him." When? It does not say, when "he brought," or when "He will bring," but "When he bringeth." If as a Babe in the manger He is brought into the world, He is the object of the angels' worship; in those Psalms that begin with Psalm 94 He is being brought in as Messiah, and again the angels worship Him.

The Lord Jesus does not begin His ministry in this Gospel till John was cast into prison. It is presented to us here dispensationally. Zebulun and Naphtali, though a people that jeopardized their lives in the days of Barak, bordered on the Gentiles and had been affected by them; it was a place of darkness, and there the light sprang up. He was among the poor of the flock.

## Notes on Matthew 4:12-25

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It is well for us to remember that we have a divine selection of events in the Gospels—a small selection according to John, but all of divine arrangement. In Matthew the several incidents are arranged dispensationally, or, at any rate, to bring out dispensational truth. Where we begin today was not the first time these disciples had come in contact with the Lord Jesus. We get the Baptist's ministry in John 3, and we find these disciples in John 1. The first four chapters of John had taken place before the events here. It was a wonderful testimony of John when he said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." He could give it because of what he was, but we are nobody to start with, so we cannot decrease. He only took the place of a voice. This was very beautiful for him. Nevertheless, there is always occasion for us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. John and Moses were both special servants.

It is beautiful to see how we have (I was going to say) a humanizing testimony to the Lord Jesus, "when Jesus had heard!" As a divine person He knew everything. We know how advantage has been taken of a verse in Mark 13 to belittle the Lord Jesus. While He was perfect man He was also God, and there was that which is essentially unique in Him; He was the God-man. All He did had a quality that you and I have not. He could weep; there were never tears like His; ours may be often superficial and selfish, never so were His. He took a divine view. How He felt the betrayal of Judas, "Mine own familiar friend!"

The various events recorded here, no matter how brought about—the going down to Egypt or here to Capernaum, were all to fulfill the word of God. Israel's greatest privilege was to be custodians of the word of God.

He identified Himself with the poor of the flock, those in the greatest danger, bordering on the Gentile world. In that place of darkness light sprang up. Yes, they were farthest from that which was intended to be the center of light. In the millennium it will be recorded, "this man was born there," not in darkness. The light always becomes darkness if we refuse "the light of life." Whatever belittles the Lord must bring in darkness. "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

In ver. 17 the Lord Himself announces the kingdom. John had called the people to repentance; now the Lord takes up the same word, and announces the kingdom at hand, and in the same words as John, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." There could not be moral fitness for the kingdom without repentance. The repenting ones form the remnant, and the Lord identified Himself with them. Acts 3 shows that on the nation's repentance the kingdom would have been set up. His blessing is "in turning each one away from your iniquities." John preached the baptism of repentance for remission of sins, and called for fruit worthy of repentance that so it might be seen to be real.

How very different this King is to Saul! Saul means "asked," and he was "asked" of the people; Samuel means "asked of God." Saul would "take" (see 1 Samuel 8:10-18); this King will "give." Yet

He will receive. "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." He will receive from the Father.

Satan had for the first time met one stronger than he; he was spoiled, not yet annulled. With the Lord's word there was power. If He said, "Follow me," there was power with it, and those who left all to be identified with Him formed the remnant. If we don't see that, many things the Lord said will be quite puzzling. Four hundred and ninety years were determined on the people, but the church has gone on for nineteen hundred years, so there arises a gap somewhere in that prophecy. We frequently find gaps in the Old Testament. This one comes in between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week, in which time is not counted. So the Lord speaks to His disciples as if they might then be living just before the millennium. He identifies Himself with them in marvelous grace, and now gathers them to Himself.

We get here the first quarternion of the disciples. Wherever the twelve are mentioned, they are always in three fours. Philip is always the first of the second four, and James the less the first of the third four. Andrew was one of the two that heard John speak, and followed Jesus, and then found his own brother Simon. This is a real call to service. They did not give up their business and turn to the Lord's service because it was a decaying trade. They had never had such success as fishermen before. This made it the greater test. Why leave this to turn to a less profitable employment? The great thing is to have the Lord's mind. It was unmistakable here. The Lord may call us to leave prosperity for spiritual service; but when they say, "we have left all," we wonder what the "all" was. We do not get a hundred percent, but a hundred-fold. We can plead for others as we cannot for ourselves; there is nothing for us but the ground of grace. They made a mistake who bargained for a penny a day. God is righteous always, yet He is sovereign and can be gracious.

Exodus is divided into three parts, pure grace, pure law, and law and grace mixed. How happy the people were under pure grace! yet poor human hearts put themselves under law! We are in a place of liberty to do the will of God in contrast to Jewish bondage.

The kingdom of God includes the kingdom of heaven; there is a sense in which God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, but the kingdom of heaven could not be till the Lord was in heaven. First it is in mystery, then in open manifestation. The Lord could say "the kingdom of God is among you," because Himself the King was there. The kingdom of heaven is always spoken of as "at hand," or "drawn nigh"; its use is guarded. In chapter 13, where we have the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, it is not said that the parable of the sower was a similitude of the kingdom of heaven, because the Lord was there the sower of the seed. Nicodemus was told of the kingdom of God. The very scriptures which in Matthew speak of the kingdom of heaven, in Mark and Luke call it the kingdom of God. But many other scriptures which speak of the latter could not speak of the former. Where the kingdom of God is looked at morally it excludes evil. Luke 13 so far corresponds with Matthew 13. I should take leaven as defilement put in the household's food. Leaven leavens the whole lump, gives character to the whole lump, brings it under its influence; and if you don't put it out, you are a prey to its power.

"I will make you fishers of men" had not been abrogated, so the disciples had not the Lord's mind when in John 21 they went a fishing. Here is shown the effect of influence. In John 20 John comes first to the sepulcher; impetuous Peter comes up and goes in, John follows he is influenced. Now

in this chapter (21.) Peter comes forward and they all follow. There is a force in good example as in evil. "Your zeal hath provoked many," the apostle could say of the Corinthians.

Psalms 103 brings before us the effect of the Lord's presence on the earth, "Who healeth all thy diseases" as well as "forgiveth all thine iniquities." This is not so now, as it will be in the coming day, when healing and forgiveness will go together. True He does heal now at times, but still He allows sickness to affect His people. Then the healing will not only be wholly, but connected also with forgiveness. Some people think the grand thing is to have faith in God's power. He has only to speak, and the worst disease can be healed easily; but He is training us. Sometimes sickness is sent as a preventive, sometimes as a corrective; we ought to have faith in His love as well as in His power, and in His wisdom too. Here Job shines. Perhaps we have not thought adequately of his sufferings— "though he slay me yet will I trust in him."

The grand truth in our chapter is that before we get the principles of His kingdom as enunciated in chapters 5-7. His fame has gone over all the land; and it is a precious testimony to His mercy, the plenitude of grace in Him, that He healed them all. These were samples of what will be done in the millennium. What He did here, He can and will do for the whole world. Syria may be used typically here.

"He'll give these bodies vile

A fashion like His own;

He'll bid the whole creation smile,

And hush its groan."

"Straightway" does not characterize Matthew as it does Mark, but you get it sometimes here. His acts of power are not the most important thing. They were His credentials. Nicodemus acknowledged this, but faith in Him as a miracle-worker did not give life to the soul. "Many believed in Him when they saw the miracles which He did," but Jesus did not believe in them. His preaching was the most important thing—His words gave life.

The Lord never does anything without a purpose, never a useless thing, and even judgment is beneficent to others. All is in keeping with His nature. Light and Love are the only two words that express His nature. All other attributes are relative—towards others—and flow out of what He is. "The powers of the age to come," in Hebrews 6, are sometimes misunderstood, as applying to true saints of God falling away; but the Spirit of God reckons up in that chapter all the privileges that might be enjoyed, which yet fall short of life. Saul was changed into another man, but never had divine life. "Partakers of the Holy Ghost," is sharers, i.e., who come into that corporation (so to speak) where the Holy Ghost works. "Partakers" of the Holy Ghost is not the same as being "sealed" with the Spirit. It won't do to put service instead of Christ. I may be thoroughly deceived about another as to the possession by him of divine life, but "the Lord knows them that are His," spite of the confusion of "a great house." Philip was deceived by Simon Magus; and some will say to the Lord in that day, "In thy Name we have cast out demons, and in thy Name done many wonderful works"; yet the Lord will say, "I never knew you." He will never say that to one who pleads, "I am only a poor guilty sinner but trusting in thy blood." That foundation cannot break

down.

Many people think the uncondemned woman in John 8 was forgiven, but there is nothing to show that. It was the action of light, which makes bare, for all things when reprov'd are made manifest by the light. They thought they had the Lord on the horns of a dilemma, but they were in the presence of Him who gave the law, and it showed the Lord's present attitude. He came in grace—not to condemn.

James and John were pretty well off comparatively. Other partners were with them, and servants with their father. They left their father as well as the ship. Each service has its place; some were “mending” the nets, others “casting” the nets. Some seem to think casting is everything, and that no mending is required. If you don't look after your nets you won't catch fish. Unless you read, and grow in the truth, you are exposed to danger. We don't want to be but a conduit pipe, but to get a good share for one's self. The twelve were privileged ones, the Court so to speak, the princes which should decree justice, who will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and He is able to delegate power to them. But it is a solemn truth as to ministry that the only recorded time the Lord spent the night in prayer was before He chose the twelve. In any kind of service, however small, there must be the being with Him before we are sent forth. We need to be “sent” and by Him.

I suppose all the diseases existing among Israel were direct evidence of their unfaithfulness (see Exodus 15:26). Their condition was evidence of their national unfaithfulness. They ought not to have needed the pool of Siloam. It is very sweet to read of His fame going forth! Psalm 72:11-13 shows this worldwide fame, and then the beautiful picture of the reign of great David's greater Son.

## Notes on Matthew 5:1-12

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There is something significant in the Lord going up to the mountain, and His disciples coming to Him. “The Sermon on the Mount” as it is called is for disciples. The previous chapter shows how His publicity extended, but here and in the next two chapters we have the principles of Messiah's kingdom. He came down from the mountain. It was not to the valley, but He came down to a level place on the mountain side (cf. Luke 6:17). It is the mountain, in contrast to the valley, not any particular place. The same with the “boat.” He “went on board,” not necessarily any special boat. Language is used metaphorically. You cannot strain it into a cast iron vice; we have to judge by the context, though we ought to be jealous as to the words of holy writ.

Is there any contrast here with Sinai? We have beatitudes, instead of curses. These are divided into twos and threes, and the bed-rock is the first: “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” There was nothing in the Lord to attract the human eye. His disciples must partake of the character of the King. The “poor in spirit” is one who can say, ‘I am nothing, I have nothing, I deserve nothing.’ These traits are the very opposite of what we find in men. The natural man cannot be content to feel he is nothing and that others should think so too.

There are nine beatitudes here, seven positive and two relative. “Blessed are the poor in spirit”; of such was the apostle who could speak of himself as “less than the least of all saints.” We must distinguish between the kingdom of heaven, and heaven itself. In these principles you get that which will have a very blessed place when the kingdom is set up; but it also contemplates what is during the Lord's absence. We do not get redemption here nor conversion; these chapters apply to those already in relationship. The law is filled up here. He is here of Whom the prophet Moses spoke, and that work of the prophets precedes the work of atonement as in Isaiah 53. “He shall instruct the many in righteousness and He shall bear their iniquities.” The A.V. “by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many” is incorrect; it should be “instruct the many in righteousness”: here He is doing it. People try to get out of the difficulty by making the “knowledge” apply to the man, but He is the perfect Instructor and then the perfect Redeemer. To be poor in spirit is to have low thoughts of self, to realize that before God I am nothing, I have nothing, I deserve nothing. It would be quite consistent with standing up for what is due to God.

The Lord Jesus took the scourge of small cords and drove them all out of the temple, for “the wisdom that is from above is first pure then peaceable.” First pure. There is no such thing as peace at any price, in the word of God. Holiness and peace—what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

In the next verse we get a reference to Ezekiel where a mark is put on those that sigh and cry. If not another soul knows it the Lord sees it, but we must not forget that we are also called to quit ourselves like men. The Lord Jesus wept over Jerusalem, that is the thing. There are only two instances of His weeping—one, at the grave of Lazarus, and the other, over Jerusalem. We cannot limit his tears to sympathy: at the grave of Lazarus the past and the present were before Him: over Jerusalem the present and the future. The Lord never put forth His power on behalf of

man without His sympathy also. If we could do people good we should be disposed to advertise ourselves. But His miracles were never mere acts of power: "Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses." This is not atonement; Matthew 8 applies it to His life. He was not bearing sins in His life; He was the spotless Lamb not yet offered. The Lord sighed deeply at Bethsaida. We can hinder by our unbelief as they did there. Isn't it a relief- to unburden the heart to one we can confide in? There is a little difficulty in the hymn

"It tells of sympathy above,

Whatever makes us mourn."

It means what makes us mourn rightly according to God's word. We ought to be so thoroughly identified with the interests of Christ that nothing affects us but what affects Him. It is sad of a Christian to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We should not advertise our brother's faults. The apostle says, Fix your eyes on those who walk even as ye have us for an example; but he wept over those who minded earthly things, etc. Instead of Christ's interests being theirs, many walk after their own selfish gratification: enemies of the cross of Christ. It may perhaps sound a little strange, but I suppose there must be in us a lack of sympathy toward Christ, if we are not affected by His interests. There is no lack on His part of sympathy toward us. It is a wonderful thing when we consider that the Lord in brightest glory above is seeking sympathy with our hearts. He longs (if we may thus speak) for human intercourse; He sought it when below, and He is the same glorified. He had a special delight in gathering His own round Himself. How did Judas know where to find Him in Gethsemane? Because Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with His disciples, Is it not a delight to Him to see us around His word or gathered to His Name? And will He not have us round Himself in glory? If I think of His love toward me it will produce communion: if I think of my love, it is very poor. It is far better to be speaking to the Lord and exposing our ignorance, than to be keeping silence. It is a blessed thing to have earnest desire towards Him, but it is better to be occupied with His desires towards me.

"Blessed are the meek." "They shall increase their joy in the Lord." The meek in the Old Testament had a very prominent place. The meek will He guide in judgment and the meek will He teach His way. Speaking of the Messiah in Isaiah 11 we are told He will reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And again Psalm 37 the meek shall inherit the earth—of which this is a quotation. There is the meekness and gentleness of Christ. Meekness of spirit produces gentleness of action and words. Gentleness would be re-presented by dealing tenderly, not using improper force: whereas the meek will not use force at all. There is no one so unresisting as was the blessed Savior Himself. His "gentleness has made" us "great" (Psalm 18). A verse in the same Psalm says, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful, and with the perverse thou wilt show thyself a wrestler." He has no pleasure in the legs of a man, but He has pleasure in those that hope in His mercy. The meek shall inherit the earth. The possessors of the earth now are generally great conquerors, but here is the very opposite; those whom men tread under foot, these are the ones that God says shall inherit the earth, and in a good time. The great and blessed pattern is the One who when He was reviled, reviled not again, etc. You cannot ignore the unrighteousness that is going on but you can commit yourself to Him that judgeth righteously. These features are not found in the natural man at any time. If we turn to Acts 10 we find Peter saying that of every nation (not only the Jews) he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is acceptable with Him. This

shows there was a work of grace in those that had that character. "An honest and good heart" is prepared ground where there has been a work of grace, and the person brought to see he has a very bad heart. It has been said that the first beatitude here is general and the rest alternately toward God and toward man.

"Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness" (ver. 6). This is deeper than what we had before. Here it is what is due to God that the soul is exercised about. It is not the thought of a soul wanting a righteous standing before God, but the display of righteousness upon earth. Righteousness will reign in the coming day, and the soul is exercised about that which is due to God—that which corresponds with the revealed mind of God in the Old Testament. If you want really to please the Lord you will be filled; these things can only be true of the children of God. The words, "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" in a later verse do not mean the righteousness of God in contrast to our own righteousness, but that theirs had come to be mostly ceremonial instead of practical.

"Blessed are the merciful" (ver. 7). That is what God is. He delights in mercy, so Micah tells us. Paul, that He is rich in mercy. It is only those who realize that

"Nothing but mercy will do for me,"

who will be merciful. You get a picture of the wonderful mercy that has been shown to Israel in the parable of the man that owed a tremendous debt. He was unconscious of the mercy that had been shown to him. Whatever a person does to us, they can never owe us what we owe to God. If we are conscious of that, it will make us tender towards others. But here we do not get what we find in the epistles; we are on higher ground there. Yet, as a rule, there are comparatively few in whom we see these characteristics, and they are obscure.

There are two thoughts in sonship, position and character; here it is character. John tells us we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren; we don't get that here. This is the pure law of the kingdom, so it is, "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven," but we are called to forgive because we are forgiven. "Obtain mercy." Paul obtained it when he was anything but showing mercy, when like a wild beast; but I obtained mercy "because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" —the city of refuge.

"Blessed are the pure in heart," etc. (ver. 8). If we love it there is that word in the Proverbs, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend." It will show itself in conversation. The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable. When the kingdom comes a new heart will be given. The Lord referred Nicodemus to Ezek. 36 and 37, born of water in the one, born of the Spirit in the other. He will take away the stony heart that said, "Away with Him"; but the new heart will say, "With His stripes we are healed." The blessing of the new covenant is not only, "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more," but "I will put my laws in their heart," and there will then be a people who shall love the Lord with all their heart. The believer now has a new nature. A new heart is a heart without any reserve. An evil conscience would keep you away. A true heart rests on the knowledge that all is done; so I am able to draw near, not in presumption, but having the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience. Having had that, it corresponds to a true heart, therefore we come. There is a reference here to the consecration of the priests. I suppose "the merciful" in ver. 7 have the sense of mercy shown to them, and that makes them merciful to others. We have seen already how obnoxious to God was the one who had no mercy to others

after all the mercy shown to him. Motives are dealt with here and that which is inward.

“Children” of God (ver. 9) should be “sons.” When it is a question of children it is by birth—not natural birth. Man has lost the title to be called a child of God, but John 1:12 shows us how he can be born again. There the word should be “children”; “son” is different. “Child” sometimes means a minor, but mostly it is character—in these chapters always character. For instance, ver. 48, “Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,” that is, we are to partake of that character. God said to Abraham, “Walk before me and be thou perfect,” meaning sincere. Perfect has different meanings in scripture. We have to read the context and weigh it. When the Lord Jesus was “made perfect through sufferings” it was not a question of moral perfection, nor could be, for He was always perfect. “Perfected the third day,” is in resurrection.

In ver. 10, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake,” it is a carrying out of the will of God and being persecuted for doing it. We get a higher standard than this for the Christian. Peter says, “If ye do good and suffer for it, and take it patiently,” etc. Nothing but the grace of God can enable us to do that. And I believe that can be shown in little things, in our everyday home life. A meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price. Why is it “they” in ver. 10, and “ye” in ver. 11? The one is doing the will of God, His revealed will; and the other is suffering for the sake of the Lord Jesus, and that is a gift of God. Every true saint of God suffers with Christ—not to the same extent, but the Lord Jesus necessarily suffered in a sense like this, and so in measure the one who is born from above and has the new nature. And in a thousand ways we suffer with Christ, but it is not everyone who suffers for Him; that is a gift: “to you it is given on the behalf of Christ not only to believe on Him but to suffer for His sake.” In ver. 10 it is suffering for carrying out the revealed will of God, that is the righteousness here; and then suffering for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we are enjoined to go forth to Him without the camp bearing His reproach, We shall not have this privilege long—of suffering as identified with Him; of suffering as a Christian. “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you,” etc., when He was reviled, He reviled not again. That was the Lord's path, and He left us an example that we should follow His steps.

“Falsely,” ah! that's the point. Turn to 1 Peter 4:12-16. It is a shame for any of us to suffer as an evil doer.

## Notes on Matthew 5:13-26

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Israel had been the salt of the earth; and here it is not the Christian, that is, not a believer of this dispensation, that is contemplated; it is the Jewish remnant. As far as the church is concerned, when the true saints are gone, the salt will be gone; but it is the remnant He is speaking to here.

I take the salt in Luke 14:34, 35 to be connected with discipleship. In that chapter we find the gospel feast—everything ready; nothing to do, nothing to pay, nothing to promise; only to accept. I get blessing not by anything I give up or do, but as a recipient. God can bless the guiltiest sinner in the fullest love of His heart righteously, because of the cross of Christ. All boasting is excluded, no flesh can glory in His presence. If I am to be blessed it must be in God's way. I must be a recipient, and then I become a disciple, if the Lord leaves me here. But my discipleship does not improve my title in the least degree. It is a very blessed thing and will have its reward by and by, but it is also a very solemn thing.

Luke 14:26-33. Nothing must be put in competition with Christ. Does this mean a Christian is to be a worse father, mother, brother or sister? Not at all. Grace makes them carry out their various responsibilities on a higher level. There is not a single saint of God but has got his cross, which he has to take up—not the Lord's cross. Let us not then shrink from it, as naturally we should, for it is in the path of a disciple. If I begin well as a disciple, and then give up like the Galatians—“ye did run well; who did hinder you?”—there is no testimony for God and the salt is useless.

While the Lord was here He was the Light of the world, as He Himself says (John 9:5). Now we are called upon, as Christians, to shine as heavenly luminaries, as “lights holding forth the word of life.” Our light is reflected light. Ephesians 5 tells us whence our light comes, “Ye were sometime darkness, now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light.” But we have also, “Awake, thou that sleepest and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” If Christ does not shine upon us we can give no light. The sleeper here is a child of God in a bad state. I was hearing today of a dear saint to whom some one said, Do you know what it is to be filled with the Holy Ghost? I told them Moses went in before God, and he was there long enough to make his face shine. But the Holy Spirit is careful to tell us that while everybody else knew it, Moses himself was unconscious of it. When Moses thought, so to speak, that his face shone his brethren did not see it. “Who made thee to be a ruler?” Moses was then forty years too soon; now, he is unconscious of it. It is well that we should ever remember this. It is not humility to be always talking about our badness. True humility is forgetfulness of self. It is not a sign of growth in grace and knowledge where there is a disposition ever to bring oneself forward. A city on a hill is seen a long way off—miles perhaps; and that should teach us how God has left us here as witnesses for Him. But if our testimony be our object with ourselves as a very bright testimony, it will be but a miserable failure. In proportion as we have Christ before us will our testimony be right.

The Lord is indicating the hindrances to the shining. A bushel is connected with the business then should we be lest in any way we corrupt God's word! The Pharisees made it void and set it aside by their traditions. The Lord Jesus brings it in when they found fault with His disciples for not

washing before food. Then the Lord of this world, and how many a light is obscured showed them they were the ones to be judged by the business of this world. God has lighted the candle that it may shine for the benefit of others. In another place it says, "nor under a bed." We must not give way to indolence. It giveth light to all that are in the house, the usefulness of it there. Now then do not let it be obscured by ease, even lawful occupation; "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." This is anything but advertising our good works. Let your light so shine that they may not give praise to you, but glorify your Father. Take a Unitarian. I do not believe the devil deals with such a one as he does with a saint of God. The Unitarian is in Satan's service; he is thoroughly deluded, building on what he can do, and rejecting Christ; and I have known some extremely particular about their ways, but does that bring glory to God? No, alas! But what a Christian does, brings praise to God, not to himself.

The Lord came to give a largeness to the law, to fill it out, so to speak (ver. 17). The books of Moses, the Pentateuch, are distinguished sometimes from the prophets, as "the law." Sometimes the word "law" is used as in Psalm 1 to denote all that God is pleased to reveal. In other places it means the ceremonial law; we must not make it always mean the same. The One who had given the law is speaking here with authority. "I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled" Jot and tittle—not the dot of an "i," nor the cross of a "t" of His whole revealed word shall pass till all be fulfilled This is exceedingly sweet to us. What an inestimable treasure we have in His word, which God has given us. It is more stable than heaven or earth, more substantial, more lasting; and that is what we have to build on for eternity! How careful because they made void the law through their traditions. They brought in a tradition which said, 'I have given that to God, and so I need not care for father or mother'; thus nullifying the law.

He impresses again and again that it is not enough to know the truth, if the truth is not operating. If ye know, happy are ye if ye do. Again, finishing up this section of the Gospel in chap. 7. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them," is the prudent man. Those who hear and do not, are foolish and builders on sand.

"Your righteousness" (ver. 20)-that is a very solemn thing. It is not the gospel. It is what is produced in us-righteousness. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Whatever we attempt to do to make ourselves fit for God is as "filthy rags," and only makes our case worse. "Though I wash myself in snow water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me," said Job. After I have used the best natural means to make myself fit for God, all is proved worse than useless. But in the beginning of chap. 6:6 it says "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men" (R.V.); then follows the division of "your righteousness" (ver. 5) into, firstly, "alms" (vers. 2-4), then prayer" (ver. 5-15), and lastly, "fasting" (vers. 16-18). J.N.D., in his Translation, tells us in a note that the Rabbis use this word "righteousness" for "alms."

Now in Acts 10 we get a man introduced to us giving much "alms" and "praying" to God alway, and his prayers and his alms (his "righteousness") came for a memorial before God. That could not be said of an unconverted man. But here was a quickened soul, a subject of grace, but one who needed to hear words whereby he should be "saved." What Peter learned was "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth God and worketh

righteousness is accepted of Him.”

This supposes in every case that where there is righteousness which God can accept, it comes from a quickened soul. The righteousness I have as a standing before God is Christ only; we cannot be too particular about that. But the grace that saves me teaches me (Titus 2). You cannot separate saving grace from teaching grace. But let us not put the cart before the horse, and subvert God's order. I must get salvation in purest grace. Grace comes to me with “salvation,” and I accept it; then it teaches me how to walk. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees consisted in tithing “the mint and the rue,” etc., but you must have a different righteousness to that, even the product of God's own grace. The Epistle of John brings this out very clearly. The eternal life that was with the Father had been manifested to us, and John was used of God to show us that beautiful life in his Gospel. In his Epistle he tells us we have that life, he shows it in its operation; first, obedience and love; secondly, righteousness and love; thirdly, truth and love.

The first evidence of the new birth in Saul of Tarsus was his praying. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” He had been born again, the bitter persecutor had been met with in grace; and this was the proof of the new birth, obedience. Another characteristic of it is dependence, showing itself in prayer; so Ananias is told, “Behold he prayeth.”

It is as much “to” them as “of” them of old time. He had been showing the importance of the law and the prophets, and their stability; for there is nothing so stable as the word of God. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of that word. He takes up instances which had been definitely spoken of in the word of God. I suppose there were those who were saying that the teaching of the Lord Jesus was opposed to that of Moses; but He shows that His sayings went deeper, revealing its force, and making known what God's eye rested on. When Cain discovered that God had accepted Abel, his countenance fell, murder was in his heart immediately. The same word in Hebrew is used for a “sin offering” as for “sin,” and we ought to be able to discern which is meant by weighing the context. There is not a word about a “sin offering” until the law. “By the law is the knowledge of sin.”

With what authority the Lord here speaks! The prophets could say, “Thus saith the Lord”; or the apostles, “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord”; but it is the Divine Law-giver speaking here, One far above the most honored servants, “I say unto you.” I suppose verse 22 would show us there are degrees of guilt, but there is no “little” sin. The Psalmist pleads, “Pardon mine iniquity for it is great.” Though he had so sorely wronged others, He was conscious it was against God he had sinned. “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.” Of Judas the Lord said, He that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin. Great sin and greater, thus there are degrees of guilt, though all be great.

How jealous we ought to be about our hearts, how careful about anger. Of course there are times when we should sin if we were not angry. If anyone says anything derogatory of the Lord we ought to be angry, but this scripture shows us how careful we ought to be about ourselves personally. “The altar” does not mean the Lord's table, though we should examine ourselves before partaking of the Lord's Supper, and we shall have a far deeper sense of grace if we do. These were legal sacrifices, but as to ourselves the principle applies whenever we come to God. Even as to prayer. “If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me.”

In Matthew 18:15 it is what I have against my brother because of some trespass against me, whose fault should be told him, but here it is my knowledge of his having something against me. The case is reversed. Pride is shown as much as anything in refusing to own when we are wrong.

There is instruction for the remnant. Let everything be right. Seek to meet the mind of God as to others. We can all see where there is no reserve, everything clear and open: that should characterize the saint of God.

God is no adversary to man, and if it is a poor sinner it would be a wrong thought altogether that God needed to be reconciled. Take John 3:16, it would not admit such a thought! And when you get that full presentation of the gospel in 2 Cor. 5, it is, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," for the sinner is God's adversary. Yet on the other hand, we must not forget that whatever God does, it must be in perfect righteousness—consistency with Himself. He has given Christ as the Lamb; what His holiness demanded, His love provided; and the cross has put God in the wonderful position of being able righteously to bless the vilest sinner according to the full love of His heart. But God is a judge; the Father is never called so except in the discipline of His children (1 Pet. 1). It is man who has made God a judge, not in His nature, but through man's sin. And here as to Israel, sin had made Him an adversary by their rejection of Christ, culminating in the cross, and now they are cast out of their land; or, in the language of our chapter, are "cast into prison." The cities of refuge have a certain correspondence to it, for they must remain outcasts until "the death of the High priest." That is, when there is an end of Christ's priestly services for His people as now going on, then Israel will return to the land of their possession. Today when any of them are converted they lose their nationality and become members of the body of Christ, where there is neither Greek nor Jew. But, as in Isaiah 40:2, the time will come when God will deal with them again in grace. Where they are now, nationally, the veil is on their heart when they read the Old Testament. But the veil will be taken away and repentance wrought—a necessity for the whole human race if any are to be blest. In Acts 3 it was promised that on Israel's repentance "times of refreshing" should come from the presence of the Lord. So as we read that verse we must remember where they are now, as a people, and that repentance must and will be wrought in them. In Leviticus 23, on the great day of atonement every soul was to mourn or else be cut off; and in Zechariah we see that repentance is then wrought and they all individually mourn. We have an illustration of this in Joseph; his brethren must be broken down; and you get in that wonderful outpouring of Judah's heart a sample of the repentance of the remnant.

On the ground of law payment must be to the uttermost farthing; and it has been paid in the cross of Christ for the believer. Though God has not made a covenant with the church they get the benefit of "the blood of the covenant." The blood has been shed, but the making of the covenant is for Israel and is yet future. We get the blessing of it, however, for the atonement is world-wide and not for the nation only— "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" —future for Israel; true of us now, as Hebrews 8; 12 show. The majesty of the law was never so upheld as in the death of Christ. He kept it perfectly in every step of His life, magnified it, and made it honorable; but He bore the law's curse for those who had broken it. Though Gentiles were not put by God under the law, yet the blessing of Abraham comes on them through Jesus Christ in consequence of Christ being "made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:8-14). When we come to think of the law it demanded what man never could give, and cursed him for not having done it; but grace first blesses a man and then enables him to work far more than the law demanded.

Rom. 8:3 shows that the law, though “holy, just, and good,” was weak through the flesh, but the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled by us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. That is what the Spirit produces because we have the new life. The new life alone was not sufficient. We need the spirit too. Compare Romans 7 with Galatians 5 (ver. 17 should be “that ye may not do,” not that ye cannot do).

(To be continued)

## Notes on Matthew 5:27-48

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### Chap. 5: 27-48

Many that were around the Lord in His day were very punctilious even about tithing the herbs in their gardens, etc. But what were they? They got praise of men, as for a pretense they made long prayers and sounded a trumpet before them, but what is the Lord's estimate? Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites! The Lord is showing the 'searching character of the law; so, of some who might pride themselves on not having committed adultery, what does the Lord say, Who looks on the heart? All this shows how watchful we ought to be of our hearts, and to let the word search us through and through. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Whilst, of course, every act of evil demands our condemnation of it in self-judgment, not less should we judge every evil intent in us, and the thought that gave rise to it. Thought, intention, action, that is the order here. Nothing but reality will meet the mind of God. Deep reality should characterize every one of us.

Our right eye may be an occasion of stumbling (ver. 29). Hell is here "gehenna" or the lake of fire. The place where the children were first offered to Moloch was called the valley of Hinnom or Gehenna, and here was burnt the refuse of the city. But we must be on our guard against those who use this to teach unsound doctrine. It is "their worm" —man's own individual conscience—that never dies, and further, the fire of God's judgment is never quenched. All this about the eye and the hand teaches us that nothing of however great value and usefulness should hinder us from self-judgment. A thorough judgment of self there must be, if we would be happy and useful. The more we judge ourselves the less disposed we shall be to judge others, though never winking at evil. There are spheres where we are called to judge, others where we should not. If we are right we should not judge motives. But the world we shall judge by and by-and now, them that are without God judgeth. The world wants a millennium without the personal presence of the Son of God, and such a thought should be abhorrent to us. But He is coming to reign, and a millennium there shall be. And when He reigns on the throne of David we shall reign with Him.

Scripture says "Do not ye judge them that are within." Oh, what divine wisdom is needed here, for we should remember what is due to Him. Yet the most unsparing judgment should be of ourselves (ver. 31). Israel's sad condition it was that led to this permission, but from the beginning it was not so. But then there may truly be a cause, and where that is, then before God the marriage tie is broken. If one were rightly exercised as to what was due to the Lord, I do not think any would care to marry while the one who had sinned was alive. But if they did, I do not see how the assembly could rightly interfere.

Swearing-(vers. 33-39). I was once in a position where I refused to swear. I was a very young Christian then, and thought I was acting on this scripture in faith. I do not think I displeased the Lord, though afterward I learned I had made a mistake. Paul used a very strong asseveration when he wrote, "I call God to witness upon my soul," and no doubt it was necessary on that

occasion—the expression is only once used in scripture. Then again, take that verse in James 3, “earthly, sensual, devilish.” That word is only used once. Because it is so used it is no warrant for us to be constantly using it. When the high priest put the Lord on an oath, the Lord spoke; and so if the powers that be require us to take an oath (unless that oath is wrong in itself) it is due that we obey, and meet what they require. But in our ordinary conversation we cannot be too simple. Let our words be always with grace seasoned with salt; it is evidently grace that is to govern.

Then in verse 40, it is the spirit of the thing, not the literal turning of the cheek, etc. In the Epistles we have what is even higher—to be forgiving, not self-assertive, meek and lowly, following the Lord, not answering railing for railing (1 Peter 2.). This should be our character; not yielding, however, where there is evil, for then we ought to be as firm as a rock. Yet should it be a quiet firmness, not a lot of clatter like a horse's hoof, but like the clean animal which had a divided hoof (Leviticus 11). There was never one so unresisting as the blessed Savior Himself. Such a spirit is what the world despises, tramples under foot, and thoroughly misunderstands, they put graciousness down as cowardice, yet never was one so faithful as He who is the pattern of grace. Look at Psalm 40:9. The great congregation was Israel, when all the males had to appear before Jehovah and He went up with them. “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation”—the very opposite of cowardice. And quite compatible with the most perfect faithfulness is His meekness and gentleness. The faithful man of this Psalm 40 is the poor man of Psalm 41 I have no doubt, too, the spirit of Christ in the remnant is also there. A greater number have gone astray in the proper understanding of the Psalms than in any other part of the scripture. They call for greater subjection of mind to rightly divide them, than perhaps, any other book of the Bible. We shall be kept right if we have the Lord ever before us, as revealed in the word. Christ is the key to it all.

I have no doubt they were making a misuse of that communication: “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” It was not for them to avenge themselves, but it was given as instruction to the judges in their administration of justice. But we are called to more than righteousness. The Christian standard is vastly higher than the Jewish. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men has appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly [as to ourselves], righteously [towards others] and godlily” [as regards God]. We should never act unrighteously, but graciously, and godlily. The principles of the kingdom of heaven show us we are to act graciously. The kingdom of heaven was “at hand” when the Lord was here; it is in “mystery” now that the King is on high; and by and by the kingdom will be in “power.”

What this chapter presents corresponds to much that we get in the Epistles of Peter. For instance, “not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,” etc. Also “Let your yieldingness be known unto all men.” It is necessary to remember that every truth has its counter-truth; there should never be yieldingness and graciousness at the expense of holiness. “Follow [or pursue] peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord”; so it is guarded: and these guards we need. The Lord Himself is the perfect pattern. He was pre-eminently “the unresisting one; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter! But He Who is the Lamb is the Lion also. And we must remember that now, while we are here and the Lord rejected, we have to show this grace. We shall not always have to show it. What is said of the Lord in Psalm 2, is said of the overcomer in Revelation 2. It is now that we have the opportunity of carrying out these principles which the Lord has revealed as those of His kingdom.

“Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also” (ver. 39). Of course we must be careful that we understand these principles. This is not the spirit of defiance; for in this there may be real pride. It is non-resistance to evil. Look at the dignity of the Lord Jesus when they smote Him. He did not turn the other cheek. We must seek to understand the principle of the thing. Was Paul acting according to this when he said, “God shall smite thee, thou whited wall”? There was only One Who was the fine flour of the meal offering. The greater the pressure the more the perfection of the fine flour is shown out. Even the blessed apostle there failed; his impetuosity came to the top. In the O.T. we read, “He who ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city.” A saint of God is not to keep company with an angry man. Grace, however, at once showed itself in the apostle. When they said, “Revilest thou God’s high priest?” he said, “I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people:” he bowed to the word at once. Let us remember what Peter says, for it is in keeping with the principle here. A saint suffering for what is right, and taking it patiently is a plain instruction for us. What a splendid testimony we should bear if we all carried out these principles! The infidel could not say then that Christianity is a failure. It is the neglect of the word of God that has brought things where they are. It is not the fault of the word, but of the neglect of it. Ah! better never to have had a revelation than, with the knowledge of it, to have turned aside from the holy commandment. Spite of all the corruptions of Christianity there is a contrast between those countries which have had but the outward knowledge of Christianity and those that are still heathen.

“If any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat [thy inside garment], let him have thy cloak also” [the outside one] (ver. 40). I do not think any of us could make any mistake as to the principle here. Under the law they were not allowed to keep it overnight if the man was poor, because it was the covering of the bed. For the Christian to prosecute another is unbecoming; and if himself prosecuted, there is the opportunity to show the difference between the Christian and the worldling. We can always put things into the Lord’s hands.

It is a poor thing for the Christian to stand on his rights. If Moses (Numbers 12) had stood for his rights, the Lord would not have stood up for him; and if we stand for ours, He will not stand up for us. The Spirit’s testimony to Moses was that He was very meek. He did not resist them, and, in result, Miriam got the leprosy and needed her brother’s prayers. As Christians we are forbidden to go to law. I believe that verse 4 in Philippians 4—the book of Christian experience, as it has been called—would cover much that we have here. “Let your yieldingness be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand,” and this in two ways.

In all these verses of our Gospel we have different examples of the same truth. “Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (40). If in verse 39 we have “resist not evil,” here it is “be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Verse 42 has been a puzzle to many who want to act rightly. I have no doubt the meaning of it is that we should be liberal-minded. In the O.T. the blessedness of this is pointed out. Of the Lord it is said, “He went about doing good.” “We are to do good to all men, specially to them who are of the household of faith.” Where we have opportunity to give, let us remember, “Freely ye have received, freely give.”

But would it be right to give, if we knew the person would make an ill use of it? Must we use that as an excuse if we have been victimized? How ready some people are to borrow? Surely there are counter-truths to guide us in all these questions. The good man spoken of in Psalm 112 will not

only “show favor and lend,” but “will guide his affairs with discretion.” There is a guard for us. Suppose a thoroughly lazy man, who will not work though able, but lives by borrowing—2 Thessalonians 3:10 affords direction for us. That supposes a man who refuses to work when he can. There may be an excellent brother out of work, and in need, and it is a privilege to help such. But Scripture is given us to guide in all cases. It is not a book of rules, though all scripture is the rule to the Christian, and where saints wait on the Lord He knows how to make plain. There are cases for exhortation. The very word that says, “From him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away,” says also, “Owe no man anything.” And a Christian in a right state of soul would not be happy to owe any man anything. A Christian is not governed by the world's standard. If one, for instance, becomes bankrupt and gets a “legal” release from the payment of his debts in full, is he not still before the Lord, morally responsible, though legally acquitted?

There was a man (I don't know if a Christian) who, putting up as an M.P., was found to have been a bankrupt. It is known, however, that afterwards, being very successful in business, he had invited all his creditors to meet him. They did so and found a luncheon provided for them, and, under each of their plates, a check for the unpaid balance due to them respectively, with 5 per cent interest added thereto. I also knew a Christian who came back to England from New Zealand in order to pay all his creditors in full. I would not be hard on a man who had failed and never had an opportunity to repay; we want to be hard on ourselves and not on others.

So in this verse we should show a generous spirit, but we need heavenly wisdom. All these things call for looking to the Lord. “Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion towards him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” We must not forget that side. Yet we must not encourage evil. We may share a man's sin by giving to him, as for instance, if we knew a man would get drunk if we gave him money. There are two words translated “covetousness” in the N.T.: one means desiring more than you have got; the other keeping back what you ought to give. The Lord does not calculate as men do. The poor widow had cast in, according to the balances of the sanctuary, more than they all, though they had cast in something. The Lord still sits over against the treasury.

I think that poor widow is often quoted unjustly. People often say, “the widow's mite”; but she had two mites, all she possessed, and she put in both. We are warned that “the love of money is a root of all evil,” and no doubt Christian communities have been great lovers of money, and ail sorts of schemes have been resorted to to get money. The Lord will not have hypocrisy; He must have reality.

Verse 43. “It hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.” This latter clause was a deduction, the inference of an evil nature. The law said, “Love your neighbor”; but there was no instruction to hate an enemy. “But I say unto you, Love your enemies.” No one could do this naturally or apart from the grace of God. Only in the knowledge of the grace of God—that when we were enemies Christ died for us, can we do so. Very lovely is this instruction, when we think of Himself, and the unrighteous way He was treated—the crown of thorns, mocking, scourging, and nailing to the cross, and then the cry, “Father, forgive them.”

A little reflex of this we see in Stephen. They cast him out and stoned him, and he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord lay not this sin to their charge. The same grace that enabled Stephen a man of like passions with ourselves—to act thus can enable us. It is very lovely, and

meets the Lord's mind. But there is a great contrast between the Master and the servant. Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The Lord Jesus could dismiss His spirit. He only.

There is a singular connection between Stephen and the apostle Paul. There you get the beginning of the gospel of glory. The twelve had the gospel of the grace of God committed to them. But Paul says, "The gospel of the glory of the blessed (or, happy) God which was committed to me" (1 Timothy 1:1). The others had spoken of the exaltation of Christ, but of Stephen it is said, "He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," and he bore testimony to it. And the Lord lays His hand on him who was standing by and consenting to Stephen's death, and says, "To you I commit that gospel of the glory of God." One that acts on the principles of this chapter will specially need the Lord's care and protection. How the world would take advantage and seek to tread on them! They need the Lord's protection and they shall get it. Paul says, when all forsook him, "the Lord stood by me and strengthened me," and he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. And He is the One we also want. And unless there is the realization of that we shall not have power to carry this out.

In verse 45 it is, not children but sons; "children" is always connected with birth. The apostle John in his writings never uses the word "son" for any but the Lord Jesus, with but one exception (Revelation 21:7). When he refers to the saints of God it is always "children." In the 1st chapter of his Gospel, verse 12, "as many as received Him to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name: which were born... of God." So in his 1st Epistle (3:1). "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God."

But when it is a question of "sons" it refers to our position; and is connected with redemption in Galatians, while here it is a question of character. "The sons of your Father" — "your Father that makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good" —not simply God, but your Father, and we are called to have the family character and show the same grace, as sons of such a Father. The one that loves his enemies, and does good to them that hate him, bears the character of a son of the Father who makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good. Think how He is treated and blasphemed, and of the character of man! Yet He treats them so, and He is your Father.

Verses 47, 48. There ought to be a maturity about us to better show out that family character. There is no such thought here as sinless perfection. The context must always show the meaning of "perfect." God says to Abraham, "I am El Shaddai" the all-sufficient One; all resources are in Me; now use them and be perfect. Paul says, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect," there it is in contrast with a babe. The Lord Jesus says, "I do cures today and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." Here He means resurrection. And it is used of us too—that they without us should not be made perfect—that is, perfected in resurrection. In Philippians 3:12-15 the word is used in two senses. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after," etc., i.e., he would not be perfect till he reached the Lord in glory. "Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded."

So there was a sense in which he was not perfect, another sense in which he was perfect, viz., a full grown Christian, and others with him. Then again in Hebrews 6— "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." The principles are the alphabet; we are not always to be in the A B C class, but to go on to full growth. Referring back to chap. 5 we find that they

needed that one taught them these principles again. The Corinthians had never been more than babes; these Hebrews had, and had gone back, so that they needed milk again and not strong meal, which belongs to the full grown. So we see by these examples how necessary it is for us to consider the context in all cases.

(To be continued)

## Notes on Matthew 6:1-15

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In the principles of the previous chapter we see the contrast between law and grace. There is no reference to the law in what follows. Chapter 6 commences with “righteousness” (vers. 1), not “alms”; and then in the “alms” (ver. 2), and “prayers” (ver. 5), and “fastings” (ver. 16) that follow, we get what this “righteousness” is.

Righteousness is consistency with relationship, whatever that may be. So we get in divine righteousness that which is consistent with God in relation to us. Here it is conduct consistent with the believer's relationship. There is to be no seeking praise from men, but to be content with God's approval. The apostle could say, It is a small thing with me to be judged of you or of man's day. It is a very small matter to one who is right with God. Not he who commendeth himself—that is what these hypocrites do—is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. All through it shows that if you are to get human applause you have your reward already, but if you seek it from God alone you won't lose it. We do well to take notice of these expressions. “Your Father which is in heaven” is perfectly right for disciples on earth, but where do you get anything like this in the Epistles, after the Lord went to heaven? There was a place of worship on earth; it is now removed to heaven, where we are encouraged to draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith. If we are in the heavenlies, and realize where grace has brought us, would it not be strange to address God as “Our Father which art in heaven”, though quite right for disciples on earth before the veil was rent? After verse 2 we get the details of what is given in verse generally, and a very solemn searching word it is.

These men are called by the Lord hypocrites. It will not be amiss to remember that the Lord calls the religious leaders hypocrites, “Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites.” God is not deceived; He does not look on the outward appearance. If their hearts had been right they would not have drawn attention to what they did, for that is what is implied by “sounding a trumpet” before them. It is a fatal thing to seek glory of men. God and the world are always opposed. The Lord says, “I receive not honor from men”; and, “I know you that ye have not the love of God in you.” God looks for the single eye; this is the great point here, and the most important one; for it would settle many a difficulty if our one object were to please the Lord. “Wherefore we are ambitious”, says the apostle, “that whether present or absent, we may be well pleasing to Him” (or “acceptable,” not “accepted”). We are “accepted” in the Beloved, and it is “to the praise of the glory of his grace.” There is nothing higher than this; it is the very glory of it. It is altogether of God's grace. Grace—“riches of his grace” — “the glory of his grace” —and this last is the highest. Therefore I labor, “make it my aim,” to be well-pleasing to Him Who has showed me this grace. There is no such thing as laboring for salvation; that would be up-hill drudgery. But having got it I can labor to please Him. Those who seek glory of men shall get it, but this is not glory of God.

But the Lord says also, “When thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” (ver. 3). So it is clearly indicated there that we should not only not talk about them (for it is a miserable thing for saints of God to be advertising their own goodness in any way), but we should

also not think about it. Self-gratulation is a miserable thing. We ought to remember Luke 17:10. Let us show the connection, it will quite fit in with what we have in our chapter. In Luke 17:6 the Lord shows that whatever obstruction there is, and however formidable against your acting in the gracious way indicated in the previous verses, it shall be removed. But then there would be the danger of your thinking yourself a very gracious person, and so the Lord gives us verses 7-10. However much grace you show in carrying out the Lord's instruction, say, nevertheless, "We are unprofitable servants." The Lord won't let us have high thoughts of ourselves at all, for all we have is of grace. So do not let us talk of our goodness or think of it.

What have we to forget as to the past? Sometimes people say, I delight to think of God's past goodness. And quite rightly, for where the words "forgetting those things that are behind" occur, it speaks of a race and attainment. Whatever in our past history that would minister to our pride let us forget; whatever would humble us let us remember: then we are wise. So let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth, means don't dwell upon it. I believe from these words there is much done in the way of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting that is pleasing to God, but which neither the world nor our fellows know anything about. That which is pleasing to God is not displayed here, the time of display will come, but this is the hidden life. Your Father which is in secret is He Who knows the secrets, and He is "not unrighteous to forget your work, and the love that ye have shown to His Name in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." We have no right to speak of people as hypocrites. It must be the One Who can read the heart to say that. Judas was a hypocrite when he kissed the Lord. Peter was not, though he denied Him. Judas never loved the Lord, Peter did.

"They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets" (ver. 5), that they may pass as very pious people—that is the thought. And from the instruction we have here we must not think it wrong to pray in public; we have other scriptures to guide us about that. In the First Epistle to Timothy we have instructions for the order of God's house; in the second. Epistle we have "a great house" in disorder. The First was written to show how we ought to behave "in the house of God", which is a living God's assembly; so in chap. 2 we get instruction about the prayer meeting, and what we ought to pray for. The words "that the men pray everywhere" show it to be the prayer meeting; the women have as much right to pray in private as men, but here it is the prayer meeting where they must be silent. Sisters have a very honored place, and many a one who has been true to the Lord will have a reward by and by.

"When thou prayest," etc. (ver. 6). As a general rule in the scriptures, long prayers are in private, and short ones in public. We get the Lord spending the night in prayer. There is more about the Lord praying, in Luke's Gospel than in the other three. He is there the Son of man, in dependence. The Lord was going to choose the twelve, and the night before, He spent in prayer. Here is a blessed lesson for us. It shows how careful we ought to be in undertaking anything-to do it in communion with God's thoughts. That is where fasting comes in, unknown to any but God; that which is laid on the heart being so absorbing that food for the body is not thought of. The Lord said, on the mount of transfiguration when the man brought his boy and the disciples could not cast the demon out, "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." There may be that in our experience which requires much prayer and fasting. "Enter into thy closet, etc." I remember a man who no, doubt entered into the closet and shut the door, but all the neighborhood knew when he prayed, for he prayed so loudly! You do not want to make a display or to let others know of it. A

shut door implies that. Daniel was in accordance with Solomon's prayer, when he prayed with his windows opened toward Jerusalem, for there was a house of prayer then on earth. What we see in him is not ostentation but fearlessness of man. What a privilege we have now, far beyond what these disciples knew. We can pray to our Father in secret amid the greatest bustle which the world ever knew. Look at Nehemiah 2:1-4. There was a secret in his own soul; his heart went up to God before he answered the king. You can do it in secret amidst the antipathies of everyday life.

Repetitions are not wrong. The Lord Himself prayed three times in Gethsemane; but verse 7 speaks of vain repetitions. Have not I seen such instructions as, that it is a good thing for the soul to repeat the Lord's prayer ten times and such like? There you get the thought; the heathen thought they would be heard for much speaking, but a soul may be very stammering yet the Lord knows the heart, the meaning of a sigh, when we cannot put it into words, and before ye ask, your Father knoweth. He loves to hear us! "Let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice," what wonderful grace! How can I have a comely countenance when looking up to God? It is the comeliness of Christ and the sweetness of Christ's voice.

"After this manner, therefore, pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven" (vers. 9-12). This is the disciples' prayer and the perfect thing, from the Lord's lips. But, as pointed out already, it is for disciples on the earth. When Paul is praying he says, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom every family in heaven and earth is named" — not to "Our Father which art in heaven," for in the same epistle he speaks of us as already seated in heavenly places in Christ. Besides, the Lord told His disciples, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when the Spirit of truth is come he shall guide you into all truth." They would be put into an entirely new position with new desires. No form of prayer is given the saints after the Holy Spirit was given at Pentecost.

Turn to John 16. The Lord is going away, and He says, "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily I say unto you whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name he will give it to you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (vers. 23, 24). These disciples whom the Lord taught this prayer had asked nothing in His Name. That means that since redemption is accomplished, the believer stands in the same relationship as Christ, and asking in His Name is realizing that. To go back. This is an individual thing, but "Our Father" because it is a common privilege. The Lord says, "My Father and your Father." This is right for us now, but it is un-intelligent to add "which art in heaven," for we are in the heavenlies too, in Christ. If one's eyes are opened to see what the teaching of the Epistles is, we see how it is all of grace, and one would not look down on any who may use it, not knowing better. Those to whom this prayer was given could not be spoken of as "praying in the Holy Ghost" because He was not yet given.

"Hallowed be Thy name." This is true in every dispensation. "Thy kingdom come." What we have before us now is something nearer to us than the kingdom—the coming of the Lord to take us to heaven, because we belong there. "Looking for that blessed hope," that is the nearer thing to us. But this prayer will all be fulfilled in the millennium. The believer now is "elect... through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Directly God begins a work in a soul, that soul is sanctified to obedience, and we are admonished to be "not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is"; and the will of the Lord is different for a

saint now from what it will be for others at a later day. Paul's desire for the Colossians was that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding?" Is it not becoming that we should be dependent on God?

"Give us this day our daily bread." Many a saint of God would almost break his heart if he thought his income would come to an end in twelve months' time. But this implies that we look to Him and as having no other resource for today's needs.

"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." The Christian is put on different ground altogether. "Forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you." The fact that God has forgiven us should make us forgiving of others. There is eternal forgiveness, and there is governmental forgiveness in the word. In Colossians we read, "having forgiven you all trespasses" and the blessing of the new covenant is "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"; while the teaching of Hebrews is "He hath perfected forever" —in perpetuity— "them that are sanctified." Sin can never be imputed as guilt to a believer; we are perfected forever, and have no more conscience of sins. But does a Christian sin? And does he not need forgiveness? Yes, in God's government. Communion is interrupted by sin, and so "if any man sin." The standard is that we sin not, but if any man sin God has made provision for it, "we have an Advocate with the Father." An eternal relationship has been formed; the Righteous One is my righteousness. If the believer should have sinned, there is one Who takes up my case in the presence of God, and makes me conscious of the sin. There is a cloud on my conscience, I am bound to confess it, and I am led to confess it. "If we confess our sins" —that was true at first when I came as a poor sinner— "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." And if I come as a saint, it is still true for me now, and thus it is that communion is restored.

(To be continued)

## Notes on Matthew 6:9-23

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Of course there is not a word about redemption here, because redemption was not accomplished when this prayer was given. Luke tells us it was given in answer to the disciples' request, and when we remember it was at an early part of the Lord's ministry, no doubt they used it for years; but at the close of His ministry the Lord says to them, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in My name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." So that they had never asked anything in the Lord's name. The mere adding "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake" at the end of a prayer is not this. But that we ask in the consciousness of the new position in which the Lord has brought His own since redemption.

When the Holy Ghost was sent down, the believer was placed in a new and wondrous position—"one spirit with the Lord"; "as He is so are we"; "taken into favor in the Beloved." John 17 shows us that the Father has the same love for us as He has for His Son the man Christ Jesus; and He has given us His position before the Father in heaven, because we have the Holy Ghost. "In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in Me [up there before the Father], and I in you" [down here on the earth]. Asking in His name is asking as one who has His position of nearness and dearness, not one on earth looking up to a Father in heaven. One using this prayer is in the same position as the disciples before redemption was accomplished. The position of the disciples was a mixed one. There are those who would teach children to sing

"I wish that His hands had been placed on my head,

That His arms had been thrown around me,

That I might have seen His kind look when He said

Let the little ones come unto Me."

But a believing child now is in a much better position than those dear children, because they had not the Holy Ghost, since redemption was not accomplished. The apostle said to the Corinthians, "Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more," but now we know Him in a far more blessed way through the Holy Ghost.

We were looking at ver. 12 when we closed the meeting last week. "As we have forgiven" is a well authenticated reading. Suppose we took that prayer as a universal one to be used by everybody, where is the room for the gospel if the unsaved are to use it? It is putting people on their works. But if we see this was for disciples we see that it is governmental forgiveness and not a question of eternity; if we cherish an unforgiving spirit, God in His government will make us feel it. Looking again at Luke 17, to which we have already referred, we see (ver. 3-5) how the disciples thought it would require great faith to carry out what the Lord had just said: and a very practical lesson for all of us is in what follows in ver. 6. Mustard seed is very small, and however tiny our faith is, all things are possible with God, and all things are possible to him that believeth; so, however small your faith is, use it and the hindrances to your carrying out the Lord's words in these verses will be

removed. This shows that if we fail in this graciousness it is because we don't look to the Lord. But there is a needs be to put the other side and so we have verses 7-10. Suppose you have forgiven a brother seven times a day, do not have high thoughts about yourself in consequence: rather, say "We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do." How the word of God strips us of all pride and boasting!

Returning to our chapter, the disciples are here (Matthew 6:13) asking the Father to "Lead us not into temptation." This is not temptation to sin, for James says (1:13) "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." Satan tempts man to evil, and we have an evil nature that responds to it. James commences his Epistle with "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Here the word means trials. God tempted, that is, tried Abraham. There is all the difference between our entering into temptation and God trying us. God may lead us into trial, as He did Abraham. But the Lord said to Peter, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." If we enter presumptuously into trial, we are bound to fall; but if the Lord does lead us into it He will sustain us. Those to whom James wrote were since redemption, and had the Holy Ghost. If it were not so, they could not count it all joy.

The latter clause of Matthew 6:13, as is well known, is an interpolation, and should not be there. The prayer ends with "deliver us from evil." In verse 14 the Lord goes back to ver. 12. It is God's governmental dealings with His children, and so it is "your heavenly Father," and quite different to Colossians 2:13. They had life through God's gracious quickening, and as to their standing before God all trespasses were forgiven; but if in our relationship with our Father we do not cultivate this spirit of forgiveness, we are losers. Contrast Colossians 1:12-14. with this prayer, and the simplest soul can surely see that Colossians is far in advance. When God unfolds to me that I have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, and that I am delivered from Satan's authority and power, it draws out from me that thanksgiving which is due to the Father. The disciples asked for a prayer, and He gave them this form, but to us He has given the Holy Ghost, and we should pray in the Holy Ghost. If we turn to the Psalms, we find there a book of prayer and praise exactly suited to the Jewish remnant in a day that is coming, but not adequately suited to us. We have no set form of prayer and praise given to us Christians, but we profit from every book of the Bible, the whole word of God. Yet while there are many utterances of the Psalms suited to us, yet, if a person used the book without discriminating what is suited to an earthly people they would get into a very unsatisfactory state of soul.

Look at those who try to Christianize what belongs to the Jew, and who say that the imprecatory psalms belong to a barbarous age! How would Psalm 109:4-13 suit you? It is utterly opposed to all we have been reading of the principles of the kingdom, and to the spirit of the Christian, but it will be quite right for the remnant, so that unless we learn to rightly divide the word of truth, we get into terrible difficulties. The whole Bible is for us, but not all about us. There are parts of the Psalms that belong to the Lord Jesus only; parts also which belong to Him and the remnant; and there are parts too that may be applied to the Christian now, and to the remnant by and by.

A greater number have been led into error through a misuse of the Psalms than of any other book. There are parts in which people delight, because there it is not so much God revealing Himself and instructing us, as it is the experimental outpouring of the saint. Psalm 32 is quoted in Romans

4. You get the negative side in the Psalm, and the positive side in Romans, and a very blessed Psalm it is to preach the gospel from, only you must make a right use of it. And that very 109th Psalm, to which I have already referred, was quoted by Peter, in Acts 1, before the Holy Ghost was given.

An O.T. saint prayed "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me"; but a Christian could not intelligently so pray, because now that the indwelling Spirit is given to those who obey Him, "He shall abide with you forever." The Holy Ghost came upon even wicked men in the O.T., as for instance, Saul and Balaam, who were never born again, and though by Him the O.T. saints were born again, He never indwelt any until redemption. This so-called Lord's prayer was not prayed in public; it was "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray." In Acts 4 the place was shaken where the apostles were gathered together praying. I can recall no record in the Gospels of their being so gathered, though the promise of "If two of you shall agree, etc.," is in view of it, and would show the blessedness of fellowship in the things of the Lord.

Verse 16.-Here we come to the third component of "your righteousness" with which the chapter began. The first is alms; the second, prayer; the third, fasting. Do not let what you give, be before men; let your prayers be in secret, and do not let your fasting appear before men. The hypocrites wanted to advertise themselves, and they had their reward; they were esteemed very pious people. Fasting itself may be an evil thing. Writing to the Colossians the apostle condemns neglecting the body; but we may well conceive a soul with such a burden on the heart before God that it takes no food but remains before Him—that is true fasting. Do not let there be anything to promulgate it. Let it be a secret between your soul and God. It will be a blessing to you if there is reality, and it is a real expression of your soul before God. There is a great desire for the nation now to spend a day of humiliation and prayer; if only a form it will be a very poor thing, but if there is really a humbling before God, it will correspond with Nineveh.

Now we come to another division of the chapter (vers. 19-24). As far as the Christian is concerned, if he has money he simply has it as a steward. In early days they had all things common, when all the saints were in Jerusalem. But that could not be carried out now. We have further instructions since failure has come in; see 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19, where raiment should read "covering"; the word in the original takes in a roof as well as raiment. That fits in a good deal with this chapter. Those who have money like to invest it wisely, and the Lord shows here how to do it. "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord." One could not have a safer investment, or better interest. We do not know what a day or an hour may bring forth. Three years ago people in Belgium little thought what would occur. Riches take to themselves wings and fly away. They will never fly away if invested thus. Heaven is the place to store them. The Lord is showing the place in which to deposit treasure. It is individual. What a blessed thing to be able to rightly appreciate what we have in heaven, and thus have our hearts set on things above, not on things on the earth!

The great point in ver. 22 is to have the single eye. It is a testing verse. Suppose I am distracted and in uncertainty about anything. Does not this tell me my eye is not single? If I want partly to please myself, and partly to please the Lord, I have not a single eye. But if I have a single eye for a single object, it will make my path easier as I go along.

## Notes on Matthew 6:24-34

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### Chap. 6: 24-34

We get numberless lessons in the word to show us that the Lord is not satisfied with a divided heart. A little farther on in this same Gospel (chap. 8), one man elects to follow the Lord. There is a play on the word "follow" there; the Lord read his heart. The scribe was after present advantage so the Lord opposed it by telling him it would be far otherwise. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay his head." Though often quoted as descriptive of the Lord's condition always, this was not so. Given chronologically, it was when the Samaritans refused Him that this declaration was first used by the Lord. Another one says, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father"; but the Lord will not have a divided heart. The Lord is jealous about our hearts. The sinner is often told to give his heart to the Lord, but there is no warrant for this in scripture. It is not a question of bringing, or giving up on the part of the sinner. But the Christian should give his heart. "My son, give me thy heart" is all right for one in relationship. Here of course it is a question of service, but following and service are intimately connected; so in John it is, "If any man serve me, let him follow me."

"Mammon" is not a word we get often in scripture. It is only here, and in Luke 16. From the context in each case we see worldly gain to be the prominent thought. Worldly gain, or earthly riches, is called "the mammon of un-righteousness" in Luke 16 So the grand lesson is, that we should give the Lord the first place in everything, and not to be double-hearted, or double-minded. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways. Then the thought may arise, "Well, if I pursue that path it may take me into a path of trial-." So it will, and this is the lesson of chap. 8. If they had gone on with the multitude they would have escaped the storm. But it is a path of faith. The Lord will take care of those who are concerned for His glory. God's glory and our good are inseparably linked together for the believer. If we care for His glory, He will take care of our good. This verse 25 has puzzled not a few. J. N. D. gives, in his translation, "Do not be careful about your life, what ye should eat and what ye should drink." It means "anxious thought"-take no anxious thought for your life. Now, we Christians get further instruction in the Epistles: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." What a relief to the soul, to be able to hand up everything to the One who loves me perfectly, who has almighty power, and is always to be trusted! If this is realized, there will be always God's peace keeping the heart and mind. We have no power to keep our own. There we are let into the secret how it can be. You get eating and drinking and raiment here, and some have confined the teaching of Timothy 6:8 to food and "raiment" (A.V.), but this latter word is really "covering" and takes in the shelter of a roof as well, a place to lie down in, as we have already remarked.

How blessed to realize we have a God who has given us Christ! He was not withheld, He was not spared. How becoming of faith then to say, "How shall he not with him also freely give us all things"! Paul's confidence in the Lord's gracious care of him comes out very beautifully in Phil.

4:19. He knew both how to be abased, and how to abound, and he knew how to suffer need, but he says, "My God shall supply all your need" (not from, but) "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." If a mechanic met a mechanic who told him he was in need, and he gave him five shillings, it would be according to his comparative riches; but if he met a millionaire and he gave him a like sum it would be "from" but not "according to" his wealth. Twenty pounds would be less to him than five shillings to the mechanic. We all have occasion to be thankful that He has given us natural life. He who has formed the body and given it life, will surely supply the needs of that body! This is full of comfort to us, and encourages us to trust, and not to be afraid to go on in the path of faith. What follows shows us we can learn lessons from what surrounds us continually. The Lord drew lessons from the fowls and, farther on, from the sparrows. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" The word "feed" has the sense of "nourish." Man is in the place of responsibility to sow, and reap, and gather into barns. Isaiah 28 shows us that God has instructed him how to do it. There is a deeper lesson there, I know. If God taught man thus to use the different resources of nature, He Himself has a purpose in all His different dealings and dispensations. But it is encouraging to see God's gracious care of His lesser creatures. Look at the sparrows, two sold for a farthing, five for two farthings; and yet not one of them forgotten before God! Our poor hearts if left to themselves want to look a long way ahead. Yet scripture shows us all the time that "it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes." As to our path we have to walk individually, and one cannot lay down a rule for another, but a word of J. N. D.'s has been helpful to many,

"Never go before your faith, and never lag behind your conscience."

The word "heavenly" is introduced here because the Lord was not then bodily in heaven, as He is now. "As is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly." The Father was not revealed until Christ came. The Lord said, "I have declared thy name unto my brethren and will declare it"; and yet, although the Lord taught them to say, "Our Father," almost at the beginning of His public ministry, yet how little did the disciples enter into it. For on the night of His betrayal, Philip says, "Lord show us the Father and it suffices us." The only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, He hath told Him out. Now we are in the same place of nearness and dearness that He is in.

Verse 27, "A cubit" (18 inches) is a good bit to add to one's stature, but there are some who think it is not so much one's stature, as the length of one's life that is meant! He has numbered our steps, and we cannot take a step beyond that number; and that would correspond with a cubit, I think. Of course either is true. So the Lord, to inspire our confidence in Him, gives us lessons from the fowls, who make no provision for the future. "Your heavenly Father feedeth them." There is one Psalm called David's "Psalm of praise" (145) wherein it is said, "The eyes of all wait upon thee, and thou givest them their meat in due season" (ver. 15).

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these" (vers. 28, 29). I dare say, though it is going away from our chapter, that you have preached the gospel from this. Link it with Canticles, and hear what the Bridegroom says of the earthly bride: "As the lily among thorns"—the gorgeous lily growing in the thorn brakes of Palestine—"so is my love among the daughters." We have the teaching about the thorn; how it was introduced; and what its end will be.

We were all thorns once. We can adopt these words for ourselves, and say that His grace has transformed us into the lily; arrayed in Christ, and the believing soul has that fragrance and beauty before Him. God is He that doeth this; it is not the result of their scheming and toil. The contrast in the Song of Solomon is between the lily and the King, who is as “my Beloved among the sons” (2:2, 3). God formed the lily, and we can boast in Him “who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

How frequently, when people speak of faith, do we find that they think a believer ought never to be suffering from sickness; that it is a shame, and due to something wrong in his path, and they talk of “faith-healing.” But while we know God can do everything, and all things are possible to him that believeth, we want faith also in His love, and wisdom, and care. Sickness may preserve us from going the wrong way. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not for anything wrong in his past path, but was given him as a preventive, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations. The danger was not when in the third heaven, but when he came down. “In everything let your requests be made known unto God.” It is our holy, blessed privilege to hand everything up to God, but it is also our privilege to say, “Not my will, but thine be done.” We would not limit the Lord's power, but we bow to His wisdom and purposes in all that He does. He is far more deeply interested in us than we can conceive. How much there is to inspire our hearts! But I think as to faith, the one who knows most about it, has the least to say about it. David kept the secret about the lion and the bear within his own soul, until it was right to speak of it, when he bore testimony before king Saul. But if you hear people constantly talking about their faith, I don't think there is much faith there: “Hast thou faith, have it to thyself before God.”

What a wonderful wealth there was in Solomon's reign! It has been estimated that there was enough gold in Solomon's temple to more than equal the national debt before this war! and silver was like stones, we are told. The Queen of Sheba fainted at the sight, it so far exceeded her expectations, so we can see why the Lord here selects Solomon. However grand and beautiful his apparel was, it was but artificial. The other was of God.

“O ye of little faith” (ver. 30). Faith is the gift of God. It is our wisdom to use what God has given us. That is one lesson impressed upon us by the Lord's teaching. Faith works by love. When faith increased, love abounded. Another thing, speaking of that, is clear, namely, that faith without love has no real value. It works by love, and overcomes the world. Can there be the one without the other? Turn to 1 Cor. 13:2, “Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.” It is very important to see, in John's First Epistle, the place that love has as seen in the saint It was seen in its perfection in the Lord when here, but in us it is first obedience and love, then righteousness and love, then truth and love.

“Therefore take no anxious thought” (ver. 31). This is to encourage us to have confidence in the Lord. I suppose the whole life of the Gentiles is taken up with these questions, “What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?” Our Father knoweth that we have need of these things, and He never withdraws His eyes from the righteous. What a blessed thing to have our souls stayed upon Him! What we have had before us here has some connecting link with the training Elijah had when taken to the brook Cherith. The Lord was training him for what we have in 1 Kings 18 that follows. He proved the Lord's care. The ravens brought him bread and flesh, till the brook dried up. Then he was taken to a widow. The Lord refers to this in Luke 4.

There were many widows in Israel, but Elijah was sent to a Gentile, and you know what occurred. It was a blessed day for her when Elijah came there. But that was not Elijah's deepest lesson. He learned that God was the God of resurrection. The apostle Paul at Troas (2 Cor. 1) was in great distress; but he too learned that God was the God of resurrection. God gives faith and He sustains faith. Untried faith is no faith. If a person has great faith, he will have great trials. Little faith has little trials. Of the Thessalonians it was said, "Your faith groweth exceedingly." Abraham's trial in Genesis 22 could not have come at the beginning of his course. He had been trained for it, and was sustained through it.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (ver. 33). This is the summing up of this part. It supposes submission of soul to God's holy revealed will. "And all these things shall be added unto you." The great thing must be God's glory, "God is faithful," the simple meaning of which is, God is to be trusted.

In the second clause of verse 34 we have "the morrow" personified, "The morrow shall take thought for itself" ("the things of" should be left out). How blessed and practical the lesson! Perhaps when the morrow comes, the thing dreaded will not be there; and if it is, God can bring us through it. "I can do all things," said the great apostle, "through him that strengtheneth me."

## The Minister of the Sanctuary

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When the apostle is showing how the sympathies of our Great High Priest are in constant exercise towards His suffering and sorrowing saints, he shows, at the same time, how the Lord's own pilgrimage through this world perfected Him as the lowly and obedient Man for the performance of this blessed part of His present priestly functions. Hence, we read: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." "We have not an high priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, and, being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 2:18; 4:15; 5:8, 9).

In this manner the Spirit of God instructs the believer as to the perfect way in which the great Sympathizer is qualified to help him through a lifetime of suffering, which is the direct result of a life of pious obedience. The pathway of the lowly Nazarene, so incomprehensible to the ordinary Jewish mind, is by this means turned to account, as it were, for the saints' blessing.

But there is another requirement of the Christian life which is contemplated in this Epistle, also forming in itself a contrast with what was true in Old Testament days. Just as the walk is one of adversity in contrast with worldly ease and prosperity, so the worship of the believer is spiritual and heavenly in contrast with what was carnal and earthly with the Jew. And the Epistle goes on to develop how the Lord Jesus, as the minister of the sanctuary on high, supplies every weakness and deficiency of the saint in this respect also.

The believer learns, therefore, that if meekness characterized the Lord Jesus on earth, majesty crowns Him in heaven. He is our High Priest. But what a Priest! He has passed through the heavens and taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty there. The glory of the Aaronic priesthood, in spite of its impressive ritual, its brilliant robes and its venerable lineage, all paled before the splendors of the new Priest that had arisen. For the one saluted by God as High Priest was of the order of Melchisedec, and not of the order of Aaron at all. And the seventh chapter of the Epistle demonstrates the exceeding superiority of this order, and hence of Him who is pre-eminently of this order—Jesus, the Son of God, our ever-living Priest before the face of God.

Now, the apostle shows how this heavenly Priest suits us, and that not because of the sorrows of our pilgrimage, but because of the dignity of our worship. It is our privilege to draw near to God, even into His immediate presence—the holiest of all (Hebrews 10:19-22). How can we do so? How can we act becomingly in the sanctuary? Because we, poor and feeble ones as we are, have this great High Priest over the House of God, and "he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). In coming near to God, therefore (for the verse, of course, applies not to sinners, but to saints), we are permitted to do so with boldness, because whatever the greatness of our infirmities He is able to save to the uttermost.

Because, therefore, of the intimacy of our heavenly relationships and exercises, we need such an One on high for us. Indeed, such a necessity is stated most strikingly in the scripture itself: "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Hebrews 7:26). The fact that we have been made holy, and partakers of the heavenly calling, in contrast with the ancient earthly people, made it necessary for there to be one to represent us on high and to intercede for us in our approach to God. Such an One, exactly suited to the spiritual worship now introduced, we ever have in our adorable Lord.

Christ, then, is in the sanctuary above for us. His priesthood is superior to that of Aaron or Melchisedec, though it is of the order (not yet of the exercise) of the latter. The sphere of His priestly service is in heaven, not on earth, but in the holies above, the true tabernacles "which the Lord pitched and not man."

"No temple made with hands

His place of service is;

In heaven itself He stands,

A heavenly priesthood His.

In Him the shadows of the law

Are all fulfilled, and now withdraw."

An earthly sanctuary, therefore, has now no place nor meaning according to the Epistle to the Hebrews. The sanctuary has been changed as well as the priesthood. And the holy place on high is the sphere of the Lord's service.

His priesthood was not of the order that ministered in the holy place below. "If he were on earth," the apostle says, "he should not be a priest" (Hebrews 8:4). On the contrary, He has obtained a "more excellent ministry" (Hebrews 8:6), which He exercises in the sanctuary on high.

"The blessedness of the ministry of Him who ministers for us in the true tabernacle, is, that it is entirely independent of us. It is by Him for us. Our conscious enjoyment of it will depend, indeed, on our walk, on our humbleness, on our self-judgment, on many things; but the ministry itself depends alone on our unfailing High Priest. He is a faithful minister, ever performing His functions in a manner well-pleasing to God."

W. J. H.

## Notes on Galatians 6

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It has been said, and wisely too, that every truth has its countertruth. And I was thinking what our beloved brother said about dying with Christ, and wondered if it would give a false impression to some of our young ones here. As to our sins—the outcome of our evil nature—we can see how they have been dealt with in the cross. “He bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” As we sometimes sing—

“All thy sins were laid upon Him;

Jesus bore them on the tree:

God who knew all, laid them on Him,

And, believing, thou art free.”

So it is the Christian's privilege to have a purged conscience— “no more conscience of sins,” for the saint of God is privileged to know sin can never be imputed to him as guilt because of the blood of Christ.

As to our evil nature the word of God is clear, “we have died” (Romans 6:8). The word is plain, “They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians 5:24). If He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and they were all laid on Him, all they entailed has been borne.

But how about our nature? The young Christian is made to feel that he still has the flesh in him. Romans 8 shows us distinctly what God has done. “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; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (vers. 3, 4). Further, Romans 6 tells us, “In that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (vers. 10, 11). Thus was the question of our evil nature settled, and God puts into our hand a mighty privilege, because of what Christ experienced on the cross, even the privilege of reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin.

There is another thing. God has His own purposes and counsels, and they will all be effectuated. Nothing can come in to take Him by surprise, or frustrate His eternal purposes. Look at Isaiah 28:23-29. Even man treats everything according to its nature. Has not God got His own place? And when the mystery of God is finished, will it not be shown that all His plans, and all the way He carried them out, were perfect? His work as Creator was perfect. His work as Redeemer was perfect; and will not the work of the Holy Spirit also be found perfect?

This is exceedingly precious. In the New Testament we read of many precious things which God is doing in the saints, that ought to be exceedingly comforting to us. “The God of peace... make you

perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ” (Hebrews 13:21); and, again, Paul desires that God would “fulfill all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you” (2 Thessalonians 2). There is never any failure on God's side. He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. There are unbounded stores in Christ, but we fail in using them.

In Philippians 2:12, we read, “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” And do you not think that all of us should realize that God works in us much more than we work out?

But there is the provision. His sympathy is living and real. His priesthood and advocacy on high are to strengthen us in our weakness and preserve us from sinning; and we come to the throne of grace, not simply to ask, but to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need. For how great are the hindrances here! What a snare the law was to the Galatians! It never helped them, or anyone else, in the matter of sanctification. It demanded, but never gave power to do. Yet how prone man is to turn to the law! What folly to make it a rule of life, instead of the blessed Christ of God!

“In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (Galatians 6:15). Have we right thoughts of this new creation? We pass out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of the Son of His love, and we are a new creation in Christ. We have a new nature, and we are created unto good works. So it says, “as many as walk according to this rule.” What rule? That of the new creation—Christ. All distinctions disappear there. Christ is all, and in all. When He delivers up the kingdom at the end, God will be all in all. But now, in the new creation, Christ is all as an Object, and in all as Life.

In Romans 6 it is, “Sin shall not have dominion over you” —not “it shall not exist.” But in Galatians 5:15 those who turn to the law for justification and sanctification were biting and devouring one another. They got no help from the law. It is the Spirit who is the power. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; so that ye may not do the things that ye would”, (ver. 17). The word translated “lust” is used in a bad, and in a good sense. It is the same word translated “desire” in Luke 22:15. If it is of the flesh, it is evil; if of the Spirit, it is good. There is a power in us stronger than the flesh. What a blessed privilege to have the Holy Spirit!

The Spirit belongs to those that are sons (Galatians 4:6). The law was only for servants, not for sons. We are children by birth; sons by adoption. We have life in the Spirit, have been quick-ened by Him, have sealing and anointing. Redemption comes first, then the Spirit. In the case of the leper (Leviticus 14:25, 28), as well as the priest (Leviticus 8:24, 30), the oil followed the blood which was placed on the ear, the thumb, the toe. The ear now belongs to God—it is our responsibility to listen. The hand belongs to God—it was in bondage once; now it is in liberty, to do His will. And our foot! once we walked as children of disobedience; now let us walk in the Spirit. He has given us His Spirit in order that we may do so. Let us live then “not to ourselves, but to Him that died for us and rose again.” We can all see what the standard is, and though we fail miserably, let it, nevertheless, be our constant aim. As Herbert says,

“Whoso aimeth at the sky

Shoots higher far than he who aims a tree.”

The Lord will soon be here! He will “descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and the trump of God”! No wonder it is called a “blessed hope”! Whatever the joys of our hearts towards Him, they are nothing to the desires of His heart towards us.

He will take every one of His own, but there will be an interval before He is manifested in glory. Then shall we be manifested with Him. In the interval between His coming for His own and His appearing in glory and we with Him, will be our manifestation before the judgment seat of Christ above. Everything connected with our whole moral being, our life and ways from our birth will be manifested there. We shall be in our glorified bodies; and we shall acquiesce in everything, whether approval or disapproval, for we shall see and judge all our past according to God. But for that manifestation we should never know what God's wonderful salvation is. But the distinction between the flesh and the Spirit will be shown there. We get as a sample what is said about Sarah in 1 Peter 3:6. She called Abraham lord, and the Holy Spirit marks His approval of it. But she did so at a time when she was acting very wrongly—Genesis 18:12. Thus we see how the precious is divided from the vile by the Spirit.

Revelation 19:7 could not possibly occur except as the outcome of our being manifested before the judgment seat. “His wife hath made herself ready.” You get past, present, and future in Ephesians 5:25-27, which may be connected here. What did He do to get her? He went to the cross. The wrath was exhausted there, but the love remains unchanged. And so He washes, sanctifies, cleanses to the end He has in view—i.e., to present her to Himself a church glorious! Oh, what a joy He has got in store! And here, in Revelation 19, is the display. “To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.”

If it was what we were in nature, we may well adopt the language of Isaiah 64, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags”! “But thou hast wrought all our righteousness for us.”

You will have contributed your part, and mine; and all put together will be the proof that the work of the Holy Spirit was perfect. Thus will be found that wonderful marriage garment, and the world will “know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me” when He comes to be wondered at in all them that believed.

## Opening the Book in Nazareth and in Heaven: Part 1

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Luke 4:14-22; Revelation 5:8

I have read these few scriptures because they bring before us our Lord Jesus Christ in two distinct and contrasted ways. We see Him in the Gospel of Luke opening the book, reading therefrom, and declaring to His audience the fulfillment of the prophecy read. We see Him again in the Revelation coming forward and opening the book, and the judgments of God follow. It is the same gracious Person in both instances, but executing two totally different offices.

On the first occasion the Lord inaugurates the day of grace, in the second instance the day of judgment. Both the past event and the future event are equally true, and both are equally God's ways of dealing with men here upon the earth.

It may be profitable for us this evening to consider both of them for awhile. It is good for us to recollect, that whether it be the present blessings of grace, or the coming dealings of God in righteous judgment, the same blessed and adorable Person carries them into effect. Jesus the Savior, the Lord whom we know and whom we serve, is the appointed Agent of divine justice. It is interesting to see that these two great subjects are connected, in the scriptures read, by their association with the opening of books. The book implies that the matter written therein was settled beforehand. God's books deal largely with the future, and in this respect they differ from human books. Man writes of the past; he writes history. God alone can write of the future; He writes prophecy. And it is, therefore, the privilege of the children of God to possess a knowledge of certain future events; though the way in which the books of which we have just read are introduced, shows us that there is only One who can adequately interpret them, and only One who can administer those divine schemes foreordained in God's book of purpose.

The prophecy of Isaiah, written as it was by that evangelical prophet of Judah and Jerusalem whom we all love, though we are Gentiles by nature, is full of Christ in grace and glory. Yet even his prophecy was sealed until the appointed day came, and then the Messiah Himself appeared in Nazareth to declare that the scripture was that day fulfilled in their ears. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." The interpreter must be divine. While we have the scriptures given to us as God's precious gift, we none the less need the help, power and illumination of God's Holy Spirit to understand them, and this assistance He does not withhold from any diligent and dependent soul.

### THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH FULFILLED.

The occasion on which our Lord spoke in this Galilean synagogue was a very momentous one—momentous for this reason. Communications from God had ceased for a considerable time. From the days of Malachi onwards, no prophetic voice had come from Him. This world was left alone as it were without any communications from on high. God was silent for four and a half centuries, and that is a considerable while. Look back 450 years in our own history. How far back the year 1460 seems, and what a time of darkness! People had no English Bibles to read 450 years ago. A period of similar extent passed in the history of the Jews without a voice from heaven. All the

prophecies regarding Israel were completed. God had no more to say to His people until John the Baptist appeared—a voice crying in the wilderness, announcing the coming of the Messiah.

Thereupon we have the Blessed One appearing Himself, and coming before men in that quiet, unostentatious way which is so characteristic of Him in the days of His flesh. How stupendous is His mission! He is coming to speak for God. He is coming to stand in this world as God's Spokesman. He is coming to make that announcement which shall bring everlasting life to millions of precious souls. He is coming to shed abroad the love of God in this dark and evil world. He will chase away the darkness and loosen the chains that hold men in bondage to sin. But He comes quietly to the obscure place of His upbringing, to Nazareth where He dwelt many years, where He was known as the son of Joseph the carpenter. He goes into the synagogue, as His custom was He takes the book of the scriptures from the official of the synagogue and stands up to read.

Beloved friends, let us not omit to note the practical lesson in passing. For we must always look for the lesson to be gathered when our lips essay to speak of the grace and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here we mark His humble demeanor. And we need to learn to copy this humility. Meekness is so becoming when a man is doing God's will for when he is carrying out His purpose he needs no show. It was enough for this blessed Man that He was come to speak the words of God, and so He stood up to read in the synagogue of Nazareth. Hence the book was opened by Him not in Jerusalem but in the little town of Nazareth out of which no good thing could come, so people said—a little village by the Sea of Galilee, obscure then and now.

#### READING THE PROPHECY CONCERNING HIMSELF

Jesus stood up to read the evangelical prophecies given of God. They were written 750 years before, and now He was standing up to read these predictions concerning Himself. This indeed was a wonderful epoch in this world's history. The fulfillment of what He was about to read was to bring life and blessing, joy and peace to men everywhere, and we here to-night are recipients of the blessings which began to be proclaimed that day.

The manner of the Lord's announcement was simple. Yet there was something about Him that gave Him power over His audience. He had been going about Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and it was as a Spirit-filled man that He stood up before them, "full of the Holy Ghost." Galilee and Judea had already witnessed His deeds and heard His words on the power of the Spirit. Now in the synagogue of Nazareth, full of that same Spirit, He opened the Book of the prophet Isaiah and read from it the scriptures relating to Himself. The fulfillment of its opening clause is seen in the great fact that the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him.

I think there is something of profound practical importance for us to lay hold of in this event. Consider that the Spirit of God, the word of God, and the Person of the promised Christ are all seen to meet at this particular juncture.

The blessed Lord standing before the audience was holding in His hand the written word, and He Himself was filled with the Spirit of God. Depend upon it there is no power in this world which can withstand such a coalition as that. The power of Satan can never withstand the power of Christ and the Holy Ghost, and as that great power was active for evil in that day, so it is an active power now. But there is the greater power of God unto salvation which is bringing the men of this world into life and blessing through the word of the gospel.

Do not let us overlook the vital things that remain in the church of God. There are many things possessed in early days that we have not, but we have the scriptures, we have the Holy Spirit, we have, blessed be His name, the Lord Jesus Christ. And happy the Christian who in His service is content to be carried forward by these forces. They are, if I may reverently say so, at the disposal of every earnest believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God will, if you are submissive, use you for the glory of Christ, and for the blessing of your fellow Christians. He is the same Spirit who filled Christ as He spoke in Nazareth that day.

#### CLOSING THE BOOK

The Lord read the scripture, and He closed the book. I want you at your leisure to look at the prophecy of Isaiah and to observe the wisdom of our Lord Jesus Christ who closed the book at the right moment just as He opened the book at the right moment. And while we love to see how He opened the book and with what a beautiful passage He began, so we must love to see how He closed the book and failed to read the dreadful words that follow— “the day of vengeance of our God.”

The acceptable year was come; the time of deliverance and of preaching the gospel to the poor; the blind were to have sight given them; but the day of vengeance was not yet. Jesus closed the book, and the day of doom is not yet. The day of grace, the day of joy and peace began with our Lord Jesus Christ here in humiliation. For He was a man come to set forth the love of God; here to pass day by day, in and out of the places of common resort, and by His words of love and power, by His works of healing and mercy Show men God's love for this world. The Lord was the light shining in the darkness. Can you conceive for a moment what the awful condition of this world would be if the revelation made by Christ were suddenly withdrawn from us?

There would then be a reversion to the time before the Lord read these scriptures when all was dark and obscure. Noon would become midnight. Now the light of full salvation shines, and we know that God is full of love to men on earth and that He finds a joy when men repent. We know that in infinite grace He sends forth the words of everlasting life to all men upon earth, drawing them thereby to our Lord Jesus Christ. We know these things from the New Testament.

But here at Nazareth was the beginning of this day of grace. It began then, and it has been going on for nineteen hundred years. Think what a considerable section of human history this is. Go back nineteen centuries before Christ, and Abraham was just leaving Mesopotamia. Nearly all the events recorded in the Old Testament history happened during that period, but when you come to the New Testament we find the record of a much briefer space. There you have the account of a comparatively few events which occurred during some fifty years or so. Then the inspired communications of God ceased; but all the while from that day to this the invisible power of God's Spirit has been bringing men to God and Christ by His word. There has been a power, a great power working in all directions leading men into the joy of the gospel. Would that we might know more deeply the value of the day in which we live, the spiritual freedom we have, the valuable and precious things revealed to us as ours through grace!

#### THE LIMITS OF THE DAY OF GRACE

But this day of grace must have its end. We are not in eternity; we have not passed into that majestic glory where there will be no change, but here in this world's history there is still a greater

event to be accomplished. Now grace reigns. Sin is not rebuked openly by God. There are the silent rebukes of the Spirit through the word, but there are no striking providential events which show God's specific displeasure with the evil ways of men. Has He not already said enough? is His word not sufficient? most surely it is, beloved friends. God has said all that need be said to show the men of this world what His will is and what His feelings are with regard to their ways before Him. Moreover, the same word declares there is a time of retributive judgment for men upon the earth. There is a time coming when the Righteous Governor of this universe will assert His rights over rebellious man in an unmistakable manner.

God fashioned this world that men might inhabit it. He has peopled it with intelligent beings. They stand in definite relation with Him as distinct from the beasts that perish. Men were to govern the world; they were to do the will of God and are responsible to Him. The day is coming when God will insist upon those rights being respected, when He will bring into this world of ours order, righteousness and peace, when this world and its inhabitants shall all move together in one harmonious whole and in one united constitution, as it were, giving their glory to God above. Then the earth will present that unusual spectacle in its history of being in perfect harmony with the heavens above. Such a day is coming; God has written it in His word, and He will bring it to pass.

(To be continued)

## Opening the Book in Nazareth and in Heaven: Part 2

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### WHO CAN BE TRUSTED TO RULE?

Who is there competent to undertake to rule and govern the world in this manner? Empires spring up, and empires decay. Great rulers sit on the throne, but their rule is often other than glorious, and far from effective. But there is, one Man who fills God's mind and purposes of perfect government. There is one Man who distinguished Himself above all others on earth, one Man that has thoroughly proved His perfection. He was the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He walked through this world to the good pleasure of God; He suffered in this world; He tasted of every cup of trial that this world has to give; He suffered every form of suffering man is liable to endure; He Himself on the cross bore our sins in His own body, and thus tasted the full judgment of God against sins that were not His own.

This Man, by His perfect bearing amid un-paralleled vicissitudes, has acquired for Himself the right to rule and govern in this world, and, therefore, the Man who opened the book in the synagogue of Nazareth will also open the book in the day to come.

The Apocalypse is singular as everyone knows—singular in this respect, that it is so full of what was a strange, word in the Old Testament, and stranger still in the New, that is, the judgment of God. This judgment is varied in form, and is displayed in visions. God is a God of infinite love and grace, and judgment is His last resource. The Revelation, the last book of the Bible, is the book which unfolds God's coming judgments on this world of ours. It has an analogy with the book of Daniel which was written especially for the people of Israel and concerning the Gentiles. John was commissioned to write what had particular reference to the churches and also what concerned the political and religious powers of the earth. Therefore it is of interest to us. Why of interest, do you ask?

The greatest reason why this book should be of special interest to us is not because it satisfies a natural curiosity as to the future, but because it brings before us the glory of Christ as God's future ruler in the world. If you love the Lord you most surely will love to think that a day is coming when He will have His rights, and when He will be owned and adored by all men. Do you not long that everyone would bow at His feet now? I know you do, and the Book of the Revelation shows how in God's own time all will be brought under His peaceful sway.

### CHRIST FIRST COMING FOR THE CHURCH

It is well to observe that the opening of the seven-sealed book and the visions which follow refer to what is coming on this earth when the members of the body of Christ are no longer here. The second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation apply, as we are definitely told, (Revelation 1:19; 4:1) to the things that exist during the present time while the assembly of God is upon the earth. There are seven churches in Asia to which the Lord addresses His epistles. And in those seven churches you see a general succession and declension until you come to the last, and this is so corrupt that it is spued out of the mouth of the Lord Himself. This rejection is not true in fact

yet. Its accomplishment may be very near, but it is not yet come about, and therefore we have not reached the events we find depicted in the fourth and following chapters.

We are waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ to come, and the result of His coming will be the removal of all those who are His own. They will be removed into heavenly association with Him-self in the Father's house, and you see them in the fourth chapter under the figure of the twenty-four elders. I just say this by the way so that we may understand just whereabouts this section begins, wherein the Lamb is seen to break the seals of the roll of mystery.

The fulfillment of the visions will commence to take place upon the earth subsequent to the rapture of the church of Christ. But I want especially to draw your attention now, not to the prophetic events, but to the striking contrast presented by the circumstances shown in Revelation as compared with the circumstances in Luke.

### THE THRONE AND THE RAINBOW

There you have the man Christ Jesus teaching in the synagogue of Nazareth with no outward glory, with no attendant signs of dignity and pomp and excellence such as the world would acknowledge. But when you come to the Apocalyptic visions everything is seen to be totally different. The apostle John is taken away from the world. A door is opened, and he is called up into heaven, and what he sees is heavenly in nature. He sees One upon the throne, and the throne is not the throne of grace, for there are lightnings and thunderings and voices which all tend to keep men in their proper place of distance from it. Such a character is not one of invitation to draw near. When the Lord spoke at Nazareth all men wondered at the gracious words that fell from His lips; they were gentle and kindly, they were attractive and drew out the love of men's hearts to the Speaker. But in heaven as at Sinai there are thunderings and lightnings and terrifying, and He that is upon the throne is glorious to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius.

John saw the throne of judgment, yet even there he saw the symbol of God's promise to His people of old—the rainbow. God has not forgotten His ancient promise, and although we are immediately to read of devastating judgments on earth, still God is slow in executing these judgments to the full. They are partial at the first, for the rainbow is there—a type of God's abiding mercy (Gen. 9:16).

### THE SEALED ROLL

What next did the prophet see? In the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne was a book or roll, sealed with seven seals, written within and without. It was full to overflowing as it were with woes and lamentations. Think how many centuries full of sins have passed since Adam's day, how the judgments of God have accumulated, how man's guilt has been deepening as the ages have gone by. Do you imagine man has become better during this day of grace? Has man's heart changed? Are men today more like Christ than in His own day? Is there less bloodshed, less murder, less oppression today than there was two thousand years ago? The answer must be that there is no change. The guilt of man today is greater than ever, and man's heart is harder. There is nothing that can purify men's hearts. They must be born again.

Now in the vision John saw this seven-sealed book, written full of God's judgments, held back for so long through God's long-suffering mercy, in the hand of Him who sat upon the Creatorial throne

of government.

## THE LION OF JUDAH

The question now arising in the heavenly courts is, who is competent to execute these deferred judgments? Who shall let them loose upon this guilty earth? There must be no mistake; they must not be sent upon the earth too soon; there must be unerring wisdom in the exercise of this function, and who is competent to do it? And John, as he looked and listened, realized that there was no one found competent to undertake this fearful task of breaking the seals and letting loose the consuming judgments of God upon men. There was no created being in heaven, no one on earth, no one under the earth, as we can well understand, who could undertake this responsibility. John wept much, but one of the elders came and said, "Weep not; behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book." He, the Root of David, He is the One, the only One who can do it. He is the One because, being the Son of man, the Father gave Him the authority to execute judgment also. The Father will not execute judgment, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men might honor the Son even as they honor the Father (John 5:22, 23, 27).

## THE LAMB ONCE SLAIN

Then John looked for the Lion. He would expect to see a Being of might and majesty and dominion, but when he looked he saw the Lamb. I think this is a beautiful feature of the heavenly picture. All power is seen to be given to the all meek and humble One. No one came down so low as our Lord Jesus, and, therefore, no one was fit to be exalted as He has been exalted. He could and did glorify God in the lowest part of the earth, and He is the One who can and will glorify God in the highest. So also if we glorify Him in the hour of trial, we shall glorify Him in the day that is yet to come (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

We remember the submission of the Lord when the kings of the earth stood up in persecuting power, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lamb. He was then before His shearers as dumb. All were that day against Him. They smote Him; they spat upon Him. But He did the will of Him that sent Him, and He opened not His mouth. Was ever meekness such as His?

Now the prophet sees the Lord in heaven as a Lamb, and he sees Him too as a slain Lamb. It was at His death He went down lowest, and this deep humiliation is recorded in heaven, for the time is near when His glory will be manifested. Hence it is as a Lamb slain that He is seen in heaven. It is the same Jesus, at Nazareth, at Calvary, in heaven— Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

Surely we love to read these words. We love to think of the Lamb of God in heaven as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, all heaven proclaiming Him to be worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof. You and I know that if He undertakes it, there will be no mistake; He will do it well.

We sometimes wonder as to the mystery of God's judgments. There are those whom we love even now under judgment (John 18). Our hearts weep for them, and we pray for them that they may be brought out of the sphere of judgment into the grace and mercy of God. But we can only pray for them, and leave the result to the One who was slain.

## THE WORSHIPPING HOSTS

The Lamb was the one who took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne, and it is well to note the effect of this act in heaven. It must be something momentous to move the heavenly host. We here on earth are moved by very small events perhaps, but in heaven, in the place of glory where everything is, perfect, it needs to be something vast to command widespread interest. But when the Lamb took the book all heaven was moved to worship. Think what the sight must be to the millions of redeemed souls, to those who have tasted of His grace, walked, worked, and waited for Him in this world, and are now brought into the fullness of His love. on high. When they see the loving One who died. for them thus honored they can do nothing but praise and worship Him. They are so glad that He has come into His own. They are so glad that He has the chief place in heaven, that no one else is found worthy to undertake this work.

The spirit of worship always is to make much of Christ, to have our hearts full of Christ. God looks down froth heaven to see men and women so enamored of Christ that they feel they must worship Him, and what can be better employment than that? It is the anticipation of what will be our chief occupation in heaven. Elders, angels, and all creation united to worship the Lamb. And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped. All join in praise and worship that the day is now about to, come when the Lamb will break oppression, and set all crooked thing§ right in this world.

Nearly nineteen centuries have gone by since the cross, since Jesus died, since that great sacrifice was offered. Myriads have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, and have been brought into possession of the privileges of grace. Yet sin has not disappeared from this, world; death is still here; sorrow abounds. And are these sad facts nothing to the One who died? They are surely ever before the Lamb of God "who, taketh away the sin of the world." We know the tenderness of His heart because He still says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He delivers from sin by His work of redemption and His word of forgiveness.

#### THE LAMB OPENS THE SEALS BUT DOES NOT APPEAR ON EARTH

But the Lamb who puts away sin by the sacrifice of Himself will also put away sin by the power of His irresistible might. And the hour may be close at hand when the Lamb will open the seals, and the judgments break forth in succession upon the earth like the plagues upon guilty Egypt. They are of the nature of providential judgments—famines, wars, pestilences, and death. They fall upon this world as the seals are opened in series, but it is to be observed that these judgments are not exercised by the Lamb in person. He opens the seals, and the judgments follow. They are clearly the result of the breaking of the seals by the Lamb, but He Himself does not come forth from heaven to carry them out.

You have to wait for His appearance until you get to the nineteenth chapter of this book when He is seen in the opened heaven with a sharp two-edged sword going out of His mouth; He comes in person to put down unrighteousness in this world. But at the opening of the seals, judgments are inflicted upon the earth at His bidding. And they are types of that judgment of wider scope which is to follow. But in the limitations of the woes of the seal period, we see a mark of the lingering mercy of our Lord over this world, who is not willing that any should perish.

During those dark and cloudy days there will be messengers of “the gospel of the kingdom” traveling far and near, calling men to repent quickly. But men's hearts in that day will be still unrepentant. They will still refuse to confess their sins, although the mercy of God is set before them in loving entreaty.

#### THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

The unchanging character of the Lamb is what I want, in closing, to point out especially. There will be no change in Christ Himself, though His office may differ. He is still the same blessed person, whether testifying of grace in Nazareth, or of judgment in heaven above. In whatever He undertakes He cannot change Himself. And we know the Lamb and love Him, and we wait for His coming from heaven. There are many things that cause us anxiety here, particularly at such a crisis as the present, but there is always One to whom we can turn with confidence. We may be but poorly instructed in the details of prophecy, but the Christian is not bound up necessarily with a knowledge of the details of prophecy for the peace of his heart.

The one thing that he rests his every peace and joy upon is this, that whether it is a question of grace or judgment, the Person in whose hands the matter is placed is the Person whose hands were pierced. Therefore, we have every confidence in Him. This as truly applies to national matters as it applies to personal matters. Our affairs altogether are in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that is the gist of my message to you to-night. The Lord Jesus Christ is our Lord; He is our Savior; He is the One in whom we have placed our trust, and He is the One in whom we must place trust continually.

The Lord has prepared our path for us. He has at Calvary's cross borne the burden of our sins in His body. He is now shaping the daily matters of our life to the accomplishment of His own gracious purpose, and He is the One with whom our future lies. Our future is with Him, and we wait for His coming that this hope may be realized. His coming means that we shall then be where He is, and once with Him we shall never leave Him, for “we shall be forever with the Lord.”

W. J. H.

(Continued from page 304)

## The Parable of the Ten Virgins

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These three connected parables—the careless servant, the virgins, and the talents (Matthew 24; 25) —all relate to the present time, that is, the time of the Lord's absence, each giving a particular view of the kingdom of heaven.

In the parable of the ten virgins we are introduced to a scene of joys and affections, and the Lord is spoken of as a bridegroom coming to the consummation of His delights. The company brought before us are those who profess interest in the bridegroom's matters. They leave their own affairs of business or pleasure to come out to look for him. The designation given indicates persons of highly moral character.

Apparently, both in name and purpose, all are alike, but we are told of a great, though hidden, difference—some had no oil in their vessels.

Now, as the lamp is the outward visible vessel of light, so the oil is the essential source of it, and necessary for its maintenance. Surely, then, we are not wrong in taking the lamp as representing the outward life and profession of a Christian, and the oil as typifying the Holy Ghost, which is the type used so frequently of Him in Scripture.

This company—outwardly alike, in reality so different—remind us at once of the wheat and the tares of an earlier parable, and give us another vivid picture of Christendom, where the true children of God are so mingled with mere professors that no one but the Lord can discriminate them.

Now we find that the waiting and expectancy are lost they all sleep. They had come out on purpose to wait and watch for the bridegroom, and we know from Scripture that the early church was looking for the Lord's speedy return (see, e.g., 1 Thess. 1.). It was with it, as it always should be, the one great hope and longing of each heart that loves Him, but it is a fact (almost incredible as it may appear) that for hundreds of years all thought of the Lord's coming to receive His bride was lost. Earnest, pious, godly men knew nothing of this coming to receive us to Himself as distinct from His coming to judge the quick and the dead. Even that greatly used servant of God, Martin Luther, speaks of no coming of Christ, except as the Judge of all.

All idea of the Lord coming as a Bridegroom to call His bride to Himself, became utterly unknown shortly after apostolic days, and yet the New Testament is full of allusions to it. 1 Thess. 4 and John 14 describe it fully and clearly; and yet, singular to say, there is not one single reference to it in the Church of England Prayer Book, or in the writings of Christians for centuries. No! those who should have been watching, slept.

But the Lord in grace causes that they shall be awakened, and “a cry” goes forth. Are we wrong in suggesting that this began about 80 years ago when the eyes of some of God's servants were opened to see in Scripture the blessed hope of the church, and were enabled to preach the glorious truth of the Lord's coming to gather His own for the heavenly mansions?

We see in the parable that the cry causes a great stir; and do we not see, dear friends, all around us this "trimming of the lamps"? Has there ever been, in the whole 2,000 years of the Christian era, such a time of religious eagerness, activities and labors?

But is this in all cases a zeal according to knowledge? Are the Christians of today seeking to be more dependent on the Holy Ghost? Are they anxious to conform to God's word? Is it not fearfully, sadly true that the very presence of the Holy Spirit, in the church corporately, and indwelling the Christian individually, has been slighted, and is now openly denied? Are not the Holy Scriptures more and more put aside, and their inspiration flatly contradicted, not by infidels only, but by ministers and teachers of the churches, National and Dissent?

Dear friends, it is during this period of trimming that the Bridegroom comes, and "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage" — those that had oil in their vessels—who were born of the Spirit, and who had an unction from the Holy One, are here designated as those that "were ready." Did the parable speak of only the faithful watchers being taken in, what would be the verdict of our hearts and consciences? But, dear fellow-Christians, shall we allow the freeness of God's grace to make us careless? Because of our acceptancy in Christ through God's wonderful love, shall we become cold in response? If God has drawn us out from the world to go to meet the Bridegroom, should we be slumbering? If He has said, "Ye are the light of the world," shall our lamps be choked and foul with an inconsistent walk? Is there not a need for "wise" and frequent trimming? Should not each one who is "sealed by the Spirit" exercise diligent, watchful care that "the Spirit be not grieved"?

There is no mention of any second "cry." There is no prophetic event awaiting fulfillment before the Lord comes for His own. Everything combines to show that His coming is surely very near. Are we in the spirit, associations, and readiness of heart and mind to welcome Him? that we be not ashamed before Him at His coming? "Surely, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

W.

## A Plea for the Gospel

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One often hears the complaint, 'Oh, we seldom have a conversion.' If asked the reason the answer is often, Well, we have a preacher every Lord's day, and the testimony seems faithful enough; but, as far as we know, souls are not led to confess and own the Lord Jesus as their Savior through the preaching. And the blame is tacitly thrown on the preacher, as if he were the only one responsible in the matter.

But is this so? Are we not all responsible in measure? Will this shirking of individual responsibility do for God? I trow not. Surely He will call to account each one who is indifferent to the well-being of precious souls. And can we close our eyes to the fact that there is a manifest neglect of gospel services, and a condition of supineness, respecting the prosperity of the word, creeping into the assemblies of the saints in many places? This is a state of things which is evidently productive of sad results. Thus some Christians are not seen at the gospel service so often, by far, as the new moon appears. The weekly prayer meeting is not attended so regularly as might be. Business matters, which might often be postponed, some prefer attending to on that evening, glad in their hearts of any excuse for absenting themselves. Yet this is only what one might expect. For neglect of perishing sinners' souls goes along with carelessness and sterility in one's own.

Oh! that our hearts could rise up more fully to the contemplation of God's own love towards the ungodly in giving His own Son to die for them (Romans 5:8). Methinks we should thus be stirred up to increased diligence in seeking to help on the work of soul-winning.

But some one will, say, probably, 'What can I do? I cannot preach. I do not feel qualified for the work.' Perhaps not. Still there is much work to be done besides preaching the gospel. We can seek to bring our friends and neighbors to the gospel services, for instance, so that they may hear the words of life. It would be well also if we cultivated a more implicit faith in the power of the word alone to reach the hearts of sinners. Again, a tract may be given by the way, or a word spoken to some weary heart, which may result in eternal blessing for the soul, and bring glory to the name of the Lord. Jesus. Thus every Christian may be used in some way, if not in the same way, in proclaiming the message of salvation to all, through Christ.

Then, further, if Christians are desirous of witnessing blessing at the gospel preaching (and who are not?) there should be an understanding amongst them as to what they need, and perfect agreement too. For it is absolutely necessary that there should be unity of purpose and desire as well as united effort. Thus having a definite object before them they could come together for presenting their requests (Matthew 18:19).

Now in Acts 1:14 we have an example of this unanimity as to a definite want seen in practice. We read, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Again, "They were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). Thus were they, brethren and sisters as well, united in prayer for blessing, and together in waiting for, and expecting, the fulfillment of the Father's promise—the gift of the Holy Ghost

(Acts 1:4). See also Acts 4:31, 32.

Let us seek then to imitate this example, showing by our reiterated supplications our felt need and dependence upon God; and by our continued waiting, our trust in our Father, and faith in His infallible word of promise.

But if we desire to see souls saved through the preaching we must avoid the pernicious spirit of hyper-criticism which is so apt to creep into our midst, working untold mischief in many ways. Instead of watching the preacher's words, like a cat does a mouse, ready to pounce upon him at the first slip in word or sense, would it not be better to have our hearts occupied with God in prayer that He would give the speaker the right word, and by His Spirit prepare the hearts of sinners present to receive it? To see this would delight the heart of our Father, and, I am sure, He would not fail to bestow the blessing so manifestly desired by His children.

And those who preach the gospel should realize fully the solemn fact that nothing but Christ and Him crucified will meet the need of the sinner. Let us see to it, therefore, that we present Him, and the way of salvation through Him, clearly and distinctly to those who listen, so that they may not mistake the road that leads to life, and strive to enter in some other way. But in holding up Christ the Savior to the gaze of others, let us hide behind Him that nothing of self be seen.

To this end we should seek to be natural in manner, and plain of speech, preferring rather to use short words, if giving the sense, than long ones, which may be sometimes misplaced and not always understood by the whole of the audience. Hearing preachers sometimes trying to imitate the style and language of their superiors in education, one is painfully reminded of the fact that when David put on Saul's coat of mail it did not fit him. May we be careful, then, to avoid bringing ridicule upon the glorious gospel by such untoward sin. And let us strive rather, by an earnest and unpretentious manner, to convince souls that we have their welfare at heart, and not our own aggrandizement. Faithfulness in this way and continued waiting upon God cannot fail to be owned by Himself in blessing on souls.

W. T. H.

## Practicalities

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There is a danger of being satisfied with what is of the tongue only, and the apostle John warns the whole family of God as to this. “Children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Nor is he alone in this, for James asks, “If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled: notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful for the body; what doth it profit” (2:15, 16)? Such conduct is only a veiled form of apathy, or Laodiceanism, so utterly distasteful to the Lord.

In writing to the young converts at Thessalonica so dear to the heart of the one whom God had used to them—the Apostle speaks of being bound to give thanks always to God for them, and styles them “brethren beloved of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 2:13). What a depth there is in these words, recalling John's favorite appellation of himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved”! And then Paul brings out that God had from the beginning chosen them to salvation—the soul now, the body by and by—through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. In no way was it of works, but the gift of God, and God's testimony was believed. He then goes on to show that they had been called by the glad tidings they had received to nothing less than “the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Savior Himself had spoken of it as an accomplished fact in speaking with His Father “the glory which Thou gavest me I have given them” (John 17:22). The apostle then exhorts them to stand fast and “hold the traditions.” We are better off than they, as we now have the whole completed word of God to which we may ever refer, but may we not say we need more than they the exhortation to hold fast? Thank God we have equally the abiding Spirit.

He then bursts out into a lovely prayer, “Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.” When you have “our,” you have what appeals to the affections. Take one example, “The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant” (Hebrews 13:20); and “Himself” is the exquisite addition in Luke 24 “Jesus Himself drew near and went with them” (ver. 15). “Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you” (ver. 36). Where it is “the Lord Jesus Christ,” we have authority, as for instance, 2 Thessalonians 3:12, “Now them that are such (i.e., unruly) we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.” Coming back to our verse (2: 16) the apostle adds, “God, even our Father.” In “God” we have all power. “My God shall supply all your need.” In “our Father,” we remember how He spoke when He rose from the dead on that first of the week, putting that relationship first, “My Father and your Father.” “Which hath loved us (how deeply, who can tell?) and hath given us (not a passing, but an) everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort (or encourage) your hearts, and establish you in every good work and word” (for such is the order). He then desires their prayers for him “that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.”

Further, we may observe, practical fellowship in addition to prayer is of great value. Paul speaks of men and also “women who Labored with me in the gospel” —not merely wishing him Godspeed—and it was a woman who had learned in measure the truth of having the sentence of death in herself, who prayed and said, “Jehovah is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed” (1 Samuel 2:3). Let us ponder this; it is an admirable answer to any of Satan's suggestions, and preserves us from being occupied with what is within. God knew how to weigh the action of Abraham when he offered up Isaac, and Paul could say with a lovely calmness that disposed of all questions as to his preaching, “From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Galatians 6:17). May we have grace to be “doers of the word and not hearers only” (James 1:22)!

W. N. T.

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## The Propitiation for Our Sins: Part 1

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Is that all? Most blessed it is, but not all. Then we find immediately in a still fuller way God coming in to that poor soul feeling its state, its incapacity to love God, and it learns, "Herein is love, not that we loved God," but the very reverse. We endeavored to escape God; we desired not the knowledge of His ways. Such was our wretched history. But "He loved us and sent His son, the propitiation for our sins." It was not enough "that we might live through Him"; because, if we lived, if we felt what was due to God, if we had a desire to do the will of God, it must be still immense misery, and constant fear, in the sense of His holiness and of our utter unfitness for His presence.

When there is no life one tries to get rid of God's presence—to drown oneself in pleasure; one turns even duties into ruin by occupying oneself with anything to shut out the sense of having to do with God. But where there is a conscience, one must go to Him. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," said one of old. There is a distinct desire after Him, while one maintains His righteous character. But how little is He known as Savior, for this is what He is—One who has thoughts of good, and not of evil—One who (when a man thus espouses the cause of God against himself, when he heeds the word that condemns him out and out) sent His Son the propitiation, for my sins! Thus not only does He give a nature that hates sin, but the mighty work of the Lord Jesus Christ is to take away all my guilt out of His sight. Ah! there is love indeed—not merely that I might have spiritual feelings instead of natural religion, not merely that I might groan over my evil, but that I might be justified. And this is secured by the work of Christ's atonement for me. I see it in all its perfection. He sent His Son for me to live, for Him to die! What does He give me in His death? Propitiation for my sins. In this two-fold way God has proved His love.

N. K.]

(To be continued)

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## Refusing and Giving Up

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I was thinking of the value of communion, and of the blessedness of having a life laid out for the Lord. Let us turn to some scriptures that combine the two. Genesis 14:17, Abraham returns from the slaughter of the kings victoriously. And the king of Sodom comes out to meet him. The Lord knew that would be a critical moment for Abraham, and He knows about our future path. It is hidden from us, but His word is given us for a lamp to our feet, a light for our path—that we may see the end, and have light for every step. But God sees the end from the beginning, and He knows what will befall us; He knows also how to prepare us for what lies before us. This was a moment of temptation to Abraham, and God gives Melchizedek to meet him first. God knows how to fit in all the blanks.

It is the practical teaching of this chapter rather than the dispensational that have before me. Here was refreshment for the victorious one. When God is on our side and the battle is the Lord's, it is then that victory is secured. Greater is He that is for us than any possible combination against us. Now Abraham is prepared. When told that he is blest of the Possessor of heaven and earth, he can meet the king of Sodom, (ver. 21). He had not been a careless listener, he had treasured up the words in his heart and memory—he belonged to the Possessor of heaven and earth, and so he refused what the king of Sodom had to offer. Thus, too, must we be refusers. When the devil comes with the world (and Sodom is a type of the world looked at morally) Abraham is a refuser.

Egypt is the world in its prosperity, and Moses again is a refuser there. He made a blessed choice. He was a good calculator, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. So Paul reckoned “that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Or like Rutherford:

“The King there in His beauty,

Without a veil is seen;

It were a well-spent journey

Though seven deaths lay between.”

That blessed One in the glory is the One we should be occupied with.

Babylon is the world in its religious aspect, and there were refusers there also—Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. What a temptation to them to forget the claims of God, and to lower the standard. So the devil says today, Everything is broken up, you must not be too particular! Away with such a thought! What a blessed man was Abraham! What a blessed man was Moses! What a blessed man was Daniel! How all this should appeal to our hearts! May we be saved from following Esau who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. Abraham would not have the world's store. The devil's subtlety is our great danger. Sometimes he tries to frighten us. He tried to get the blessed Lord from the place of dependence, but He stood firm, even when the time came when “it was your hour and the power of darkness.” He could not be overcome with terrors. He defeated

Satan in every way.

We get something akin to this in Genesis 15, "Fear not Abraham." God saw the fear, but He who had prepared him to meet the king of Sodom now encourages him, and says, 'You are no loser,' Abraham, "I am thy shield" —what a place of blessed security to have God as our shield! — "and thy exceeding great reward." In all our dangers a shield, and at the end an exceeding great reward! We often break down instead of enduring. Even Abraham did not wait for God, but took Hagar, and so had Ishmael, who was not the child of promise. May He keep us enduring!

Turn now to 1 Samuel 17. Here we have, in type, the secret of a life laid out for the Lord Jesus Christ, through the constraining love of Christ. It makes one think of Galatians 2:20, "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." I have got everything in Him Who loved me and gave Himself for me. Well, we are all acquainted with this seventeenth chapter of Samuel. The Israelites here are all filled with fear, and David appears. Jonathan, a man not without faith, had shared the fear. He was a very interested spectator of what took place in the valley of Elah. When Adam fell, he did not seek the Lord, the Lord sought Adam, and announced the first gospel which was that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. David's stone smote the giant's head, and by his own sword was he decapitated (cf. Hebrews 2:14). Jonathan sees David (a type of the risen One) with the head of the giant in his hand, and his heart was won by David, who was more than conqueror. There was a sense of indebtedness in Jonathan. We have learned the love of our Savior surely, for has He not won our hearts, and does not His love constrain us? Here it is not "refusing," but "giving up." Jonathan's love is witnessed in that he stript himself. What a joy to Jonathan thus to express his love to David! I think of the Lord Jesus, and His servant Paul, as presented to us in Philippians 2, 3, where we have first the Lord emptying Himself for Paul, then, secondly, Paul stripping himself for Christ. What a sight! What an exhibition of transcendent love! Can we after this be surprised at the apostle's appraisal of things on which he had once set store! All Jonathan's things were given up and laid out for David. All that we have, time, health and wealth—may they all be for Him! Is He not worthy of all?

Let us compare Mark 10 with Philippians. What a superiority of place is ours now that the Comforter has come! The young man in verse 17 may be looked at as corresponding in some respects to Paul, notwithstanding the evident contrast also. For verses 19, 20 describe the young man's character. Yet treasure in heaven exceeds, which if he had only known (and had he been a good calculator he might have known) was infinitely better than anything he could give up. But the little bit of the world in his heart was more to him than Christ. After all, what have we of earthly things but what is lent to us? And are we prepared to surrender all when He demands what has been entrusted to us? Yet do we know that God's gifts and calling are without repentance?

Multiply (vers. 28, 29) anything that you may have given up a hundred times and you will see what you gain note), and the end, eternal life! It was a dangerous place to go to Jerusalem; and the Lord goes before them, and they are afraid. They shrink from the sufferings. And we are no better but we have received, not "the spirit of cowardice" (2 Timothy 1:7), but "of power"; so in Philippians 3 we see, not one amazed, not one afraid, but one not holding to things here, whose very possession of things he counted loss for Christ. The apostle knew he had something better than all

these, and he esteemed it a privilege to have the fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, and Christ in the glory was his goal. He was going through everything, and at whatever cost, to reach Him.

## The Revelation of God: Part 1

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It is an immense thing to have a revelation of God. I do not mean merely a revelation from God, but a revelation of God Himself. God has given us both: revelations, again and again, revelations of the most varied character; revelations in the most suitable order; but, most of all, and specially with the view to this, the revelation of Himself, the revelation of Himself in this world.

For little as this world may be, compared with other parts of the creation of God, it is here that man is-here now; and this is a very solemn consideration for you and for me. It is here that we are put to the test as moral beings; here that we are lost or saved.

Men may speculate about other worlds, but no man has any real ground to say that God has ever revealed Himself except here, or indeed that there are others to whom He would reveal Himself as He has revealed Himself here. May I go farther, and venture to say this—He never revealed Himself anywhere as He has done here? It is here that He sent His Son; it is here that He sent Him to be a man (unspeakable witness of His grace towards man!), and, remember, when man was fallen. Not till then was there the very smallest word of it from God, but man was no sooner fallen than He speaks; and now the word that God spoke so long past is become a great substantial fact, that puts every heart, every conscience of every man, woman, and child, completely to the proof. Do I prefer sin to God? Do I prefer my selfishness, my misery, the darkness and guilt of sin, to God and His grace?

For when God did send His Son into the world, it was to deal with sin, it was to deal with Satan, it was to bring in what man could find nowhere, else, LIFE—eternal life! Life that could feel according to God, life that could have pleasure in the presence of God, life that could take delight in the will of God, life capable of knowing and enjoying God! And where was this found? Where is it? Is it in man's heart? in ordinances? Nowhere but in the Son of God! But (wondrous to see now) the Son of God a real man; certainly much more than a man, but a man. He was God from everlasting to everlasting, but He became a MAN. Assuredly He did not cease to be God; nor will He ever cease to be a man; and there it is that God has given in itself the most astonishing pledge and proof that He has no designs against man, nay, that He had the fullest love towards man.

Yet this was what man was so slow to credit. And why so? Most of all because he is a sinner. He has a bad conscience; he is afraid of God. And good reason he has to be afraid of God, as far as he is concerned; the best reason has he if there be none other than he. But there is. There is one man that is God—I will not say like God. He is never said to be “like God.” And I will tell you why. Because He is God. He is said to be the image of God. He has given me to see what God is. He has brought the very image of God before my heart, before me in this world. He is the image of the invisible God. But He is never called His likeness, for this were to deny His glory. He is God's very transcript. He is the true God and Eternal Life; and this is the One that God sent into the world to save, to save all that believe—not to be a judge, yet He will judge. Every man, as man, nay, every man absolutely, must give account—I do not say be judged. Every man as man must be judged, but every soul, every saint even, must give account of all that he has done in the body.

You observe that I have spoken of a difference in these two things, and there is one. It is not understood generally, but I will tell you what and why it is. It is because salvation is not understood! Thanks be to God, people do not lose salvation because they do not understand it. Wretched were it so, that is, if God only blessed according to their measure, but He blesses according to Christ. And is there any measure there? On the contrary, what a fullness, fullness infinite, according to Himself, according to all His grace and His truth.

Such is the Savior! Is He yours? Do you know Him? Tell me not that He cannot be known.

Are you a heathen, or a Jew? You, a Christian, to say that God cannot be known! What sort of Christianity is that? More guilty than Judaism or even heathenism. A heathen, just because he was a heathen, had not the knowledge of God. He had therefore gone after false gods, gods that were no gods. No wonder he should say God cannot be known; but even a Jew knew something about God, though he did not know God Himself. And you who take the place of being a "Christian," even if it be on the slenderest confession, be it so! But what Christianity is based upon is this, that God has revealed Himself; yet you, you call yourself a "Christian," and do not know Him! perishing, in the presence of the richest abundance! dying, although eternal life has come here in the person of the Savior!

It is for sinners, life has come; not for those who have life. Though I grant that all that can strengthen, all that can fill the heart, all that can guide and bless, is found in that same One who is "Eternal Life." But I ask, For whom was He sent, and for what? Here we have it. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us; in that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." And this is so true that no man can see the Son and believe in the Son, without having eternal life. So this very inspired writer says; and you must remember an inspired writer means one who gives the sure unfailing truth of God. It is impossible for God to lie, and this is the way He speaks in His word. Surely there is One who had the words of God when He was here. He is the Word of God. But the apostle says, "He that knoweth God, heareth us." He could be known, then, The apostles were raised up, they were inspired, for the very purpose of communicating God's word.

"Heareth us." One does not pretend to be above the apostles, or to do without the apostles, for we have their writings, but hears them. "He that is not of God heareth not us." And do you hear not the apostles? When you say that God cannot be known, you certainly do not hear the apostles. You never learned that from them. On the contrary, you have learned it from men who speak as of the world, and the world hears them. I do not say they speak "for" the apostles, for they speak against their word, though they may call themselves, ever so much, their successors. And this is exactly the state in which Christendom now is. These high pretensions always go with denying the sure present knowledge of God by faith.

#### THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM

But let us hear what he says who writes these divine words: "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, in that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." This was His very object. There was no life here, nor could life be got through any other. It was not enough to point to the Son in heaven; that would not satisfy God. No, God sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him; and it is in this way that souls do live. He sets before

us this One, and tells us who the Son of God is, even Jesus—undoubtedly the Son of man, but the Son of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, yet God just as much as His Father. You are a man if you are the son of your father. In a still more glorious ineffable way was the only-begotten Son of God Son of the Father. And in this also it is that God triumphs, because man had only believed a lie, judging of God by Himself—the sure way to be lost. You cannot by searching find out God. The Son of God, “the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” Thus the simplest believer knows the only true God; there is none he knows so well. He is known by my need, by my wants, in His own divine love and skill meeting me where I am and in spite of all that I am.

It is evident that, if the only-begotten Son was sent into the world that we might live through Him, there was no life without Him, for life does not mean mere existence. True, the soul is immortal, but the immortality of the soul does not hinder the soul from being lost. The soul is immortal; and, further, the body will be raised. Oh! it is an awful thought that the body will be raised to be bound to the guilty soul, that both soul and body should prove what it is to have despised God—to have hated Him—and to have proved it by despising the Son. It is not merely for his sins that man is lost, but because he refused this unspeakable love of God who sent His Son. He is too proud, too given up to selfishness; he does not want to give up his sins, above all, he will not be beholden to God; he would rather risk it.

There it is that the Spirit of grace works to touch the conscience of the sinner. Where does he turn then? To the very God he has wronged, avoided, dreaded, hated too. There is no surer proof of hatred than that you never care to see a person's face. Now you who have not the knowledge of God, is not this what you would like best—if you could only be sure you could always escape God; if you could go on as you like, and never face God, never have to give account of your sins? If you could go on with your pursuits, your pleasures, without being cast into hell, would you not like that? You are dead in sins!

But the Spirit of God, when He works, makes the truth quickening. I am a sinner. I am ashamed to think of my sins, ashamed to tell them to God. I feel I have been most guilty. Yet such an one turns by Christ to God. He confesses his guilt, cost what it may. If God were to cast him into hell on the confession of his guilt, it would be just, and man must justify God. He tells it all out to God. He must draw near—the consciously shameful, shameless, guilty soul—and pour out the confession of his sins into the ear of God. And what does God tell out to him? “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, in that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.”

## The Revelation of God: Part 2

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(Concluded from page 240)

It is in this world—in no world but this—that eternal life is given. It is not to any other world but here that Jesus came. We have not the smallest ground to believe that the Son of God ever came, ever died, in any world but this. God is not looking for great people but for wretched sinners. He is not looking for great worlds any more than people, but a sinful earth! He is seeking wretched sinners. But now that the Son is come and I believe in Him, He is my life, and my sins are sent away. Is that not enough? No; He is coming to take me on high. Would you like to be in heaven? No place you would enjoy so little, if in your sins! You would dread it, although you do not like to say so, more than any spot in God's creation. The light, the love, the holiness of God, would be unbearable to you. But God, who has searched you through and through sent His Son. Why? He has but one Son—the only begotten, yet His Son was sent to sinners. He is the “propitiation for our sins.” Why fear, if you believe on Him?

The glory of His person is maintained. Take a poor guilty woman caught in the vilest sin. The moment Christ speaks a word, they who had accused her were the first to turn from His presence. Thus the glory of the Lord, the light in His person, is far more confounding than in the law. One ray from Him—they fled from His presence! What will it be with you when you stand to give account of yourself to God? Stand and give account now. Faith does not wait for the day of judgment. Those who believe are willing to tell out their sins now. What do they find? Judgment? Life eternal, a new nature, the knowledge and love of God, their sins forgiven. Men say that they believe in the remission of sins. Well, are your sins gone? “Oh no,” you will answer. Is there then no such thing as the certainty of the truth? If I do not know them gone, can I say truly that I know God? It is not a question of activity, or depth, of mind. Thank God the gospel is for the poor, and for persons of feeble mind too, for God has saved many such. It has nothing to do with any particular power of this kind; but I will tell you with what is has to do with my bowing to God's word that condemns me and puts me down as a sinner without life, who yet has his sins; and there they are, crying Out for the judgment of God. My being such a sinner is a shame to me, but to believe in His Son is life and glory. Oh, what delight God has in having souls who believe in His Son! Do you suppose it honors God to wait, to hesitate? Do you suppose that not to receive His word is the way to believe? May God give you to hearken, to believe and to know what this is by the Spirit of God! Naturally you are afraid, and indifferent, or hostile, because you are full of self-will and bent upon pleasing yourself; and this with consciousness of sin, with judgment before you, but in presence of God sending His only-begotten Son to bless you in His love if you bow to Him now.

But there are those who receive Christ, and what is the result? They possess the fullness of God's love. Who are they? Every believer. There is no believer that has not life according to it. It may be very feeble—that is, there may be what is of himself which shrouds and enfeebles—and God has His way of taking down all that thus hinders His own work; but I affirm that every soul thus born of God loves God. The apostle does not say ‘We ought to love God’ because we do. It is a necessity

of the new nature, of the life of God, in every believer. But he does say, "We ought to love one another" —we love God, but as to one another—well, one sees plenty of faults, and surely (if conscience is in the light of God) most in oneself. Doubtless this hinders, but God has His way of using all for good, while humbling us for our faults. Do you think God loves His children less because they are faulty? You have a child that other people don't think much of, whatever you do. But do you love that child less because of its faults? It may be you spoil the poor child. I scarce ever knew a parent that had not his affections, his heart, drawn out by those faults of the child. God loves us, and this love is so real that our faults only draw out the wonderful resources of His love. If you love a child of yours it is thus with you. I do not mean God makes light of anything wrong: but He never turns aside His love, and people who think so do not know God as He has revealed Himself. They have a very feeble knowledge of who and what He is.

#### HE HATH GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." When Christ was here He was the great witness, and now, wonderful to say, Christians are the witness. Oh, how ashamed of I ourselves we ought to be when our levity blots out the testimony God looks for in this world! It is a great deal more than knowing the love. Now if one of us had written these words, he must have been thought most presumptuous. Yet are they true. Hereby we know, "because He hath given us of His Spirit." I admit it is a very strong word, and that no man could have ever said it or gathered it except by divine teaching. The apostles write it calmly and quietly, as the real truth about the Christian, "because He hath given us of His Spirit."

It is not merely "the Spirit," because the Spirit was given occasionally to persons who were not renewed. Mighty power wrought in people said to be partakers of the Spirit who were not born of God. Here it is more than that. "He hath given us of His Spirit" implies, not merely power but communion of nature, and that is the force of the difference. It is what characterizes God's own nature, and that is the force of the difference. It is what characterizes God's own nature and that in divine power, and this is what belongs to the Christian now. It is not only life. The Lord Jesus is eternal life, and we live by Him. Perhaps there is some soul miserable enough here, who yet has eternal life. If I do not give God credit that He has truly blotted out my sins, I cannot have peace. If I really believe God's love that the Savior came down for it, why am I still troubled about my sins?

'But I don't walk as I ought.' Well, my dear friend, let us settle one thing at a time. There is no such encouragement for walk afterward as that all is secured between God and the soul. The Holy Ghost is given, sealing the person and working in this new divine nature. That is what I call the communion of nature, the Holy Ghost being the power. Now the result of this is, that we not only go to God, but we dwell in God. Is not this much more than going to Him in time of trouble? It is not merely occasional visits, nor merely that life is eternal, but as the Holy Ghost dwells in us, so we dwell in God.

#### THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world" (ver. 14). That is the effect of being thus blessed of God. We have a special testimony to which we are called. The apostle does not speak about the law; God has put the Christian on an entirely

different ground. It is not commandments, though there are commandments that are most suited, because there is a Living Person to obey. There is a Divine Person that has quickened us, sealed us, and come down as power; not merely to cheer us, not merely as Comforter. The Holy Ghost is always the Spirit of power. It is in communion with God, with His mind and His affections; and this is what characterizes the Christian. "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." "We have seen" —what a sight! Greater than Moses ever saw! It was never made known till He came (the Lord Jesus) that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. Now it is the testimony of every Christian. The believer who does not testify this does not understand Christianity. The truth has been spoiled; there is that which is wrong mixed up with it. Half Jewish, half Christian, are their thoughts; but here it is Christian testimony, that "the Father sent the Son to be the Savior," not merely of Israel, but "of the world." No matter how bad, how distant, how dark, the individual sinner might be found, He is the Savior; and such a Savior could not be confined to any portion of mankind.

### CONFESSING JESUS THE SON OF GOD

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (ver. 15). Whosoever shall confess! Oh, weigh it well, you that have never yet confessed. Here is what will save your soul. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God (not merely shall be saved, but) God dwelleth in him and he in God." Oh, what a wonderful thing! Is this true? Nothing more so. How is it made true? The Holy Ghost has taken His place in that man, that woman, that child. "God dwelleth in him," and as a consequence of it, "he in God." The heart has an abiding rest in God. I am certain of God; I can be certain of no one else. You may have perhaps that most faithful, blameless, devoted friend: Ah, you are not always certain of your friend. There may come the moment when you will be disappointed; but never in God. The simplest Christian knows it. I do not say they may not be foolish and forget, but they know it is their folly. The apostle is looking at the consequence of thus confessing that Jesus is the Son of God. It is there that God dwells. It was not miraculous outward power, but what was always greater, what could not be seen. "Jesus died and rose again." Is that all? "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

### WE HAVE KNOWN AND BELIEVED THE LOVE

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us" (ver. 16). He goes back to the same great truth. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Now, observe the change of order here.

The reason is this. Where he is speaking of the confession of Christ, the object is to give the soul confidence in Him who fills the soul with His own pure grace. He has received the Spirit. The consequence is that his heart goes out to God. But now he is walking like a Christian; he is dwelling in love. Instead of being occupied with evil he is occupied with love, and dwelling in love. What is the consequence? "He dwelleth in God," he rises above all that is here, and the result is that God puts fresh blessing upon him, working in power, God dwells in him.

Not merely is it the fact of the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, true as it is. First of all, God gives him the Spirit. God dwells in him and he in God. "Hereby we know that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." Then, as the effect of that, my heart goes out to Him; I

have confidence in Him; I spread out great and small into His bosom. But if I am walking in love, in the midst of all that is calculated to act upon the flesh and distract, God makes me enjoy fresh blessing, acting in me by the Spirit. It is not merely the fact of having the Holy Ghost, but God working in us by it—and not less than this is the Christian's portion. The least Christian should say that God dwells in him and he in God; but the most spiritual cannot rise beyond this, that, as he dwells in God, God dwells in him. This is the privilege of communion, as that is of faith. And if I know the one, I ought to seek the other. If blessed by grace let us walk in the fellowship of His love (Galatians 5:25).

Oh, may those that confess Jesus to be the Son of God not fear to take their stand, that this is the truth, that this is their portion. Blessed portion! for if God dwells in me, and I in Him, He is training me in that which will be the greatest joy for eternity. Of course then only will all the hindrances be gone, and the circumstances in which we now are; but I am not speaking of circumstances, but of God dwelling in me and I in Him. This is the portion that grace gives to the simplest confessor of Jesus. Fear not then to take it, fear not to confess Him. This honors God if I speak and act upon the truth of God. If this be the case, I can confide in Him for every-thing. It is not only a hope; it is not merely cherishing desires. It is a great glorious, divine fact for faith only. It is not that blessedness first, and then I believe: I believe first, and then the blessedness comes. Next follows deep enjoyment, which becomes powerful in our dependence on God, and works according to God.

May the Lord bless His own word, both to those who do confess, and to those who have never yet confessed, that Jesus is the Son of God! Amen.

W. K.

## Sanctification—1

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“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth” (John 17:17-19).

I propose to treat with a little freedom the great truth of sanctification, Christian sanctification, not confining myself to the verses which introduce the term in the passage just read, but connecting with them some other portions of the word of God which set forth the same great truth, either as the Lord here introduces it, or as carrying it out in practical detail. That there is a very special sense in the way in which our Lord employs the term must be evident to any one who weighs His words. What I hope to show may convince some (who may not perhaps have perceived it before) of the danger of taking only one side of any truth, let it be ever so precious. We shall also see, I trust, that the subject is larger and deeper in God's word than anywhere else. This is no disparagement of that which may have been seen by many of the children of God. We ought to delight that it is so; and not least such of us as find out how much more there is to gather than they had even conceived. Why should we wonder if we find the mind of God infinitely rich as compared with our own? We ought to expect it rather, and should constantly bring our little measure of insight into the truth of God with the confident assurance that we shall find that there is far more that had escaped our notice even where we have laid real hold of a truth. I am not now about to dwell upon that which is erroneous. There are views prevalent at this time in Christendom which diverge far from truth on this very subject. My present purpose is not at any length at least to deal with what I believe to be unfounded, but to attempt the happier task of searching out with simplicity what the plain truth is and thus of demonstrating with the clearest evidence how much there is in God's word of prime importance which is never found in the measures of man.

Now our Lord, when He says, “For their sakes I sanctify myself,” seems to me to give a most plain and positive proof that what is commonly the view of sanctification prevailing among the children of God is at any rate defective—that even those who see what is from Him see but a small part of the truth. In general, sanctification is limited to the practical work that the Spirit of God carries on in the souls of those who, though born of God, have much to contend with, but find power in His grace through the knowledge of Christ against their own evil. It is evident that this cannot apply to verse 19; and this on the surface of it. It must be owned therefore that sanctification must have a bearing different from ordinary thought, and incomparably larger than that to which it is usually confined. “For their sakes I sanctify myself,” says our Lord Jesus.

Thus at the outset it is happy for a simple child of God to find plain proof that it cannot mean the amelioration of fallen humanity. He has the certainty in his soul that the Lord Jesus does not here refer sanctification to the Spirit's dealing with an evil nature. There was no evil in Him to be subdued or improved what child of God does not reject such a thought with horror?

Hence it is that many have through ignorance and haste fastened a meaning on our Lord's sanctifying Himself very remote from the truth. Thus some of old supposed that our Lord used it in

some figurative way of His sacrifice, if not of other truths. But it can readily be shown that this is altogether a mistake. There is no reason for departing from the radical thought that is always contained in "sanctification." It invariably means the setting apart unto God of those that are concerned. This is its true and simple meaning, from which there is not the least reason to depart here. It does not matter where the word is found in scripture, sanctification when used of a man always means his setting apart to God. How the person is set apart is another matter. In the Jewish system we know the nation itself was so. This was after an outward sort, and was effected by various ordinances, more particularly by that of circumcision; but in fact it was a sanctification that was carried out in all the details of a Jew's life. The whole ritual system of ordinances and judgments which ran through the practical habits of a Jew forms the evidence, measure, and material of his being so set apart unto God.

But the striking thing that we find in our Lord's unbosoming of Himself to His Father on this occasion is, that there is now a new kind of setting apart. Within those of old set apart as Israelites we have the disciples themselves, to be set apart after a fresh sort, nay even the Lord deigning to set Himself apart for their sakes. For His own sake He needed nothing. We must find room therefore for thoughts differing widely from those prevalent among men. Indeed there cannot be a more striking proof of the depth of the setting apart of the Christian to God than the patent fact, that our Lord here prays the Father that the disciples, already morally apart from the Jewish people, who were themselves apart from all other peoples on the face of the earth, should be sanctified by the truth. He was not content with their being drawn to His person here below; He was about to make them more than followers of Himself, in whom they already had faith. All the rest was true; yet He prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth." It was no longer therefore on the face of it a question of the law. This would be beyond controversy. From the people who had the law the disciples were to be sanctified. The Jews might be a holy people, but the disciples were to be sanctified not only from men but from Israel—from all they themselves had been. They were to be set apart after a new sort altogether. The law which severed the practice of Israel from the Gentiles is not the rule of Christian life.

But even this is not all. The Lord Jesus in carrying out this setting apart or sanctification of the disciples shows that He must contribute to it personally, and in order to this that He must set Himself apart. "For their sakes," as He says, "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

Now the first thing to which I would here call attention is the instrument employed. The disciples were to be sanctified, as He says, "through thy truth." Then the Lord explains what He means by the Father's truth. "Thy word [the Father's word] is truth."

Undoubtedly the Father's word is most directly to be found from the time when, and in the holy writings where, His name as Father was clearly revealed. It is in the New Testament, as we all familiarly know, that the Father's name was thus declared. We find our Lord Jesus from the beginning, as in the Gospel of Matthew for instance, most carefully declaring that name. But we know too that the disciples did not yet enter into its real power. This could not be in the transitional state through which the disciples were passing with the Lord. All the time of His ministry, and with increasing plainness towards the close of it, He was intimating that an immense change was at hand. In the chapter read (John 17) He says that which a little connects itself with what has been

now remarked— “I have declared unto them [unto the disciples] thy name, and will declare it.” He had been already doing so through His life, but it does not terminate there—quite the contrary. It was to be declared with still greater fullness afterward. There were many things He had to communicate which their state forbade. They could not bear them now. When the Spirit of truth was come, He would guide them into all the truth.

It is therefore more particularly in the scriptures of the New Testament that we have the Father's name set out and made known, the Lord Jesus declaring it either in person or by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is the Father's word then that is most manifestly and immediately given us there. And what a mighty change, my brethren, this was that He who remains still, as He always is, God, the only true God—that He who had been revealed to the sons of Israel as Jehovah, and even before their immediate parents, to those that are called “the fathers” (to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) as the Almighty—that He was now making Himself known in the intimate name and relationship of Father. But we must remember that there is something more than this.

It is not merely a nearness of love, but it was as the Son knew God the Father. That is, it was as He is in truth—in the deepest and fullest way in which the only One capable of knowing the Father from all eternity knows Him. And He who had known the Father from all eternity—the only begotten Son—had come down, was a man upon earth, and though born of woman He was still the Son. In this condition He walked in unbroken communion with the Father. All this was really new, and the disciples were permitted to see and know the fruit of this holy fellowship. But now they are told more. The wondrous truth is more clearly made known that the Lord Jesus by the work which He would effect for them, and which He in spirit sees already finished, would bring them, as no others could be, into a most real and profound enjoyment of the same relationship—would bring them, even while passing through this world, to know the Father as none has ever known Him in this world but Himself the Son.

I grant you there was in the knowledge of the Father by the Son that which was ineffable and entirely beyond the creature; but then we must remember, brethren, that our knowledge of the Father is in a certain sense above mere creature knowledge. Not that of course we ever cease to be creatures, even in the glorified state, but that we now enter a wholly new place as partakers of the divine nature, and with the Holy Ghost given that we may enjoy it in power as well as testify it to others. We are now brought out distinctly and consciously as the children of God, being born of God; and, further, the Lord Jesus, having dosed the whole estate of the race as such in the cross, and having entered into the new and final condition of man according to the counsels of God in His presence on high, the time was come for the Father's name and truth to be known in the Holy Ghost, as it was impossible before or otherwise.

It is in view of all this then that our Lord prays that the disciples might be sanctified through the Father's word—through His truth. And indeed the knowledge of Christ had consequences immensely greater than even that to which I have already referred. It is not only that we are now rendered capable by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us of appreciating His mind, but we are said to “have the mind of Christ.” It is not only that that which was not revealed of old is now, and that we enter into it, as the same chapter that I have referred to proves (1 Cor. 2); but, more than this, all scripture is sensibly transfigured for us, if one may say so, by the knowledge of the Son of God thus revealed.

Thus, if we but take up the legal ordinances, there is not one of them but what is now filled with a new and heavenly light. It is not therefore that the Father's word is to be necessarily restrained to the full unfoldings we have in the New Testament, but the light of the Son of God is reflected from every part of scripture. The very same portion which is understood by a Jew in one way conveys wholly distinct and infinitely deeper lessons to the Christian in another. This is nothing fanciful in us, nor shadowy as to scripture, but an effect of its own real fullness in the light of Christ. Take a pious Jew reading the law, or the Psalms, or the prophets, before the Lord Jesus came. What he saw was true enough, and had its own importance for the object for which it was, was literally given; but how immensely enhanced and enlarged and deepened when the connection with Christ as we know Him is seen! Thus the revelation of the Lord Jesus, and this too as the One who declared the Father to the disciples, affects every part of the word of God, making that which in its primary application is merely an institution of the law to be a witness of gospel truth, of divine grace, of heavenly things.

Take for instance the great day of atonement. A Jew reads Leviticus 16, and has before his mind certain important institutions of the law: the high priest, the bullock, the goats, the application of the blood within and without, and the confession of the sins on Azazel sent off into the wilderness. All this is before him; but to us how different! It is not that we deny or slight any one part, nor that the fuller truth, the Father's word (to apply it to this subject), is such that one loses an atom of what a Jew saw; but that the Jew has not the smallest conception of that which we are permitted to know in fellowship with Christ, as we look on the things that are unseen and heavenly. We see the High Priest going into the holiest, but have its application in an altogether distinct way. We see our Lord Jesus Christ going there, not alone; we see others in Him.

Not a word of this identification is said in the chapter. It is a mystery; and the mystery was not then revealed. Now it is. It is not merely a question of the sons of Aaron, and that we have the force of it made good in ourselves in a new way. Christ is known not merely as a single person, so to speak, but complex. The New Testament gives us to see Him constituting us a part of Himself; we are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Thus in the One who goes into the holiest we behold our own portion as brought into the presence of God. We are not like the people that stood without, waiting for the reappearance of the high priest, when their consciousness of acceptance is imparted. We are entitled to an incomparably deeper knowledge of this sacrifice, because it enters into that within the veil, instead of waiting for what is published outside. Ours is what is before the eyes of God in heaven; and not merely the measure of acceptance that the people would form from seeing the high priest come out; it is founded on the infinitely more glorious fact of what God sees in the blood and in the great High Priest who presents it before Him. In short, what we are brought into is not the measure of the comfort or of the judgment formed by a pious mind, even though the Spirit of God be working therein. What we rest on is what God the Father sees in the Son and His work, and what the Holy Spirit testifies accordingly.

Thus therefore for us all is changed. Hence, we know, the great force of that word which I do not suppose a Jew will ever know as the Christian does— "the righteousness of God." The way in which Israel will have it made known, more particularly, will be rather as to the form "the righteousness of Jehovah"; but we see "the righteousness of God," as such, entering in our measure into that which the depths of His moral nature have found, all that is suitable to Himself completely glorified in the Lord Jesus by His work; and then God according to His counsels

dealing with us suitably, for we are made His righteousness in Christ.

This may illustrate the way in which the Father's truth, the Father's word, is the instrument of setting us apart to God the Father as given directly in the New Testament, but not confined to it, as just seen. What I am more anxious still to show is that which might easily be overlooked—the complete change that the knowledge of Christ has thus revealed on the basis of redemption already accomplished in the Holy Ghost sent down to bring us into all its fruit now in faith—the change that is wrought by this in our appreciation and enjoyment and application of all the word of God. In short, the result of Christ revealed as we know Him is that we see scripture generally as we never did before. Many of us have said, and many more have felt if they have not said, that such a knowledge of the Lord Jesus makes the Bible to be a new book even if we had been Christians before. I am perfectly persuaded that many present in this place know what this is. I am appealing to what has passed through their own souls in feeling. Instead of questions, the anxieties, the unsolved thoughts that they have had, the vagueness with which the truth of God was approached, and their own relationship too with God, now they have seen it fully through the grace of God as far as any of us can speak of anything being full: but, in truth, we may, for God our Father speaks of us as knowing Himself without a doubt or question. He speaks even of the youngest among us, the babes that have an unction from the Holy One and know all things. How could the Father so speak of the least of His family? He has given them Christ and the Holy Ghost.

Yes, we are sanctified by the truth, and the Father's word is truth. This it is then that has made such an immense change. The Christian is brought out of the old contracted way of looking at the word of God. We know what it is now no longer to be half Jew and half Christian. We have been brought by His infinite grace in the gospel to appreciate Christ, to embrace all the revelation of Christ, to see that, whatever might have been the literal application, it is now absorbed and lost in the brightness of One who fills the mind of the Spirit from Genesis 1 to the end of Revelation 22.

All scripture is thus our heritage, and nothing less. Only we need to know the Father in the Son in order to read it all thus. I shall not be charged at any rate with abridging; nor does such a view admit, even in appearance, of shutting up the Christian to that which the Jew has as a rule of death which some would persuade us to regard as our rule of life. I rather think that those who plead for the law are more liable to that accusation. No, beloved friends, let us not abandon what our Savior spreads before us in its infinite extent for that by which God was shutting up the proud Jew to condemnation. If we had been Jews, we have left that kind of sanctification behind. The disciples were not only Jews, but believing Jews; yet they needed to be (and were not yet) sanctified by the truth.

Sanctification then was not conversion (for they were converted), but the separating power of the Father's word which they were about to prove. And the mighty change was wrought in them—How was it wrought? What has the Lord said? “Sanctify them through thy truth.” Undoubtedly that which wrought this, as far as the written word was concerned, was the new development of divine truth where the Father's name as revealed in and by the Son was the distinguishing-characteristic force of it.

In short, the instrumental means was the New Testament. But then so far from this taking away one fraction from the Old, it is the best way to make the Old truly our own; thus is it really understood. Knowing the Father we enter in and enjoy every part of the word of God. There is

nothing therefore lost. It is not imagining ourselves to be Jews that will give us the truth or sanctify us. On the contrary, it was precisely out of all that was Jewish those were taken who had been really Jews. It is a question now of one new man in Christ.

Thus then we may see clearly the general ground on which the Lord speaks, and somewhat of that weighty change that was to be brought about by the power of the Spirit of God. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." You must remember that the disciples were not yet on Christian footing. This sanctifying that is spoken of here is really setting them apart as Christians. It was not the communication of life, which is not sanctifying. On the other hand it does not refer simply to the practical work that goes on day by day in the heart of the child of God. This is true, and important too; and there are scriptures that speak of it in this light exclusively, as 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4; 5:23; Hebrews 12:14. There is a sanctification or setting apart unto God the Father of a more general kind, and more fundamental too. This, without excluding the practical work going on all through, is what (I believe) the Lord Jesus refers to; the setting apart, in that new proper Christian character and power, of the disciples who then surrounded the Lord Jesus. They were still connected with the old condition of things, having been Jews up to this moment. The time was just at hand when they were to be brought out of their Judaism. The Lord Jesus appears to have this in His mind

But this is not all. He does not merely say, "Sanctify them through thy truth" —the Father's truth, more particularly and directly in the Christian scriptures commonly called the New Testament; but further He says, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." It was no question of the land of Judea now. The world was before them. Thus, if there was the intimacy of setting apart to the Father, there is also an universality of mission. Though the Lord Jesus had a mission to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, this is not the way in which He is regarded in the Gospel of John. There is a deeper thing here in question. The fact is that all through this Gospel the people are viewed as utterly gone from God, and as only part of a vast system in opposition to the Father: so completely are all regarded as hopelessly evil and enemies. As the Father had sent Him into the world, "even so I also sent them into the world."

But in order yet more to effect this work of setting apart unto the Father, the Lord adds another and a most weighty truth: "For their sakes I sanctify [or set apart] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." That is, the Father's word (blessed as it is, and changing all as it does for us) is not enough. We want a personal object in order to bind our affections to it. Who could that object be but one—the Lord Jesus Himself? But it is the Lord Jesus not on earth. Jews will have the blessed revelation of the Lord here below: I do not say how far or how long; but they will have it. They will have the promised One making Himself known to them here below. His feet, as we know, shall stand on the Mount of Olives. But it is not there or thus that we know Him.

(To be continued)

[W.K.]

## Sanctification—2

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How then? As He is now in the presence of the Father in heaven. This is the meaning of His setting Himself apart. It is not the victim upon the cross. There He was made sin, instead of sanctifying Himself. There it was the substitute forsaken of God that we who believe might never be. Not that Jesus, even when made sin, was one whit less, but infinitely more, the object of God the Father's delight, and in that most solemn judgment even morally a deeper, yes the deepest, delight to the Father. But still it was most true and real that He was made sin upon the cross in this sense, that He identified Himself thoroughly and with-out reserve with all the consequences of our evil, and suffered accordingly at God's hands against whom the evil was wrought and whom He came to glorify. The cross certainly was no mere appearance but a reality, whatever might be the vain show of the world wherein it stood. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of your redemption is gone. Weaken the reality of His suffering, and the reality of the glorifying of God is gone—which is a much more important thing than your salvation or mine

Brethren, all was met there and settled forever. All evil was there taken on Himself, who was judged for it. There was nothing so foul but Jesus suffered for it; there was no sin so dark but He washed it away with His precious blood. The consequence is that, there and there alone, can either God Himself rest with satisfaction when He looks at a sinner, or a sinful soul find the rest that his awakened conscience needs. But this is a wholly different thing from our Lord setting Himself apart or sanctifying Himself for our sakes, "that they might be sanctified through the truth." It is the Lord Jesus who enters into an entirely new place for man—a place essential in order that there should be Christians in deed and in truth. For the essence of a Christian is that, although he is upon earth, he is heavenly; and how could he become heavenly unless by the revelation of a heavenly man who is his life? And who is or could be that heavenly man but the man Christ Jesus, who, having died to put, away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, takes this new place there, Head of a new family, and is so revealed to us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven?

This then is the force of our Lord's added words. Instead of only giving us that fullness of truth in the Father's word, more particularly the New Testament, but at the same time so affecting all the Old as to give us distinctly and positively a means of knowing the Father in every part of scripture, He gives us Himself as a personal object before us in order that we may have the truth thus. Besides having thus the detailed word of the Father, we want an object to attach our hearts to; we need it that we be not lost in the abundance of the revelations of God. Here then is One who can claim every affection, who can detach us by the revelation of. Himself, the worthiest of all objects, an object worthy of God the Father, and surely of us the children who delight in what He delights in. This is none other than Christ, but it is Christ after all the evil was judged, after all the good was won, after love had nothing to do, nay, even righteousness no other task but to bless us. This is what God now can afford to do as the Father: this is what He is now doing through the infinite sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. But this is what He now reveals, through the Lord Jesus in His presence, and by the Holy Ghost sent down gives us to know. Hence therefore our Lord's taking His place at the right hand of God is not a bare fact in Christianity, an incident be it ever so great

and glorious, but barren of fruit. Far from it. His setting Himself apart at God's right hand is a root of divine truth, yea, the root of our distinctive blessedness. He is there the model man according to whom the Spirit forms us by the truth. It is thus essential in order that He fitly and fully should be the means of that wondrous display of truth and love that God looks to be reproduced in those that are Christ's below.

This then is the further intimation in the words, "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." We require the Father's word; but we require the person thus set apart in heaven, and in this order too. For the Father's truth that is made known in the New Testament invariably precedes our full appreciation of the Lord Jesus at His right hand, thus sanctifying Himself that we might be sanctified through the truth. But then (need we say it?) when we have seen the Lord Jesus there, when we appreciate the all-importance of having Him as an object before our souls entirely outside the world, according to which the Holy Ghost is carrying us on and fashioning us while we are here below, the truth is everywhere made more personal and in power. Not that the truth abides not in the word, but that it is thus applied with increase of blessing. As He says here, "For their sakes I sanctify myself," but not stopping at this, "that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Thus we see, if we begin with the truth and rise to see the personal place of the Lord, the truth only receives more and more power and point through it.

Turning now to some of the chief scriptures of the New Testament that touch on sanctification, we shall find fresh developments no doubt, but all of them making good the same great truth, whatever the special application to need.

Almost every epistle furnishes evidence. "To all that be in Rome, called to be saints," or rather saints called; "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus," saints called, that is, in Corinth; "all the saints in all Achaia"; "to the saints which are in Ephesus"; "to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi"; "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse"; "unto all the holy brethren," speaking of Thessalonica. Here there can be no doubt to any simple, not to say intelligent, mind. It is the description of persons set apart to God; and this too from the beginning of His work in their souls as Christians. The word in no way speaks of their measure or practical attainment of knowledge: it supposes that they were set apart to God as His own children in this world from the outset of their career after their calling, but it says no more.

But this truth, elementary as it is, was far too much for Christendom to carry uncorrupted. Nor do I speak only of the grossness of Babylon, which canonizes her saints years after death, and actually not till alleged proofs are given of miracles from relics of the deceased candidate. But even where the pope is rejected, what can be more timid, what more unscriptural, than the unwillingness of most believers now to recognize each other as saints, and to confess themselves sanctified in Christ Jesus from the starting-point of their confession of the Lord's name? What is this but an unworthy shrinking both from accrediting the rich grace of God and the solemn responsibility of the believer? Saints they are, however; and as such they are bound to walk. Not to own it is not exuberance of humility, but only ignorant unbelief to the dishonor of the Lord and their own soul's great loss. It is clear as light from the scriptures adduced that all who confessed Christ were called and treated as saints, and that sanctification is viewed as attached to every one who bore His name. They were set apart to God; and this from the first. (Compare Acts 9:13; 20:32; 26:18.)

Again, in 1 Cor. 1:30 we find another reference, without taking up every one, for this would be beyond the limits of the present discourse. But here the apostle says, "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." There I think that the Spirit of God uses "sanctification" in a very large sense, not only for the separating us from the first unto our God and Father through the Lord Jesus the Son, but also looking at the separative power as going on practically in our souls to the last. It is very general, and this is my reason for citing it, as I believe that this two-fold application is contained in it and meant. "Wisdom" is in contrast with the philosophy of men that particularly prevailed among the Greeks to whom he was writing; "righteousness" as setting aside all that was imperfect, and communicated in grace where moral consistency with God was absolutely wanting to man as such; "sanctification" not only from the first call but going on all through; and "redemption" completing the work of grace; for it is not here redemption through Christ's blood, but that of the body, as I gather from its place as winding all up. This again illustrates the largeness of the term "sanctification." As it is clear that redemption is meant in the fullest sense, so I suppose is "sanctification" too.

But when we come to chapter 6 we have something a little more precise in verse 11; "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." No theologian writing in the nineteenth century would ever think of putting these words in any such order. They have missed the truth therefore. And let me say further that no man writing in any century whatever would have ever chosen the same form of words except one inspired of God. But have we learned the wisdom of it? Have we discovered why these words are not only true, but more true in this order than in any other? Certainly the verse does not regard sanctification as only the practical application of the truth to the conscience by the Spirit of God after one is justified, which is the general sense among Protestants; still less does it confound sanctification with justification as Romanists do.

It is manifest therefore that, assuming the apostle's words to be the vehicle of divine truth perfectly expressed, the notion which limits sanctification to the practical process which goes on in the soul after justification is altogether defective. It is not the view that the apostle gives here for our instruction. Is it meant then to weaken the value and need of that practical work, of growth in holiness, after we believe and are justified? Far from it. I admit its importance and that it is rightly styled sanctification, being our continual setting apart to God every day and in each detail. But I maintain that there is more truth which man does not so easily let into his own thoughts and judgment, and that an element is wanting to give Christians a fuller and clearer understanding of their relation to God.

First of all is it not plain that the apostle Paul here tells these Corinthians that (whatever they might have been in vileness before they knew the Lord Jesus) when they received Him they were washed? It is very possible that there may be some allusion to their baptism as an outward sign of it. I am not discussing this; but I affirm that washing is not the same thing as sanctifying, and that sanctifying is, as all admit, a different thing from justifying. But further, as all these express necessary parts of Christian salvation, are they not all right as God has written them here? The Corinthian believers are said to have been "washed," because the first action of the word of God on a guilty soul is to deal with his impurity— to detect, judge, and remove the evil that defiles. "Washing" by the word (Ephesians 5) is not sanctifying, though in the closest way associated with

it; God's grace thereby takes notice of and deals with that which is altogether contrary to Himself. "Sanctifying" is more positively and exclusively occupied with the good to which the soul is set apart. There is a separating object to which the affections are attached, not merely a cleansing from our natural evil.

Although we may distinguish between the washing and the sanctifying, in point of fact they cannot be separated in the soul of him that comes under the quickening power of God. But still God is wise in the order in which He puts the thoughts and words. The washing, I repeat, is the application of the word of God by the Holy Ghost to the conscience. Christ, thus received in truth, gives the sinner to detect and judge his evil before God. He is born of God; but the effect of the new birth is that he feels what he himself is. There is repentance in short. But, besides, sanctifying goes farther by the revelation of an object that wins and draws out the heart towards that object. It is plain therefore that the washing supposes more the removal of defilement; and that the sanctifying is rather the effect of the object revealed, which commands the heart, and attracts it from all else, set apart to itself.

This then is the way in which the Spirit of God presents the matter. But there is a third expression—justifying; and it is clear that to be justified is here put after and not before sanctification. In the order in which the Spirit of God puts them, it follows washing and sanctification. How is it possible to reconcile this with the view which limits the doctrine of sanctification to the practical holiness of a Christian after he is already justified? Impossible! Is the apostle's statement then to be given up as unintelligible? Are we not to have the truth of God as to this received and enjoyed by our souls? The truth is, that not only "sanctified" in John 17 is proved by our Lord's use of it to have other and larger meaning than men usually assign to it, but the way in which the Spirit of God, through the apostle, uses it has a force quite different from its bare application to the practical condition or growth of the soul after the Lord is known.

I will refer to one other scripture, in order to show that this is no arbitrary thought, but that the Spirit of God has designed it in the most distinct manner. The very same side of the truth is revealed by another apostle. In 1 Peter 1: 2 we are told that the Christian Jews who were scattered about Asia Minor were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. It is clear that what is called "justified" in 1 Cor. 6 answers to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus here. If the common view were meant, the way in which the apostle Peter would have expressed himself would have been somewhat of this sort—that these Christian Jews were elect unto the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, after which the Spirit carried on the work of sanctification in their souls. But He makes, at the very least, a totally different statement.

[W. K.]

(Continued from page 285)

(To be continued)

## Sanctification—3

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He says here, “Elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.” In short, the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus is supposed necessarily to be in virtue of sanctification; for they were sanctified by the Spirit in order to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.

In what sense then is sanctification meant here? This is the real question. What does the Spirit of God mean either by Paul saying, “sanctified, justified”; or by Peter saying, “through (■v) sanctification of [the] Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ”? Put before “justified” in 1 Cor. 6, and before the “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus” in 1 Peter 1:2, “sanctification” in these passages must needs take in the work of the Holy Spirit from the time that the soul is quickened to desire after God, to look up because of Jesus, distrusting itself, yet daring only to hope for good. Perhaps the soul does not yet know what provision grace has made; but it knows enough mercy in God to make it willing to, bow to His judgment of all that it has been and all that it has done. Hence it cleaves to Him, and is perfectly sure that all goodness is in Him, trusting that His grace through the Lord Jesus will yet shine upon it; but it does not yet know how richly that grace has sought it out, and wrought for it even before its awakening. The Spirit of God produces a desire to do the will of God at all costs, and testifies before such a soul the work of the Lord Jesus in its infinite efficacy before God. Then and thus it is brought to the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus; but as it was elect before the Holy Spirit began to work effectually, so the Spirit was effectually at work before the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus.

There is, it seems plain, an allusion to Old Testament figures or facts in the language of Peter, which was calculated to impress the believing Jews with a lively sense of their new position as compared with the nation of old. For an Israelite could scarce avoid recalling Exodus 24:7, 8, when Moses “took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that Jehovah hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words.” Now here we have the same elements in their case: obedience of the law and sprinkling of the blood of the victims offered at that solemn moment. But how great the contrast! Israel stood pledged to obey the law and sprinkled with the blood which declared death the penalty of its infraction. The Christian is partaker of the life of Christ which lives in obedience, the obedience of a son, even as Christ was its perfect expression; and he is sprinkled with His blood, which declares that he himself is perfectly cleansed from his sins before God.

That effectual work of the Holy Spirit from first to last is called in the scriptures “sanctification of the Spirit.” It embraces the entire setting apart of the soul to God from the beginning onwards. Quickening looks on the soul as being dead in trespasses and sins. There is a new life given it from God; but the effect of divine life is that the heart goes out towards the God that gives it. Sanctifying always supposes the affections drawn out towards Him who thus confers His blessing. The depth and fullness of the blessing may be imperfectly known yet, but nevertheless He is believed in who alone can bless. It may be but the conviction that in the Father's house there is

bread enough and to spare, with the assurance of happiness if one could only get there. The soul is quite sure that mercy is there, though not yet looking when there to be more than a hired servant. Still the confidence of the heart is in the love that is there if one can only get there; and so he sets out. Such is the effect: behold a quickened soul. Without the Spirit there had been no such turning of the prodigal's heart to, the Father; no real sense and confession of having sinned against heaven and in His sight. This action of the Spirit was immediate and vital. From the moment that self-judgment was produced, and the affections of the heart turned towards the Father and His house, there is sanctification of the Spirit. It is only when he meets the Father and learns the killing of the fatted calf, with the ring and the shoes and the best robe—it is only then that he is doctrinally what may be called “justified.” Justified is the application by faith of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ to the person who is already in the true sense of scripture sanctified by the Spirit.

Of course practical holiness mainly follows justification; and with such a view I have not the smallest quarrel. I do not in the least mean to raise any question or attack any person or party on that subject. It is an important truth in its own place that the progressive work of holiness proceeds after we are justified. But what is sanctification of the Spirit before we are justified? And why is it that theologians or preachers never say a word about this? Why is it thus left out? Not certainly to do honor to scripture; nor through intelligence in the truth of God. How comes it to be thus ignored in Christendom at the present moment, and for seventeen centuries before it? If it be not so treated, where among the divines ancient or modern can we find its expression? Who can say? I do not know, and I do not believe that anybody else does. The fact is that this truth has, in a way absolutely unaccountable save to such as have learned the defection of Christendom from the faith, fairly dropped out of the schools of theology.

What should we gather from this, my brethren? The blessedness of having the scriptures. For this is no recondite truth; it is not something that might be lost without any particular detriment to the soul. There are immense practical consequences which result from losing sight of sanctification of the Spirit from the point of view in which both Paul and Peter treat it. I am speaking now not of what may be called relative or progressive sanctification, or whatever growth in practical holiness may be styled in theology; I leave all that as it is. Those terms may be more or less correct, but I pass them by without the smallest debate or arresting ourselves upon that question. For my own part I believe that they express substantially the truth, and I have no controversy with Arminian, Calvinist, or anybody else about the matter.

But I must demand of these Christians and you, whether it is not a most extraordinary and suggestive fact, that one of the primary truths for every soul that fears God, one of the most capital truths of the New Testament, should have thus practically become a cipher to most of God's own children up to this present time? If I be mistaken in such a thought, let me be shown the evidence; for indeed I should take it as a very great kindness if any one do me the favor of pointing out where I have in some way overlooked it; but I can honestly say that, after searching in vain yet examining carefully, I believe that what has been said is the simple truth (and a solemn truth it is), that sanctification of the Spirit, in the most important sense in which the New Testament presents it, is a truth wholly wanting—an “unknown quantity” —to most Christians at the present moment.

And what is the result practically for souls? Much every way. But this is obvious, that there are those in whom the Spirit of God has wrought, who are often tried and miserable. Then not the Father's word but the law is brought in as a rule for them, and they are thus made still more wretched; for it never was the intention of God by the law to make any sinful man happy. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." How could it do aught for any child of Adam but enslave, condemn, and kill? (See 2 Cor. 3) Further, the law, as it does not give power, so it never reveals an object. The law has a most important use: but its use is to convict the guilty soul. And the apostle expressly teaches, its lawful use is not for the righteous but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane. It is the strength of sin, not of holiness, the precise reverse of a sanctifying power. The Father's grace reveals to us the most blessed object that even He has; and His word makes His object to be our object. This sanctifies. "Sanctify them by thy word. Thy word is truth.... For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth."

Besides this, which gives us the full character of Christian sanctification right through the believer's course, "sanctification of the Spirit" takes in the first effectual working of the Holy Ghost in every soul that is born of God, from the earliest real effect of the Spirit of God by a life that is given in opening the heart more or less (for it may be often hindered, and is often in bondage), nevertheless with affections turned to God. In such a case how frequently the soul is pining after the assurance of being sanctified! If a person could know himself sanctified already, what a relief it would be! It is exactly in that condition that many a person, conscious of his unworthiness, is cast down immensely, because he is deeply conscious that, whatever the grace of the Lord Jesus, at any rate he is not sanctified himself. What a comfort it would be for such a soul to know that it is precisely what he is in a sense still more absolute than the practical measure which occupies his mind—to be thrown off self on Christ!

But there is a further thing. While God does meet a soul tried, cast down, and without ability to take full comfort and peace through faith in the Lord Jesus, even though already sanctified He does not allow one to settle down in that condition. Here is where the importance of Peter's word comes in: "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." And why obedience first? This often is no small difficulty, and sometimes leads persons to a sad perversion of the word. They acknowledge that as believers they are called to obey; but are apt to think that, if we fail to obey, the blood of Christ becomes the resource, and makes up all deficiencies. There is hardly any one, it is to be hoped, in this room so uninstructed in the mind of God as to treat the scriptures thus lightly, not to say offensively. No, my brethren, the apostle meant no such thing; but this—that when the Spirit of God thus separates a soul from the world, the first movement of the soul when turned really and truly to God from sin and Satan, the great and prime desire of the heart thenceforward is to obey, while the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus assures of cleansing from guilt in the sight of God. "Lord," said Saul of Tarsus, when he was smitten down, "what wilt thou have me to do?" I know there are those who say that this was rather legal. From such thoughts I wholly differ. I grant you there was not yet known the full liberty of the gospel; but, as far as it went, the desire was excellent and blessed. It is the instinctive yearning of the new nature to do the will of God.

But we have far more here. We are told that the measure of obedience of the elect soul now sanctified by the Spirit is the obedience of Jesus; for His name, I believe, qualifies both the

obedience and the blood sprinkled. It is not the obedience of a Jew, but in contrast with it. Such is the point of the words "Jesus Christ" introduced at the end. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by sanctification of the Spirit unto [the] obedience and sprinkling of [the] blood of Jesus Christ." The English words are a little changed to give the full force. The obedience was Christ's obedience, as the blood was His blood. And is not the first desire of the awakened soul to obey? But God has no obedience now that He values, except that kind of obedience which Jesus rendered. It is not obeying the law, as a Jew might do, in the hope of certain blessings, or from fear of certain curses. The Lord never obeyed on this principle; He always obeyed out of the consciousness of a Son—the son—of God; and the simplest Christian ought to obey from a similar consciousness too; for we too by grace are children of God; and our God and Father has implanted this in us as the first feeling of the new life—to do His will. This it is you may see in many that are born of God, and that, even though not in liberty, and alas! too often imbued with doctrine that injures the soul, they nevertheless delight in His will. Their hearts desire to be faithful and obedient. They only want the bright fullness and freeness of the grace of God to clear them out of these imperfect and sometimes erroneous thoughts.

This then is what I believe the Spirit of God here meant. The sanctification of the Spirit is "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." It is in contrast with the Jew saying presumptuously, "All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient," and in consequence of this, having himself as well as the book sprinkled with the blood of the offerings, which threatened death in case of disobeying the law; for this was the sense of the blood with, which the book of the covenant and the people were sprinkled. It was not at all the blood of atonement to secure them, but blood sanctioning the law and their own obligations, so as to keep before them the death that they must die if they failed. The apostle Peter appears to me to have all this in view: only the change is complete for the Christian who begins, not with the book of law, but with the Savior; and what he finds in the Savior is both a spring of life, by which he desires to obey God, and also accomplished redemption, by which he starts with his sins effaced and forgiven before God. Thus, instead of having the blood of victims to tell him he must die if he fails, he has the blood of the Savior to assure him that all is clear because he is thereby washed from his sins. And the redemption is eternal no less than the life in Christ.

I trust, therefore, that in these few scriptures compared with what has come before us somewhat more at length in John 17 the nature of Christian sanctification has been shown clearly. Its full character and means the Lord Jesus first gave us to see. This the epistles follow up, developing the order and place of sanctification, or the setting apart of the soul to God, as compared with His other dealings in grace. Christ looked at its full import right through, while the passages in the epistles we have examined take up its beginning, so to speak, in the heart. At the same time both of course are divinely true, and each of all possible importance; but both differ not a little, unless I am greatly mistaken, from popular thought even among the children of God. I have been anxious therefore to set forth, as far as God has enabled me, the testimony of scripture to this most momentous truth.

There are other scriptures that refer to practical sanctification, on which I must say a word next. One clear text of this description is in Hebrews 12, where the apostle says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness" (or sanctification, if you please) "without which no man shall see the Lord." It is evident that this is practical holiness. He is addressing those whom he assumes to be

Christians. There might be persons among them in danger of going back, as we know there had been. Some had already been apostates; but the apostle was “persuaded better things of them, and things that accompanied salvation, though he thus spoke.” But here he says, “Follow peace with all men.” They had already peace with God, but they were told to “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” There is nothing really harsh in that, nor a word to cause the smallest difficulty to the most sensitive spirit; for surely, my brethren, there is no Christian who would affirm or allow that a man can live as he lists and yet go to heaven. Can a man sin habitually and be born of God? Surely the language of John is even stronger where it is laid down that “he that is born of God doth not commit sin.” No doubt, as you justly plead, he means the person so characterized, not that a believer may not fail in this particular or in that, but that no man who is really born of God lives without exercised conscience and holy ways before God: no man so born goes on in sin, but walks according to the new nature. There are differences of measure, and various degrees of spiritual power as we know; but all saints have an uniform desire, and the Lord hearkens to that desire and answers it too—meeting and helping the soul, sometimes by the comfort of the truth, sometimes by sharp discipline, but in one way and another strengthening it to please Him-self. It is manifest from this that there is not the slightest ground for explaining away such an exhortation, no excuse for trying to make out that “holiness” here means what we are made in Christ. This is not the thought in the smallest degree. It is only deceiving ourselves if any think so.

[W. K.]

(Continued from page 301)

(To be continued)

## Sanctification—4

Again, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians it is clearly a question of practice. "This is the will of God, our sanctification." "For God hath not called us to uncleanness but in holiness" or sanctification. Here it is plain that he is speaking of walking in holiness every day. And then again he prays that the God of peace Himself sanctify them wholly, and that their spirit, soul, and body should be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. In all he is looking at the practical work that goes on in the believer.

I particularly mention these passages; for we ought never, in asserting one side of the truth, to forget another. Only what has been already said proves that, besides the practical holiness of which we have been last treating, the New Testament speaks pointedly and plainly of the separating power of the Spirit of God in every man's soul who is born of God, and from its rudiments calls it "sanctification of the Spirit." From the first motion of divine life in the soul right through, all that time a man is sanctified; and this, one may call absolute or personal sanctification, in order to distinguish it from what came next, that is, relative sanctification, which depends upon spiritual growth, submission to God, use of means, as the word of God, prayer, fasting, self-judgment, discipline. All these things help on the soul's practical growth in holiness.

Again, we must notice briefly such passages as Acts. 20:32, 26:18. It is impossible to apply these to progress in holiness but to the character and estate of all Christians. The structure of the word **■γλασμ■νοι** admits of no other meaning. Is it argued that this is only the condition of believers when they have arrived at the end of their course, if not of the world altogether? Rom. 15:16 and 1 Cor. 1:2 refute such a restriction; still more forcibly does Heb. 10:10. This is not at all weakened by the form of the word (**■γλαζ■μενοι**) in verse 14, as in chap. 2:11. For the present participle may be used abstractedly apart from the question of the action or the passion. But the perfect tense could not be used as it is in verse 10 about the same persons at the same time, if the object were to define by **■γλαζ■μενοι** that we are only under a process of sanctifying now going on, but as yet imperfect. For while the present may express either the actual time or the abstract character and object of the operation, the perfect necessarily gives the permanent result of a terminated action, and therefore affirms that we have been and are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. It is no question of God's counsel respecting us, but of a present abiding effect of Christ's finished work. Hence to lay stress on **■γλαζ■μενοι** as if it must needs indicate a process going on is not only arbitrary, because the present participle does not always convey this force, but even negated by **■γλασμ■νοι** which decides the time and excludes what is imperfect. It is not potentiality, but a present fact and a continuous character acquired by Christians through the accomplished and accepted sacrifice of Christ. To translate therefore in verse 14 **το■ς ■γλαζομ■νους** as "them who are being sanctified" is, under the appearance of literal precision, to prove that we have never seen the true spirit of the passage, and that we do not understand the apostle's doctrine on this great head; and the rather too as **τετελε■ωκεν** ("he hath perfected") in the same clause is irreconcilable with this effort to get rid of sanctification here as a standing condition, by denying the abstract force of the present participle as used in this case. It is

interesting to observe that in the same chapter (ver. 29) the Spirit employs the aorist ἠγασθη to describe him who had once been a baptized confessor of Christ crucified, but afterward turned out an apostate. That tense simply states the fact historically; whereas the perfect, adding to it the idea of an existing result, could not properly be used of one who had spurned Christ and counted the blood of the covenant a common thing. It is not true that he had advanced so far in the spiritual life that this blood had been applied by faith, or that its hallowing or purifying effects were visible in his life. Such talk is merely imaginative, not only without scripture, but neglecting the obvious intimation of that which is said; for the passage says nothing of spiritual life, or of applying the blood by faith, or of purifying effects visible or invisible, but only of sinning willfully after having received the knowledge of the truth. Be it ever so exact and full, this in no way implies in itself a divine work in the conscience so that the person was born again and converted to God, but such a clear full and certain knowledge as many unconverted men possess who nevertheless hold fast the truth in unrighteousness. Very different is the statement in Heb. 9:14 where the blood of Christ is said to purify the conscience from dead works in order to serve (i.e. religiously) the true God. Had there been any such language in chap. 10. used of the renegade's previous state, there would have been a scriptural basis for the idea of some; as it is, in what is really said here and in what is said not here but in chap. 9:14 is a twofold testimony of the most distinct kind against it. Hebrews 13:12 seems too general to decide the question before us in either way; but there is ample light where the language is strict to gather the sense with certainty.

These then are the two main senses in which "sanctification" is used of believers; for I do not here go into the setting apart of the Son by the Father (John 10:36), nor of praying that the Father's name be hallowed (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2), nor of the relation of marriage with a believer (1 Cor. 7:14), nor of food no longer taken in mere nature but set apart for godly use of the faithful. The first is what the apostles Paul and Peter have laid down, where, as we have observed, sanctification is expressly shown to be before justification. To apply this to the practical work would destroy all truth: there can be no proper Christian holiness of heart and ways before the soul is justified. Tridentine doctrine is ignorance of scripture: "to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Since therefore both emphatically introduce it before justification, it is plain that the "sanctification" of the Spirit intended has another sense than the practical one; and that it means the setting apart in principle to God, which is true of the believer from first to last. So it is used in 2 Thessalonians 13: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Sanctification of the Spirit" evidently here accompanies "belief of the truth," and this "from the beginning." It is not growth in holiness afterward. Yet assuredly growth comes when the soul, finding rest in the work of Christ, identifies itself by the working of the Spirit practically with Christ as an object before the heart. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" or sanctification. Hence "being now made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." There it is and thus that the Christian enters into what the Lord Jesus set out so fully, which, as we have seen, contemplates Christian sanctification and its specific means without drawing attention to time one way or the other. Its object is a deeper

one, showing that we are set apart unto the Father according to what was revealed by His word and in the Son on high. "We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Lord the Spirit."

May the Lord then grant that this rich and grave subject may be estimated better—a subject so easily obscured to the loss of the children of God, and so easily forgotten to the injury not only of those that are beginning their career (depriving them of the comfort of the knowledge that they are sanctified), but also of those that may be longest in the way. May they be continually stimulated, knowing that if they are thus sanctified, they are called on to walk according to no less a measure than Christ revealed by the Father's word. May they profit not by fragments of the truth only, but by the whole revelation of God, acting by the power of the Spirit of God in renewed affections, ever judged, ever deepened, by these divine communications, but also concentrated on the person of the Lord Jesus. May He give us thus to prove more and more how precious it is that we are sanctified by the Father's word, and that the Son has set Himself apart for our sakes that we might be according to such a model. Amen.

W. K.

(Concluded from page 316)

## Sanctification Without Which There Is No Christianity: Part 1

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There is something very sweet in the certainty with which the apostle Peter presents to us the truths contained in this epistle. There is neither hesitation nor uncertainty. The word speaks of things received, of a certainty for those to whom it is addressed. Their faith was tried, but the thing was certain. The apostle speaks here of an inexhaustible fund of truths which belonged to him and it is not as one groping in the dark that he speaks of it. These things are too important to be left in doubt; they deserve all our attention; our hearts need it. It is not the unregenerate heart that loves the Lord Jesus; one may be brave and all that, and think that, if one's conduct is good, the result in heaven will be accordingly, but therein is no love for the Lord Jesus. And this is the badge of the Christian.

The apostle says, in the eighth verse: "Whom [Christ] not having seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Now, there is no such thing as this without the new birth, which is a new life, which has an object that preoccupies it. It is an entirely new life, which has interests, affections, quite a new world; and without that there is no Christian, because there is not Christ.

We will now see the two principles laid down in this chapter, and in the work here attributed to the Holy Spirit.

God finds the soul in a certain position, in certain relations, and removes it to place it in quite a new state; and this separation is according to the power of the resurrection of Christ.

The apostle speaks to the Jews of the dispersion (that is, to those of whom it is spoken in John 7:35, those dispersed among the Greeks) in these words: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," etc. He addressed himself to the dispersed, to the Jews converted to Christianity, to those who were elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through "sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace," etc. He says this because he is speaking of another election than that of the Jewish people. The Jewish nation was elected after another manner. Here he writes, as we said, to Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus; so that sanctification in them was no sanctification of a nation by outward means, but by the Holy Spirit, who separated the souls from among the Jews to belong to God, and to form a part of the present dispensation of grace. It was not with them as with the ancient Jews, who were separated from the Egyptians by the Red Sea; they were separated by the sanctification effected by the Holy Spirit. Observe particularly this word "sanctification": the first idea is separation for God, not only from evil, but a setting part for God, who sanctifies.

This is what God does in those whom He calls. God finds souls lying in evil. John on this subject says, in his First Epistle, chap. 5: 19: "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness;" and it is very precious to have things clearly stated. "We are of God;" it is not merely that we

should conduct ourselves aright; doubtless, that is well; but the great difference is, that we are of God, and that "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Does that mean that we are always as we should be? No; but we are of God. One is not all one would desire to be; that will come to pass only in heaven; for it is only there that God will make us conformed to the image of His beloved Son.

But this is what God has done: He has separated us to Himself, as a man who hews stones out of a quarry. The stone is hewn out of the quarry, and set apart, destined to be cut and fashioned, in order to be placed in the appointed building. And God detaches a soul from the quarry of this world, to separate it for Himself. I say not but that there is much to do, for a rough stone cut out of the quarry requires often to have considerable labor expended upon it before it is placed in the building for which it is destined. Even so God separates, prepares, and fashions this soul, to introduce it into His spiritual building. There are many useless matters to take off, but God acts every day in His grace; howsoever, this soul is sanctified, set apart for God, from the moment it is taken out of the quarry of this world.

The apostle speaks here of sanctification before he mentions obedience and the blood of Jesus Christ. We are sanctified for these two things (ver. 2.); "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ." The stone is entirely His, and adapted to His purpose. Although He has yet to work upon it, the question is not of what He does each day, but generally of the appropriation to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who acts in the soul, and appropriates it to the end God has proposed to Himself. It is the Holy Spirit who acts in the soul, and appropriates it to Himself. It may previously have been very honorable or very wicked in its conduct; that is all the same; only it will be more grateful, if it feels itself more evil; but as to its former condition that matters little, it belongs now to God.

To what does God destine this soul? To obedience. Up to this period it has done little but its own will; it has followed its own way, no matter what appearances may have been, more or less good, more or less bad; it is all one. The character may have been weak, or more or less fiery, until, as with Paul, the Lord arrested him on his road: now behold this soul, hitherto filled with its own will, set apart for obedience.

Paul had been very learned in what concerned the religion of his fathers; he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel. He honestly believed that he had done the will of God, but there was nothing of the kind; he followed his own will, according to the direction impressed by the tradition of his fathers. Never, till the moment that Jesus stopped him on the way to Damascus, had he said, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Thus, whatever may have been the conduct of a soul before this setting apart, nothing of all that has made it do the will of God. But the aim of the life of a soul sanctified, set apart, is to do the will of God. It may fail, but that is its aim. Jesus said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God." He had no need of sanctification in one sense, because He was holy; but the aim of His whole life was obedience. Here I am "to do thy will, O God." He took the form of a servant, became in the likeness of men, and He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He existed only for God; the principle of His life was obedience. He was come to do nothing but His Father's will.

As soon as a soul is sanctified, it is sanctified unto obedience, and that is manifested by the spirit of dependence which has done with its own will. It says: "What must I do?" It may fail, through weakness, in many respects, but that is its aim.

As to the second thing, we are sanctified to enjoy the sprinkling of blood; first to obedience, then to enjoy the sprinkling of blood. The soul, thus placed under the influence of the blood of Christ, is thereby completely cleansed. The blood of the Son of God cleanses us from all sin; it is by the efficacy of His blood that we are separated from this world.

The question here is not of the blood of bulls and goats, which could not sanctify the conscience of him who did the service, but it is the blood of Christ, who by the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. It is this blood which purifies the conscience.

The Jews, under the law, said indeed, trusting to their own strength, We will do all that Thou hast spoken. They undertook to do everything, when it was prescribed to them as a condition. But here it is much more; it is the Spirit that makes them say, "What wilt thou have me to do?" It is submission; it is the principle of obedience, really produced in the heart: 'I know not what Thou wilt, but here am I to do Thy will.' It is obedience without reserve. There is no question here of rules that man cannot accomplish, but of the whole will changed, no more to do one's own will, but to do God's will.

The book of the law was sprinkled, as well as the people; but that gave its efficacy to the requisitions of the law, while the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus gives to the changed heart the purification and the peace which belong to those who are placed under the efficacy of His blood. We are placed there as the Jews were under the blood of the goat of atonement; not, however, for a year only, but forever.

As to a soul, then, that the Holy Spirit has hewn out of the quarry of this world, being honest, amiable, kept by the good providence of God, but withal doing its own will—well, God has found it there in the world and of the world, notwithstanding all its good qualities, and He has to put His love in its heart, in order that it may, without hesitation, care only about the will of God to do it. But, thus separated, it is under the blood of sprinkling, it is cleansed from all its sin.

That is the first principle; the separation wrought by God Himself, who places us outside of this world, or rather of the things of this world, and makes us Christians; without this there is no Christianity.

God acts effectually. He does nothing by halves; and that is all His work. God does not deceive Himself. He must have realities. He does not deceive Himself as we deceive ourselves, and as we try to deceive others, although we deceive others less than we deceive ourselves.

I would point out to you the meaning of the word "sanctification": it is rarely used in the Scriptures in the sense in which we generally use it; that is to say, in the progressive sense. It is only three times employed in this sense. It is said: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness (sanctification), without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly" (1 Thessalonians 5:23). I quote these two passages to show that I do not set aside this sense of the word; but it more particularly designates an act of separation, a setting apart for God. If we have not laid hold of this meaning, there will be an entire mistake as to what sanctification is.

In the two above-quoted passages, the work has an every-day application. In the sense in which it is used by the apostle in the beginning of this Epistle, it is perfectly in the sense of taking a stone out of the quarry of this world to fashion it for God.

Sanctification is attributed to the Father in more than one place in the Bible. See Hebrews 10:10. Now, it is by this will that we are sanctified; by the offering made once of the body of Jesus Christ. It is by this will of God that we are sanctified.

1. There is the first thought, the will of God, which is, to set us apart (to sanctify us).
2. And the means, -it is the offering of Christ.

And it is always (with scarcely more than one exception, which we have already quoted) in this manner that it is spoken of in the Hebrews. Sanctification is attributed to God the Father in another passage also—Jude 1.

The Father having willed to have children for Himself, the blood of Jesus does the work, and the Holy Spirit comes to accomplish the counsels of the Father, and to give them efficacy by producing the practical effect in the heart. The soul separated from the world is sanctified by that very fact. There is the old trunk which pushes forth its shoots, but God acts in pruning; and His acting, which takes place by the Holy Spirit, works the daily practical sanctification. The heart is each day more and more set apart. It is not like a vase, because in man it is the heart which is set apart. Thus, when life is communicated, and thereby the man is sanctified, there is a daily work of sanctification which applies to the affections, to the habits, to the walk, etc.

Let us see how God does this—

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (ver. 3).

Such is the way He does it. God sets us apart for Himself. It is not by modifying what was bad in us, but by creating us anew; by making afresh a new creature, for the old man cannot be made subject to the law. He gives a new life.

If one be not thus born anew, one belongs yet to the world, which is under condemnation; but when God acts, it is altogether another thing. Being born in Adam, we have need to be born by Christ. When the heart is visited by the Holy Spirit, one is begotten again by a life which is not of this world, which urges it to another end, Christ. It is not by precepts addressed to the old man; it is by another life. The precepts follow afterward; that is to say, that this life of which we speak, which is the new birth, belongs not to this world, neither in its source, nor in its aim; it cannot have a single thing in common with the old life. This life is found here below in the body; we eat, work, etc., as before; but that is not what Christ came for. Christ came to make us comprehend quite another thing from the life here below, into which He entered. And that is the rule of the Christian's conduct. He has for object, for aim, and for joy what Christ has for object, aim, and joy; his affections are heavenly, as those of Christ.

If the life of Christ is in me, the life and the Spirit of Christ in me cannot find joy in that wherein Christ finds not His joy.

The Spirit of Christ in me cannot be a different spirit than it was in Him; and it is evident that he who is separated from this world for God cannot find pleasure in the life of sin of this world, and prefer it to that of heaven.

We know well that the Christian often fails in this rule; but this hinders not that there is nothing in common between the life of heaven and that of the world. It is not a question of prohibitions as to using this or that, but of having altogether other tastes, desires, and joys; and it is on that account people imagine that Christians are sad, as if they were absorbed by only one thought.

It is that our joys are altogether different from those of the world; the world knows not our joys.

No unrenewed person can comprehend what renders the Christian happy; that is to say, that his tastes are not for the things of this world.

His thoughts rise higher. This is the joy of the Christian, that Christ is entered into heaven, and has Himself destroyed all that could have hindered us from entering there.

Death, Satan, and the wicked spirits, have been conquered by Christ, and the resurrection has annihilated all that was between Him and the glory. Christ placed Himself in our position.

He underwent the consequences of it. He has conquered the world and Satan. It is written, "Resist devil, and he will flee from you:" if he is already conquered, we have not to conquer him, but to resist him. When we resist him, he knows he has met Christ, his conqueror. The flesh does not resist him. Jesus gives us a lively hope by His resurrection from the dead; in this way, and being in Him, we are on a foundation which cannot fail.

Christ has already shown that He has won the victory; and what grace is here presented to us Even that of obtaining the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith, etc. (vers. 4, 5).

This treasure is in heaven. I have nothing to fear, it is in perfect safety. But this is what I fear as to myself, temptations, all sorts of difficulties, for I am not in heaven. That is true; but what gives every security, is not that we are not tried or tempted, but that in the trial here below, we are kept, as the inheritance is kept in heaven for us.

Here is the position of the Christian, set apart by the resurrection of Christ, and begotten again., It is that, in waiting for the glory, we are kept by the power of God, through faith, separated from the world by the power and communication of the life of Him who has won the victory over all that could have hindered us from having a part in it.

And why are these trials sent to us? It is God who works the soil, in order that all the affections, of the heart, thus sifted, may be purified and exercised, and perfectly in harmony with the glory of heaven, and with the objects which are set before us.

Is it for naught that gold is put in the furnace, or because it is not gold? No; it is to purify it.

God, by trials, takes out of our hearts that which is impure, in order that when the glory arrives we may enjoy it.

Let us see a little what the apostle says on this subject: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (vers. 6, 7). Whereabouts are we, then, when the process of sanctification is carried on? It is that although we have not seen Jesus, we love Him; and although now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

It is there the heart finds itself; and whatever be the circumstances of the present life, Christ is present in the midst of our temptations, and the heart always finds itself close to Jesus, the source of its happiness; and while saying that His love is boundless, passes all knowledge, we can say also that we have the intelligence of it.

The magnet always turns towards the pole; the needle always trembles a little when the storm and tempest roar, but its direction changes not; the needle of the Christian heart points always towards Christ. A heart which understands, which loves Jesus, which knows where Jesus has passed before it, looks at Him to sustain it through its difficulties; and however rugged and difficult the way, it is precious to us, because we find there the trace of the steps of Jesus (He has passed there), and specially because this road conducts us, through difficulties, to the glory in which He is. Seeing, says the apostle, that if need be, it is "that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold, that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

It is not only that we have been begotten again, but that we receive the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls. The end of my faith is to see Christ, and the glory that He has gained for me. He says here, the salvation of the soul, because the question is not of a temporal deliverance, as in the case of the ancient Jews. I see now this glory through a veil, but I long to see myself there. And being now in the trial, I look to Him who is in the glory, and who secures it to me. The gold will be completely purified; but the gold is there: as to me, as to my eternal life, it is the same thing as if I were in the glory. Salvation and glory are not the less certain, though I am in the trial, than if I were already in the rest. And that is practical sanctification; habits, affections, and a walk formed after the life and calling one has received from God.

[J. N. D.]

(To be continued)

## Sanctification Without Which There Is No Christianity: Part 2

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If I engage a servant, I require him to be clean, if I am so myself. God says: "Be ye holy; for I am holy." And as it is with the servant I desire to introduce into my house, so is it with us. God requires that we should be suited to the state of His house; He will have a practical sanctification in His servants. Moreover the aim of the apostle is, that our faith be firm and constant. He gives us, in the twenty-first verse, full security, in saying to us, "that your faith and hope might be in God," not merely in that which justifies us before a just-judging God. It is a God who is for us, who willed to help us, and who introduced us into His family, setting us apart for obedience, and to share in the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. He has loved us with an eternal love. He has accomplished all that concerns us. He keeps us by His power through faith, in order to introduce us to glory.

He places us in trial; He makes us pass through the furnace, because He will wholly purify us. It is Himself who has justified us; who shall condemn us? It is Christ who has died, or rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and who also maketh intercession for us; who shall separate us from His love (Romans 8:33)? Our faith and our love being in God, what have we to fear? We have, in Zechariah (chap. 3.) a very encouraging example. The Lord caused Zechariah to see Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said to Satan: The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! the Lord who hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee. Is not this the brand that I have plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments (the sin, the corruption of man), and he stood before the angel. And the angel said, Take away the filthy garments from him. And he said to him, Behold, I have made thine iniquity to pass from thee, and have clothed thee with new garments (the righteousness of God applied). Satan accuses the children of God; but when God justifies, who can condemn? Would you then that God were not content with His work, which He hath wrought for Himself? And it is in order that we be holy and unblameable in love before Him.

Can you say, "He has sanctified me," in the sense that He has given you Jesus for the object of your faith? If it be thus, He has placed you under the sprinkling of His precious blood, in order that you may be a Christian, and happy in obedience. You may say now, He is the object of my desires, of my hope. You may not yet have understood all that Christ is for you, and you may have much to do in practice; but the important thing is to understand that it is God who has done all, and has placed you under the efficacy of that resurrection life, in order that you may be happy and joyful in His love.

It is remarkable to what a point God makes all things new in us; it is because He must destroy our thoughts, in order that we may have peace.

There is nothing morally in common between the first and the Second man; the first sinned and drew the whole human race in his fall; the last Adam is the source of life and power. That applies to every truth of Christianity, and to all that is in this world. There are but these two men. Nicodemus is struck with the wisdom of Jesus, and with the power manifested in His miracles; but the Lord stops him, and cuts the matter short with him, by saying, "Ye must be born again." He

was not in a condition to be instructed. He did not understand the things of God; for to do so a man must be born again; in short, he had not life. I do not say that he could not arrive at it; because, further on, we see him paying honor to Jesus, in bringing the necessary spices to embalm Him.

I have been led to this thought, because the end of this chapter recalled to me the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. I do not speak of the accomplishment of the prophecy which will take place at a later day for the Jews, but of a grand principle. This chapter begins with these words: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever."

Before God begins, He must cause it to be understood that all flesh is as grass.

If God will comfort His people, what saith the Lord? "All flesh is grass." It must begin there. The grass is withered, because the spirit of the Lord hath blown upon it. But the word of God endureth forever. Therein was the foundation of hope; had it been possible for any one to have obtained anything, it would have been the Jews, who had all; but they were nothing more than the grass of the fields, than the grass that withereth. When God will comfort man who has failed in the responsibility which attaches to him, it is thus He begins, "All flesh is grass," and it is for this reason that there is such a confusion in the heart of the newly-converted man, and even of the Christian, if he does not pay attention to it; namely, that the word comes to tell him the grass is withered, the flesh is incapable of producing any good, and that he does not yet rest on this, that the word of the Lord endureth forever, and that the blessing consequently cannot fail to His own. Till we cease in our efforts to get good from the flesh, and till we are assured that the word of the Lord endureth forever, we shall be always troubled and weak before the assaults of the enemy.

The people had trampled on the ordinances, broken the law, crucified the Messiah, done all possible evil. Has the word of God changed? In nowise. God alters nothing in His election, nor in His promises. Paul asks, Has God rejected His people? God forbid. Peter addresses himself to the people; there is no more of them apparently; the grass is withered, but there is the word of God, and He can say to them, You are now a people; you have obtained mercy. Now, we are going to see that this word becomes the instrument of blessing and of practical sanctification. God never sanctifies what withers like grass. He introduces, on the contrary, what is most enduring and most excellent of man into heaven.

The word withers man, the breath of the Lord has passed over. Introduce man's glory into heaven, it is dreadful! This work is painful, because of the often prolonged wrestlings of the pride and self-will of the flesh; and God does not begin His work by modifying what already exists. Neither can He, because He will destroy it. He can neither require nor produce fruits before the tree be planted. But He begins by communicating a new life, and detaches the creature from the things to

which its flesh is attached; and the Holy Spirit communicates to it the things of the world to come, and the instrument He employs is the word, that word whereof it is said, It abideth forever. The word, which was of promise for the nation, becomes an instrument of life for our souls. We are begotten by the word of truth, which judges also as a two-edged sword all that is not of this new life. Let us examine the difference between our justification and our sanctification. Justification is something, not in ourselves, but a position in which God has placed us before Himself; and those to whom it is applied by God, being the children who possess this righteousness, those of the last Adam, possess all that He has and all that He loves. He who has this righteousness of God is born of God and possesses all that belongs to his Father, who assimilates the rights of His children to those of His Son, who is Heir of all things. So soon as I am a child of the last Adam, I am in the blessing and righteousness in which Christ Himself is found; and just as I have inherited from the first Adam all the consequences and results of his fall, even so, being born of the last Adam, I inherit all that He has acquired, just as I had inherited from the former.

If it be thus, it is evident that I have part in the glory of Christ; and if life be not there, it is naught. God presents His love to us. He reveals it to us, and His word abides eternally. And here is the way God begins with the soul. He presents this truth to us, ever fresh before Himself; it is not a result produced in us that He makes us see; on the contrary, it is that man, such as he is, has no part in this righteousness, because the flesh, which is as grass, cannot be in relation with God. He reveals and imparts to us a justification He has accomplished.

God cannot give precepts of sanctification to such as have no justification. The effects of the life of Christ are to convince of sin, and also to cause fruit-bearing. When the gospel was presented at the beginning, it was the Gentiles who, till then, had had no part in the promises of God. There was no need to speak to them of sanctification. But now that all the world calls itself Christian, I must see whether I be really a Christian; but this idea is not found at all in the Bible. The state of sin was spoken of, and the gospel declared; now men say, "Am I really a Christian?" which thing was not so then. A man takes his practical life to see whereabouts he is, believing that the question is of sanctification, when it is only of justification. This question was not necessary at the commencement; now, people look at the fruits to see if they have life, and confound with sanctification that which is only a conviction of sin previous to justification by faith and peace with God. Until a soul has consented to say, "Jesus is all, and I have nothing;" till then, I say, there is nothing in this soul which relates to Christian sanctification. These things must be set right before the soul can have peace.

At the preaching of Peter, three thousand persons were made happy; they were not in doubt; from the moment a man embraced the gospel, he was a Christian, he was saved.

The progress of practical sanctification must not be confounded with justification, because practical sanctification is wrought in a saved soul that has eternal life. It is an entirely new thing, of which there is no trace before I have found Christ. If we comprehend this passage (Heb 12:14), "Follow.... holiness [sanctification] without which no man shall see the Lord" (and there is nothing troubles a soul as that often does), it is clear that if I do not possess Christ, I cannot see the Lord: that is very simple. If I have not in myself that life of the last Adam, as I before had the life of the first, never shall I see His face. The tastes natural to the one will develop themselves therein, as they developed themselves in the other. The first inquiry to be made in such a case is, Have you

peace with God, the pardon of your sins? If not, the question is of the justification of a sinner. Having then your soul purified in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit, that is the power “by the Spirit.” The essential thing is the obedience to the truth; people seek purification, and desire to bear fruit. But this is not what God first asks of us; it is obedience, and obedience to the truth.

Whereof does the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, speak? He has much to say to us; but first of all, “All flesh is as grass.” He says that no good thing exists in man; the Spirit convinces the world of sin. The whole world lies in wickedness; that world would have none of Christ, and the Holy Spirit cannot present Himself without saying, You have rejected the Christ. The Holy Spirit comes into this world, and proves to it its pride and its rebellion. Behold, the Son is no longer here, and why? The world has rejected Him. The Spirit comes to say, The grass is withered; then, when that is acknowledged, He communicates the peace that He has preached. He says truly, “You are sinners;” but He does not speak to sinners of sanctification; He will produce it by the truth, and He tells them the truth. Can man produce it? Nay. It is Christ, He who is the way, and the truth, and the life. The Holy Spirit speaks to the sinner of the grace, of the righteousness of God of peace, not to make, but made; that is the truth. He convinces the world of what it is, and He speaks to it of that will of God by which the believer is sanctified, that thus we may be obedient to the truth, in submitting to the love of God; and when the soul is subject to this truth, life is there.

He communicates life; “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.” The word abides eternally It is thus that God first produces the principle of sanctification, which is the life of Christ in us; if the practical means be inquired for, it is the word of truth.

Does the Holy Spirit tell pagans to make progress in sanctification? Does He say this to men unconverted? No. When a sinner has understood the truth, such as God presents it, then the Holy Spirit puts him in relation with God the Father, and this sinner rejoices in all that which Christ has acquired for him Thus, having purified your souls in obeying the truth by the Holy Spirit, etc., ye have been born again of an incorruptible seed, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. You will find that it is ever thus.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:10 it is written, as to the unbelieving, contrasted with the Christians, that they have not received (or rather, accepted) the love of the truth that they might be saved. Therefore God will send them a strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who have not believed the truth, etc. But, my brethren, beloved of the Lord, we are bound to give thanks to God for you, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (ver. 13).

It is, then, the belief of the truth; it is not the belief of the fruits. The Holy Spirit cannot present to me the works He has produced in me, as the object of my faith. He speaks to me of my faults, of my short-comings, but never of the good works that are in me, He produces them in me, but He bides them from me; for if we think of it, it is but a more subtle self-righteousness. It is like the manna which, being kept, produced worms.

ALL is spoiled—it is no more faith in action; the Holy Spirit must always present to me Christ, that I may have peace.

The same principle is in John 17:16: “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The world was not Christ's aim.

During His whole life, though He was not gone out of the world, He was no more of the world than if He had been in heaven. When Practice is in question, He says, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth.” Truth is not of this world; this world is a vast lie, which is demonstrated in the history we possess in the Bible. There we find the manifestation of sin in the natural man, and the manifestation of the life in the renewed man, by His word. “Sanctify them through thy truth.... For their sakes I sanctify myself.” What does the Lord Jesus here do for us? He sets Himself apart.

He sanctifies Himself; it is not that He may be more holy, but He makes Himself the model Man.

It is not a law requirement; but it is Christ Himself who is life and power, whereof He presents the perfect result. It is Christ who presents the fulfillment and the perfection; He is the vital spring of all; and in considering these things, the reflection of them is in me by faith, which reproduces them in the inner man and in the life.

We find something interesting on this subject in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. In the beginning was the life, and the life was the light.

The law was not this. It was not a light that condemned; but the life was this light, and we have seen it full of grace and truth—not of truth only, but of grace; and of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. When we have received Christ, there is not a single grace which is not for me, and in me. There is no Christian who has not every grace that is in Jesus. Suppose even a state of failure, it is the strongest case, but this hinders not that we possess all in Him. Failure is a sad thing, but that changes not the position; for the Christian has not received a part only of Christ, but the whole of Christ. On the one hand, it is encouragement. When I say to myself, “I must seek after such a grace;” the answer is, “Thou possessest it;” and, on the other hand, it humbles me; for if I possess it, why is it not manifested? This always supposes that we have received the truth that God has made peace. We must always return to this: “Sanctify them through thy truth: Thy word is truth.” Is it by looking into myself that I shall find this sanctification? No; but in looking to Jesus, in whom it is, Christ having been made unto us of God “righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” I see this humility in Christ, and take pleasure in it; when I look to Him, by faith, my soul is in peace; His Spirit is always in me, and I am sanctified by faith in Him, according to that grace which makes me one with Him. Christ gives me all that, and this truth reveals to me that the redemption is made, and I enjoy it, having obeyed the truth. If any one seeks after sanctification without being assured of his justification, and is troubled about it, doubting whether he be a Christian, then I ask him, What have you to do with sanctification? You have not to think about that for the present. Assure yourself, first of all, that you are saved; pagans, unbelievers, do not sanctify themselves. If you have faith, you are saved; sanctify yourself in peace. The only question is to consider your sinful state. First, have you obeyed the truth? have you submitted to it? What does God speak to you about? He speaks of peace made. He says to you, that He has given His Son; He says to you, that He has so loved the world, that He has given His Son to the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. This is the truth to which you have to submit, and to receive above all, specially before you busy yourself about sanctification, which depends on Him who has given you eternal life. Begin, then, by obeying the truth; this truth tells you of the righteousness of God, which is satisfied in Jesus,

and which is yours; or rather that you are in Christ; then you will enjoy peace, and you will be sanctified in practice. This practical sanctification flows from the contemplation of Jesus. Here is what the apostle Paul says to us on this subject, in 2 Cor. 3:18: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

You see that it is in beholding Jesus that we are transformed from glory to glory. Life, the principle of life, is there, and not in your anxieties; the development of this life of Jesus is progressively realized by looking to Him. It is faith which sanctifies, as also it justifies: it looks unto Jesus.

When Moses came down from the mountain, from before God, he did not know that he also shone with glory, but those who saw him knew it. Moses had looked towards God; others saw the effect. Blessed be God that it is thus in a practical sense! As to practice, then, the question is the sanctification of Christians, because they are saved, because they are sanctified to God, as respects their persons; not those who are not yet so. It is not to exact, on God's part, but to communicate life. Now, this communication proceeds from Jesus, who is its source. He communicates life, which is holiness. Oh that God might always show us the grace to make us always more and more feel that all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass; but that the word of the Lord endureth forever! "And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." It is of this incorruptible seed we are born. What ought not our confidence to be in this word!

J. N. D.

(concluded from page 48)

## Scripture Query and Answer: Head Covering

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Q.-Will you please say, through the "Bible Treasury," whether, in your judgment, 1 Cor. 11:1-17 (re sisters covering heads) may be applied to a Bible reading in a private house, which is private in character? Also, whether, in such a reading, it is proper for sisters to pray? Such a meeting is not to be regarded as an "assembly" gathering, is it? Your reply in the May issue, if possible, will be appreciated. J. M.

A.-We should never confound a "Bible reading" with an "assembly meeting." The character of each is altogether different and distinct. For the freedom of speech and asking of questions which pertains to a Bible reading is altogether disallowable in a meeting of "assembly." Whilst, however, there is this freedom, and more or less conversational character, which obtains in the reading meeting, women, nevertheless, have their suited conduct which, in general, is "to be in silence." "The men" may pray in every place, lifting up holy hands; not so women, who (not in dress only, but) in seemly deportment, should be adorned with "modesty and sobriety." It would be a contradiction of this if women were to pray in public. We can well understand the liberty of a mother praying with her children at home, and that scripture does not call upon her in such a case to cover her head either then, or, as it appears to me, in the reading of God's word at "family prayer." But in a Bible reading, where men are present, even if held in a "private" house, would not this assume a "public" character? And if so, comeliness would call for the covering of the head on the part of the women as well as (need we say?) for their silence whether of prayer or speech.

## **Scripture Query and Answer: Luke 9:3 Compared With Mark 6:8**

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Q. -Will you kindly answer the following question?—In Luke 9 the Lord told the disciples not to take a staff when sending them out; whereas in Mark 6:8 He says, “Take nothing... save a staff only.” Can you say why the two Evangelists differ?

A. -If the enquirer has access to vol. 9 (N.S.) of the Bible Treasury (1913) he will find on page 356 what, we think, may be a solution of his difficulty.

## Scripture Query and Answer: Reign of Christ

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Q.-Can it be shown from Scripture that when the reign of Christ over the earth is finally established, there will be none of mankind living in the world but such as have been born of the Spirit?

C. Cox

A. Does not Revelation 20:7-9 supply the answer? For the expiration of the millennial reign of Christ reveals the solemn fact that, in spite of the universal knowledge of the glory of Jehovah (Habakkuk 2:14) the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth fall under the deceptive power of Satan, then loosed out of his prison, who succeeds in gathering them to battle against the camp of the saints and the beloved city—Jerusalem, God's holy mountain.

With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, a new covenant will have been made, and “they all shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Compare also Ezek. 36; 37. They shall be all righteous and shall inherit the land forever, the branch of His planting, the work of His hands, that He may be glorified.

As regards the Gentiles, all flesh shall see the glory of Jehovah, but the nation and kingdom that will not serve Israel shall perish, they shall be utterly wasted (Isaiah 60:12). “Whoso will not come up [“from year to year”] of the families of the earth to Jerusalem to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.” “Jehovah shall smite the nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.” This shall be the “punishment [or sin] of all the nations that come not up” (Zechariah 14:16-19).

Whilst, therefore, Israel will be a “holy nation,” not so the nations universally. Righteousness will reign, and evil be suppressed; non-existent it will hardly be, else how can we understand (the margin of) Psalm 18:44, “sons of [the] stranger shall yield feigned obedience to me;” also Psalm 66:3, “Through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies yield feigned obedience to thee?” And of the children of the righteous born during this period of universal blessedness, how can we assume that they would be all born of God? —that they necessarily grow up to walk (as did not the sons of Samuel—remarkable man as he was) in their father's ways? On the contrary, we see judgment falling during, and at the end of, the thousand years, disclosing conclusively that not all are converted, whatever may have been the case at the beginning of the reign. Does not Isaiah 65:20 show that the man who filled not his days was cut off, because he was a sinner? For there will be no death during the thousand years except as the result of open sin; death will be swallowed up in victory (Isaiah 25:8).

We thus learn that no outward circumstances avail for the conversion of the soul. There must be an inward work of the word and Spirit of God. The mighty works of our blessed Lord in favored Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum failed to work repentance in these cities! So in the millennium, with all its manifested power and glory and knowledge increased, the heart of man

remains unchanged, unless the subject of divine grace. There must be a new birth, and this cannot be apart from repentance and faith.

## The Son of Man in Heaven

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The second of Luke's letters to his friend Theophilus does not stiffly and formally take up the inspired narrative where the first of them had left it; there is rather an easy and graceful intertwining or intervolving of the two; the second going back a little into the scenes and the seasons which closed the first, giving them the same general character with a few faint distinguishing features. But each of these letters, "the Gospel by Luke," and "the Acts of the Apostles," has of course, as I need not say, its own proper subject.

In the early chapters of the second of them, that is, of "the Acts of the Apostles," and to which I am now, for a little, addressing myself, we get an account of Jesus as Man glorified in the heavens; as in the early chapters of the first of them we got an account of God manifest in flesh on the earth. I mean, this is characteristic, severally, of each of them. The Person is, surely, one and the same in both; the God-Man.

We learn many things connected with the Son of man in heaven, from the Evangelists, where that mystery is anticipated now and again. The Lord Himself tells us that He is to be seen there by faith all through this present age, seated at the right hand of power; and that in due time He will come forth from thence in the clouds of heaven (Matthew 26:64). He tells us also, that when He has come forth, He will sit on the throne of His glory (Matthew 25:31). These are but mere samples of the way in which this great mystery was thus anticipated. But the Person seen in the Evangelists is God manifested in the flesh, and, as such, in action on the earth. In these chapters of the Acts, succeeding the Evangelists, it is, on the other hand, Man glorified in heaven, and acting there.

In chapter 1, Jesus of Nazareth, who was God manifest in flesh here, is seen ascending the heavens.

In chapter 2, the promised Spirit is given, and Peter begins his preaching by taking this gift, according to the prophecy of Joel, as his text. And after reciting it, he says, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." And he then shows, from Psalm 16; 110, that this Man thus approved of God on earth, was now raised from the dead and glorified at the right hand of God in heaven.

Thus the mystery is established, the mystery of the Son of man, Jesus of Nazareth, exalted in the heavens. Then, as the Evangelists had already looked at Jesus as He walked, and ministered, and toiled, and suffered here on earth, so now in his preaching, in this and in the following chapters, Peter gives us some of the ways and virtues of this same Jesus now ascended into heaven.

Thus, in this same chapter 2, with Joel still as his text, he tell,; us, that He is the God mentioned in that prophecy, who has now sent down the Spirit. According to Joel, therefore, it is the God of Israel who does this great Pentecostal wonder; according to Peter, it is the Man now in heaven that does it.

This is surely a magnificent way in which to begin the story of the virtues and glories of Jesus of Nazareth, now glorified on high at God's right hand; where also Peter declares Him to be seated, till the day come for making His foes His footstool, as the "My Lord," of the hundred and tenth Psalm. And then, on the authority of these things, he calls the whole house of Israel to own the once crucified Man to be both Lord and Christ. And when a number of his hearers are aroused by this preaching, he publishes to them the virtue of "the name" of this glorified One, that it can secure eternal life and the gift of the Spirit to all sinners who receive it.

Then, in chapter 3, this same Apostle tells us several other great things of Jesus in the heavens—that it was His name, through faith in it, that had just healed the lame beggar at the gate of the Temple—that He was the Prophet promised by Moses in Deuteronomy 18—that the heavens are now retaining Him, but that He is again to leave them in due season, to bring with Him back to the earth, times of refreshing and restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets.

Then, in chapter 4, he preaches through this same Jesus, "the resurrection from the dead" and further proclaims, that He was "the Head of the corner," according to Psalm 118, and the only One set of God for salvation in this guilty world. And towards the close of this chapter, he and his fellow-saints at Jerusalem lay the name of this same Jesus before the Lord God, the Maker of the heaven and the earth, as all their confidence and title to blessing.

Then, in chapter 5, Peter and the other apostles testify in the face of the Jewish council, that this same blessed One whom they had slain and hanged on a tree, God had exalted with His right hand to be both a Prince and a Savior, everything indeed to Israel, whether for blessing or government.

After these manners, in the course of this preaching, we get a large and varied testimony to the Man in heaven. Well may it follow the ineffably weighty and blessed testimony of the Evangelists to the Son of the Father, God manifest in flesh, on earth. But here, with this fifth chapter, the apostolic testimony under the given Spirit ends. We pass from it to a vision (chap. 7.). For after this hearing about the glorified Man, we are given for a little moment, a sight of Him. Peter had been preaching Him, Stephen is now to see Him. They are alike witnesses, though in different ways, to the same great mystery, that the Son of man was in heaven at the right hand of God. Stephen is cast by wicked men outside the city to be stoned, while his face is shining like that of an angel; and his eye is opened, and he looks up to, and within, the opened heavens, and there sees the glory of God, and Jesus, "the Son of man," standing at the right hand of God.

Thus is the Man in heaven testified by the eye of Stephen as He had been by the lips of Peter. The Spirit fills the one with an inspired tale about Him, and God opens the eye of the other with a glorious sight, of Him. But the object is the same—the glorified Man, the Son of man in heaven, Jesus of Nazareth at the right hand of the majesty on high—the One, who having been "God manifest in the flesh" here, humbled, serving, crucified, buried, and raised again, was now in His Manhood exalted to the highest place of honor there.

One thing, however, still remains in the revelation of this great mystery. In chapter 9, this glorified Man comes down from heaven, and shows Himself for a little moment, here on earth. In holy, peaceful glory, and in the attitude of one that was receiving him to Himself with a blissful and

perfect welcome, He had just been seen (chap. 7.), as in His due place in heaven, by His suffering saint. But now, in terrible majesty in the burning brightness of judicial glory, He is seen by the persecutor of His saint, here on earth. He thus appears as One ready and all-powerful to avenge the blood of His slaughtered flock. Mercy indeed shall rejoice over judgment in the present case, and the persecutor shall become a Witness and an Apostle; but the vision tells us that the Man in heaven waits there, as in other characters, so in this, the Avenger, in due time, of the wrongs done in the earth. This is so, and this is here pledged and foreshadowed. For we know that Jesus has ascended in various characters. He has ascended as to His native place, the glory He had with the Father ere the world was—He has ascended to prepare mansions in the Father's house for the elect. He has ascended as their Forerunner—He has ascended to sit in the God—pitched Tabernacle as our High Priest—He has ascended as the Author and Finisher of faith, and as the Purger of sins—but He has ascended also to take His place as Adonai at the right hand of Jehovah, till He makes His foes His footstool. And this last character He must return to earth to fulfill, as now He comes down to the road which lay between Jerusalem and Damascus to give, as it were, a sample of this, and to put the sentence of death in this persecuting Saul of Tarsus.

J. G. B.

## Strength in Weakness

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Isaiah 11; Genesis 32; 2 Corinthians 12

It is well when Christians in conscious weakness (for indeed, we are as water spilled upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again) “wait upon the Lord,” for “in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength;” and we are told “he that waiteth upon his Master shall be honored.” At the time Isaiah spoke, all was weakness and confusion in Israel; but although their condition was so sad in the Lord's sight, yet in the riches of God's grace the prophet was given to utter by the Holy Spirit these memorable and reassuring words, “Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” Thus He recalled them to the inexhaustible source of strength to be found alone in Himself. Their youths and young men, in whom strength and vitality would naturally be looked for, had utterly failed, and everything was in a state of complete prostration. Then came the blessed and definite promise (surely not less for us than for Israel) “they that wait upon Jehovah shall renew, or change their strength. They shall mount up as with the wings of eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.” Faintness and weariness are thus overcome, and power given to run in His service, and strength imparted to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, to all those who wait upon the Lord.

In that remarkable scene recorded in Genesis 32 Jacob had to prove by painful experience, as we have, that natural strength availed him nothing, yea, was a positive hindrance to the blessing a divinely sent one desired to confer upon him. Instead of “wrestling Jacob,” as so often he is called, it was quite the contrary up to the moment that the hollow of his thigh was touched. “And there wrestled a man with him, and when he (the man) saw that he prevailed not against him (Jacob), he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint as he wrestled with him”: and it was only when Jacob's flesh had been touched and become shrunk that he could say, “I will not let thee go unless thou bless me”; and the result of Jacob wrestling in weakness was a full blessing in power, for the answer came, “Thou shalt be no more called Jacob, for thou hast power with God, and hast prevailed, and he blessed him there.” And the Spirit desires our attention to another fact that this struggle had made a difference to Jacob's “walk.” May the Lord be pleased to grant in these last days unto His beloved people a like result flowing from our intercourse with and waiting upon Him!

In 2 Cor. 12 we have a very notable example of a believer's weakness and the Lord's mighty power. Paul, the precious and honored servant of the Lord Jesus, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations to him, was given a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, to buffet him. This drove him to the Lord. He waited upon Him about it, and he prayed earnestly. He besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him. The answer came from Him glorified on high, “My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” The apostle, in his weakness and powerlessness, had obtained the blessing and

victory in waiting upon the Lord. With this blessed assurance from his risen Master and Lord, he no longer asks for the removal of that which made him weak, but his language then was "most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Our adorable Savior and Holy Lord, in the days of His flesh, in grace knew what it was to be here as the humble and dependent Man, and as such waited upon His Father in prayer; and in that scene of Gethsemane's garden we, with chastened hearts, hear Him praying more earnestly, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done"; and then when He had so prayed, we read, "And there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening him."

May we each and all desire to be in that condition of realized weakness and dependence before the Lord that He may be pleased to let His strength rest upon us, and thus know more intimately and experimentally what it is to "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," and to "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

H. C. M.

## To Correspondents

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R.C. is referred for an answer to his statement to the selfsame column of page 6 of last month's Bible Treasury, from which he quotes.

## Truth: Its Nature and History—1

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What is truth? Earnestly the question is often asked, and on many occasions suggests itself. Once it was put to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "What is truth?" asked Pilate, the Roman Governor (John 18:38), when that subject was suddenly thrust upon his attention. In the same manner it is being asked still, "What is truth?" Many in perplexity have inquired and still inquire. But the occasion referred to in this chapter was, whether as regards time or place, or persons involved, absolutely unique. Let us glance at it as a preliminary to our subject.

On the eve of His crucifixion, before the judgment-seat of Pilate, the Lord Jesus Christ had this question addressed to Him by His judge. "What is truth?" Exactly what was in the mind of the Roman Governor when he asked the question on that momentous occasion we may not know, but his actions help us to determine what was his attitude towards the subject of conversation. He broke off so abruptly at this point. If sincerely anxiously to know the truth, an answer would have been vouchsafed from Him who "for this cause came into the world that He might bear witness to the truth." And had it been any other spirit than one of indifference or skepticism which prompted the question, such answer would surely have been waited for. Now attitude towards the truth and towards Christ are virtually the same. The Lord, in the previous verse, had declared, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice," and by turning his back on the Lord when he said this, Pilate manifested where he was. "Of the truth" he was not, for Jesus' voice, the voice of its greatest Witness and fullest Exponent, he did not hear. There are those who, born of water and of Spirit, begotten of God by the word of truth, can be spoken of as "of the truth." Such, being thereby of the flock of the Good Shepherd, hear and recognize His voice. But Pilate, un-happily, was not one of their number. That spirit of subjection to its claims which marked these, was far removed from his haughty bearing here. The most charitable, if not the only possible construction we can put upon his words is to see in them that mingling of skepticism with indifference which formed the common attitude of cultivated men among the Romans of that period towards everything but worldly and material considerations. Little heart had they for the truth! What was it to them! It had no utilitarian purpose or value in their eyes, and was accordingly held in but little esteem. With this Pilate's actions harmonize throughout, and manifest the solemn position he has taken. Of these, and regarding that, Pilate himself must yet give account. He has long since gone from the scene where men can receive the truth in the love of it. Well would it have been with Pilate had his inquiry been sincere, and his question a genuine one. His destiny, however, is now determined, and whatever he may know now, or, too late have had his eyes opened to when he passed to that other sphere, such intelligence cannot affect his place and fate eternally.

But his case is not a solitary one, for truth concerns all, and although many, like him, have asked the question in a spirit of anything but honest inquiry, yet some there are, thank God, who have been awakened to a sense of its value, and have earnestly sought it for its own, or rather for its Author's sake. "What is truth?" then, we would consider, and also man's attitude to it (a very important matter as even Pilate's case has shown). How he has treated it from the beginning hitherto, may profitably form part of our inquiry.

Truth, in the abstract, has, in all ages, been the professed object of man's diligent search. From the beginning it has been so, and seems to be inseparable from him as constituted and created of God. In the realm of created things intelligence is, above all else, his crown of distinction. It is his to reflect, to reason, to know. Naturally inquisitive, his active mind refuses to be bound down to the passive contemplation of things in his own immediate environment; but must needs pry into everything, investigating into cause and effect, ascertaining the properties and powers, and endeavoring to discover the origin and destiny of all that comes within his cognizance. The acquirement of knowledge has been his steady ambition, and with whatever ulterior motives that object in many cases may have been sought, we may still trace it, back of all, to a spirit of inquiry with which man seems to be constitutionally endowed.

The real reason why man “gives his heart to search and find out concerning all things” is because of that in him which in our first parents was appealed to by the temptation—“a tree to be desired to make one wise.” A fatal aspiration that, truly! but at the same time indicative surely of that active and receptive mind with which their Creator had equipped them. The fact is, that nothing so clearly distinguishes man from all else that lives and moves in nature as these peculiar and unique properties he possesses, of weighing and reflecting upon things not materially presented. The presence of that in his organization to which these powers are ascribed, the mind, marks him off at once in a clear and unmistakable way from every other creature on earth. Between him to the nearest approach in the scale of organized life, there exists, in this particular, not a link of connection, but a wide gulf of distinction. Capable of reasoning and judging, as they are not, and possessing an innate consciousness of things beyond the reach of their limited powers, he is thus clearly fitted for familiarity with a higher plane than they can aspire to. The temple of truth finds in man more than an honorable part of the furniture of its holy place, where, in the realm of nature, every whit of it uttereth His glory. No mere hewer of wood or drawer of water is he, but one fitted to stand in its courts a worshipper.

Unlike these lower orders of creation, man was created in God's image, after His likeness; and for what purpose, reason and intelligence—elements of that highest and spiritual part of man's tri-partite nature—were given, we to whom by His word and Spirit His mind has been revealed, can more than surmise. In this crowning piece of workmanship, morally and spiritually so far above all others, has not God prepared a creature capable in some measure of having communion with Himself? Who can now say what measure of truth God could have gone on to reveal to unfallen man? or to what extent intercourse between God and Adam in Eden might have been enjoyed? However that may be, in man we behold a creature equipped most wonderfully, both morally and intellectually, for the pursuit of knowledge, and the reception of truth.

But is it not just there that danger would come in? Would it be surprising if this his distinctive blessing were also his characteristic danger, that his high privilege entailed commensurate responsibility? Is not that the side most open to attack? where the incursions of an enemy would most likely be looked for? For, if capable of receiving truth, is he not also capable of imbibing error? If thirsting to be enlightened, is he not liable to be deceived? Now, an enemy there was. His character is thus described for us—“He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The source of error himself, his whole interest lies, we may very well imagine, in its propagation. Hatred of God, and all that is of God, also animates him, who

was “a murderer from the beginning.” An opportunity of thwarting God, may we not think he imagined, presented itself in the case of man. To hate one in whom God delights is characteristic of him. To sow error in a field God had so carefully prepared for the reception of truth would be an occupation most congenial to him, and, at the same time, work at which, as the father of lying, he would be most apt. In man, then, he would discern an instrument in some sense made ready to his hand, and very early in their history, therefore, our first parents were assailed. Amidst other issues, were they not there confronted with an artful attempt to displace what truth they already possessed by implanting that which was calculated to effectually exclude it altogether?

Genesis 3 gives the inspired account of this. With this single issue for the time being before us, as we consider the scene in the beginning of that chapter, it becomes increasingly apparent that everything turns upon the question of how God's truth is treated. Subtle as he was, the devil quickly perceived the only vulnerable point in the prohibition of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Exactly in what sense vulnerable, and why left so, are questions which, if to be answered at all, must find their solution along the line of such considerations as what kind of a creature man, as he came from the hand of God, really was; what his state of innocence really signified as to moral intelligence and responsibility. The old problem, in fact, confronts us of man made up-right, yet in such sense that only after his fall is he become as God to know good and evil. One thing, at least, we know as to our first parents in their original state of innocence, and recognize in it a kind of hedge that God had put round their moral immaturity, if such, indeed, it be. Concerning the (to us) mysterious tree of knowledge of good and evil, God had spoken and had declared the inevitable consequence of partaking of it, so that man was already furnished with the truth of God about the matter. To controvert the truth, and to gain an entrance into man's mind for error, was the task before the enemy, and with consummate art he set about the achievement of his design.

The extraordinary subtlety, with which the serpent is credited in verse 1, is exemplified by the very manner of his approach. To the woman his words are addressed. The weaker vessel was chosen as the object of attack. It cannot but be remarked too how cautious are his steps, how warily his part of the conversation is conducted. It opens mildly. To insinuate a doubt is, assuredly a more effectual way of overthrowing convictions than to meet them with a flat denial, for the mind is thus left, as it were, to draw its own conclusions. And an insinuation it is that appears in his words—“Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” From the woman's reply it is evident that her mind had caught the drift of his language, and that her heart, alas! had entertained the implied question as to God's goodness. Confidence in God destroyed, or at least enfeebled, His ward now assumes to her the character of an unpleasant prohibition, and surrender of it is thus made more easy. “Of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” The prohibition increases “neither shall ye touch it”; the penalty is rendered less threatening— “lest ye die.” A small circumstance it may seem, yet sufficient to show where she is, her attitude towards God's truth.

Judging things to be now ripe for it, Satan does not hesitate to boldly deny what he had already questioned; and his lie is accepted in exchange for the truth she has come to so lightly esteem. The words of Eve in reply to God's question, “What is this that thou hast done?” aptly describe the process by which the enemy's triumph was accomplished— “The serpent beguiled me.” Her statement receives inspired corroboration from 2 Cor. 11:3 — “the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety.” And that record also is true which declares that “being entirely deceived she was in

transgression" (1 Timothy 2:14). How deep the fall! How serious the consequences to a creature endowed as man was! The height of the honor of his former position measures the depth of his degradation now. The very possibilities of enlightenment then enjoyed, such of them as were not lost in the catastrophe itself, become now so many probable inlets for further deception. Completely at the mercy of that wily antagonist we may not describe ourselves for truth still finds that in us to which it can appeal; but biased in the direction of error (we may say) man has seemed to be ever since. Measure the effects on man of the fall, even in this respect, we cannot fully; but, considering whence we have fallen or to what descended, we do well to attend to that which wrought our undoing.

For a sample this is of that "working of Satan" (2 Thessalonians 9) "which deceiveth the whole world"; so that, attending to the word of God, "we are not ignorant of his devices." For ends of the same kind he uses continually means of the same nature, and, manifold and various as are his schemes with men, in some way all resemble this their prototype.

In later encounters the same tactics are pursued, as here on the occasion of its first entrance into the lists; and error does and will maintain the same warfare with similar weapons.

Many elements enter into this crisis of Genesis 3, for it is a fountainhead of history; but a point of great importance in it is the contrast between truth and error, and the origin of the latter through the surrender of the former. And it is well to be clear on this to day. It is of importance to remark that truth was possessed before error was implanted, for exactly contrary to this is modern teaching. The theory as to the rise and dissemination of religious knowledge, which now in large measure holds the field, seems to conveniently forget that there has been a fall, or consequent departure from truth originally possessed. A gradual progress from primeval darkness, on through the twilight of superstition, into the broad daylight of modern enlightenment and knowledge, may form the material of the self-complacent dreams of men; but is it supported either by scripture or by facts? Far from it. To maintain it is to incur the woe pronounced on them "which put darkness for light and light for darkness." The opposite is rather true, for God has never left Himself without witness, but has invariably given a testimony suited for the time and circumstances; and in every case man's sin and the cause of his darkness has been, that he has turned back on that testimony!

Nor was it otherwise here. The truth was plain. A simple command was all that was given. Obedience, the only becoming attitude for a creature, was required. To question the wisdom of the prohibition, or the motive for it, was what Satan endeavored to draw man into. To see man, in effect, constituting himself a judge of God's word, instead of a hearer and doer of it in the due spirit of subjection to its claims, is still his desire. And when he has raised this question, when he has tempted the soul to occupy the judgment-seat, the moral state of him who entertains it, of him who arrogates to himself such a position, is ripe for, and generally grasps at, his solution of the problem, his decision of the case. How much care, then, should be exercised as to what attitude we take up towards the truth of God!

With the fall of man, we enter upon a new era in the history of God's truth in the world. A mercy it is that it did not close there; that further light from God was not withheld, and man left to the darkness he had chosen. No objection could have been raised against such a mode of procedure: it would have been quite compatible with His righteous character for a Holy Creator so to act. In judgment

He had already acted to-wards creatures of His, who had sinned and left their first estate (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6); and the gloom and darkness to which they are consigned might have been, in the spiritual sphere, the immediate result for men also, as it will be eventually and literally their portion who continue in unbelief. In a path of unrelieved darkness, our race might have been left to run its course; to fill up the measure of their iniquity, unvisited by a single ray of hope or light; and still have been only thus reaping what they sowed. But grace was in God's heart for men, and truth from on high still visited them. If man is to be distinguished from all the ranks in nature below him, he is also from those above him. Different from those he is, as we have seen, because of that which is in him; from these, may we not say, because of what God has for His estate differs from all inferiors because of what he is; his treatment from that of created intelligences above him because of what he is to be through Christ Jesus. God's purposes of grace have chosen a human, not an angelic, platform for their expression. His love is to be manifested "not to angels but men." Thus, rather than the judgment which a somewhat similar offense had in that case incurred, mercy is shown to man. Light from God was still vouchsafed.

In what measure, can we exactly say? Adam's naming his wife Eve, the mother of all living, is surely an utterance of faith. Abel's offering, as we learn from Hebrews 11:4, was an action of faith. On what revelation were these based? In the doom pronounced upon the serpent, we can read the forecast of a wondrous deliverance, and the darkness of judgment is relieved by that light of mercy, a veritable silver lining to a dark cloud, if ever there was one. God's action in clothing the guilty pair with skins of animals, implying death, has also significance for us. Whether for them also, or whether these constituted the whole truth for them or not, there was, at any rate, sufficient material for faith to build upon right through those early days.

Truth, in fact, has always been present in the world, and always will be till the close. It might almost be described as one of the constituent elements of the moral atmosphere. Certainly, without it, faith or spiritual life would be, either of them, impossible. Viewed thus also, we can understand the persistency of Satan's endeavor to corrupt and poison that which is, in spiritual things, one of the chief necessities of life to man. That is to say, where he cannot eliminate thoughts of spiritual things from the minds of men altogether, these seem to have been the tactics he pursued during this period, and with conspicuous success. The story of the fall, and abundant evidence of its occurrence, were there to awaken inquiry in the thoughtful. Then, that inquiring mind should be diverted into another channel, and to provide something which should thoroughly engross it, was, as we shall see, what then principally characterized Satan's plan for excluding the truth.

In attaining to the pitch of wickedness which filled the antediluvian earth with corruption and violence, men must themselves have acquiesced in this exclusion; or the recollection and memorials of that fall would have proved at least a check on the pace of their headlong course in iniquity. Doubtless so it was, and, forgetful of the past, they were no less unmindful of anything God might from time to time say to them through His witnesses. Breaking in upon their busy preoccupation, in Enoch, the seventh from Adam, the voice of God is heard, in threatening tones of coming judgment, it is true, yet still, as this, a call of God to men who had, alas, no heart for His truth. Through Noah, a preacher of righteousness, the Spirit also strove with man during the preparation of the ark, while the long-suffering of God waited on men. It waited, alas, fruitlessly, for man's attitude was now one of entire indifference. He had got something now to divert his interest

and engross his attention to the total exclusion of God and His truth. What a creature is man! "God made man upright; he hath sought out many inventions," and building up with these inventions a system, a world of his own, amidst a scene of unbounded wickedness, he finds his pleasure therein, and treats God's offers of mercy and warnings of judgment alike with indifference.

In this object of their pre-occupation itself, have we not again a fresh instance of the great enemy's activity? The scene into which Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, the devil was not absent from, we may be sure. There are traces of his agency here, for the way in which Cain, fugitive and vagabond in the earth as he was, so soon seems to find, along with his descendants, respite from accusing conscience and morbid despair, is remarkable. There must very early have been discovered a sufficiently engrossing subject to give relief from the double burden of conscious guilt and foreboding judgment. And this man did find in the world, the system he was then, under the adversary's guidance, so busy in founding and developing. The elements of that old civilization, far away from us as it is, are not at all unlike the principles of the world system still. And who is the author of that? "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" —not of the Father are they. Deceptive vanities, from the deceiver they come. His habitual work, deceiving men, is it not prominent here also? The sowing of error had apparently triumphed already in what led to man's fall. And now that God will not leave men in their darkness, but pursues them in grace with the light of His truth, Satan has their hearts so wrapped up in the system he has helped them to build here, away from God, that no voice of mercy can reach their hardened hearts, no sound of coming judgment awake them from their indifference. The truth of God was an unwelcome disturber of their peace; and unresponsive to it they remained.

They were "disobedient" we read (1 Peter 3:20); they were indifferent, we conclude; and judgment overtook them. Is it an attitude unknown today? A fate not less terrible awaits those who obey not the gospel now.

With a new world a fresh start is made. Not in ignorance did Noah and his family step forth from the ark. No *tobula rasa* was his mind. Truth was one of the things that came with that ark through the deluge, part of the precious freight it bore onwards into the new world. Much had perished in the waters of judgment, ail, in fact, in which man's pride could rest. The glories of his civilization, the embellishments and luxuries of society, the comforts and delights of his cities, all that had accrued round life for him, the science and learning of that ancient era with discoveries and problems of its own, the arts and crafts of olden time, all he had developed and evolved, discovered and added to the sum of human knowledge and invention, in one wild moment of catastrophe had disappeared forever, and stark and stripped and primitive again stands man, reduced to, and represented by one single, simple, pastoral family. But faith was there, and truth was there. The minds of the saved ones surely had it engraven upon them. With both the mercy and the judgment of God they had become intimately acquainted also, for, while the objects of the one, they were witnesses of the other. Nor was the invitation to enter the place of shelter the last communication God intended to make to man; for, sent forth by that same One in due time, one of Noah's first furnishings was a fresh disclosure of His mind. The sweet savor of his burnt-offering gave God satisfaction, and, charged with the significance of that greater sacrifice of which it was the type, it provided Him a new medium through which He could look down upon the new earth, and man upon it. Smelling that sweet savor of rest also, He could speak regarding both, and truth about each, both new and important, He vouchsafed. Not only at the beginning, then, but at

various points, and especially at every crisis in man's history, has God spoken.

Man's responsibility, then, in presence of the growing light, has been accumulating also. In this connection one of the most important passages of scripture to be kept in mind is Romans 1. The subject of light from God, and how men have treated it is there most thoroughly gone into; so that when tracing this history of truth in the world which we are endeavoring to follow out, this chapter claims considerable attention. In proving man's guilt in the early chapters of Romans, the Spirit, through the Apostle Paul, makes and substantiates certain distinct charges against men, Jew and Gentile, respectively. One of the first of these charges is in chap. 1:18— "who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Unquestionably this points particularly to the Jews, who, with a written revelation from God, and sinning against it, were liable to the charge of unrighteousness. But the truth was a matter the Gentiles also were concerned with, for their "ungodliness," against which the wrath of God is no less revealed, was simply an entire absence of the fear of God where there was sufficient testimony to render such a thing inexcusable. So that unfaithfulness to truth possessed can be charged against both classes. That is the real state of the case, and, beginning with Romans 1, this we must now trace out.

[J. T.]

(To be continued)

## Truth: Its Nature and History—2

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Of the Gentiles it first speaks, showing that that which was “knowable” of God from the testimony of created things, contained a voice for any listening ear, wherever or whenever found. “Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Creation, open to the observation of all, is full of manifestation of God. Above and around man there are strewn in abundance evidences of a divine hand at work, and the most darkened, one would say, would have real trouble to escape the conviction of a wisdom and power therein displayed nothing less than divine. Yet, widespread, continuous, and eloquent as is its testimony, men have not so read God's plain speech in it. And, remark, it is no mistaken reading of the evidence merely that we must lay to man's account, but the wholesale rejection of it. There was little room left, one would think, for mistake had not the hearts of men been really desirous of some alternative signification. Yet just there it lies. Anyone or anything but Him they would willingly invest with the glory of such handiwork. They say unto God— “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” Yet, even in face of this want of desire after God, these silent witnesses remain, to be accusers, if nothing more; and the sum of their accusation here is that ungodly men are “without excuse.” This witness of creation to the great Originator and Sustainer of all, infinite in His might and wisdom, is fact beyond challenge or dispute. Designed so to testify to man, legitimately therefore is it to be reckoned as one more instance of truth bestowed, of truth resisted.

But not only is it so with regard to that which is knowable of God, with creation's testimony. Positive knowledge of Him was at one time possessed by men, however far from such knowledge universally he is now. “When they knew God they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened” (Romans 1:21). “When they knew God!” We come back here to Noah and to man's new start in the new scene after the flood. Truth, as we have said, truth about God they had. It was on the threshold of Noah's new world that this was true of men—that, as a class, they knew God. It was an assurance man was abundantly furnished with, from this onwards—this objective knowledge of God. To conceive of Him objectively after such manifestation in mercy and judgment as in the flood had been witnessed could have occasioned no difficulty. Rather should He thereafter have been peculiarly present to the mind of man as existing and almighty. But how long did such knowledge remain? How long did it continue to be operative? Practical recognition of God, we learn, was early abandoned, and the knowledge and remembrance of Him gradually faded. Falling into folly through their reasonings, we read, men approved it an undesirable thing to retain God in their knowledge. Thereupon God gives them up to a reprobate mind. The One they have eliminated suffers Himself to be so excluded, as far as they are concerned. What that meant we shall soon see, when the space which has thus been vacated, has been re-peopled; but, for the present, let this oft-forgotten fact be noted—that, in the ancient inventory of man's possessions, the knowledge

of the one true God was an item; and the occasion of, and reason for, his parting with this heirloom of the family, are also here revealed. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge" is a solemn statement of their attitude towards the truth.

Nemesis is not far behind in the shape of error ready always to lay hold; for here it was that idolatry with all its horrors probably originated. Under profession of wisdom, men made rapid progress in their path of folly, until ultimately, become fools, they "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," and, on the down grade ever, "to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things," solemn instance of man's foolish, yet proverbial, proneness to exchange the truth of God for falsehood. By this surrender of the truth the way was at once opened for a new and stupendous movement to begin.

Idolatry, it can safely be said, is one of the most widespread and powerful influences the devil has ever used with men. In every corner of the earth is it found, and in every age since the flood has it been prevalent. It retains its full power, in different phases, over multitudes of men even now upon the earth, and has a future before it, according to prophetic scripture, of which men little dream. From the silence of early scripture regarding it, from the account of its origin in this chapter of Romans, and from various considerations in regard to its character, there is reason to believe that idolatry did not exist previous to the flood. Error took a more suitable form during a period when men were wedded in spirit to the world they were organizing, and developing—with thoughts of divine interest in, or interference with, their affairs far from their minds. But that stroke of judgment put an end forever to the idea that the only being of power man had to consider was himself; and the memory of that supernatural intervention would continue to haunt mind after all real reverence for, or fear of, the true God had been surrendered.

That innate consciousness of a higher power, and sense of responsibility, which man never loses, combined with this recollection of judgment once executed so terribly, left, when God was dethroned there, a void in his soul, a niche unoccupied; and, seizing the opportunity, the devil supplied the want by that most successful of all his terrible projects for man's ruin—idolatry. Error developed into a system of such a nature, that, behind the mere empty image-worship which constitutes its external aspect, there are, in the background, spiritual powers of evil who, in some occult, mysterious way, associate themselves therewith. This may sound strange to many today, but nothing less is affirmed by scripture of this remarkable phase of the depths of Satan. Anything like an analysis of the various forms of error is not here attempted. Truth, not its opposite, is after all our subject. But regarding this matter of idolatry, it cannot be sufficiently emphasized that, as far as man is concerned, it is simply an inevitable stage in a self-chosen course. Sufficient is it to recall that the delusion, varied in form and measure, of which men today are the victims, traces its history and owes its origin ultimately to surrender of truth originally possessed.

Chosen by men, error has virtually been. For just as retiring from the presence of light means withdrawal into darkness, so the giving up of the knowledge of the true God, with which men are charged in Romans 1, meant idolatry. A solemn thought it is that an attitude towards the truth is an attitude towards error as well. Any stand that is taken mutually affects each. Man can never be clear of both, so as to have nothing to do with either, nor is there a permanent halting-place between the two.

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(To be continued)

## Truth: Its Nature and History—3

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As sure as he has a mind, so surely is it being dominated by one of these forces, and its reins are in the hand of one of these guides. Solemn also is it to consider the progress we make under either of them; former points of attainment recede rapidly behind us, as we are carried on with irresistible force. There is no standing still in the sense of thus far but no farther, when once we have surrendered to the current. Progress then is as inevitable as it is alarming. Thus, in the first case we considered, Satan successfully tempted man to doubt God's truth; the antediluvians he taught to disregard it; man since he has led to disown it.

From the mass of idolaters into which the race had degenerated, God in grace called one individual, Abraham, and opened communication with him Like springing water, the truth refuses to be entirely enclosed in the incrustated earth-but will break out somewhere, and form a channel for itself. In the incident referred to, we have such an effusion, and if Genesis 3 is correctly described as a fountainhead of history, no less might this important event, the call of Abraham, be so designated. It marks a new development in the ways of God with man. An important step it is—involving many issues, and a point from which diffuse many of those widely divergent lines, to which attention must be paid if the word of truth is to be rightly divided.

Leaving all others aside, we pursue the record of man's attitude towards the truth, as continued in the history of those who, according to the flesh, are the seed of Abraham. If, as we have said, it is the Jews distinctively who are referred to in Romans 1 as those who “hold the truth in unrighteousness” there must be good reason to examine with care their particular case in Romans 3:20 we are told of such that they have “the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.” Unlike the Gentiles, the heathen world around them, they moved in a sphere where light from God was still shining. The scriptures they possessed. One, and the chief, of the advantages they had was, that unto them had been committed “the oracles of God.” These scriptures were composed of the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets; but, as it was of the law that they made their boast, so it is with this distinctively that we must, in their past history, associate them. A people “under the law” has been, from Sinai, the character of their relationship with God. Now this form, this delineation of knowledge and of the truth is of such a special character that consideration must be given to what led up to, and gave occasion for, such a revelation.

The origin of this most interesting and remarkable people we find in what has been already spoken of—the call of Abraham. Wrapped up in that event were issues of unimagined import. God had a purpose in view even then, which today remains unachieved, regarding the nation of which the son of Terah was the progenitor. The point for us at present, however, concerns one branch of that purpose in particular. Briefly it is, that God designed that this people should be the custodian, and at the same time, the witness, of His truth in a world of darkness and idolatry. To this end was the law given. Were we recounting circumstantially how Israel came to occupy the status of a people under the law, or considering the larger question of legal righteousness versus grace raised in that issue, it would be necessary to show that when Israel, ignorant of themselves, and therefore full of

self-confidence, declared at Sinai, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do," they quite gratuitously relinquished the principle on which their former relations with God were founded. The unconditional promises to the fathers lay at the foundation of their history as a separate community. And these, with the interventions of grace necessary for their accomplishment, were the terms on which everything heretofore had been based. But enrolling themselves now under a covenant of obedience as the condition of blessing they occupied a new platform entirely. A fresh revelation, the law, suited to that new position, is given. Thus, then, did they come to be possessed of the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. This was the truth of which they, in turn, were the recipients, and their attitude to which would determine so much.

Here, again, failure was not long in coming. Early indeed was their lapse from its solemn directions manifested. At the very time Moses was receiving from God that which He had to communicate to them, they were making and worshipping the golden calf as the god that had brought them out of Egypt. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" —so read their first commandment. The worship of this calf of gold was their answer to that—a remarkably shameful betrayal of their trust, surely! a deliberate and flagrant offense against what they had but newly pledged themselves to obey! "The form of knowledge and of the truth in the law" met with no better response than truth had at any time encountered. Their whole after-history witnesses constant disobedience and departure from God. So plainly is this seen throughout their course, so persistent and stubborn in transgression are they from their worship of the golden calf in the wilderness right on to their rejection of their Messiah, that detailed instances do not require to be given. The less need there is for this, since Stephen, in his address before the council (Acts 3), makes good his accusation, that "ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye," by just such a group of details in their history of backsliding as sets it in the strongest light. One of these illustrative details, the worship of the golden calf, already alluded to, forms by itself a telling point in Stephen's indictment. "They made a calf in those days and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands."

This has been called Israel's original sin. The term is not altogether inapt. It is one of those critical actions, suiting such a purpose as Stephen's, that stand out prominently in history as the point of a new departure, a projecting rock that gave direction to the tide. No wonder it has been termed "Israel's original sin." It has all the characteristic features implied in such a description. First of all, it is the first action of the people recorded after the solemn ratification of the covenant in Exodus 24, the first movement they made on the new platform in their new status, as a people "under the law." Then, that blow, aimed at the very throne of God itself, so to speak, was right in the face of the very first item of that law they had pledged themselves to obey— "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Again, original sin is besetting sin—the first deviation of the pendulum, ensuring the future oscillations. Israel's characteristic sin—what has it been throughout their history but a continual lapse into that very idolatry against which their calling and election were the standing witness? In many respects the similitude to Adam's transgression may be traced. In this, in particular, that in that first, that primary departure, their whole aftercourse of iniquity lay wrapped up.

To justify God's own estimate of their character on that occasion they did not fail, for "a stiff-necked people," they have been right on. Again and again was restoration given them until one would think they had forfeited all claim on the One towards whose truth they showed themselves so

“stiffnecked in heart and ears.” Since the day they came forth out of Egypt, God had sent unto them prophets “daily rising up early and sending them,” reverberating without ceasing the truth they were so prone to “let slip” or “drift away from,” but all in vain; for they would not hearken or obey. Of none but Israel could He say so truly, “All day long I have stretched out my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”

That is to say, in this last case, where there was everything, humanly speaking, to induce men to maintain the only proper attitude towards God's truth—everything, on the other hand, in the nature even of self-interest to warn them against disobedience of the One concerning whom it was their true glory to be the witnesses—His word has been continually and deliberately disobeyed. Not that this hindered them, in their fleshly pride and self-righteousness, from assuming a superior position to all others, because of the truth they possessed after a material fashion; for this their way was their folly, and a mark of their delusion by Satan is, that they “rested in the law and made their boast of God.” Their possession of the truth and knowledge of the one true God, from the beginning of their history, cannot be denied, and a prize and privilege it was to be the custodians of both.

But responsibility, great and heavy, attaches likewise to the place of witness-bearing. Privilege and responsibility go together. True of individuals, translation to the corporate sphere is only raising the figure to a higher power, the gravity of that responsibility simply being increased by reason of the more extended nature of its incidence. By the people of Israel this should have been remembered, and to us, forming part of that which was made “the pillar and ground of the truth,” it should, by the way, be a serious thought. The whole question of corporate standing and liability is a very deep and far-reaching one. That question never had fuller illustration than in the case of Israel. As a people they were blessed; as a people they were responsible. Jehovah's chosen people, in a world where every other national worship was of idols, they constituted His sole witness there. Provided with His law and truth also, they were His appointed trustees for the use and preservation of that holy deposit. Their failure, then, in both matters, was nothing short of disaster. Nor has that failure been occasional by any means, but continual—consistent, fatally consistent, with all the uniformity of a law of nature, have Israel shown themselves in their unfaithfulness to the great trust committed unto them. As Romans 2:23, 24 declares, “Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written”.

Not merely towards that body of doctrine comprised in the “form of knowledge and of the truth in the law” itself has their antagonism been shown; but the dawn of the “better things” of the new covenant found them prepared for still stronger resistance. True to their character, their opposition rose in intensity, in proportion to the fullness of the truth presented. Its high-water mark was surely reached when He of whom their scriptures testified presented Himself, and met rejection, and lastly death at their hands. In this, no doubt, they did but prove themselves of that “generation of vipers” of which Christ Himself spake (Matthew 23:33). To show venomous hatred of those sent to proclaim the truth seemed always to characterize those in that line of descent. Their fathers had done so. So would they, for “Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, etc.” Heredity, transmission of character, accumulating forces, reversion to type, are terms in frequent use in biological science, undoubtedly having some place in the affairs of men. Do they find no illustration, as to the matter in hand, from the Savior's

words to the Pharisees: “Ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. Fill ye up, then, the measure of your fathers.... That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from the blood of righteous Abel.... Verily, I say unto you all these things shall come upon this generation.”

Jerusalem, that killed the prophets, has heard the voice of One, the Prophet like unto Moses, who came, with grace on His lips, and love in His heart, proclaiming truth beyond anything they had yet conceived, and showing credentials such as no prophet had ever possessed. “The law and the prophets were until John, since that time the kingdom of God is preached.” But these children in the market-place would respond to nothing, the new message of grace as little as the old of law. The truth He proclaimed they resolutely refused to hear; the power accompanying it they ascribed to Beelzebub; the Lord Himself they hurried to the cross, to silence, if possible, the voice that rebuked their persistent unbelief. The Truth Himself, Christ did not fail to witness of it, nor to testify how far they were from it; but such was their ruinous pride and folly that, rather than be shown their darkness, they will extinguish the Light itself. Awful effect of the blinding power of Satan over the minds of those who reject the truth! As in instances we have already considered also, the blindness men have preferred, God has given them over to. “God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see” (Romans 11:7, 8). This blindness continues. Even over that part of revelation which can be called “their own scriptures,” and with the letter of which they are not unfamiliar, the shadow is cast. “Until this day remaineth the same vail, untaken away, in the reading of the old testament.”

Likewise of the truth now going out to the world, and during the whole course of this dispensation, it is true that “blindness in part hath happened unto Israel, Until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” Light shall yet arise for them, but first there intervenes a still deeper darkness. The future crisis finds them, the faithful remnant excepted, universally surrendered to the delusions of Antichrist. Fittingly does Jerusalem's cup of retribution contain this ingredient in return for the haughty refusal of Him who became “minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers.” Him they refused and the grace and truth He brought. The Antichrist they will receive, and the darkness and error he spreads and, propagates. Such is their record, and such their future nationally, and as the immediate prospect, according to the word—the fact of their eventual restoration notwithstanding. The attitude of Israel towards the truth committed to them is the most extreme we have yet considered, amounting to willful and stubborn disobedience; consequently they are overwhelmed in error beyond all others.

[J. T.]

(Continued from page 160)

## Truth: Its Nature and History—4

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If, in considering the effect of the truth upon men, the measure and relative importance of what is communicated are to be regarded as having any weight with them, the Christian revelation should have met with a very different reception from that which the word of God, in former times, has invariably experienced. If, in time past, the light was so meager that (while it was man's own fault and part of his guilt, that the darkness comprehended it not) still, he can plead it was so disproportionate in both fullness and extent—that there was, in fact, so much darkness in which to hide and so little light to shut out—yet no occasion can be found for seeking to exonerate himself in that way now. Light there has been from the beginning, sufficient to render man without excuse. Light there is now, so glorious and full, that he who receives it not, far from having excuses wherewith to parry judgment, on the contrary is “judged already.” And as showing where such an one is, “This is the judgment,” declares John, “that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.” From one, too, whose special mission it was to unfold in its fullness the present truth, we learn that “if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” The reason that any darkness now remains is here disclosed. By man's own consent, the influence of the prince of darkness still exercises full sway over him; but as far as God is concerned, obscurity there is none, but fullest manifestation, and for all men. For “God our Savior will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” A distinctive feature of the gospel this latter is, its universal scope, and a point that should be in its favor with men. In fact, we might say, every serious consideration is in its favor in the present age; for in its most interesting garb, and attractive colors, does truth now array itself.

Whether one considers the nature of the message itself, the illustrious character of the messenger, or the terrible fate before their open eyes of those who refuse to hear, surely, one would say, Men will treat it otherwise this time. A message of salvation the gospel is, and their need of it should be as manifest to men as their welcome of it should be cordial. Not without importance either, is it to consider by whom the word of this salvation was sent: “God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son” by the One who, amongst other glories, has this one of so much moment to us, that “by Himself He purged our sins.” And “if therefore, the word spoken by angels was steadfast,” and the results of disregarding it so fearful, “how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord?”

How has it fared, then, with this, the last, the fullest, the most gracious utterance of God to men? Wisdom hath cried without, hath lifted up her voice in the streets, in the chief places of concourse. And hath she called again, and men refused? Stretched out her hand, and no man regarded? Have her counsels been set at naught by unresponsive fools who hate knowledge? Alas! indeed it is so. Good-ground hearers there have been, but how few! The wayside, the stony ground, the thorns, how large a space they occupy! Here and there a heart is touched, a soul is won; but the

majority, how hardened in sin! How shallow! How full of the world and its interests! Kept out, starved out, or crowded out, men seem to be determined the truth shall be. Surveying the field as a whole, only one verdict can be pronounced as to the fate of the good seed sown, and that a most unfavorable one. History has repeated itself once more. Repeated itself this time in such a manner as to present a duplicate of every former age, for the various attitudes men have taken up before are reproduced now in every possible phase. If, in the first instance which we considered, God's heart of love was wounded, through seeing His truth doubted by those whose benefit alone He desired, He has had fresh experience of that treatment. The indifference of the antediluvians has not been confined to their age, any more than their preoccupation with the world which so attracted them, a charmer's voice by no means silenced yet. As in the case of those who came after them, the enemy can still find or make dupes of those who disown that which does not approve itself to their proud wisdom. And his adulterations, all of them instinct with the spirit, if not the letter, of idolatry, have still as many devotees. The disobedience, too, that accompanies self-righteousness and religious pride is prevalent among those who, "having a form of godliness, deny the power thereof."

In a new dispensation therefore, where the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ characterizes all, the word of God still finds no better response. Against all its appeals, however gracious, man seems to be amply fortified. Nor in any way less intense appears his inveterate antagonism to the truth than formerly. And this comes out in more ways than one. Thus the apostasy of Israel, their faithlessness to the oracles of God committed unto them, has likewise (to take one more instance of history repeating itself) been reproduced in Christendom. So much so that the charge of "holding the truth in unrighteousness" preferred against the former in Romans 1 levels itself quite as fittingly at the conduct of the professing Christian church. Error, dark and deadly, far from being banished by all that has been brought to light by the gospel, has over and over again reared its head in the very bosom of the church. Not only so, but far and wide throughout Christian teaching and practice its insidious influence has spread, until not only the entire system of theology is affected, but practical life and godliness as well.

There is no need to search minutely the history of the church to ascertain this. It is all too apparent today. Scripture itself indeed has prepared us for a departure on the part of the professing mass from the truth, the Christian revelation, on a scale and in a fashion never heard of before. Even in the time of the apostles there were not wanting signs of defection from the faith. Many antichrists then present made it evident that it was, even then, "the last time." There was warning given also of what would happen in "latter times" when "some shall fall away from the faith." Further, that "in the last days perilous times shall come," when wholesale lapse into ungodliness and infidelity would characterize the Christian profession. The testimony is consistent and clear that man's unvarying antagonism to the truth had, under Christianity, by no means been disarmed; but rather in increased and embittered form has risen up, and is sweeping on to extreme apostasy. A most solemn consideration this, without a doubt! It is in the face of the full Christian revelation that this attitude is predicted as the one which shall be adopted. And thus, in magnitude and enormity, this, which according to Scripture distinguishes Christendom in its final stages, exceeds all others.

How then do we stand with regard to this today? At what stage are we arrived? Our own times in what way are they affected? Can any reflecting mind doubt that there are even now in progress influences and forces inevitably leading on to such apostasy. Take for one thing the theological

unrest abroad, a marked characteristic of recent times. Uneasiness, hesitation, uncertainty, doubt, are the rule everywhere. What mean these appeals that have been heard from every side, from perplexed students and misled theologians alike, for re-adjustment of beliefs, for a restatement of Christian doctrine in terms suited to the modern standpoint? From whence does all this proceed? Certainly not from faith in the written word of God. Nay, faith in that, any real faith as to its divine inspiration and authority has, for such, already been insidiously undermined and destroyed. This precisely it is which characterizes the prevailing position. What we are observing now is, properly speaking, neither open attack on the Scripture, nor wily perversion of it, but surrender of it, as in any real sense the divinely appointed standard of truth. Surrender of the truth—that is the implication, the tendency, the inevitable outcome of what has for some years now been the course of things in the theological world.

Just for the moment, no doubt, the center of interest has shifted slightly. The cataclysm of the present great war has given pause to many things, and men have actualities and not theories for the most part to face. In the way they face them, alas! there are not wanting traces of the baneful influence already exerted. The discarded anchorage and loosened moorings leave men to strangely drift about. There are many elements in the situation today not easy to place or explain. Features there are, however, which put it beyond I a doubt that it is by surrender of truth possessed, truth as it has been given to us in inspired Scripture, that the enemy is effecting his customary end of sowing error and deceiving men. Now of these features none surely is so portentous as that new and important departure in the theological world which recent times have witnessed, the rise of Biblical Literary Science, otherwise known as “Higher” or “Historical Criticism.” It may sound extreme to some to place in such a category at all a “science” which many are disposed to regard as both harmless and legitimate. The truth is, that when regard is had to what is being done through its agency in discrediting the word of God and disseminating infidelity, far from being innocuous, “Higher Criticism” is seen to be not only one of, but really the chief of, the many conspirators and forerunners of the “apostasy.” Consider in this light this new phase of the conflict between truth and error. Three points in particular claim attention—the recentness of its appearance; its almost phenomenal success; and the inevitable ultimate end.

Comparatively speaking, only recently has the incessant warfare against truth taken this form. In the record of the professing church from the beginning, many heresies stand chronicled, for great has been the departure from the truth all along; but that in which modern theology differs from all is just this, its attitude towards the word of God. There are different ways of turning from the truth. There is such a thing as the unbridled working of an imagination, to which Scripture has become neither a guide nor a check. Of this type there are many examples of the working of error in the world. Wresting the Scriptures so as to dislocate the perfect organization of the truth, is a process in building up false teaching, which is not new either. But the form opposition takes today is different entirely. No policy of mere obstruction, but a deliberate attack on the inspiration and accuracy of what has, in the main, been the recognized standard of authority for Christians, is what is now attempted—While saying “deliberate,” there is no intention of imputing motives in those engaged, other than those they profess when they proclaim their object to be “The application to the Bible of the principles of the science of literary and historical investigation.” The deliberation is on the part of the one into whose hands they are playing when they rise no higher than this in their conception of God's word. Such a hostile attitude towards the Scriptures, together

with such professed zeal for the elucidation of the truth, marks a complete change of tactics on the part of the great antagonist.

That this movement—this attempt at discrediting the foundation upon which Christianity is built—is really the most serious feature of our times, we conclude without hesitation. Its comparatively modern appearance is one remarkable point; the number and position of its adherents is no less unique. In every branch of Western Christendom, not even excluding Roman Catholicism, with its Modernist movement, leaders and teachers have been carried away with this new Biblical Literary Science. By a large number of representative men throughout Protestantism, at least, this “science” is believed in, its conclusions, whether being accepted wholesale, or, as “expert” deliverances, held to be at least worthy of consideration! The cases are few and far between indeed where, along with non-acceptance of critical finding, there is anything like whole-hearted repudiation of their method, a protest concerning its legitimacy. The seriousness of all this to their hearers or readers, who can question? When men to whom they look for light and leading have themselves so little respect for that from which alone it can be supplied, what can be expected? The plain fact of the matter is, that the foundations of the Christian belief, except where grace really preserves, are being undermined and destroyed by (what can be described in no other way than) the rank infidelity of those in high places, in the religion of our time. How baneful in its effects on the rank and file such influence is, especially with the more intelligent or educated class, we can imagine; for even in this day of universal change and decay in religious beliefs, when everything seems to be put into the melting pot, nowhere, it would seem, could more plastic material be found than the convictions of Christian professors. The contrast between truth and error is seen even in this—the hold they each retain upon men's minds. How much more tenacious the latter seems to be! Compare the various religious systems throughout the world (those of them in a sufficiently organized state to possess written oracles) and observe the attitude their votaries maintain towards them. No doubt, the dissolving, disintegrating action of the modern spirit reaches even there, and, permeating the more educated minds, reduces all to a cold and lifeless skepticism, the worship of “the ancient idol, the grand Perhaps”; but how much slower is confidence shaken, or cherished traditions surrendered. Alas! it is not so with professing Christians. Only too readily, at the first breath of a charge of superstition or bigotry do they surrender their trust. Only too clearly is it to be seen that, if error is being taught, the people love to have it so. Stated in Scripture language, which is true today as never before, men “will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers,” having ears that turn away from the truth, and are open to every fable that can excite them. Those who have the responsibility of forming and directing popular thought are foremost in this attack. Public opinion itself, so susceptible of being moved in that direction, is easily brought into line. The popularity of the movement, therefore, is not surprising.

For its own purposes, the advance has been well-timed. It finds in the unrestful spirit of the day an occasion which more conservative times would not furnish; in the intellectualism so prevalent a powerful ally; and in the immense educational equipment a splendid recruiting agency, as well as a ready-made means of diffusion. In fact, nothing about that movement, generally called “Higher Criticism,” the rise and progress of which has formed such a marked characteristic of modern times, is more remarkable than its opportuneness. In this other way also it would seem to have arrived just in time. It is a precursor of the “apostasy,” a term used in Scripture to designate that

final and extreme defection from the faith on the part of nominal Christianity, which, contrary as it is to the thoughts of so many, is what we must expect to see develop. Scripture uniformly testifies of such an approaching time of apostasy issuing froth, and succeeding, the Christian dispensation. Amongst other passages, 2 Thessalonians 2 gives definite announcement of a vast scheme of error that shall develop and flourish in the interval between the rapture and what is there called the "day of the Lord," a day that shall be ushered in by His appearing in power and judgment. Before that day can arrive, said the apostle, disilluioning them as to the false theory of its being already present, which some had propounded to them, before it come the scene here will be filled with other actors, and Satan for a time have full sway. As preparing the way for this state of affairs, "there shall come a falling away first," literally "the apostasy." That is to say, the truths of Christianity will be given up root and branch, for nothing less would suit such a definite term "the apostasy." And, in fact, that this enormity of error might have the fullest acceptance, it would seem to be desirable from Satan's point of view that every shred of truth now held in Christendom, though but traditionally, or embodied in a creed, shall be abandoned, if it be possible to induce men to do so. And not only of Christian truth, but of everything in which God may be known or owned, either in natural religion, or in Judaism, would he seek to deprive men. That is to say, just as in the immense and imposing system he desires to set up in connection with to keep that which was committed. Antichrist, every element necessary to the deception of men universally must be included, so he must first of all clear the ground of everything that could possibly undo or expose that deception. Now for this it is clear that the authority of the Bible over men must go, their respect for it must be destroyed. That is the most formidable barrier, and what is this that men are at already, but seeking to surmount it? With the ostensible objects and methods in detail of Higher Critics we have nothing here to do, simply remarking that in undermining faith, that is, traditional belief, in the Bible as the word of God, they are solving a difficulty long felt with regard to the ready, almost incredible, acquiescence of men in the scheme of Satan for their own deception.

"The apostasy" has been spoken of. And undoubtedly it is from Christianity that we are to understand the departure there spoken of to be. But has not every separate age had its own apostasy? Not merely that the truth has failed to find acceptance with many on each occasion; that there has been, on each page, a broad dark margin where the light never reached; but that from that which was illuminated the light has been deliberately banished. The solemn responsibility for these extreme steps, upon whom does it lie? The corporate principle which we have already noticed in Israel's case, comes in here to explain. Each dispensation has had its special delineation of truth, suited in character and measure for the time. This outline of divinely given knowledge must be regarded as a trust, for the administration of which the favored class on whom it was bestowed may be called to account as a class, and, in the government of a just and Holy God, reap as a community what it has sown in a corporate capacity. We lose the true perception of this by reason of the intense individualism of our conceptions today. A principle there is, presiding in human affairs, where things are taken in the aggregate, and justly so, beyond dispute. How solemn, then, to consider that even on this principle failure has been consistent throughout man's history. The first brief day of innocence witnessed one such failure

Rom. 1 provided the account of later instances of ignoble surrender. Israel's breach of trust we have considered. And now, alas, we do not require analogy to suggest a parallel as to the church, "the pillar and ground of the truth"; for the public renunciation of real and vital Christianity is

predicted, and is being rapidly prepared for by what is now going on.

Thus is the truth being treated by men, and even thus are they, in Laodicean times, preparing the way for coming days of still greater darkness and delusion, when that one shall be supreme whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power and signs and wonders of a lie, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. As the Christian revelation has surpassed in fullness and depth all others, and the attitude of men to it been the one of most uncompromising antagonism, so the alternative error they have resigned themselves to is the darkest ever known. "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe the lie. That they all might be damned who believed not the truth; but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Involved in it also are the Jews to be, as we have seen; those who each possessed a definite written revelation coming in thus peculiarly for the retribution their haughty refusal of it has merited. The lie is compounded of the elements suitable to each, for they themselves supplied the ingredients for the cup of their delusion. A terrible culmination is this to the history of error in the world. Truth, too, shall have its day, when its extension throughout the earth shall be such as to make good the simile "as the waters cover the sea." How grave and vital the issues of both also, which run where we cannot follow them now, but shall hereafter, into eternity itself!

Truth and error, then, are two forces at work in the world, exercising their sway over the minds and hearts of men, their thoughts and words being constantly actuated and prompted by either of them. They have each a history behind them, and a future before them. In the case of truth, those who have in simplicity received it from God have had light from, and communion with, Him. Their path is as "the path of the just that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Tampering with, or turning from it, men have but laid themselves open to the deception of the enemy, whose error has easily supplanted the truth for which they have no heart; and, compassing themselves about with sparks of their own kindling, this they have of God's hand, that they lie down in sorrow and deepest gloom. In a day of such unparalleled activity of mind as the present, it becomes men to consider by which of these forces, truth or error, they are being controlled. How various the attitudes men have, at various times, been enticed into taking up towards His truth! Is Pilate's unknown? Eve's children, have they not followed their mother on many occasions? In the giddy godlessness of the world, how many seek a refuge where that voice may be drowned! So, on the strange history goes. If man disowns, disobeys, is it so strange that now he seeks to discredit a divine revelation? The Scriptures are now the, sole repository of the truth, being the word of God which liveth and abideth forever, inspired of Him, being absolutely infallible in every detail, and worthy, therefore, of every confidence. They are to be heard and received, and through faith in God they are the means, by the power of the Holy Spirit, of new birth and reconciliation. To saints they are the voice of God Himself, revealing His counsel and purposes concerning Christ, concerning themselves, and all else, and at the same time the expression of His mind and will for them in their pathway here. May the truth be prized by them, and receive from them the response it has got so seldom from men, hearty and humble obedience. Oh, that men too would be warned that the point of departure in all cases has been, and for each still is, the attitude we assume towards it!

J..T.

(Continued from page 174)

## The War and Prophecy—5

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“The word of God presents to us the coming of the Lord under several aspects. After His first coming as man here below, we have His coming from heaven as the Morning Star to receive His own to Himself. Then His coming when He will come out of heaven with His armies, to smite the nations, with the beast and the false prophet. Then His coming when He will be seen by His own on the mount of Olives and deliver them from the Assyrian. Finally, in our passage, His coming in glory with all the saints to establish the kingdom and lay the foundation of His government. This will be the moment when He will sit on the throne of His glory, and when all the nations will be assembled before Him to be rewarded or judged according to His retributive justice (Matthew 25:31-46).”

From other scriptures we learn other facts as to this closing period, just before the millennial blessing is established on a peaceful and permanent basis. We find in Isaiah 63 and 64, the Lord's return from the terrible judgment which will take place in the land of Edom. This judgment is executed by Jehovah Himself upon the armies of the nations who are assembled against Jerusalem, and who find themselves in Edom on account of the movements of their armies. Edom itself is dealt with by Israel, as we shall see just now. This is the day of Jehovah's vengeance, the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. It is the day of vengeance on Jehovah's enemies, and the year of His redeemed the time of deliverance for His people.

Edom, as a nation, had been characterized by pride and bitter hatred against the people of God, and they rejoiced at the calamities which overtook Israel. But if God finds it necessary to chasten His people, He does so for their good; and it is always a wrong thing to rejoice over the evils which come upon God's people, even if they deserve chastening. Three nations are said to escape out of the hand of the desolating king of the North (Dan. 11:41), namely, Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon. These nations were borderers on Israel's territory, and connected with them by distant ties of relationship; but they had a special malice against God's people, therefore God uses Israel to deal with them in judgment at the close. Thus we read, “they (Israel) shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them” (Isaiah 11:14).

Again, Ezekiel says, “I will lay my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel and they shall do to Edom according to mine anger and my fury: and they shall know my vengeance, saith the Lord God” (25: 14). So also the prophet Obadiah brings before us the implacable hatred of Edom against Israel, and their rejoicing over God's chastisement of His erring people: but he shows us also God's deep displeasure against Edom on account of this animosity. Further, it is a remarkable fact that, while a remnant of the other nations will come in for blessing in a future day, Edom will not— “Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at the plagues thereof” (Jeremiah 49:17). Because of their perpetual hatred of God's people, He says, “When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee (Edom) desolate” (Ezek. 35:14). Let us take the moral of it to heart, for we may easily fall into the same kind of spirit as the Edomite. Jeremiah saw the failures and sins of God's people, but he wept over them; Daniel and

other godly men confessed them as their own; but the spirit of the Edomite is that of bitter hatred against those who, however they may have failed, are nevertheless the people of God. This spirit is particularly displeasing to Him.

Scripture clearly shows that the future blessing which is in store for this earth, and which will be brought in under Christ as the true Messiah of Israel, will be preceded by a series of judgments, and will not be brought about by the preaching of the gospel, as some suppose. It is when God's judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness (Isaiah 26:9). The gospel of God's grace which is preached now, has quite another object, namely, to bring souls to Christ, and to gather out of the world a people for His name

It is important, too, that we should distinguish between the "day of the Lord," so often spoken of in the prophets, and the "coming of the Lord," for which we wait. The former is a day of darkness, gloominess, and judgment, when God will assert His rights over this world, so long under the dominion of Satan, its god and prince. The latter is the bright and blessed culmination of all the Christian's joys, the climax of his hope, and the cheer and sustainment to his faith as he passes through this Christ-rejecting world, waiting for God's Son from heaven.

This fact, that the kingdom will be preceded by judgment, explains what is a difficulty to some people, that is, what are sometimes called the "imprecatory psalms." Owing to not understanding the difference between the Christian and the Jewish dispensations, and applying to the one what belongs to the other, some are led into confusion and error. We (Christians) do not look for judgment in the world; on the contrary, our place is rather to suffer, if called on to do so; and to be earnest in seeking the conversion of souls, out of the world. When the Lord comes, we leave the world to go to be with Him in heaven. But when it is a question of the government of the world, God must act in righteousness and put down evil. Israel will, therefore, rightly look for His judgment on their enemies, because they cannot have their rest and blessing on earth until the wicked are put down.

Another remarkable event connected with the appearing of the Lord in glory- will be the RETURN OF THE TEN TRIBES OF ISRAEL. The last notice of them in scripture is given us in that instructive chapter, 2 Kings 17, where the history of God's patience and forbearance on the one hand, and their sins and follies on the other, is brought before us. It was their sins and idolatry which were the cause of all the calamities which came upon them, as the word "therefore," which sums it all up in verse 18, plainly shows— "Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight." So also we find in 1 Chronicles 5:26, "The God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul, king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser, king of Assyria, and he carried them away... and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan," etc. Remark it was God who stirred up the spirit of these kings; and thus they were deported to Assyria. This is one of the places mentioned in Zechariah 10:10, from which they will be brought back in a future day.

These ten tribes, therefore, were not in the land (with rare exceptions) at the time when Christ was crucified, and for this reason they are not directly guilty of having put Him to death. They do not pass through the conflicts of the three and a half years which we have been considering, but are brought back just at the close. We get some light on this subject in Ezek. 20, where God says He will gather them out of the countries where they are scattered, with a mighty hand, and will bring

them into the wilderness of the peoples, and will plead with them face to face. There they will be purged from the rebels who are amongst them, separating a remnant, and God will accept them and require offerings at their hands. From Isaiah 49:18-23, we learn that the Jews (i.e., the two tribes) will again recognize Israel (the ten tribes), saying, "Who hath begotten me these... these, where had they been?" God will put it into the heart of the nations in that day to bring back these lost ones to their land, in order that they may be made ready to receive their Messiah—at least the godly ones amongst them (compare Jeremiah 16:15; Ezek. 11:16-21; Micah 3:8; Isaiah 49:21). Infidels and skeptics may say—How can this be, seeing that they have disappeared amongst the other nations? But we know that God has His eye upon them, and in His time the great trumpet will be blown, and they will be once more restored to their land.

We have now arrived, in our brief study, as far as THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN IN POWER AND GLORY. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all the nations" (Matthew 25:31, 32). Scripture shows that all judgment is committed to the Son of man (John 5:22); but it is important that we should clearly understand that those who appear before this judgment throne are not people who have died, but living nations on earth at that time. Christ will deal with those nations according to the way they treated those ministers or servants whom He sent out during the period of trial and persecution just preceding; and whom He calls here, "these my brethren." Those who received them, in so doing, received Him and will pass into the blessing of the millennial kingdom. Those who rejected them, rejected Him, and will depart into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Such is the sentence of the King who sits on His throne.

Judgment is, indeed, His "strange work," for He delights in mercy; but all rebellion and opposition must be put down before Christ reigns in righteousness and peace. When He comes in glory, His appearing will be sudden and vivid as lightning, and He will gather together His elect (i.e., the elect of Israel) from all parts. It will be a solemn day for the world, but a blessed time for His oppressed and persecuted people. The Lord Himself confessed before the high priest, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Let us here give a brief resume of the events of this closing period just before the millennial reign begins. We have the testimony borne in Revelation 1:7, "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." Chapter 19 of the same book, where we find heaven opened for the last time in scripture, gives us Christ coming in warrior-judgment, with all the majesty and glory which belongs to Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. His eyes are as a flaming fire—piercing and penetrating He is the royal Victor, crowned with many crowns, and having a name which no one knows but Himself. Truly man as well as God, His person is inscrutable, no one could sound the deep mystery of His being; but, revealed in judgment, His name is declared to be the "WORD OF GOD." A sharp sword proceeds out of His mouth, and He treads the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of God Almighty.

The first stroke of His judgment falls upon the head of the revived Roman Empire (the first beast of Revelation 13) and on the false prophet or Antichrist (the second beast of Revelation 13) who was linked with him. These two leaders of Satanic power and craft, being taken in the act of open rebellion and war against Christ, are cast alive into the lake of fire, without further judgment; the

remnant, that is, their followers and those who compose their armies, are slain. The judgment of Gog we have already spoken of (see Ezek. 39; Isaiah 30:31-33; Dan. 11:45, etc.); and in Joel 3 we have God's judgment of the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat, where He sits to "judge all the nations round about."

Here let us pause for a moment. It is always a solemn and humbling thing to contemplate God's actings in judgment. Solemn, because who can withstand the Almighty when He arises in vengeance and in judgment? Humbling, when we think what depths of wickedness and folly man is capable of; and we ourselves should be the same but for His infinite grace!

In view of what we have sought to bring before the reader from the prophetic word, we may here venture a few general remarks as to the present position of matters in Europe.

We have seen that there are two main groups of powers referred to, (1) the revived Roman Empire with its ten subordinate kingdoms in the West, closely leagued with the Antichrist in Jerusalem; (2) the Assyrian confederation, or Gog and his allies, in the East and North.

We cannot well see how Germany, which has been of recent years much the strongest military power in the world, can ultimately maintain her position, seeing that she does not come within the field of the prophetic scriptures in any definite way. Is it likely that such a power would not be the subject of special notice, if it existed as such at the close of the dispensation?

The Austrian empire, which is a kind of conglomeration of smaller nations, will probably break up. Russia will doubtless gain an ascendancy over what is now the Turkish empire, as well as over Greece and Macedonia. England, France, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, etc., will form a part of the confederation of European powers under the Roman beast.

But all that is now taking place is in the hand of One who, though He moves behind the scenes, moves all the scenes which He is behind. Man's will, and even Satan's power, can but subserve the accomplishment of His purposes.

THE MILLENNIUM.—The various acts of judgment to which we have referred, prepare the way for the millennium by the putting down of evil and what is opposed to God. But before we enter upon our subject, let us briefly consider the state of the people of God in that day, preparatory to Christ's reign.

We have already seen that there will be a faithful remnant of Israel, as well as a company of Gentiles, who will identify themselves with them, preserved and kept by God's power, and who will be looking for the Messiah, in spite of all the machinations of their enemies. Though Israel should "abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim" (Hosea 3:4), yet, afterward they will return and seek the LORD, and David (type of Christ) their king. What a remarkable testimony this is to what has actually taken place, and what will yet take place! They will say, "Come, let us return unto the LORD; for he hath broken, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us; and the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight" (Hosea 6: 1, 2). The "third day" is the day when God intervenes in power.

We find a figurative representation of this future restoration of the nation in Ezekiel, in the vision of the "valley of dry bones" (chap. 37.). God brings life and blessing to His once torn and scattered

people. And it is worthy of note also that, when Hezekiah, after his deliverance from the Assyrian, was sick unto death, and prayed to the Lord for his recovery, the prophet was sent to him with the message; "Behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up into the house of the LORD" (2 Kings 20:5). He is here, no doubt, a type of Israel, delivered through God's marvelous interposition; raised up to life again, so to speak, and going up to worship in His house "on the third day."

But the prophetic testimony which speaks of that blessed day for Israel, and for this earth, when they shall be restored to their own land is so abundant, that it would be quite beyond our space to refer to it in detail. One thing which is very striking about it is that these promises of future blessing are often abruptly brought in, just after speaking of the chastisement God had to bring upon them for their sins. Frequently they are introduced with the words "I will," do so and so. This shows us that the blessing of the people is on the ground of pure grace and sovereign mercy; it is also a touching evidence of God's willingness to forgive, yea, His delight to bless, wherever there is real repentance and self-judgment.

The work of repentance and contrition on account of their terrible guilt in crucifying their own Messiah, produced by the Spirit of God acting in the hearts of the godly remnant of Israel in that day, will be very deep and real. We have a very striking picture of this in Zechariah 12:10-14. It is not, there, a question of outside enemies or circumstances, but one between the soul and Christ Himself. What bitter sorrow they will feel as they "look on him whom they have pierced," and realize, as they have never yet done, what they have been guilty of. Every family mourns apart, and their wives apart; such is their individual contrition; and, by a strong figure of speech, even the land is said to mourn.

The title "millennium" means simply the thousand years, and is quite correct, so far as it goes; because, as we learn from Revelation 20 Christ's reign over the earth will last for that space of time. It will be a reign of righteousness and peace; "A king shall reign in righteousness," "and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isaiah 32). Being a reign of righteousness, wherever evil shows itself during the millennium, it will be dealt with in righteous judgment at once. The glorified saints will be associated with Christ in His reign. The seat and center of government will be Jerusalem, which "shall be safely inhabited." To it those who are left of the nations shall go up year by year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. The temple will be built on mount Zion, not on mount Moriah as of old.

Many of the psalms give us notes of praise and triumph which will be sung in that day to celebrate the Lord whose mercy towards His people endureth forever, and whose praises will be found connected with Zion, the place of God's own choice and of His triumphant grace toward Israel.

But it would carry us much beyond the scope of this paper to look at more than two or three passages. In Psalm 68 we find: "A mount of God is mount Bashan, a many-peaked mountain is mount Bashan. Why do ye look with envy, ye many-peaked mountains, upon the mount that God hath desired for his abode? (Zion), yea, Jehovah will dwell there forever." And Psalm 145 looks on to that millennial day when Christ Himself will lead the praises of His people in the midst of the assembly of Israel. So also Isaiah 11 gives us a beautiful description of that time when the "Branch

out of the root of Jesse” shall judge the poor in righteousness and maintain the right of the meek with equity, and under whose beneficent sway blessing and peace shall fill the land. Chapter 12 contains the song that shall be sung in that day, when Jah, Jehovah (the existing One objectively, as well as the One who is in special relationship with His people) will be the strength and salvation of His delivered people. It closes with the words: “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.” Such is the exulting praise which shall go up to Him in that day from His redeemed people, for His rich and abounding mercy. Then “the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

There will be a manifest, visible display of the glory of God in the heavens, just as the pillar and the cloud marked His presence in the tabernacle of old. Thus we read in Isaiah 4:5: “And Jehovah will create, over every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and over her assemblies, a cloud of smoke by day, and the shining of a flame of fire by night, for over all the glory shall be a canopy.” So, too, we find in Revelation 21, that “the holy city, Jerusalem” (as it should read) comes down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God and her shining was like unto a stone most precious, as it were a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

It does not derive its light from the sun and then give it out to the earth; but, in a fuller way than the pillar of fire and the cloud, the glory of God enlightens it, and the light thereof is the Lamb. In this holy city, Jerusalem above, there is no temple; God's presence there is manifested, not shut in; but in Jerusalem below, the temple will be rebuilt, as we see by the account given at the close of Ezekiel. Though the Lord will open the millennial reign in person, yet He will not, we believe, reign exactly on the earth during that time, but over the earth, in connection with it. We would gather from Ezek. 46-48, that there will be a representative, or vicegerent (as we would say) who will represent Him, in the center of God's government at Jerusalem, and who is there called “the prince.”

Satan, long practiced in deceiving men and tempting them to sin and rebellion, and who is undying in his hatred against Christ, will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit or abyss. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad and shall blossom as the rose. The effect of the curse will be to a certain extent, removed; and it seems probable that death will not be, unless for positive acts of disobedience and sin against God— “the youth shall die an hundred years old, and the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed” (Isaiah 65:20). [F. G. B.]

(Continued from Vol. X. page 378)

(To be continued)

## The War and Prophecy—6

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But it must not be supposed that the heart of man is one whit changed, even by the manifestation of such glory, except where the regenerating grace of God has wrought; and in many cases they will doubtless yield but a feigned obedience. So, at the close of this time of blessing, God allows one last test. Have one thousand years of righteous rule and unalloyed goodness on God's part changed the heart? Alas! it is not so. No sooner is Satan loosed out of his prison for a little season, than he gathers together the nations of the earth as the sand of the sea, around Jerusalem. This last act of rebellion is met by God's summary judgment: fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them (Revelation 20).

ETERNITY.-We now enter upon the last and final stage of all; beginning with that great session of judgment called the "great white throne." The account given at the close of Revelation 20, is one of the most solemn and impressive within the whole compass of God's revelation given us in the Bible, and we do well to feel this as we ponder over it.

We have already remarked that the saved who had died, had been raised at the coming of Christ for His saints (Hebrews 11:13 and 40; 1 Cor. 15:50-57 Thessalonians 4:16). The saved ones who were slain during the period immediately preceding the millennium, were raised also in order to enjoy the blessing of that day (Revelation 20:4); both these are included in the "first resurrection." But the unsaved, or "rest of the dead," had remained in their graves "until the thousand years were finished." After this they are raised by God's almighty power, whether from the grave or from the sea. A "great white throne," which is distinctly and essentially a throne of judgment, is set up. Where this throne is set we are not told, for heaven and earth have lied from the face of Him who sits upon it. And, as the Epistle of Peter tells us, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Solemn, most solemn consideration for man with all his boasted advancement, as well as for all who have nothing beyond this world! And here we pass out of time, which is measured for us by every sunrise and sunset, into a limitless and boundless eternity. The clock which marks each passing hour in this world, will be no longer required then.

And who is it that sits on this great white throne of judgment? This is a question about which people have very confused thoughts, but as to which Scripture leaves no room for uncertainty. It is the Son, the once-rejected Savior. He Himself has said, "The Father judgeth no one, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" ( John 5:22). Yes, every one must honor the Son; either by bowing to Him now, in the day of grace, as the Savior, or then, in the day of judgment, as the Judge.

Who will appear at this throne? Clearly it is not a judgment of living people such as we find in Matthew 25, where they are separated as sheep from goats, etc. No! the passage plainly states that it is "the dead, great and small," who are found here. It is the dead out of Christ, the unsaved dead, and only they. At this throne everything is done in perfect righteousness and justice, and the judgment is according to works. We must all be before God either in Christ, in all the worth and

value of what He has done; or we must have to do with God as unsaved, standing on our own merits. Now to appear in our own merits involves certain condemnation, for our works could not stand the searching light of that day. Moreover, this is not a throne of grace, or sprinkled blood to meet the sinner's need, but of stern unbending judgment and nothing but judgment. The day of grace will have passed away forever, and the issue for every soul will be final, according to the demands of the righteousness and glory of God. Against the sentence there given there can be no opposition, and from it there is no appeal.

The dead are judged out of those things written in the books. This conveys to us, in a figurative manner, the idea of records of works known to Him who searches all hearts; and these works are not perfect before God. Then the book of life is referred to; but mark, it is not in order to write anyone's name there! Could it be that any of their names were written in that book? No, this could not be, since none of those whose names are inscribed by God Himself in the book of life, appear at this throne. These saved ones had long since been raised from their graves, and had shared with Christ in His reign of a thousand years, and therefore they do not appear at the great white throne at all. And what is the solemn end of it all? It is to be "cast into the lake of fire." It is true that men do not like to hear of this, and Satan is doing all he can at the present time to hide and obliterate the fact; but it is a remarkable thing that we find this very expression, "the lake of fire," three times in this part of Revelation (chaps. 20: 14, 15, and 21: 8).

Death and Hades are looked at as personified; and they are also cast into the lake of fire. Death is the last great enemy to be destroyed. No one, not even the wisest or the greatest or the most powerful of men, has been able to stand against it; and no man of science has ever found a remedy for it. There it stood from the day that Adam fell, like an unstormed fortress of the enemy's power, until the Lord Jesus Christ died, and by His death delivered those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. And, as we have before remarked, the true believer may never die, for Christ may come within his lifetime!

But, taking man as such, its sway was universal, and its power was paramount and complete. However, at the point at which we have now arrived in our brief study, death has no more place, because all men have disappeared from the scene—the saved to share the blessed abode of the new heavens and the new earth, the unsaved to the lake of fire. Lastly, Hades, the unseen, the state of departed spirits—has yielded up its last occupant, in order that such may appear at this resurrection of judgment. It has also, therefore, ceased to exist; and (solemn thought!) there remains now ETERNITY—a fixed state; a timeless, endless, infinite duration forever and ever, incomprehensible to the mind of man.

**THE NEW HEAVENS AND THE NEW EARTH.**—We have just been speaking of the solemn events, closing in eternity itself, in reference to the unsaved and the ungodly, and we now turn to the brighter and happier theme of the eternal destiny of the saved. "We, according to his promise," says the apostle Peter, "look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." It has been remarked by some one that righteousness "reigns" throughout the millennium, but it "dwells" during the eternal state.

We have already remarked that the closing verses of Revelation 20 give us the final issue of judgment for the lost; then we have in the first eight verses of chapter 21 the eternal state of blessing for the saved. Here we find that God dwells with men, in the scene which He has Himself

prepared for the eternal habitation of His saints. But before this could be so, every trace of sin and evil must be forever removed from the whole universe. Now this, as we know, will be effectuated in virtue of the far-reaching efficacy of the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Not a trace of that sin, which so marred everything, will sully God's fair creation then. In this eternal state of bliss everything will be in perfect harmony with the holy nature of God; and His love told out in all its unmingled fullness shall, so to speak, expand itself without hindrance and fill the scene. The saints will not then need to be ever on their guard lest they should defile their garments, but will walk the courts of the heavenly city with perfect freedom and unalloyed bliss.

As we have said, God dwells with men; this was His purpose from the beginning. He visited Adam in Eden, but sin came in and marred everything. As soon as redemption was accomplished, in type at least, in the paschal lamb and the deliverance through the Red Sea, then God spoke of His habitation. Yet God could not fully rest in a scene where sin and Satan's power were -a world departed and alienated from Him.

But here, in this eternal state of sinless perfection, it is not a question of man tested, as in Eden, and liable to fall; on the contrary, everything stands on the immutable basis of the value and efficacy of the precious blood of Christ—everything is now reconciled to God; and here God dwells with men. The “holy city, new Jerusalem,” comes down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. It would seem that this “new Jerusalem” is itself “the tabernacle of God,” and if that be what is now called the church, as it appears to be—the Lamb's wife, this would show that the church will retain its near and privileged place even in eternity itself.

Let us remark here that it is a question of “God” and “men”; we have got out of all simple dispensational names such as “Jehovah” with Israel, “Father” with His people now, etc. Then Christ will have finished His millennial reign, and the last enemy having been destroyed, He will have delivered up His mediatorial kingdom to God, even the Father, that God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) may be all in all. Distinction of nations, too, of which we have seen so much previously, will have ceased to be. It is no longer a question of Jews, Gentiles, etc., but of “men.” The whole order of things will be changed. Instead of sorrow and tears so familiar in this world, God Himself shall wipe away every tear. Death cannot enter the scene what breaks, what sorrows it had caused for ages! In fact, sin and everything which it had brought in, and which had followed in its train, will have passed away forever.

In conclusion, may we not praise and bless God as we consider the wonderful harmony of Scripture, throughout all its wide and far reaching range? Like a panorama of great events, God makes all these things to pass in review before the eye of faith in His word. Not, indeed, in order to gratify our curiosity as to the future, but that the student of prophecy may learn profitable moral lessons for his own soul's blessing. To discard or neglect the study of prophecy would surely be a serious loss.

Prophecy, indeed, began with the Fall in Eden, when the Seed of the woman which was to bruise the serpent's head was promised. Then it conducts us, in its wide range, along through past events (recorded on the pages of Holy Writ with perfect accuracy, long before they occurred, but which have now become matters of history), right on through the successive ages, until, finally, we find ourselves carried into eternity itself. God has, speaking reverently, taken us into His confidence; He has revealed all these things to us in His word for our present profit and blessing.

To His name be the praise and glory. Amen!

F. G. B.

(Concluded from page 16)

## Wine

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Q.-Rom. 14:13 2l; 1 Cor. 8:8-13.

Would you please state what, in your view, is the bearing of these scriptures on the subject of the paper in the September Bible Treasury, page 137, "The use of wine"? A. R. C.

A.-"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

The things of peace and mutual building up are here presented as the object of our pursuit. And in so doing we are serving Christ, and are well-pleasing to God, as well as approved by men.

It is not to the "dijudication," or settlement of disputed questions that we are to receive one another. For one who is "weak in the faith," a Christian brother, for whom Christ died, may have a conscientious difficulty in regard to the prohibitions of the Mosaic law, through ignorance of the liberty into which (not law, but) grace has now brought us. Yet true, as it is, that we have been called unto liberty, we are not to use this liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love to serve one another.

We are not called to satisfy the "whims" of our brethren in Christ, but it is blessed if, by denying oneself, we succeed in removing a stumbling-block to our brother's growth in the truth. "Weak" though such a one be, he that is strong is not to despise his weak brother, but to "please his neighbor for his good to edification (or building up). For even Christ pleased not Himself."

If we are filled with the Spirit, we shall not be drunk with wine. All the sophistry of those who declaim against its use, is exposed (to the simple soul who bows to God's word) by the simple and telling fact that our Lord made wine (John 2) — the "use" of which was not therefore prohibited, and yet in excess it is intoxicating, or we should not be told to be not drunk with it; and as the writer of the article points out, it is the "abuse" against which we are warned. And if it be to any of us a snare it clearly ought to be avoided. "Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." What greater safeguard can there be than this?

Comparing Galatians 2:3 with 1 Timothy 4:3-5, we see how man's will is as ready to demand as to forbid. But whilst Paul could circumcise Timothy (Acts 16:1-3), where it could not be demanded, yet in the case of Titus, where the demand was made, the Apostle resolutely refuses. Grace knows what is consistent with the truth of the gospel.

## The Use of Wine

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Now as to the use of wine. There is nothing like getting down to foundation principles: for often a false doctrine is working, concealed amidst religiousness, and there is nothing more handy for Satan to use than false principles so disguised.

First, it was remarkable that our Lord's first miracle performed in the world was turning water into wine, at a wedding feast. Strange fact for teetotalers! How contrary to ascetic religion is such an act the last thing that a religious man would think of. Man's religion is "Handle not, taste not, touch not," and these "commandments and doctrines of men" have indeed an "appearance of wisdom," but meet with unsparing condemnation in Colossians 2.

Second, drinking wine is an essential part of Christian testimony, specifically enjoined in the Lord's Supper. This would certainly not be the case, if the drinking of wine were an evil in itself.

Third, notice that the blessed Lord entered heartily into the social life of the people, not banning their meat and drink, and receiving, in consequence, the reproach of His enemies, "Behold a... winebibber" (Matthew 11:19).

Fourth, wine was used at the Paschal Feast, with the Lord's express sanction; and though, for special reasons in His own case, He did not then partake of it Himself, He told the apostles all to drink of it; and this was not ceremonial, as it related to the earlier cup which was part of the feast, not to the one after supper out of which He instituted the Eucharist.

Fifth, the banning from use of God's creatures is condemned in Colossians 2, already referred to (see also 1 Timothy 4:3-7).

Sixth, the use of wine when specially required is apostolically recommended to the servant of the Lord in 1 Timothy 5:23, and that, notwithstanding that the abuse of wine was not unknown in the Christian community in which he was (see chap. 3:3, 8).

Seventh, though there are abundant references to wine in the New Testament, it is in no case prohibited. Excess is denounced: but even in the detailed qualifications for bishops and deacons, while wine is mentioned, its abuse only is deprecated. The proper use of wine is, in the New Testament, not even discountenanced.

SO FAR FOR THE NEW TESTAMENT. We have there, both in Gospels and Epistles, a body of testimony which is dead against prohibition. There is no resisting it, if one is subject to Scripture.

The voice of THE OLD TESTAMENT is equally pronounced and decisive. Wine is mentioned there as under God's blessing one of the marks of His favor to Israel— "He will love thee and bless thee... He will also bless thy corn and thy wine and thine oil" (Deuteronomy 7:13).

It was daily offered to Jehovah in the temple— "In the holy place shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto Jehovah for a drink offering" (Numbers 28:3, 7). The scriptures in which, as a special earthly blessing it is spoken of, are too numerous to quote, but take the following,

Deuteronomy 11:14; 33:28.

Israel is reproached with not having recognized that her wine came from Jehovah (Hosea 2:9).

It is to be a millennial blessing (Hosea 2:21, 22).

Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine for Abram, and Mephibosheth's servant brought wine to David (Gen. 14:18; 2 Samuel 16:1).

Psalms 104 tells us that it is Jehovah Who maketh the herb to grow— “for the service of man; bringing forth bread out of the earth, and wine which gladdeneth the heart of man” (vers. 14, 15).

It is pretty evident that God does not frown upon the use of wine. And so in other passages. The burden of Scripture testimony is that wine is one of God's good gifts to man, intended by its proper use to cheer, help and invigorate him.

I do not here refer to the Scriptural denunciations of excess, which are abundant, particularly in the Prophets; nor to all that we know of its evils, because that is not the subject in question. What is now under consideration, is not the abuse of wine, but its use; and Paul, contrary to all ascetic notions, instructs Timothy that, “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if received with thanksgiving,” etc. (1 Timothy 4:4), adding immediately, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine” (ver. 6).

I have said that I have no sympathy with Teetotalism, but the searching of Scripture gives me a much more decided judgment against it than I had before. I had looked upon it as a harmless fad, rather good than otherwise; but scriptural investigation shows me differently. Contrasting it with New Testament doctrine, as I have quoted, Teetotalism appears to me to be a REFLECTION UPON CHRISTIANITY. It is the Colossian error of supplementing Christianity from the resources of human wisdom; not openly denying, but adding to it, and thus implying that it is not perfect and complete in itself. Paul says to the Colossians, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world and not after Christ.” “Ye are complete in Him” (Colossians 2:8, 10). See also verses 16, 20-23 of same chapter.

I do not admit that Christianity needs to be supplemented, or its holy principles added to, from the repertory of Total Abstinence philosophy or any other. Coming after Christianity, Teetotalism is an impertinence (I do not use the word in an offensive sense); it virtually impugns the wisdom of our Lord, denying the completeness of the doctrine and precepts which, by Himself and His apostles, He has handed down to us.

Besides being a reflection on Christianity, Tee-totalism is a REFLECTION UPON GOD AS CREATOR. Now whatever God has created, is good; it is man's sin that turns it into evil. Drunkenness is the abuse of a creature of God. The created thing itself is good, and its proper use beneficial. But Teetotalism treating the thing as evil really reproaches God with having created an evil thing, and, pro tanto, reduces or denies man's sin in the matter. It thus throws upon God the blame of man's sin, which is, in principle, just what Adam did when he said: “The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” E. J. T.

## The Women of the Genealogy

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Matthew 1:3, 5, 6

The introduction of four women's names, and of four only, into the genealogy of our Lord, as given by Matthew, has furnished material for inquiry to many students of the inspired word. That there was a special purpose in it no one who had any right claim to be such could ever doubt. Moreover, a slight glance only at the names so chosen to a place in connection with the human descent of the Lord of glory would show something of the significance of their being found there. They are precisely such names as a chronicler, left to mere human wisdom in the matter, and especially a Jew, however right thinking, would have kept out of sight; and especially so as there was no apparent necessity for bringing them forward. They were not needed at all as establishing the connection of our Lord with David or with Abraham.

No other names of women are thus introduced. Neither Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, nor any other, while yet there was perhaps not another who might not seem to have better title to be remembered. These women were, of all others, though in different ways, just the blots apparently upon the genealogy. And then, so far from any attempt at concealment of what was discreditable in connection with them, circumstances which needed not (one might have thought) to be referred to, are brought in, as if to draw our attention to what otherwise might have been less noticed. Thus, Zarah's twin-birth with Pharez, though himself not in the line of the genealogy, is mentioned as if to recall the circumstances of that sin which brought them into being; while Bathsheba, instead of being mentioned by name, is associated, as it were, with all the horror of the crimes which her name alone one would think sufficient to bring to mind—“her that had been the wife of Urias.”

But there is something very beautiful as well as characteristic in this fearlessness of one who, here, as in other places—in a mere record of names, as it might seem, as well as in the most solemn passages of our Lord's life—spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. If there be a blot upon the life of one of His people, the God of truth will never hesitate to bring it out, though it might seem to be furnishing an occasion to those who seek occasion against the truth; and if there be a dark spot that presumptuous man would dare to lay a finger on, on but one of the links (each divinely constituted) of the chain of ancestry of the Man Christ Jesus, the Spirit of God puts His finger upon it first, to invite our attention to it as something worthy of being noted, and calculated only in the mind of faith, to beget reverential thoughts and lowly admiration of a wisdom that never fails, and that is most itself when it confounds all other.

Now to a faith that (as is characteristic of it) “believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly,” the introduction of the names of Tamar and of Bathsheba into the inspired record of the Lord's human ancestry, is pregnant with suggestions fitted to awaken the liveliest emotion. Each of these women of dishonored names and shameful memories had title, then, in a peculiar way, to appropriate those words which recorded Israel's most real boast: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.” The human feeling—for there is that in it whatever there may be more—which has given an

“immaculate conception” to the mother of our Lord, would have at least provided for the unblemished character of the line of His natural descent; and that feeling would have said, Let Him have connection with the purest and noblest only that can be found; and thus it is that human thought has been shown fully in the wisdom of One who, from the beginning, took the “seed of the woman” —first as she had been in the transgression—to bruise the serpent's head, and heal those that are oppressed of the devil. Fixed, in divine wisdom, in that part of our Savior's genealogy which no Jew could dispute—for none could dispute that the Christ was to come of David—these names (all perhaps Gentile, and some undoubtedly so) stood there to vindicate the Gentile's part in the “child born.” And just so in the face of pretension to human righteousness they stood to vindicate the claims of sinners to Him whose “body was prepared Him” that He might die for sinners.

Thus far, then, the meaning of these names in the connection in which we find them is plain enough, and their place in the genealogy not only needs no vindication, but is another note of harmony in that song of praise which His word, as well as all other of His works, is perpetually singing—seed to sow music in the hearts of the sorrowful, in the assurance of how the sighing of the prisoners has come up before the Lord.

But what if we are able to go further and to show that not only is this so, but that each of the four names here given furnishes its own peculiar feature to what, taken as a whole, is really a full and blessed declaration of the story of grace and of salvation—each in its order adding what the former had left out, till the whole is told? Would it not be worthy of God to speak so—to make not only types and parables, but the very names of a genealogy repeat a story He is never weary of telling, however slow man may be to hear?

Let us take up, then, the history of these four names, so far as it connects them with this inspired genealogy, and try to read the lesson which is given us by their connection with it.

The history of Tamar you will find in Genesis 38 It is one of those dark chapters of human depravity which the Word lays open with its accustomed plainness and outspokenness. Infidels would speak of it as a blot upon the book that contains it, and few perhaps care to read it, least of all aloud. And yet it is a story that will one day again find utterance before the most magnificent assembly that the earth or the heavens ever saw or shall see. And how many such like stories shall come out then—mine, reader, and yours, not perhaps, after all, so far removed from Tamar's and the pure eternal day will not withdraw its beams, and the night not cover it up with its darkness.

What must be told then, may well bear to be told now. The light that shines upon evil deeds is all undefiled by them. If Tamar's history were a mere thing of the past and had no voice for succeeding generations, no doubt it had been vain to bring it up; but now let us rather thank Him for doing it, who has given us a page of human history so dark that we have to shudder, so filthy that we have to blush at it. Reader, I ask again, is there no page of your life that if it were written by the faithful hand of God, you would have to blush at in like manner?

Now in all this history of Tamar's the thing that strikes me in this connection is, that there is no redeeming feature about it. If I take the record attached to the other names which have place with hers in this genealogy, I may find perhaps in each case something that breaks the darkness a

little. But I find nothing similar recorded about Tamar. She comes before me in this picture as a sinner and nothing else. The wife successively of two men, each cut off for his wickedness by divine judgment, she dares yet in her own person, by crime equal to theirs, provoke divine judgment. But the wonder above all this is, that it is this very sin that brings her name into the Lord's genealogy—for this sin it was that made her the mother of Pharez, one of the direct line in Christ's ancestry.

Is there no voice in this? And is it the voice of the God of judgment, or is it the voice of the God of grace, the God and Father, indeed, of our Lord Jesus Christ? True, if I look alone at the Old Testament record, it may call up before me, as it has called up, the time of account and manifestation; but the moment I turn to the New Testament and find Tamar first of women's names in the genealogy of the Lord—Tamar, brought in by her sin into that connection—I find what fixes my mind upon a scene of judgment, indeed, and that of the most solemn sort, but where the Holy One of God stands for the unholy, where Barabbas's cross—place of the chief of sinners—bears the burden of One who alone bare all our burdens, and “with whose stripes we are healed.”

O, blessed lesson, and worthy of God to give! Tamar's sin her connection with the Lord of life and glory? and O beloved, look! was not our sin our connection? Did not He die for sinners? Was it not when we confessed our sins, and, with our mouths stopped, took our places before God, ungodly and without strength, that we found out the wondrous fact that for the ungodly and without strength Christ had died; and that because we were sinners, and Christ had died for such, He was “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”?

Thus Tamar's name, first in this genealogy, is first also in the simple gospel truth that it reveals; and the fact that Tamar is a sinner, of whom I can read nothing but her sin, and whose sin gives her connection in a peculiar way with the Christ who came for sinners, is light and joy and gladness in my soul.

But we must turn to Rahab.

And here again we are not in very creditable company. Rahab is a Canaanite, one of a cursed race, and Rahab is a harlot, sinner among sinners. We seem destined to move in this track. The one thing recorded to her advantage is her faith. That it had fruit too, none can question. She is one whom the apostle James takes up, to ask us, “Was not Rahab, the harlot, justified by works, when she received the messengers, and sent them out another way”? But even here, you will observe, the thing he appeals to is not what would, in men's eyes, make a saint of her. There was no brilliance of devotedness, no wonderful self-sacrifice, no great goodness, as one might say. Even in the very thing in which she shows her faith she tells a lie; as if to isolate faith from any kind of merit whatever, and to give us expressly the picture of one that “worketh not,” but whose only hope is in a God who “justifieth the ungodly.” (Romans 4:5.)

And who can doubt it was Rahab's faith that brought her into the genealogy, as sin had brought Tamar? Without faith, she had died with those shut up in Jericho, a cursed woman of a cursed race. Faith removed that curse from her: faith brought her in among the people of God, if it did not attract to her the heart of Salmon, so as in the most direct way to account for those words being in the genealogy, “Salmon begat Booz of Rachab.”

Thus the second of these women's names teaches us a lesson as sweet and as needful as the former. "To him that worketh not, but believeth" is what we instinctively think of when we think of Rahab, faith that, while it has that which demonstrates its reality, leaves one still to be justified as ungodly, nay, believes on One who only does so justify—faith which looks not at itself, therefore, and pleads not its own performances, but brings the soul to accept the place of ungodliness only, because for the ungodly only there is justification.

This is very sweet and very wonderful. It is wonderful to find how in the mere introduction of a name into a catalog, the God of grace can speak out the thoughts of His own heart. And it is very sweet to see how constantly before Him is the thought of our need and of His mercy, and how He would by the very wonder, as it were, surprise men's slow, cold hearts into the belief of it.

And now we have got to Ruth: "Boaz begat Obed of Ruth."

But what shall we say of Ruth? Here at first sight our text might seem to fail us, and we might seem to have parted company with sinners. Why, you might say, the Spirit of God Himself takes a whole book to tell us about Ruth. And true, indeed though it be that she was a Gentile, as Rahab and as Tamar, you might repeat of her what the Lord Himself says of another Gentile: "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." With no sword of judgment hanging over her head as over Rahab's, with no tie to connect her with Israel, but the memory of a dead husband who had himself abandoned it, with the memory of famine in that land which had forced her husband out, and with the company only of an aged woman, with whom bitter providences, as she deems them, have changed the name of Naomi into Mara, Ruth comes into the land and to the God of Israel, in whose fields she is content to be a gleaner. No, do not think, reader, that I would disparage the worth, or blot the fair fame of Ruth the Moabitess. That she was a Gentile only adds to it the more honor, in that among the godless grew her godliness, and that she was faithful where Israel's own children had set her the example of unfaithfulness.

But is there nothing in this very fact that, in company with the names of sinners among sinners, we find one who shines, as it were, saint among saints? What does it mean, this putting down of Ruth in company with such names as Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba? Is it not a truth of the same kind as when the Word tells us of one who "gave much alms" and "prayed to God alway," that he was to send to Joppa for a man who should tell him words whereby he should be saved? Or, as when Zaccheus, standing forth and saying to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor," meets the significant and gentle word—you can scarcely call it reproof— "This day is SALVATION come to this house, for as much as he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was LOST."

So that without the smallest word of detraction from Ruth's goodness, but rather allowing in its very fullest all that can be claimed for it, we may fairly draw a lesson from the company in which we find her name, which is itself full of instruction and of beauty; and Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, side by side in the genealogy, give us but the announcement of Isaiah's vision, which the Baptist's mission went to fulfill: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Yes, God's salvation as much needed, and in the same way, by one as another—as much of grace to one as to another, to Ruth the Moabitess, as to Rahab or Tamar.

But we have not yet got at that which gives fullest significance to this name in the genealogy. Against this Ruth, with all her loveliness and with all her goodness, there was lying a ban which did not lie in the same way against the others. She was a Moabitess, and against these there had been leveled an express statute of the law. "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord, even unto their tenth generation they shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever" (Deuteronomy 23:3). Thus Ruth lay under the interdict of the law. It is striking that it was to this devoted, to this lovely woman that the law applied—not to Rahab nor even to Tamar; God having thus proclaimed in an unmistakable way the law's character; not bringing it in to condemn the sinner and the harlot (where men's minds would have done so), but introducing it as that which would have excluded a Ruth, even with her piety. Emphatically was it thus taught that it was man as man that was shut out from God—not in his sins merely, but in his righteousness; and that if we stand on that ground all "our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

But the law does not keep Ruth out. Moabitess as she is, she does enter into the congregation of the Lord. The law is set aside in her behalf, and instead of her descendants being excluded to the tenth generation, her child of the third generation sits upon Israel's throne, and hears the promise which confirms that throne to his heirs for succeeding generations.

Thus another principle comes out in bright relief. If God takes up the sinner and the harlot on the principle of faith, law is set aside by the very fact. "The law is not of faith." "The righteousness of God without the law is manifested," "even the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe." This is what Ruth is witness to. The Moabitess comes into the congregation of the Lord, spite of the law expressly leveled against her to keep her out; and in this we find but another utterance of this self-same story of grace which, in so many languages, our God so joys to tell.

One name alone remains; one truth has yet to be uttered. God takes up sinners, then, by faith, and law is set aside. "Faith is reckoned for righteousness." Not as if faith were righteousness, or its equivalent—that would be quite another thing: but God, who had been looking (to speak humanly) for righteousness by law, had ceased to do so. The law had returned Him answer, "there is none righteous; no, not one." Thenceforth the principle was changed, "Faith" was "reckoned for righteousness:" faith that did not pretend to righteousness at all, for it was in One who "justifieth the ungodly."

But if God receives sinners, to what does He receive them? Is it a complete salvation they obtain, or are there conditions still to be met before the final goal is reached, and there is complete security? On what, in short, does the ultimate salvation of the believer rest? This is a question which evidently needs answering before the soul can be completely satisfied and at peace. It is one thing to be now in the favor of God, and it is another thing to know that I can never lose it. And the more I look at myself, if it depend upon myself, the more I must be in dread of losing it.

Moreover, there are those who will allow of a free present salvation, who will not allow of one that gives security absolutely for the future. With them the sinner may be saved without works; but the saint may not! The legalism shut out at one entrance gains admittance at another, and the result in either case is the same. Self-sufficiency is built up; self-distrust taught to despair; the work of Christ is practically displaced from its office of satisfying the soul, and the grace of God effectually denied.

The Scripture speaks as decidedly on this point as on any other. On justification by the blood of Christ it builds the most confident assurance as to the future. It tells us that inasmuch as “when we were yet sinners Christ died for us, MUCH MORE then, being now justified by His blood, WE SHALL BE SAVED from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Romans 5:8-10).

And when I turn to this last name of the four, and find “her that had been the wife of Urias” taking her place with Tamar, Rahab, and Ruth in the genealogy of the Lord, it seems as if the text just quoted were repeated in my ears. For, the moment I think of Bathsheba, a greater name than hers (linked strangely with hers in the crime which it recalls), comes in to efface her almost from my mind. David it is I think of—David, child of God, Israel's sweet psalmist! in whose breathings the souls of saints in every age have poured out their aspirations after “the living God,” —David fallen, and fallen so low that we cannot marvel if his name be side by side with Tamar's. David, man after God's heart! Oh, how many of the Lord's enemies hast thou made to blaspheme! how many of the Lord's people hast thou made to mourn for thee! Was that thy witness to what God's heart approved? Was that thy soul's panting after Him? What! murder a man in the midst of faithful service to thee zealously rendered, that thou mightest hide thine own adultery? Was that the man who, when flying from the face of his enemy, and when Providence had put that enemy within his power, cut off but his skirt, and his heart smote him for it? Ah! sadder than thy heart could be for Saul, we take up thine own lament over thee, “How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished.”

And surely, O Lord our God, in Thy presence shall no flesh glory! If David could not, could we? Alas! if I know myself, what can I do but put my mouth in the dust, and be dumb forever before the Lord! “All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass.” And “let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” The voice that comes to me from David's sin is infinitely more than David's condemnation. It is my own. Can I pretend to be better? Can I take my hand from his blood-stained one? Ah, no! I accept with him my own condemnation; and not as a sinner merely, but as a saint. From first to last, from beginning to end, the voice of David's fall brings to me the assurance that the justification of the ungodly must be my justification still. It is like that voice of God, strange, and contradictory in its utterance, men may call it, which, having pronounced man's sentence before the flood, and destroyed every living thing because “every imagination of the thought of man's heart was only evil continually,” after the flood declares, “I will not again curse the ground for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more everything living as I have done.”

Blessed be His name! He does not trust His salvation to my hand. My “life” depends but upon the life of Him who has taken His place in heaven, after He had by Himself purged my sins; as much “for me” therein the glory as “for me” upon the cross. He is the accepted One; I but “in Him.” Because He lives, I shall live also.

If David could have taken his salvation out of God's hand, he surely would have done it in the case before us. That he could not I read in this woman's name, partner in his sin, recorded in the genealogy. Once again, as in Tamar's case before, I find sin connecting with the Savior of sinners. It was not that God did not mark, and in a special way, His abhorrence of the evil. It was only

grace, really to do that. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," and no wonder, therefore, if adultery and murder sprung up again and again in David's path. No marvel that the sword never departs from his house, and that his wives are dishonored in the face of the sun. But in the midst of all this growth of thorn and thistle, sure fruit and consequence of sin, one floweret springs up from this cursed ground, type and witness that, where sin had abounded, grace over-abounds. From this David and this Bathsheba, whom sin has united together, a child springs whose name stands next in the line of the ancestry of the Lord; and who receives, as if to confirm this, a special name "Jedidiah," "beloved of the Lord."

And is it an imagination or is it more, that there is something in the name—the other name of this child born—which harmonizes with all this? I will not say; but if Solomon, "peaceful," be a strange name in so near connection with so sad a history, it is not an unsuited one to follow in this genealogical list—not an unsuited one to be in company with Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, or Bathsheba. And it is a blessed one with which to end the history of four names, which when God utters them can be made to speak of what He must love well to utter, or He would scarcely take such strange occasion to remind us of it.

And if to any there seems after all in this, something that seems too much like a mere wonder to be God's utterance, I would beseech such an one to remember how once a burning bush was made just such a wonder to attract a passer-by, and how, when he turned aside to see, a voice out of that bush proclaimed that God was really there. Even so may it not be strange that He should attract now by a kind of wonder, to listen to a story which He loves to tell; and for those who turn aside to see, may the same voice, now, as then, be heard.-F.W.G.

## A Worldly Sanctuary (Duplicate): Part 1

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We are often in danger of coming short of the truth of God, by attaching to the words of Scripture the technical meaning which they may have in the theology of our own days. The words “carnal,” “flesh,” “world,” and “worldly” are known to us as expressive of that which is corrupt in itself, and which is disowned of God.

But if we do not see that God has had long patience both with the flesh and the world, dealing with them both in a way of probation, previously to His finally giving them up, we shall fall greatly short in apprehending the truth of God. And not only so, but we shall also fail to perceive that every effort which man is making now is but the repetition of that which has been previously attempted under far more favorable circumstances, and which has issued in lamentable failure. “Is it not of the Lord of hosts that the people shall labor in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity?”

Let us then remember that the time was when God said to the children of Israel, “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” This was a “worldly sanctuary.” A sanctuary suited for God’s dwelling-place in the world, and suitable also for the worship of a people of the world. God had constituted Israel to be His worldly people. He had fenced them off from the nations round about them by statutes, and judgments, and ordinances; and He had prescribed likewise “ordinances of divine service,” adapted to their sanctuary and to their standing.

All here was consistent—all was worldly. Worldly worship, therefore, was then a holy thing in itself, for God had then appointed it. And it would be so now also if God had a worldly people and a worldly sanctuary; but seeing He now has neither the one nor the other, the attempt to approach God, even by ordinances of divine service which He Himself originally prescribed, is most sinful. “He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that offereth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog’s neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine’s blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.”

This is a solemn word. The very act which was once a religious act, acceptable to God, as the killing an ox for a sin-offering or a burnt-offering, is when God delights not in it—but man chooses to do it—of moral guilt, it is as murder before God! The incense which God Himself so minutely directed to be compounded, and without which Aaron himself could not appear before the Lord lest he die—for one to burn that incense, is as if he blessed an idol!

Now if such was God’s estimate of His own ordinances of worldly worship, when those to whom they were given used them corruptly and willfully, what must be the iniquity of introducing an order of things distinctly set aside by God? But has not this been done in the history of the church, and is it not with renewed zeal being attempted in our own day? Forms and rituals of worship suited only

to a worldly sanctuary and a worldly people are sanctioned and established on every hand. And this is most fearful sin. The prophet of old was commissioned to rebuke Israel for their corruption and abuse of the worldly sanctuary and its worldly ordinances; but the apostle rebukes the saints of God when tending to turn back to worldly elements.

God was dishonored of old by any neglect of the worldly sanctuary; He is dishonored now by an attempt to copy or re-establish it. This enables us to determine the character of things now done in the professing church. Such things, for example, as an altar on the earth, repeated sacrifice, the burning of incense, the consecrating of buildings and of ground, and of persons also, by outward ceremonial. Such like rites and ceremonies were so early borrowed from the Jewish worldly ritual, and transferred into the Christian church, as to have become almost universal shortly after the apostles' days.

But where is their warrant in the New Testament -nay, how can any read therein and not see the introduction of such things prophesied of and solemnly warned against? How searching then is such a word as this: "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them, because when I spake they did not hear!" How needful is that recall to the only source of authority found in the word, "He that hath an ear to ear, let him hear" — "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." This marks at once the place from whence our wisdom and guidance must be sought. Not in antiquity, or in the examples of Judaized churches, but in the unquestioned teaching of the Holy Spirit Himself to the churches. This leads us away from all whose wisdom or authority can for a moment be questioned. It places the word of God itself before the conscience of every saint. Errors, however ancient, or venerable, or attractive, are thus detected, and the child of faith is forbidden to countenance them.

This makes the path of faith at all times sure, though oftentimes difficult. For nothing can be more sure than the steps of one guided by the Spirit of God and the word of God, and yet nothing more difficult than to have to walk in separation from all that exists around. It is indeed difficult to have to wind one's way through things so perplexing and so different as the religious systems of our own day. We have to avoid on the one hand systems formed in imitation of things past, and on the other, systems more characterized by anticipations of things future. We have to allow that such things were once given by God, and that they will yet again be introduced by Him, while in-variably contending that they are positively opposed to His present workings.

There was a worldly sanctuary—there is yet, in the coming dispensation, to be a worldly sanctuary—but now there is none. Existing systems are variously compounded of things proper to these three distinct periods. Some have drawn most from the past, some from the future, some, it may be, most from the present—but all involve sad confusion in the things of God. How many, who may in some measure have been emancipated from the ordinances of the ancient worldly sanctuary of the past dispensation, do not allow that there is a worldly sanctuary yet to come; and have consequently chosen and instituted that in which God delighteth not, as much as others who are professedly imitating the ancient ordinances. Thus, while denouncing worldly elements they them-selves have invested themselves with that which can only properly belong to the worldly part of the dispensation to come. Thus they are involved in the sin of mingling things heavenly and things earthly.

And is not all this a work of the flesh? Is it not an admission of worldly principles into the church of God? Do we not see this in the fond desire for official distinction, dedicated buildings, permanent institutions and ordinances, and attempts to attract worldly repute, so common to the systems around? For all this is not confined to the Church of Rome, or the Protestant Establishments of Europe, but it, with scarcely less prominence, characterizes the systems of Dissenters also. And surely all these things, under whatever form seen, must be alike offensive to God. We may go back to some ancient institutions of God, or forward to something He intends yet to introduce, or we may assert our own right to worship according to a pattern of our own devising, but in each and all these cases we subject ourselves to that word, "When I spake they did not hear."

It is important therefore to show that there yet will be a worldly sanctuary and worldly worship. This is very largely revealed in the prophets. Their subject of hope is the restored nation, restored polity, and restored worship of Israel; but all, when so restored, under and in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. Now the Christian church has in a great measure applied these predictions to herself, and hence we have the thought of a Christian nation, instead of the holy nation now to be gathered from out of all nations—hence too the thought of the union of the church and the State—a thought to be most blessedly fulfilled when Christ as a King and Priest shall sit upon His throne—hence, too, the antedating of the day when the kings of the earth are to bring their glory and honor to the golden city—hence the constant invitations which are given to the world to contribute its aid and patronage to the work of the church! All this has secularized Christianity, and given a worldly character to its position and its worship.

In the prophet Isaiah we read, "mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people." That is, God would have a house on earth, a worldly sanctuary, but it should be open to all, it should not be confined to Israel. The Israel of that future day would have a standing higher than that which belonged to them as the natural seed of Abraham, and in that standing others would be associated with them, even those who were naturally sons of the stranger. Joined to the Lord, these should be brought to His holy mountain, and made joyful in His house of prayer. The Lord Jesus, the Master of the heavenly house now, and in due time the builder also of the earthly house and worldly sanctuary, adverts to this Scripture in the sequel of His ministry. Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, "Is it not written, my house shall be called an house of prayer for all nations"? (Mark 11:17).

It never was this in its first standing. But when it is of another building, then many nations will come and say, "Come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Here we have most clearly a worldly sanctuary, a metropolitan temple on the earth—the fountain of legislation and instruction for all who fear the Lord. Christians may perhaps think that to establish a cathedral on mount Zion would be an approximation towards the fulfillment of this word. But if that were done, the word would still be, "The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Ezekiel in his vision witnessed the departure of the glory of the Lord, first from the house and then from the earth (chaps. 10, 11.); but in the 43rd chapter he says, "And the glory of the Lord came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is towards the east and behold the glory of the Lord filled the house and he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever, and my holy name shall the house of Israel no more defile." Here again we read of that worldly sanctuary yet to be set up.

But not to multiply quotations, let us only revert to two more, both of which lead us onward from the time of the rebuilding of the temple of Zerubbabel. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with my glory, saith the Lord of hosts.....The glory of this house shall be greater, the latter than the former, saith the Lord of hosts; and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." Here we must note that this worldly sanctuary is set up after the heavens and the earth have been shaken, which, according to the testimony of the apostle in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, has not yet taken place.

Again, we read in the prophet Zechariah (chap. 6:12), "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord; even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a Priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

Now all these testimonies, and they might be greatly multiplied, tell us of a worldly sanctuary yet to be set up; but not after the old order. There God will be known as the God of peace, even where the real glory will be, where Jesus will sit as a Priest upon His throne. There will be ordinances of divine service there, and ministering priests, and a worshipping multitude. One of those ordinances is mentioned in the last prophet referred to, "All the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles."

The conclusion therefore from these Scriptures is that there was a worldly sanctuary suited to a worshipping people in the flesh on the earth-and that there is yet to be a worldly sanctuary in connection with the new covenant, suitable for the true circumcision, the true spiritual seed, on the earth (Isaiah 57). But there is no such. sanctuary now. Now there is the heavenly sanctuary only. And this is the contrast so carefully drawn by the Holy Spirit in the 9th chapter of the Hebrews.

The first tabernacle in connection with the worldly sanctuary had its place for awhile. During its continuance the way into the holiest of all was not yet laid open, nor could there be any purging of the conscience. Now the contrast to this first tabernacle is not a second, set up like that on the earth, and in which the worshippers are to be kept at a distance from the holiest, but one set up by God Himself in heaven, in which those only can enter who are cleansed by the blood of Jesus and anointed with the Holy Spirit; but into which all such do now in spirit enter as alike accepted and equally priests. The first tabernacle is therefore in this chapter looked at in contrast with "the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building," in which the church now worships.

Such a sanctuary as this heavenly sanctuary alone befits the “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.” Man, as man, can recognize the propriety of splendid buildings for the worship of God, and he has ever acted accordingly. But the spiritual house has nothing tangible in it. It is not adapted to the world, nor does it present attractions to the flesh. To one who only judged by appearances there might be some ground for the slander that Christians were Atheists, for there was no visible or imposing attraction in their worship. Their worship was in the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands. They did not attempt in their places of assembly to vie with the imposing architecture either of the temple at Jerusalem or the heathen temples around them. They had not then heard of “Christian ecclesiastical architecture,” nor was the church then the patron of the arts. Their temple was not of this building.

And the ministry in the heavenly sanctuary corresponds with all this. It is complete and perfect, because performed by one who is divine and who is beyond the range of this world's cognizance. Christ is entered once into the holiest, having obtained eternal redemption. The eye of man could scan the beautiful proportions of an earthly sanctuary, and mark the service of an earthly priesthood, but faith alone can enter into the heavenly sanctuary or delight in its glories. No one of its beauties or glories is displayed to the senses—it is the soul alone which has learned the preciousness of Jesus which is now able to say, “How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts.” The Lamb is the light and glory of it. If He be not the object of faith no wonder that men should again make the sanctuary worldly. But even when God had His worldly sanctuary here, how little of its beauty was displayed to the ordinary worshippers. They saw not the golden sanctuary, nor the cherubim and vessels of gold; these things were most carefully hidden from their sight. The priests were charged to cover up the vessels of ministry, even from the sight of the Levites who were to carry them (Numbers 4:20). The eyes of the priests alone were to rest on these holy things.

Now it is the antitypes of these veiled and precious types with which we have to do. All believers now are priests unto God, and hence all now is open to faith; but open to faith alone. What eye hath not seen, God hath revealed to us by His Spirit. The Holy Ghost is specially come down from heaven in testimony of what He knoweth to be there. He could not witness of a heavenly temple and a heavenly priesthood, until the builder and sustainer of the temple and the perpetual Priest was in heaven.

All attempts to establish a worldly sanctuary now are therefore in direct opposition to the present testimony of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost by His coming was the conviction of the world's sin in having rejected Jesus, because testifying that God had exalted Him; but that blessed Spirit is also, by His very presence in the church, the conviction of the sin of every attempt now to set up a worldly sanctuary. He has to testify only of a High Priest, now ministering in the heavens, “Jesus, the Son of God, who is passed into the heavens,” and consequently He can only lead the soul to Him He glorifies. All who worship “in Spirit” must therefore worship in the heavenly sanctuary—for there alone does the Spirit lead.

But man, as man, knows not the Spirit of God; the world cannot receive him (John 14). It is no part of His ministry to guide the flesh into the presence of God, or to teach it to worship. His very presence here is God's most emphatic and solemn testimony of the entire ruin of man and his utter incompetency for any good thing. Regeneration must therefore precede worship. The only true

worshippers now are those who are separated unto God through “sanctification of the Spirit.” These are now “the holy priesthood,” “the royal nation.” And it is well for the saints themselves to bear constantly in mind this elementary truth. For it will enable them to test all that assumes to be worship. We may have the senses gratified, the imagination exercised, sentiment and feeling kindled—and we may mistake such things for worship; but they are fleshly things, and when found in saints they sadly grieve the Spirit of God.

These are things against which the saints have to watch, and which they have to mortify, but these are the things which must be fostered and gratified by the willful introduction of a worldly sanctuary. What more fearful, then, than to confound such a work with the present work of the Spirit of God. Is not this to confound darkness with light—flesh with Spirit? The whole order of a worldly sanctuary must hinder the present testimony of the Spirit of God. Now to do despite to the Spirit of grace—to insult the Spirit of God—is indeed fearful sin. But what has the Spirit of grace to do in the worldly sanctuary? There the great points are the service of the ministering priest, and the duties of the suppliant people. Grace is excluded in the whole order. Grace establishes the heart; but the worldly sanctuary leads it back again to meats.

Hence then we worship God in the Spirit. Not in sentiment—not in refinement of the imagination—not in fleshly wisdom or in fleshly power—but in the Spirit. And this we are able to do because the resurrection of Jesus has set aside the order of the flesh and of the world, and introduced us into the heavenly things themselves, and because the Holy Ghost has come to dwell in the church on earth, from Jesus its Head exalted in heaven. Any return therefore to a worldly sanctuary now must be as insulting to the Holy Spirit as it is contradictory of the finished work of Jesus.

But consider a moment longer, how truly the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of grace. What is His blessed witness to us? Is it not to grace accomplished in glory in heaven; Jesus by His own blood has entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. This it is which the Holy Ghost has revealed to us. Christ is there—and there “having obtained eternal redemption;” and He “there appears in the presence of God for us.” What need we more than this? Can we not by faith see here the witness of our own present acceptance and the pledge of our own glory! There then is the scene of our worship—there is our sanctuary—our only sanctuary. And it is into this scene of accomplished and abundant blessedness that the Spirit of God has come to lead our souls. “Set your mind on the things above” is His unceasing exhortation to us. May our hearts know more of the peace and glory of that heavenly sanctuary!

And what should be the characteristic of the worship of the heavenly sanctuary? Surely praise!—praise for accomplished redemption. And this sacrifice will not be wanting, if our souls realize our heavenly portion. None, indeed, can withhold their tribute of praise, who really worship in that sanctuary. Fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore, are at God's right hand; and every heart led of the Spirit there, declares, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.” Eternal redemption is the solid basis on which all such joy rests. Eternal redemption, found in the perfect work of Jesus—that work which He Himself ever presents on our behalf in heaven: “Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.”

(To be continued)

## A Worldly Sanctuary (Duplicate): Part 2

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The worldly sanctuary knew nothing properly of praise. There was no ministry of song pre-scribed by Moses. He could sing with the children of Israel the song of redemption after passing the Red Sea (Exodus 15); but it was grace which had brought them over; they sung the triumph of grace. The worldly sanctuary had not then been ordered. In it there was nothing ever accomplished, and therefore no ground-work of praise. There was the constant repetition of the same services; the worshipper's conscience was un-purged, and hence he could never raise the voice of praise and thanksgiving. We speak of the tabernacle in the wilderness. But few even of the strains of the sweet Psalmist of Israel were adapted to the temple service—that temple was a worldly sanctuary, and its blessings earthly; but the ministry of song went beyond all this, anticipating the full and accomplished blessing. Faith could sing then, only because reaching beyond the then present sanctuary—but faith sings now because in its present sanctuary it finds the themes of everlasting praises. Grace and glory, deliverance and victory, the wondrous salvation of God Himself, are there the subjects of unceasing praise, for their accomplishment is witnessed by the presence there in glory of our Forerunner Himself.

Can that heart be turned to praise which is taught its need of a daily absolution from the lips of another? Can such a soul sing in the Spirit and with the understanding, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs? Can an unpurged conscience praise? Such things are impossible. For is not the very act of worship regarded as a duty required by God, and so rendered under a sense of law, instead of a blessed privilege arising from the perception and enjoyment of mercy from everlasting to everlasting? The apostle teaches us to give thanks to Him “who hath made us meet” for “the inheritance of the saints in light” (Colossians 1). This shows the true ground of thanksgiving and praise to be what grace has accomplished for us in Christ.

But if this is not seen and remembered, worship must become a burden instead of our highest privilege. And do we not see that Christians regard the teaching and preaching with which God blesses them, far more highly than worship? This is a sure consequence of not remembering the sanctuary in which we worship. Let the soul realize this, and it will instantly perceive what are its grounds of praise, and what the character of its worship. But if a worldly sanctuary is established, or the order of a worldly sanctuary is introduced, our worship must be degraded, and our souls become lean. Such results must ensue if we take for our pattern the worldly sanctuary, instead of, by faith and as led of the Spirit, entering into that which is heavenly. There all is done— there we have subject for praise only.

(Concluded from page 110)

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