

# WRITINGS OF W H WESTCOTT

by W H Westcott

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*A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by W H Westcott, compiled for study and devotional reading.*

67 Chapters

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## 01. The Administration of the Head.

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The Administration of the Head.

Ephesians 4:1-32.

Notes of address No. 3 by W. H. Westcott, 1929. In our previous addresses we considered the Headship of Christ; in the first we noticed that every person who believes the gospel, has, in receiving the facts of the gospel, received also what prepares him for the understanding of every other truth. As you advance in divine things you will never be able to leave out, or to leave behind, the basic facts of the gospel. In trusting yourself to Christ in the simplest way as Saviour, there is the gift of God, the grace of God bestowed upon you, the pardon of your sins, the gift of the Spirit, and eternal life: thus the simplest believer has in his soul the germ of all that God has to say to him. In our second address, looking at the same subject, we noticed the purpose of God in Ephesians 1:10 :- that He is going to head up all things in Christ, which are in heaven and in earth. Everything is to be redeemed, everything to be brought into the good of the gospel. We are told first that God has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of the times, Christ is to be the Head, Centre, and Administrator of all the will of God in heaven and in earth. It is mightily comprehensive: and as our hearts take in God's plan, we find that we have a peculiar and unique place in connection with that plan.

Secondly, we looked at the Person of Whom we read in the end of the chapter. God raised Him from the dead leaving behind all that belongs to sinful man and the first man's sinful history, all of Satan's power, and the world. He is beyond everything. Not only has God raised Him from the dead, but He has set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places. He is not on the earth, but He is exalted as the risen Man far above all principality and power.

Whatever we may know of these mighty beings, mightier than ourselves — far above them all is Jesus at God's right hand in the heavenly places. He has put all things under His feet and gave Him to be head over all things to the church. Every believing heart, every young Christian as well as every mature Christian, can look up and say, "I see that this worthy Saviour whom I have confessed as my Lord, is the One whom God entrusts to carry out this stupendous plan, He is 'Head over all things.'" And when it says, "Head over all things to the Church," it is not the same as Head of the Church. The church down here on earth, composed of every Christian, is connected with a Person whom God has set as Head over the creation, Head over men, Head over kingdoms, Head over everything. The church recognises that Christ is Head over all things; it is a sweeping inclusion of everything in heaven, and in earth. We know the One Who is the divinely designated Head. The church in the meantime is His body, as it states at the end of the first chapter.

Thirdly, we saw in Ephesians 5:1-33 the Partner that is given to Christ in connection with that wonderful place. The Church of God called out at the present time, is quite different from the saints

of the Old Testament and from those of the world to come. We live in a parenthesis in the ways of God. While Christ is set there, hidden from the world at the right hand of God, God is gathering out for Him a living, heavenly; company. Their calling is not the same thing as the calling of Old Testament believers, it is quite distinct. They are a company spoken of as His body, or the assembly, the church which is to be given to Him. But more than that, it is a company so united to Christ, so equipped, so indwelt by the Holy Ghost that as a whole it will be an adequate object for the love of Christ, to be the real sharer of His throne. His throne; I do not say the Father's throne. It is ours to be the companion of Christ through unending years, a unique place. You get illustrations in the Old Testament. You find, for instance, after Joseph's refusal by his brethren when he was carried down into Egypt, he obtained an Egyptian bride to share his honours. But let us understand that at the present time God is gathering out a heavenly company and to that company every saved soul, every Christian, belongs in this present dispensation.

Ephesians 4:7-16.

Now may we study a little the particular relations of the Lord Jesus Christ to the assembly. In the language of Scripture, although we know that all things are put under Christ, we can truly say, we see not yet all things put under Him. We do not yet see kingdoms and men, and this lower creation, brought into order as they will be by and by, under His Headship. But we see Jesus: we are introduced to the Person who will bring everything to pass. By faith "we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." So we know the Person who is going to put all under God, and to rule all for His glory. Here on earth is the sphere in which His glory and His authority are not at present recognised; but it is a great thing for us Christians to see to it that we yield ourselves to His administration and come under His control so that we become even now pleasurable to God. In that way it was intended that the world to come, although still actually future, should be appreciated and enjoyed and illustrated in the church of God even now. In the first chapter of Ephesians we have two things — "purpose, and power." We have the purpose of God indicated to us, and we have the power indicated by which God is going to bring all this about. Look at Ephesians 1:9-10. There we read of "His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, for the administration of the fulness of times, to head up all things in the Christ" (N.T.). Then, in connection with the apostle's prayer, verse 19, he prays that we may know "what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised him from the dead." As God wrought with mighty power to raise Christ out from amongst the dead by whom He was surrounded, and to introduce Him into that scene of glory at His right hand, so is the power that is in operation towards us. God would have us to learn that He has taken us up and has drawn us out from among the dead by whom we are surrounded, and has linked us up with that glorious Person in the heavenlies. The second chapter unfolds it further, but this is the power that is in operation toward us. It has picked us up, and will not drop us until it has us with Christ and like Him. The apostle prays that God would open the eyes of our hearts to see the glory with which we are connected, and the power that is operating for its completion; so that we might come more and more under the present administration of Christ.

Then in Ephesians 2:1-22 we learn two things which will greatly aid us in understanding of this. One is "grace" — the mighty grace of God; "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ." Viewed

from the standpoint of His purpose this is what His grace has effected, — that when He raised up Christ from the dead we are looked at as being quickened together with Him, and He has raised us up together with Him. You see the mighty power of God operating towards us from His standpoint; the object of it all being to set forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Grace has picked us up from such awful depths, and by such mighty power, and in such a wealth of mercy, in order to fulfil the purpose of love, — "For the great love wherewith He loved us." He has associated us in His own mind with Christ Who is in "the heavenly places." If we are then to be associated with Christ, it is surely only right that we should learn all we can about Christ and that we should seek to come under His administration and grow in the purpose of His will, while we are down here.

It goes on to say, in verse 10, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Now if you would set your face in that direction and humbly desire to understand the grace of God, and to be in the good of it, you would realise what is necessary, that is the Spirit. The Spirit is given; it is part of the gospel. The remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost; these are constituent parts of the gospel. When you believe, after you have forgiveness of your sins, the gift of the Spirit is also yours. But this Spirit is given to take us up and to lead us in the exercise of our hearts up to the very source of all. Look at Ephesians 2:18, "For through Him (that is Christ) we both (that is the former Jew or the former Gentile now saved and brought into this one association and blessing), have access by one Spirit unto the Father." When it says, "The Father," I apprehend that it is not exactly our Father, nor a question of our individual relationship to Him as sons, but the Father. That is to say, the One Who has given birth to all this system of glory. I think you get in Ephesians 1:17 the explanation of it, "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." Who is it that has conceived the thought? Who is it that is the Author, the Source of all the blessing, if it be not the Father? The Holy Ghost not only gives us the knowledge of the blessing, but it is as though He says, "I am competent to lead you up to the knowledge of the Father from Whom the blessing has come." And you find that at the present time we are, in the 22nd verse said to be builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. The second chapter, I suggest, brings these two things before us, Grace and Power; the Spirit is given to lead us into the present enjoyment of it.

Now in Ephesians 3:1-21 we come to two other things, revelation and prayer. You may ask, "How is it that we have come to know these things?" "Well" says the apostle, "I will tell you how I have this knowledge of the mystery of Christ." He says in the Ephesians 3:2-3, "Ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given to you-ward, how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery." It was not given in the Old Testament scriptures. But when Christ had died, and risen again, and gone to glory, and the Holy Ghost had been given, He laid hold in a special way of Saul of Tarsus. It is in this connection that the Lord Jesus Christ made known this mystery to that wonderful apostle of Christ. In the very moment of his conversion there seems to be some hint of it, because when Saul of Tarsus was persecuting Christians he did not know that they were united to Christ as members of His body; but the Lord Jesus at the moment of arresting him (intervening in his wild career, and laying hold of him for glory and blessing), said, "Saul, Saul why persecutest thou Me?" To complete the truth you have this vessel of divine communications instructed in the mystery, as he goes on to say, "In other ages it was not made known to the sons of men as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles

should be fellow-heirs." There is the bringing into being of this new formation of which there was no hint in the Old Testament; the bringing in of the converted Gentiles as well as converted Jews to form one body in Christ. As he goes on to speak of it in the 3rd chapter he becomes so impressed by the magnitude of it, that, after unfolding the truth of the mystery he seems to say, "Not even I, the apostle, can make it good to your souls." In the 7th verse he says, "I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Here he introduced us to a second administration. In Ephesians 1:1-23 we read, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ": ("dispensation" or "administration" as the word may more correctly read). That, of course, is future: when all the different lines of God's working with men will converge, and Christ will take up every one of them. In the administration of the fulness of times He will head up all things in Christ; but, says the apostle, "There is another administration, and that is now." He says in verse 9, "To make all men see what is the administration (the same word) of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known in the assembly the manifold wisdom of God." There are the two administrations. There is one future, when Christ will bring everything into order, when He will subdue all enmity and hostility, putting down all enemies beneath His feet, and when the kingdom will be established in power. But there is the present administration, and that administration goes on in the assembly. You may ask, "What do you mean by the assembly?" Do not get any wrong idea into your minds; do not think that it means any denomination; do not think that it means any select company of Christians gathered in this hall or any other hall. The assembly includes within its circumference all Christians, and, from the stand-point of the Epistle to the Ephesians, all Christians from the day when the Holy Spirit first came, to the day when the Holy Spirit will leave with the church, and we shall be caught up into the air to meet the Bridegroom of our hearts. The truth in the Epistle to the Ephesians is different from that in the Epistle to the Corinthians which looks more at the local constitution of the assembly in each town where God has wrought in grace. The local assembly covers the whole number of Christians in each city, who although they belong to that locality geographically are under the One Lordship of Christ, and are unified administratively by one set of instructions the new order intended to obtain all over the world. They act locally in view of what is to the honour of Christ everywhere, in the whole church of God; but they are the local expression of it. That is the teaching of Corinthians.

Here in Ephesians it is the church as a whole, and so it says, "Christ loved the church." It does not just mean a little number of Christians in any one town, but in all its fulness the whole church of God, from the day that the assembly was first formed on the day of Pentecost to the day when He calls the church home and presents it to Himself in glory. The assembly, the whole community of Christians on earth, is the circle in which the blessed administration of Christ as the Head is to be discovered now. We learn to be subject to Him, to derive from Him, to recognise Him as the source of direction, and as the resource of His people. It is this present administration that we

would now consider.

Look then at Ephesians 4:1-32. I should first say that in connection with the revelation of the mystery we have again the apostle turning to prayer. He tells us how this mystery was revealed to him that he might make it known; but as to the making good of it in our souls he cannot do that. Hence he says, "I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." I feel how very frequently we deprive ourselves of the force of some of these scriptures. It is not the love of Jesus dwelling in the saint saved by grace. Of course we would love to see the blessed Lord Jesus precious to every believing heart. But that is not the meaning of it. It is that Christ, the One Who is the Head, Whom God has designated, and appointed, and anointed, as the Head of all this great system of blessing, may dwell in the hearts of those who compose the assembly, by faith, that they "May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." And that we all might come so completely under the guidance of the Spirit, and under the control of Christ, that we may understand in our collective assembly life what a blessed thing it is to be under the administration of Christ. Let us remember if we do turn to prayer, that chapter three, verse 20, says, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the assembly by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages," — the present included. Let us remember that God by His Holy Spirit is working in us; and in proportion as the Spirit of God works in us (it is according to the power that worketh in us), even so will this desirable end be accomplished, that there will be glory to God in the assembly. People are very apt to quote this verse, as to His being able to do more than we ask or think. But as to the actual setting of it, it is that God's intention with respect to us might be carried out; that that the Christ might dwell in our hearts, so that there might be carried on this present administration in the assembly.

Now look at the way in which we are influenced by this administration. After speaking in the 4th chapter of seven things that are common to us all, in verses 4, 5 and 6, he says, in verse 7, "But unto everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." In connection with the One Body, and the One Spirit, it is not that God passes all into a mould and fashions everyone alike. It is not that God produces absolute uniformity, although the unity is perfect. Looking at things from the standpoint of Ephesians, this oneness embraces all Christians; but each one of us has his own place in the body. It is quite a unique place, the little function of my life is not precisely like the little function of your life; each is connected with its own position in the body. There is unity, all under the direction of the One Head, but there is not uniformity. All must be formed in the life of the Head, all equipped from the Head, all directed from the Head. In a body that is properly operating everything is subject to the Head. We enjoy this now; it says, "Now unto everyone of you is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Christ Who descended has gone up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. From the very lowest to the very highest point Christ is Head, and everything is to be brought under the administration and control of Christ. In the future that administration will be manifested so that everybody will see it; but at the present time it is to be seen only in the assembly.

Now as to the assembly; look at the wonderful resource, and the perfect administration of the One Who is the Head. "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints." There should be a semi-colon after the words "for the perfecting of the saints." A different word is used in the next clause; instead of "for" it should read "with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ." Unfortunately words that are different in the Greek are not always made different in our authorised version. The object that God had in committing all this administration to Christ is at the present time for the perfecting of the saints. If you understand that you will see that Christianity is not come into the world for the making of the earth better; the whole service of Christ at the present time, and the whole administration of Christ at the present time, is for the perfecting of the saints, not for the betterment of the world. The way that He carries it on is by constant ministry from Himself. Of course there is the ministry of the Apostles and prophets in the New Testament scriptures. But there is the constant ministry from the Head in glory, so that we may be reminded of the truths they were inspired to give us, and that their influence may be made distinctly real in all our lives. The evangelist is just as much for the perfecting of the saints as the apostle. The evangelist who thinks that he is only to save souls is-mistaken. The apostle, the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor, and the teacher, are all for the perfecting of the saints. But how? Well, if there were no evangelists there would be no saints to perfect. The evangelist is used to bring light to the soul, to turn men to the Saviour, and they trust Him and receive the Holy Ghost. But what after that? The evangelist has to bring them into the circle where they can be cared for, "for the perfecting of the saints": that they may be brought into the circle of Christ's administration and receive of all His fulness and come under His Headship all the way through. "Till we all come," this goes right on to the end; it is with a view to the work of the ministry, with a view to the edifying of the body of Christ, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God man, unto the measure of the stature of Christ."

Coming to the 14th verse we read, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." It is not a question of running after this man or that man, this elder or that elder. The object of all ministry is to bring people into contact with the Head, and instead of being children tossed to and fro, that they may grow up unto Him. The work of the ministry in every form is for this purpose; to put people into living attachment to the One who is the Head. When that is the case, you will see that not only Christ is the One Who is going to bring everything into accordance with the will of God by and bye, but that everything in your life and among the saints is to come now under the administration of Christ. Hence it says in the 15th verse, speaking of holding the truth in love, you grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head.

If you read the rest of the Epistle you find some of the "all things" that come under the direction of Christ as Head. If we speak of our lives, our ordinary day by day lives, these are to come under the control of the Head of the new race. Putting off the old man and being renewed in the spirit of our minds, we "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (verse 24). Then he says, give up such things as lying and deceit and lust; all these things are done with, we have put off the old man. Then as to our whole business life, coming into contact with the world, let each man speak truth one to another. There are no such things as "white lies," "business lies," in the new man. When you come down to the detail, it speaks of the relation of wives to husbands, of children with their parents, or servants with their masters. Each ought to

take his character as a Christian from the One Who is the Head; each one is to live in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ as His Head. You find many a Christian going on with all sorts of religious or worldly entanglements. But if he looks up to Christ Who is the Head in all things, it has the effect necessarily of severing him from all that which is of an independent or worldly formation; whether it is in the way of moral reformation, or in the way of religious associations and organisations. If you are entangled in anything that is not after Christ, you are not in a position to carry out this scripture. I would earnestly pray, and ask that we may all be concerned about coming more distinctly under the direction and administration of Christ as Head and that we may discover in Him every resource. You may depend upon it, such is His care for His people that He will supply every need, in spite of all the weakness and sorrow of the present times. He will supply us with grace so that we may be able to grow up unto Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ; "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

## 02. Not only "Good" but "The better."

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Not only "Good" but "The better."

W. H. Westcott.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 39, 1956-8, page 167.)

Man is naturally incredulous in the things of God. It was the first form of Satan's attack upon Eve, to infuse questions as to His being the Source of all good to man; and want of faith in God's wisdom, God's ways, and God's means, still hinders the most pious and earnest souls. We propose to ourselves a certain way in which He will work, and are greatly taken by surprise when He works in another way. To look for Israel's Messiah, in Jerusalem, in the Temple, with pomp and glory and power, — this Nathanael could understand. To see the high orders, the prelates and princes, the influential among the nation, urging His presence and His claim, — this was to be expected. To have Him overthrow Caesar's power, assume the crown, and rule in equity and peace, — this surely was the hope of the nation.

Hence when Philip found Nathanael and told him they had found the One they awaited, even Jesus of Nazareth, Nathaniel said unto him, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see." (John 1:46). But Nazareth! A place not so much as named in the Old Testament; and again in Galilee; and yet again, a village so usually unproductive of good that it had quite an ill-savour among those who knew it; for Nazareth to be the home of Israel's Saviour, seemed to tax Nathanael's mind almost to refusal. Happy he to have a friend like Philip whose wise rejoinder led him to come and see. Was he disappointed? Does God ever disappoint the man or the woman who is content to receive and learn Christ in the unexpected place? Do we sometimes decide for ourselves that Christ is to appear to us as the Saviour, or as the Leader, in some stately building worthy of the occasion, or by the sanction of some ecclesiastical hand, or by some special form of service? Is not the Lord whom we so truly seek in some nearer' some insignificant place, void of all religious import according to man's ideas? Or do we not hope for some general, popular move, in favour of Christ; a religious upheaval into which one can slip without being singular, avoiding the sterner discipline of individual conviction and the courage to act upon it? Yet is not the Jesus whom we seek rather the Jesus of Nazareth, to whom one and another, sinking all prejudice, attracted by the pure grace of His Person apart from all outside show, are irresistibly drawn? If attached to the stately temple ritual man may have visits from the Lord, but His company is found with those who are the poor and afflicted remnant of His people whose only home is His presence, and whose only lure is His company. He satisfieth the longing soul.

Good did indeed come out of Nazareth in the person of Jesus, but when we pass into John's second chapter we meet with not only the positive — good, but that which is better, for the wine given by Jesus was better than man's wine. Probably at the wedding feast here spoken of, the rule had been followed, and the bridegroom had given, according to his means, the very best wine first;

but the expert who presided at this feast immediately detected the quality of what was now set before him, though ignorant of its miraculous source, and chided with him, saying, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now." (John 2:10). But with Jesus as our Friend, do we not always find things better as we go on? The Spirit of Christ in the prophets led them to speak of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. The Lord Jesus in grace walked the path of lowliness and humiliation, enjoying therein His Father's smile and communion with Him, and then entered into glory. At the close of His stay on earth He bore our sins and their judgment, but is risen to die no more. In glorious resurrection, made the centre of all glories, He will receive His Church, and His Kingdom and will bring out all the counsels of the Father's heart on an unshakeable basis for eternity. Truly in His case the best wine is last.

It is so with His people. Even here, and despite all weakness, suffering, persecution, isolation, we taste the sweetness of Christ's love, the sense of His approval, and communion with God. We have the joy of our relationship with the Father, the friendly power of the Holy Ghost who dwells within us, the precious privilege of the Lord's communications to us by the Holy Scriptures. We have even here the glad reality of the Lord's supper, the rare delight of worship in the Father's presence, and the happy service of the Lord toward His people, and in the world of need around. Ours is the luxury on earth of going to its dark places as dispensers of the bounty of God, with forgiveness for the guilty, life for the dead, rest for the weary, peace and satisfaction for all. The wine is good to begin with. But the best wine is to come. We shall see His face whom not having seen we love; ours will be the joy of beholding His glory so as we have seen it in the sanctuary. Testimony, service, suffering in His Name, are all sweeter than the honeycomb; but to be with Christ is far better. Eternity is not to be for the saint a Sphinx-like fixture, but a flowing, an ever expanding, life; where the glory of God, and the grace of Christ, are by the Spirit, to be our joy; and His service our unwearying delight.

## 03. The Body of Christ (1)

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### The Body of Christ (1)

W. H. Westcott.

February, 1930. My Dear Brother,

You ask if the Pauline use of the word "Body" of Christ is the same as Luke 22:19, or Luke 23:52, or is it not in the sense of "Corporation" or "Regiment." The actual word used is the same. To speak of what is divinely inspired on the human side, the gospel of Luke is universally recognised as written on Pauline lines or under Paul's influences.

There are many occasions on which Paul uses the simple word "body" (Greek, soma). Leaving, for the moment, those passages that refer to the Church, all the other instances, I believe, refer to concrete substance animated by life; or (if the life be taken) to that same concrete substance, dead. Romans 6:6, 1 Corinthians 15:40, and Colossians 2:17, might be cited as possibly needing, if not another interpretation, at least another application. But they do not affect your enquiry.

There remain the passages dealing with the Assembly of God. These are Romans 12:1-21, 1 Corinthians 12:1-31, Ephesians 4:1-32, and Colossians 2:1-23. What other isolated instance there may be, must be viewed in the light of these.

Romans 12:4, is illustration, Romans 12:5, is application of the illustration. Forgive me for saying that if Regiment or Corporation had been what the Spirit had intended to convey, the figure or illustration actually given might appear to be unfortunate and misleading. We have many members in one Body, but these are all organically united. Adapted marvellously as the many organs and members are for their various uses, they are essentially one, and together form one living entity. They are not units each having its independent life, even though all were united under the control of a commander or director.

Romans 12:5, is the application of the figure. With all the diversity to be found among Christians with individual exercises and activities. they are nevertheless an organic unity in Christ. That is. we are not thinking of a mere congregation of individuals, but of organs and members in a body. This is a wholly spiritual idea: it is not administration in a Corporation or Regiment, where all through training are unified, and as unified work together to a common end: hut a body with differing members functioning with a common life. Hence this verse adds we are all "members of one another." Each is incomplete without all the rest. you cannot possibly say this of any aggregate of individuals even though unified.

One might say I am a servant of a Corporation, or I am a Private in a Regiment, but not "we are members one of another."

1 Corinthians 12:1-11, gives the same idea of diversity in unity, but signifies more particularly the divine Persons in the Godhead Who operate and how They operate in local assemblies. Then in v.

12 the illustration is again brought in of the body. and in v. 13 the application of it to the Church. It is not by enlistment as in a Regiment (nor of course compulsory military service), nor is it by contracting for employment as in a Corporation, but by Divine work, and that viewed in two ways. We are baptised by One Spirit into One Body; the individuals with their once diversified interests are now brought on to new ground, where there is but one life and one interest. Every interest is submerged in the one interest, it is not a multitude of individuals agreeing upon a course of action, but an organic formation under one vital impulse. And further, we have been all made to drink into One Spirit. For there is the taking up on our part (as we say, subjectively) of this new status, the sinking of our individuality that we might, as members of One Body, be (and no longer regard ourselves as being ought else but) expressive of the life of Christ. Indeed, even as the body of our wonderful Redeemer was the vessel for the expression of the holy and blessed life of Christ in all its gracious and faithful activities on the earth, so is the Church formed as Christ's Body, to be the continuation in His absence of all that He is. The taking up of this wonderful mystery on our part is implied in the drinking into One Spirit. It involves the negation in ourselves and among ourselves of every phase of self-will, of independent action, and all the introductions of the flesh, or the combinations and the suggestions of men after the flesh; and the committal in unqualified complacency to all that the Spirit would produce in us of Christ. The Body is for the expression of the life of Christ. In Corinthians this is taken up on the lines of local responsibility; what is true of the whole Church is to be consistently and locally expressed. And all the detail given in that chapter — foot, hand, ear, eye, nose, head — are such as are necessary to present the picture of a human body and are not such as to present the officials of a Corporation or the Officers in an army.

Ephesians 4:1-32 is the part of that Epistle which speaks of Christ as Head, Centre, and Administrator of the whole counsel of God. This particular chapter indicates how the administration is carried on in this present interval in the ways of God. Christ Who descended is now ascended, and is the One Who gave gifts for the perfecting of the saints. But the objects He had in view are the work of the ministry and the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. This administration is continued "till we come . . . to the full grown man"; it is not till we attain the effectiveness of a Corporation nor to the efficiency of a well trained Regiment. His present grace is promotive of stature — the full growth of the body organically considered. Verse 15 is specific in speaking of "growing up to Him in all things which is the Head," and adds that "from Him the whole Body . . . works for itself the increase of the Body unto it self-building up in love." This is by the grace of the Head flowing into the whole Body, fitted together and connected by every joint of supply. Certainly we should not speak of joints in a Corporation nor in a Regiment. The effectual working in its measure of every part is that the Body be well-proportioned, full-grown as to stature, and mature in development.

Colossians 2:1-23 is part of the Epistle which, while it unfolds the glory and the competency of the Head, connects this with the most blessed teaching as to the fulness which resides in Him. Probably Colossians 1:19, refers to Christ in incarnation, and Colossians 2:9, to Him in resurrection glory. As He is the image of the Invisible God, and in Him we see the concrete, and yet absolutely complete, representation of God — Himself being the Eternal Son and ever dwelling in the Father's love — so the very Creation He has formed is the working out in a material form of all His various glories and wisdom and power as Creator and Sustainer of all. But for the display of His glory in the moral and spiritual sphere He is set forth as solving the tremendous question of

good and evil, of death and resurrection, of order and disorder, of need and supply. For while every department of Creation has ever present needs and possesses no resource in itself, "in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; and from Him — our glorious Head in Whom we are complete and require not to add to Him — rolls down into every part of the universe, old creation and new, all the supply that is demanded, that the purpose of God in creating it may be fulfilled. None save the Church, which is his Body, is at present in the secret; none save His saints can trace their formation or their supplies to Him, none but they in this Dispensation are equipped to respond to God's great design and to use to the full His resources. But again in this connection, in the Pauline use of the word "Body" (Colossians 2:19), we have the Head ministering to all the Body, united together by the joints and bands, and so increasing with the increase of God. This is not the increase of a Regiment which would be by the bringing in of recruits, or the increase of a Corporation which would be by the extension of its boundaries, or by the enlargement of its business. It is the development of the human frame by nourishment, and the healthy and proportionate growth of the parts, which serve the apostle with language to describe the increase of the Body. Here again the Church (the saints who form the Church) gives the idea of the vessel formed in which are to be set out the graces of Christ. We have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man, it is not that we are new men in this connection, but have put on the new man. We are invested with the moral features of the One Who is hid in God, and Christ is all and in all. The totality of Christ's excellencies and beauties requires the totality of His Body to express them in His absence.

## Letter 2.

I see in all those who advocate a general reception of Christians — defective presentation of the Body of Christ. Until deliverance is experimentally known there is no apprehension of what it is to be in the Spirit and not in the flesh. It is urgent for us all to apprehend that a new being, and a new state of being exists. The doctrine of the two natures can be held, and yet the Christian not be in true liberty, so as to take account of himself as judicially free before God, and free in conscience, in respect of the old; able to take cognizance of himself as having died with Christ to sin and being alive to God in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1-39 proceeds on the assumption that Romans 6:1-23 and Romans 7:1-25 have been learnt, and is really descriptive of the Christian as a new being in a new state of being. It recognises the old creation around him and his having an old creation body with attendant pressure; but he is viewed as a new being shortly to be conformed even bodily to the glory purposed of God.

It is often pointed out that Romans lays the foundation for the truth that there is one Body. (Romans 12:1-21). In the Body of Christ as Scripturally viewed there is no evil nature, there is nothing of the world, there is nothing of man. To get a right view of it we must eliminate from each and every person who is a Christian what he is in nature as a child of Adam. A man may be a Jew by nature, or a sinner of the Gentiles. He may be wise, mighty, high-born, or he may be foolish, weak, despised, a nonentity, in fact, in nature. But all these natural features, good or bad, disappear by the Cross. There is no way into the Body but by the Cross on the one hand (eliminating everything of man after the flesh), and by the baptism of the Spirit on the other (bringing in all that is of the new order of Christ). Ephesians 2:13-16, affirms the first, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, the second.

It is true in the abstract that members of the Body should be received. Nor need a man's simplicity as a young convert, nor his ignorance as a saint, owing to want of teaching, be a barrier to his reception if there be no will or subtlety in his coming. In view, however, of the phenomenal development of the elements of philosophy and vain deceit (Colossians 2:6-10), there is exclusion of ritualism or of rationalism, there is exclusion of every movement under the Christian Name which is of the tradition of man, or after the elements of the world, and "not after Christ". If I may say so, no more is the Crusader movement after Christ than is the Salvation Army movement as such. We thankfully recognise that every Christian in such associations is, as a Christian, of the Body, but his man-made associations are not; they are "not after Christ." The truth then that there is one Body, and that all Christians are members of the one Body, can only be spiritually discerned. Any Christian presenting himself for Christian fellowship is possessed of the title as being a Christian to reception; but it is his responsibility when challenged to show that he is not using his title to bring in associations which that very title excludes.

We humbly recognise that the Lord has revived His truth this century past, and that as a remnant were restored to the land, the city, and the house, in Divine providence and mercy in the past dispensation — so God has recovered the distinctive truths of the Head, the Body, the Assembly, for us in this Dispensation. It has led to a movement of separation from all that is of man in the corrupt state of Christendom and the developing apostacy; every gathering should be satisfied that a man presenting himself for reception furnishes credentials which satisfy them as to their validity. If for example a man be introduced to them by a brother who is known to be careless in his own principles, they may justly demand delay until there be his corroboration of his testimony.

Further there are some who are confessedly "out" to destroy all "barriers", as they call them and advocate. not only an unquestioning reception, but a free and easy intercourse with groups, companies, missions, churches, systems, from which the truth that there is One Body when rightly understood and held, has separated us.

I am sure that their confusion arises from ignorance of the Body. Any saint pleading this truth as an excuse for receiving from, or going to, all and sundry, does not recognise that a Divine nature, a Divine formation, is necessarily exclusive. The Body is necessarily exclusive for it is wholly the work of the Spirit of God. It is co-extensive with the new man (Ephesians 2:15-16), and nothing that pertains to the old man can pass the Cross. There is in the Body no barrier against Christians as such, but there is obviously an utter and eternal barrier against the flesh in the Christian. There is the exclusion of legality and exclusion of lawlessness. There is the exclusion of both in order that we may be free to practise what is after Christ. This would be impossible in such associations, and hence the out-movement from them. We must all own to failure in the carrying out of this recognition of the Headship of Christ and the spiritual nature of the Body. But, certainly, recovery does not lie in the reintroduction of the conditions from which the knowledge of the truth delivered us. Care in reception is one of the Scriptural instructions given in the wisdom of God which is our safeguard in these days of wholesale departure. Apostles might come unannounced, but some others need letters of commendation (2 Corinthians 3:1). We are instructed to lay hands suddenly on NO man in Timothy days (1 Timothy 5:22). How much more need to refuse to do so now. A person coming unannounced to a meeting, his case affording no opportunity for consideration, must respect the exercise of those who care for the purity of their associations and the honour of the Name to which they are gathered. To receive such on his own individual testimony is to

disregard every warning of scripture, as, for example, Acts 20:29-30, 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:11; 2 Timothy 3:1-9, Php 3:2-3; Php 3:17-19. Moreover, the more active or prominent a man is in Christian circles, the more incumbent it is to be assured in these days that he is not going to use his inside position for propaganda of principles which we believe to be contrary to the truth which we have learnt.

Referring to "Calling on the Name of the Lord," I have no doubt that it is a term descriptive of Christians as such, in contrast with those who call on other gods. But in a day of ruin we have to deal with those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. Hence we can no longer rely upon face values, upon the "ipse dixit" of a person, we are to discover the moral qualifications in others, as well as practise them ourselves, which are spoken of in 2 Timothy 2:1-26 ere we can find the fellowship suited to our calling and the path of the Lord for us to-day. No one can deny the difficulties nor lightly speak of the exercises that we face, but to cut the Gordian knot and declare ourselves free to go anywhere where there are Christians, is of course simply to abandon the path of separation to Christ, and to surrender all thought of maintaining the truth of the Assembly so graciously revived for us and so long enjoyed.

Letter 3.

It has been said that the root error of Rome has been to apply to the historical Church on earth the statements of Scripture as to what the church is in the purpose of God. To put the Romish conception into plain language we may state it thus. The Church is one, and since the Papacy is the only Church which makes even any pretension to unity universal, you must belong to the Romish Church or perish. One Church has only One Head, and since the Pope is the recognised head of that Church, submission to the Pope is incumbent on all its members. In the Church is salvation, out of it damnation.

Such is a legitimate conclusion if their conception of the Church be the truth of God.

I have noticed how very distinctly of late there has been creeping in a tendency to an advanced school of objective thought among Christians, which leads them to apply to Christians in an absolute way what is true of them only in Christ, or as viewed in the Spirit, and in the purpose of God. For example, take our membership in the Body of Christ. It seems so simple, and is so true, to say that all true Christians are members of the Body of Christ. Yet we need to understand that in the One Body as presented in Scripture there is no flesh, as we speak of the flesh in a believer; and there is nothing of man, as we speak of man after the flesh. All pertaining to man as in Adam, and all pertaining to the believer of inherent sin, has been eliminated by, because judged in, the Cross and death of Christ, and nothing of this enters into the mystical Body of Christ. Members of the Body of Christ? Yes, but only when viewed apart from flesh, or the workings of will, or the innovations of man as distinct from the work of the Spirit of God. We are reconciled to God in one body by the Cross. This rules every element of man out. We are by one Spirit baptized into one body for we have all been made to drink into one Spirit. This brings in all that is of the Spirit's work.

It is obvious then that in speaking of the privileges of Christians as members of the Body of Christ, we must regard ourselves as entitled to those privileges only in so far as we judge ourselves with regard to an independent will, to the workings of the flesh, or to any distinctions which man brings in his intrusive zeal in the things of God. Christians are responsible to recognise in each other only

what is of the Spirit of God; certainly not to recognise what is of the flesh, nor of fleshly zeal, nor of man. One who is a true Christian may present himself as a member of the Body of Christ, but we are bound to challenge him if under cover of that privilege he would bring in much that is of man, or flesh, or will.

There is exercise to be cultivated on this line in relation to much of what is true of every Christian. If I take the purpose of God in Ephesians 1:1-23. "We are chosen in Christ . . . that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Thus is the delightful purpose of God unfolded to us. It is said, "chosen in Him," but "in Him" means the exclusion of all we are in ourselves. As to our historical presence and ways on earth, it is sheer folly to speak of every Christian being holy and blameless. A man must be conscienceless to apply to himself now in an absolute way what is true enough in the purpose of God. When the purpose of God is completed with the Christian, and we are in the place that that purpose has counselled for us, we shall be indeed absolutely so; and the light of that purpose shines upon us to guide our hearts now; but we have to discern the difference between love's purpose for us as seen in Christ and love's work in us now to wean us from all else!

I refer to one thing more. Christians are said in Scripture to be those who call on the Name of the Lord. This is our privilege as Christians. The Christian who calls on anybody else is inconsistent with his position as Christian. But to say that every Christian calls on the Lord out of a pure heart is confounding things that differ. Purification as presented in relation to the heart of a believer is a process. It is not part of his standing, but is connected with his personal state. See 1 John 3:1-3. If Acts 15:8-9, be quoted, be it noted that the question in that Chapter is law versus grace and faith. It is shown by Peter that God in His sovereignty did not employ any injunctions of law on circumcision to effect the change that had come over them, but that on the principle of belief of the Gospel, and through the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, they were saved and delivered from the impurities of their former lives, and their former national disqualifications. That every Christian will be pure in heart to see God goes without saying. To say that every Christian is pure in heart now is to say that every Christian is holy and without blame now; it is a blind surrender to the holiness by faith doctrine.

It is admittedly difficult in these days — not to find Christians, for Christians there are in tens of thousands in our land, but — to secure any definite concrete number of Christians all of whom have pure hearts. Yet difficult as it is, and more difficult as it must become, such when discoverable are to be acknowledged as our companions in the path of today. We certainly shall not discover them all; we may be disappointed in some of whom we hoped much, but with them we are to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace. This path will still require patience with some who oppose every demand for consistency with the truth, and ability to teach positively what we trust will produce consistency; but these four do not include self-will, expediency, laxity or acquiescence in what is contrary to holiness and truth. Calling on the Lord implies quiet holy reference to Him in every matter and in every contingency, and not turning to man or men. They who, being separated unto Christ nominally, and in the circle where the whole truth is welcomed, run away from difficulties and form for themselves another path, or join themselves to another company, may escape exercise, but it is not calling on the Name of the Lord.

Ever yours, W. H. Westcott.

## 04. Christ: and the fulness there is in Him.

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Christ: and the fulness there is in Him.

Matthew 4:18-23, Romans 8:34.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 20, 1928, page 76. The office of the Spirit of God is to bring home to us the infinite fulness that there is in Christ, to make us satisfied with Him, and to produce in our lives an actual response to Himself.

Most of the controversies that we hear of today must, I think, be very wearying to hearts that love the Lord. To those who have real affection for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, to hear all these endless discussions about church functions or church rubrics is utterly wearying; and I am convinced that in Christendom there are hearts that are aching for a personal knowledge of Christ that will fill them to overflowing, and that they may be in full response to all that they learn of Him. The object of these meetings to-day is that we may help one another — God grant that we may recognize that all help comes from Him — but surely it is our desire to help one another in the pursuit of Christ in these very difficult days of formality and attention to externals, for this state of things does not satisfy hearts in whom the Spirit of God has produced longings after Christ.

There are in Newcastle itself a great number of people, I feel persuaded, who would discover if it be possible how to make everything of Christ. Feeling this I make reference to the Gospel of Matthew. In the Gospel of Matthew we begin with a very small apprehension of the Lord Jesus, even as a Babe. Turn to the first chapter for a moment, and you will see what I mean. The second half of Matthew 1:21 says: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Now in our knowledge of the Lord Jesus this must be the beginning, but it is after all a very small beginning by comparison with what we may know of Him. If we read through the Gospel of Matthew, the One who is seen in all this condition of a Babe just born, grows upon us chapter after chapter, until, at the end of the Gospel (Matthew 28:18) we find that He is great enough to fill heaven and earth. But I propose to just take up one or two details in the early chapters in order to suggest to you that in the Lord Jesus Christ is the answer to your every craving, and to your every desire.

Now the first presentation of Him is in the first chapter, and then under a very simple name — the name of JESUS. It may be remarked it is spelt in capital letters. Everyone who is beginning the Christian life, who has learned the grace of God to him, may rightly and joyfully say in his heart, "Well, I like that, because the Spirit of God has written the name of JESUS in capital letters on my heart."

Then the form in which He is presented is that of a little child — the very smallest form in which He can be observed in the Gospel, and in connection with the very simplest service — "He shall save His people from their sins." This being a meeting for Christians, I take it for granted that those who

are present have already learned the Lord Jesus in this simple way. Our sins would have sunk us down into eternal punishment, for our sins we should have been banished forever from the presence of God. But the Lord Jesus has become more than a name to us — He has become to us an indispensable Saviour. We have learned that through His sacrificial work our sins which are many have been atoned for, and in believing on Him they are all forgiven. "He will save His people from their sins." But still our knowledge of the person of Christ may not be great when we only know Him as a Saviour. It is therefore interesting to notice that in that very chapter we get suggestions of greater glory. Look at the 23rd verse. The birth of the Lord is in fulfilment of the Scripture spoken by the prophet saying, "Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is 'God with us.'" Beloved fellow Christians, however small our apprehension may be to begin with, are we not conscious by the grace of God that there are vast, infinite glories in this Person who is our Saviour?

Matthew 2:1-23 shows Him in another light. "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the King, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Now although their apprehension of Him was but small at that time, these wise men were able to recognize in this One of whom they knew but little, the King of the Jews. Therefore they came, guided by the Word of God and the star, and we read, "When they were come into the house they saw the young Child with Mary His mother."

Now at this time, to speak after the manner of men, the Child was relatively small, and Mary the mother was relatively great, to sight. But these men were taught and led by God, by His providence, by His Word, and no doubt by His Spirit. Therefore when they saw the young Child with Mary His mother they fell down and worshipped HIM. Let us remember this, for we are surrounded by a very great change in the appearance of things from 300 years ago. Today we see a great religious system spreading its baneful influence through the whole of this land, and again and again insisting that attention must be paid to the mother. But when these wise men saw Him they fell down and worshipped one of the two — and that one was not the mother. They worshipped HIM.

We can recognize the great favour that God has given to the Virgin Mary, described as "Blessed among women," but, dear friends, when we come to the person of Christ there is no one that can be put alongside of Him. He stands out in distinct glory, even though our apprehension of Him must be but small to begin with. There can be no possible mistake in the true Christian's heart that, whatever honour be paid to the mother as a human vessel, the one who is the Object of our reverence, our faith, our worship, must be the Son.

Then you will notice that they first put themselves at His feet, and then they put all that they had at His feet. This surely is the result of a growing apprehension of the Lord Jesus that the young convert puts himself at the Lord's feet, and is glad to put all that he has at the Lord's feet as well. Indeed, when we read in the second chapter that He is enquired of and sought after as the one that is born King, are we not reminded of that passage in Peter where it speaks of the king as supreme? We are to render honour to those that are in authority - to the king as supreme. I challenge your hearts this evening. With the little knowledge that you have of the Lord Jesus to begin with, has He become to your affection the Supreme One whose glory makes you put yourself and all that you have at His feet?

Now look on to the end of Matthew 3:1-17. We find how very quickly we may grow in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. I pass over the first fifteen verses, urgent and important as they are, for in the Lord Jesus we find the One who fulfilled all righteousness. Others were brought to the banks of Jordan and baptized of John confessing their sins; the Lord came to the same place, and was baptized by the same servant, but on what a different line He came. They confessed their sins. They had lost everything and forfeited everything because of their sins; but here was One who came and submitted to the same baptism who came on this other line of fulfilling all righteousness. The young Christian has this to learn — that there is perfection in the Lord Jesus Christ. There never was in any detail either within or without any flaw, anything that could cause the heart to have a sense of disappointment in the Lord Jesus. He is not a disappointment. We may find in Him a Friend whose virtue commands our honour, our worship, our adoration. We are delighted with Him, the more we know Him. The more time we spend in His company the more do His perfections open out before us. These four Gospels are given to us to open out what He is in all His blessed ways on earth.

Now come to the end of the chapter, verse 16 — "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon Him. And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Now you notice that in the presence of those standing on the banks of Jordan as He came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and the Holy Ghost distinguishes Jesus. John the Baptist was there — eminent servant, successful preacher; there were crowds of converts, the people who had come under the power and influence of John's ministry; but the Spirit of God signalizes the Lord Jesus Christ before all our eyes, distinguishes Him, puts honour upon Him. Then at the same time there is heard this communication out of heaven for the delight of our hearts, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Thus by the time we have reached the third chapter we find that the one who was the object of our faith in the first chapter has grown so rapidly upon us that we have discovered Him to be the adequate Object of the love of God, and the Man in whom God has found His good pleasure. Why, dear friends, a whole world of interest opens up to us, we can see that there is a glory and fulness in Christ we had never dreamed of before.

Now come to Matthew 4:1-25. Tested by the devil He answers by the Word of God. I pass that over, but will you look at verses 13, 14, 15 and 16? "Leaving Nazareth He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast in the borders of Zebulun and Nephthalim; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zebulun and the land of Nephthalim by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up."

I do not think I can convey to you the wonderful picture that this gives to one's soul of the condition of things up against which we find ourselves today. You find in the picture the nation of Israel in great darkness. You find religion certainly, you find synagogues, you find the great Cathedral of the Jewish Faith at Jerusalem, you find all the services carried on in their splendour and regularity, the feasts, the sacrifices morning and evening, the choral services, the Psalms of David regularly sung, and all this great organization of religion centring upon Jerusalem, and carried on by the

ordained clergy of those days. The whole system, imposing, magnificent, was one that appealed in every way to the eye and the mind. All the record of antiquity lent glamour to the practice of this religion — songs beautiful, sweet, grand, and true, sung continually, incense floating on the air. But you find the whole system — EMPTY! Because there was no glory there — there was no glory in it. There was the great organized religion of that day, but I repeat no glory in it. The glory had left as long ago as the days of Ezekiel, and had never returned.

Now down there in Galilee mark this Person whom you and I know. He was humble in His walk in life, nothing striking in His appearance, had never been recognized by the ecclesiastical authorities of the day, a Person living for a long while in a village of which it was said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" going down then to Capernaum, a small fishing village. But this Person, strange to say, is the missing glory — this Person is the one in whom we see the great light — the light of God.

If we take these pictures from God's Word and study them, do they not help us in the midst of the difficulties by which we find ourselves surrounded in these days of ever-growing apostasy? From the highest to the least, in some form or other, the emptiness of it perplexes us, our hearts are sore because of it. Oh! dear friends, let us remember that in Christ there is still preserved for us all the light of God. The great thing is to know how we may get into contact with Christ.

Then, the second thing is in that chapter in the 18th verse: "Jesus walking by the Sea of Galilee saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers," and in verse 21 — two more; and they immediately left the ship and their father and followed Him because He called them. This is to me a very wonderful thing. I think that we ought to take it to heart, seeing that all that organized religion, although originally inaugurated and instituted by God, was but an empty show, as the Lord Himself said of them, "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me." That being so, you find God present among His people in the Person of Jesus, for His name is Emmanuel, "God with us," apart from it all, and calling individuals around Himself. Do you not see the position? In Him there was all the Resource of God, in Him you find the one who was great enough to be the object of the Father's love and the Man of God's good pleasure. There He was in God's behalf calling people round Himself, in separation from the decayed religiousness of that day. Evidently it was a very small beginning — one Person and two followers to begin with, then two others. Just four gathered round and following the Lord Jesus. A very simple beginning — but I would like to ask you, if you had been as earnest in those days as you are tonight to find out something about God and God's way for you, what would you have done in the circumstances? I know that the pull would have been very great to go back to Jerusalem, to go on with things there. All the Old Testament Scriptures if read in the letter only would point you to it, and all the order and splendour of the services. The fact that it had been the divine centre would have appealed to you, and it would have been a decidedly strong pull. When you saw the crowds going up to Jerusalem, as was often the case, I feel sure that it would have required a very great enlightenment from God for you to have said "No" to all that, and to have taken up the peculiar position and pathway of this lowly Jesus. But now come! Supposing you had been there, and with a real desire to know God and to be in the light of God, would you not have seen, being taught by the Holy Spirit, that there was now a new Centre round whom God was gathering souls? All the religion was going on as before, but now God had commenced this new work of drawing souls out of it all to the Person of Christ, and they were to find in Him the

great Resource of God. The next thing is in the end of the chapter. It says in verse 23 that "Jesus went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Not only is the light of God — the whole Truth that God had to present to man — presented in Jesus, but the power of God was there; the power of God that could meet all the need of this distracted and diseased and sorrowing people. There was the power of God in Him to meet every single case.

Now these things are pictorial. If you read on in the Gospel you will see in the Sermon on the Mount there is not only light and power, but wisdom too. There is the ability to legislate in the kingdom. Then in the eighth chapter (verses 16, 17) you have a wonderful record of His sympathy. That really led me to Romans 8:1-39, because in view of the extraordinary position of things today I am going to indicate to you what will be a comfort to you.

It is this. That this particular Person who was then the divine Son, and was gathering people round Himself, in whom were the light of God, and the power and wisdom of God, — this very one, having made atonement by the sacrifice of the cross, has now been raised from the dead and is seated in glory. "It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again."

I would like to assure you of this, that on the throne of God sits this glorious Person — one in whom God is made known to us, and who is for God, a Man perfectly according to His own heart. That Person is there, and actively engaged for you. He knows the difficulty you are under. He knows the position you find so difficult. He knows the exercise of your heart, and there He is praying for you. And not only that, but He is rolling down for us the light and grace that we need, and the guidance — sending out the light and guidance that we need in order that we may discover Him to be our one unfailing Resource. Oh! that God might direct your hearts thus in the midst of every exercise to the wonderful Resource that there is in the Person of Christ.

Newcastle-on-Tyne, Oct. 26th, 1927.

## 05. Christ: The Head of Every Man.

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Christ: The Head of Every Man.

Romans 5:15; 1 Corinthians 11:3.

Notes of an address by W. H. Westcott, 1929.

Before speaking directly of Headship, I may say that our ideas of the gospel are very contracted. In our contact with people we think if we can only get them "over the line," that is all our present business. But the gospel is comprehensive. The facts that lie at its basis are simple yet grand; how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; that He was buried, and was raised again the third day according to the Scriptures; then was seen by several on earth, and finally by one who saw Him in heavenly glory. The epistle to the Romans is the orderly exposition of the meaning of the facts. First, the explanation of the state in which the gospel finds men; then of how that state was met, and of the new state that has been brought about by the grace of God. In Romans 16:25, you are reminded, as those who have received the gospel, that God has power to establish you; so that every part of the gospel should be wrought livingly into your souls, that you might know the deliverance spoken of, and which has been wrought for you; and have a practical, powerful, entrance into all the blessing of which It speaks. The gospel, when it lays hold of you, and is wrought into your souls, prepares you for the understanding of "the mystery." That is what was in the mind of God in providing the gospel. It is really therefore a basis laid in your soul for the intelligence of all the mystery. In Romans 14:17, we read, we have been brought under the sway of God, in contrast to the dominion of sin. You are under God's will, the sway of God in grace; the kingdom of God is set up in your soul. When one is saved and put under the will of God, what is begun in the soul is but the forecast of what is going to be established in a world-wide way by and bye. When the kingdom of God is outwardly manifested, and Christ has come as God's King over the whole earth, there will be three great marks which everybody can recognise: — (1) It will be a righteous rule, all wrongs will be righted, and the reign of that wonderful King will be righteous. (2) There will be peace. The nations will not learn war any more, nor will there be international strife, nor class war, but the will of God will be dominant; and in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, it will be absolute autocracy linked with absolute justice, what has never been known on earth yet; the effect of righteousness will be peace; (3) There will be joy. The ransomed will return with songs to Zion, everlasting joy will be upon their heads, and the sounds of sorrow will be hushed. These are the three great marks of the coming kingdom of God, which will then be universal. But the Holy Ghost dwelling in you sets up the rule of God in your heart, and these three marks are exemplified in the Christian now. The Christian under the rule of Christ is righteous, (i.e., speaking of him characteristically, and as subject to the will of God), he is peaceful, and happy. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink"; it does not consist in your being a vegetarian, but the Holy Ghost brings you under the sway of God in grace, making you righteous and peaceful (i.e., you are not a disturber of the peace), and happy. The gospel lays the foundation in your soul for the kingdom of God. Yet while the kingdom of God is referred to, the doctrine in its immensity is not developed.

From Romans 12:4, those who have believed the gospel are one body in Christ, organically joined together. It is not a matter of agreement (i.e., not we will join one body; nor different gatherings federated to form one body; nor that the gatherings of Christians are individual members of the body of Christ, and that the whole body comprises all the gatherings; but every Christian is a member of the body of Christ). The fact is stated; the basis is laid in your soul for the understanding of the doctrine when it is unfolded; but it is not unfolded here!

"The mystery" is referred to in another way in Romans 11:25. God instructs us even in this primary epistle as to the order of His ways. All Israel will be saved; they will all be brought into national blessing; but at present God is visiting the nations to take out a people for His Name He has postponed the kingdom in its outward form, and the blessing of Israel, but He has not forgotten it. Everyone saved at the present time is brought into a new circle of blessing. From Romans 8:28-30, we see that in the gospel there is a basis laid in the soul for the fulfilment of the purpose of God (i.e., the first time in this gospel epistle that "purpose" is mentioned. You may be quite a young Christian, but when God laid hold of you, He had a purpose in it, viz., that you should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. It involves Sonship for us; and in order that we may have its enjoyment now, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son whereby we cry "Abba Father." The foundation is laid in your soul for the understanding of the purpose of God. Having begun the work, He sees it right through. What God has purposed will infallibly be fulfilled. From Romans 7:1-4, we see that it would not be legal for you to leave the law if under the law, you are bound to that husband; but having died in that wherein we were held, having come under the benefit of grace, we have become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead. That is being delivered by the death of Christ from the law, we have a right to love Christ, to be wholly for Christ. "That we should be married to another, even to Him that is raised from the dead." You have, beloved, a right in heavenly courts, to be truly for Christ, loving Him, even as a wife who is a true woman loves her husband. So the foundation is laid in your soul for union with Christ. This is individual in Romans 7:1-25, but the foundation is laid, not merely a love of gratitude, but a love of attachment to Christ! That foundation prepares you for the unfolding of the mystery when the church as a whole is united.

Romans 5:15 brings us to the subject of the Headship of Christ, the foundation for which is laid in the believer's soul, but the doctrine of which is not unfolded in this epistle. We can see in these chapters from the 3rd onward, how that God in sovereign grace and through the death of Christ is the source of all blessing; but that it has been so wrought, and so seen in Christ, and the administration of it is so put into the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ, that all the blessing that we have by believing the gospel is administered through Jesus Christ our Lord. One blessing after another is presented as it has been wrought out in Christ Jesus. In Romans 3:1-31, we have a summing up of our guilty estate. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." We might well despair as far as we are concerned. But, speaking to believers, the apostle at once says, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." The name "Christ Jesus" is applied to our Lord Jesus Christ where He is now. There has been wrought out a redemption the full power of which is seen in Christ Jesus. It does not direct us to look to Jesus on the cross (because He is not there); nor as buried (He is not in the grave); nor is redemption in Him only as risen from the dead (He is up there in glory). The full expression of the redemption is

seen in Christ Jesus; it is all set out in Him. He was charged with the sins on the cross, "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God." But through whom, and on what ground? "Through our Lord Jesus Christ." He is the great Administrator of these favours of God. But not only so, we have a standing in Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of promise in the 5th chapter. God thus draws our attention to this glorified Person to whom we are indebted. From Romans 5:12 he goes on to speak of Headship. "As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." "Through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." The sin in which we formerly were found, the sins which we had committed, and the death and the condemnation that were the result of these things, are all traced up to the sin of one man Adam, our head. The head of that race was the one who fell through sin; and so death has passed on all for all have sinned. In Romans 3:1-31 "All have sinned," sums up our guilt. But in Ch. 5, the same three words sum up our state. The old state was that we were of a sinful nature under a sinful head, and condemned therein. But now we are translated from all that was connected with Adam; we are free of condemnation, have a new life, and in Christ. God now takes account of each Christian as under the headship of Christ, just as formerly under the headship of Adam. All connection with Adam has been judicially annulled by Christ's death for the believer, but that followed by His resurrection has involved for him the beginning of a new order of man altogether; as we have seen our redemption is in Christ Jesus on Whom we find the love of God eternally resting; and that the love of God rests upon us in Christ Jesus our Lord. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one: much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one." There are three things in that verse — grace, righteousness, and life. God takes account of us as having been transferred from Adam to Christ. We are linked to Christ, the Head, in risen life, partaking with the Head in all His wonderful position of grace, righteousness and life. At the end of the chapter "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound, that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," i.e., grace, righteousness and life! In 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 the subject is carried a step further. There is a difference between Romans and Corinthians. The former grounds us in the truth of the gospel, as the Apostle says, "To establish you according to my gospel." Every individual believer should get established in the gospel. "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Corinthians 1:2). He is not now addressing individuals, to respond to that gospel, but he is addressing them as an assembly; to all in their localities. Lest any should say, "that applies to the Corinthians, God has not given it to us," the apostle adds, "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's." The state of the assembly at Corinth was the immediate cause of writing the epistle, but it was the opportunity of unfolding to the assembly of God in every locality; the constitution of the assembly, its privileges and functions, and ways of carrying it on. To say, "that is Paul's teaching or opinion" is nothing but ignorance; and that is exactly what Paul says. The 1 Corinthians 11:3 opens the subject in three directions: — (1) The head of every man is Christ. That everybody is under the Headship of Christ is true, but the apostle is addressing the Christian assembly, the immediate application is clearly thereto. (2) "The head of the woman is the man." (3) "The head of Christ is God." The Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son ever seen in His own unique relation in the Godhead, has become Man, and He looks up in dependence and subjection to God. Even though exalted it is for the carrying out of the purpose of God. By and bye

when He takes the Kingdom it is to bring everything into subjection to the will of God. In the end when the Kingdom has run its course, as far as that form of it is concerned, and the Lord Jesus has brought Israel through every peril, He will deliver up the Kingdom to God and His Father, that God may be all in all. He takes His place as subject. He has taken that place as Man that in Manhood He might carry out all the purpose of God! Then "the head of the woman is the man," is elaborated in the chapter. In the Christian assembly God has a certain order suitable to Himself, and this is part of the order. When assembled as a christian assembly men remove their hats, and women remain covered because the head of the woman is the man! Man was made in the image of God, in His likeness, and his office in creation is that he stands in the image and glory of God, he is the head of the lower order of the creation; hence it would not do to cover up the glory of God! The woman was given to the man to be his help-meet. The woman is the glory of the man! So that, when coming into the presence of God, the glory of man is covered.

Then, the head of every man is Christ. In Romans, that all the blessing for man is headed up in Christ underlies all; the fulness of God is in Christ. But when the assembly comes together, we are to look to Christ for direction, for wisdom, for support. The assembly is carried on, while the Head is invisible, but nevertheless real. If everyone understood that he has immediate access to Christ, and Christ has immediate access to him, he would not be asserting his own will, or pushing forward, but everyone would look to Christ for direction. In the assembly there is not the appointing of a minister, to direct or control the service. That is not ministry of the truth in individual service, but of the assembly gathered in one place in recognition of Christ, as the one living, personal, active, controlling Head!

## 06. Christ: Head over all things.

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Christ: Head over all things.

Ephesians 1:10-11; Ephesians 1:19-23; Ephesians 5:22-32.

Notes of address No. 2 by W. H. Westcott, 1929.

There are three things that may now occupy us, and can be easily remembered. (1) the purpose of God; (2) the Person Who is the centre of that purpose; (3) the partner associated with that Person. Ephesians 1:1-23, opens out a very wonderful presentation of Christianity, because it conducts us beyond this present scene. In our time history we are brought to realise our sins, and the need of a Saviour; we realise that God has provided One in the riches of His grace; we obtain redemption and the forgiveness of our sins, and we are sealed by the Spirit. But, in the first of Ephesians, we are carried outside of things here, of this world of time, back into eternity. We find that the blessing which we enjoy as individual believers was thought out, and planned in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is astonishing that we should have had a place in the thoughts of God from all eternity; according as He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world. In verse 3 the Apostle, speaking on behalf of Christians, says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus has been here, rejected, slain, and in His death has wrought the glory of God, and for the accomplishment of His purpose; and He is now made both Lord and Christ at God's right hand. You have His full name and title here, our Lord Jesus Christ. Now God, Whom we realise to be our God and our Father, sets before us what He thinks of Christ, makes us cognizant of His enjoyment of, and delight in our Lord Jesus Christ. He takes this name and title as connected with all that He has to say to us. The Apostle in the sense of it says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and then brings in a view of all His favour. "Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." It is stupendous! Every believer is in view; you have been blessed in this way, according to the thought that our God and Father has of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is no longer addressing Himself to man as the God of Abraham, or Isaac, or Jacob; but, with His eyes upon this glorious Person, He seems to say, "Now I will tell you what I am prepared to do, and what I have purposed."

He goes on to speak of the nature of believers, in which they will be found when all the purposes of God are completed, when the last trace of flesh in us has been left behind. When God has carried out what He will carry out, we shall then be holy, and without blame before Him in love. "That we should be holy": when the purpose of God is completed, we shall be entirely agreeable to God in that respect; holy because He is holy. There will be no trace of defilement in us then. If we learn what we are to be in that coming day, then we learn correspondingly to regulate our conduct now. "Holy and without blame," not a single blot or flaw under His holy eye, as it says, "before Him." What a scene it will be when every saint all over the universe will be holy and without blame before Him in love. We shall be formed in the divine nature, and placed before His eye, where His love shall rest upon us with delight eternally. That refers to our nature!

Then in verse 5 we read, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto Himself."

There you find the mind of God that we should be in all the dignity and intelligence and power of sonship. It refers, not so much to the moral nature in which we are to be formed, as to the relationship in which we stand before His face — by Jesus Christ. It is in each case for the gratification of His own heart. We are predestinated to sonship by Jesus Christ to Himself, in that near and holy relationship, to be enjoyed for ever. Again, in verse 6, "To the praise of the glory of His grace wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved." "In the beloved," what does that mean? If you can understand in any degree how much God loves this wonderful Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom He speaks here so prominently as "the Beloved" you can see what a stupendous revelation it is to us that we are taken into favour in the Beloved. Every Christian is verily beloved of God, the love of God rests upon him, and he can be rightly designated as one of the beloved of God. But while that is true, and true of all saints equally and alike, there is One Who is pre-eminently the Beloved. You who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are said to be accepted in the Beloved. That is the power of it; it is not simply to have that acceptance in the Lord, but in the Beloved. God would stress it, that you might understand how greatly you are loved, and that you are taken into favour in the measure of love that He has for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, in the 7th verse, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Notice these two first words, "In Whom." God has not simply given you a document saying, "Here is the forgiveness of your sins," but, He says, "I have worked out that question in a Person. There He was with your sins upon Him, and upon Him fell all the just judgment in view of My claims in righteousness and holiness; He bore it all, and the sins that He bore were yours. They are all gone, and the very Person who bore them is risen from the dead, enthroned in glory. It is in Him you have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." That is the measure of the redemption that He has wrought out for us: the question is never to be reopened. And so He acts according to the riches of His grace. I know some people have the idea, "Yes my sins are all forgiven up to the time of my conversion; but what about the sins that I may commit after my conversion?" But from this standpoint in Ephesians, God would have you to understand that when He did take up that matter, He did not divide your life into two or three sections — your past, present, and future sins; but undertook the settlement of that question according to the wealth of His grace, taking it all up at one and the same time, and settling it all in that One Person, so that every believer can say, "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the wealth of His grace." God took into account all our history from start to finish; at that moment knowing all the sins beforehand, and dealing with them according to His own glory. With these things in view — our future assured, and the sins question settled — we may think what more could there be? There is a great deal more. Believers, whom God has so wonderfully blessed, are taken into confidence by the blessed God. They are drawn into His presence to receive the most intimate communication as to what He is doing. What is God's object? He appears to say, "I want to take you into my confidence, I have constituted you my redeemed people, and I have given you a nature, relationship, and acceptance in which you can be in undisturbed possession in quiet and rest; every anxiety removed. Now, with your heart at rest, I want you to understand that My blessing and your blessing is really part of a larger plan," viz., He has made known to us the Mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He

hath purposed in Himself. It is hid from other people, but made known to the believer. Let us remember that the will of God is supreme; He counsels, and it must be accomplished. When we read of the will of God in this sense — the will of His counsel — we know that it is going to be accomplished. What is behind it all? "His good pleasure which He has purposed in Himself." What then is that? Is it not that God is working out a wonderful scheme, headed up in Christ, in which He will be able to find eternal pleasure. When it is all brought into being and accomplished, God will be able to rest in His love, in supreme satisfaction, because He has brought about a system for His own pleasure. He purposed it in Himself, He has made it to depend upon His own omnipotence and omniscience: upon His own wisdom and power. He has brought it about, and will bring it about for reasons of His own. Truly we can say:- "Father, Spring and Source of blessing."

What is this purpose? He is going to bring everything under one control. He has purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might head up all things in Christ. There are a great many discussions that take place amongst the nations, and amongst men, as to what is really the best form of government in a properly constituted state. Some would advise aristocracy, some autocracy, others democracy; but what is God's good pleasure? The fact is that all these schemes of men fail, because the state of men in their fallen condition sets them one against another. Supposing you had a community where there was no authority, but all did their own wills, it would be every man against his fellow. It is all very well to talk about dividing things up equally, but anybody would know that very soon one man would want more than he had, and he would feel that he could only get it from his neighbour, and so there would be one set against the other. But God is sovereign; and the most wonderful order of things will be brought about, when there will be absolute autocracy or theocracy, combined with absolute justice and absolute consideration for every creature. The blessed God alone is capable of it, and He will vindicate His will, and He will entrust — He has entrusted — the fulfilment of it to this wonderful Person — it is purposed to head up all things in Christ. It is God's plan to bring everything under Christ; everything will centre in Christ, He will be the great Head, the great source of authority; He will rule and order and govern according to the will of God.

Now turn to the end of Ephesians 1:1-23, and there we read more about the Person. The Apostle prays in verse 17 of the first chapter, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." Attention is drawn to this Person already named in the 10th verse. But He was found in death. Every power that is adverse to God had been put into movement to place Him there; all the power of Satan, all the judgment of sin, — all the hatred of man, all the hidden forces of evil, had been brought to bear upon His holy Person. He had gone down into death. You can see the power that was against Christ. But while in grace He submitted to those conflicting powers, and when they had done their worst, and Christ had gone down to the very bottom, when sin had risen to its greatest height, God raised Him from the dead. We who believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ can also trace in that death the removal of our sins and our sinful state in Adam; but we can see also all the working of the power of evil against Christ and its seeming success in putting Him in death and the grave. But then God in the might of His power

raised Him from the dead. There is a power greater than all the power of evil, greater than death, and greater than the grave, seen in God.

Then in verse 20 we read, "He set Him down at His right hand in the heavenlies" (N. T.). It is not only that He rose superior to the powers of evil, and triumphed over death and the grave, but God has proved the might of His power by setting the Man of His purpose, the Person Who is the centre of His plan, at His own right hand in the heavenly places. "At His own right hand" implies that in Christ God has vested all His power. The right hand signifies the strength, and the power, and the authority of God. In setting Him at His own right hand He has constituted Him the great administrator of His own authority, and His own mind, as well as His own blessing. He has set Him thus "in the heavenly places", away from this earth. The true source of power is not here, the executive that will give effect to the purpose of God is not now resident here; the Holy Ghost truly is come from the right hand of God, from Christ there, and is here provisionally; but the power that is going to set the earth right, and put the whole universe in harmony with God, comes from the right hand of God. "He set Him at His own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality and power."

They are not to be named in the same breath: Christ is supreme, above every other name, above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named. "God hath put all things under His feet," everything is subjected to Christ in the plan of God, and will be effectually put beneath Him according to God's mighty power. It may be said, "How is it that everything is not put under Christ now?" There is a reason for this. The saints, redeemed by Christ and formed into one body, the church, are the only people that have this wonderful secret communicated to them at the moment. God has made known the plan (verse 10), but He has also disclosed to us who are believers, the Person, the One destined to be both Head and Centre of His plan. I love to think that God has so far proceeded with the plan; He has already displayed the smash up of the power of evil in the cross, and He has exalted the Person Who overthrew sin and Satan, to His own right hand. You can see the Person to whom God has entrusted this high place of dignity and glory is in position, Head over all things, and all things put underneath His feet. God is not inactive; He has already seated Christ at His own right hand in heavenly places, He has exalted Him, and He has put the church into the knowledge of it. The rest of the world does not yet acknowledge it, but the redeemed ones do who form the assembly. When it says the assembly it means all Christians from the descent of the Holy Ghost to the Rapture. The whole church of God is in the secret of God as to the Person to Whom God has entrusted the fulfilment of the plan. We acknowledge Him in the meantime as Head, but for the moment we Christians are the only ones who really do so. Let us be consistent in our subjection to Him.

Then it says that the church is His body, the complement, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." In further explanation of this we may turn to Ephesians 5:1-33 and there we find the unique position in which the church is placed. When the earth was first formed for man's habitation, you get an indication that God had this in His mind. After this world had been started, all free of sin, in its beauty, its productiveness, and its serviceability, man was created and specially formed according to the counsel of God. It was said, Let us make man after our image and in our likeness. He then put man at the head of all this lower creation. After He had been constituted the head to have dominion, God brought the animals before him. God had endowed him with such qualities that he knew exactly in what language to describe each animal; and whatever he designated each

animal, that was its name. He was truly the head of this lower creation. But of all the creation of which he was head, for the moment it was just nothing but a splendid isolation? because there was not anyone with whom he could share it, to whom he could communicate his thoughts, or with whom he could enjoy the privileges that the Creator had placed upon him. He was alone in it, head but alone. Then in His goodness God crowned the position of him. He said, "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make him an help-meet," and He did. He gave Eve to be the partner with him in this place and scene of glory. It is so plain that we ought easily to grasp it; and yet it can only be by the Spirit of God.

Come now to the anti-type, and we find that God raised Christ from the dead, and set Him over all, Christ personally; but is Christ to be alone? That is where the counsel of God comes in regard to the church. For the church, composed as it is of all believers in this present dispensation is to be with Him in His place of dignity and glory — even as Eve was given to Adam — to be His partner in His greatness. In Ephesians 5:1-33, we find that the model, the example, is set before us of marriage; in Ephesians 5:22, we read, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." It is often commented upon that it does not say, "Wives obey your husbands" as though they were children or servants. In Ephesians 6:1-24 you have "Children obey your parents" that is a question of authority, and rightly so, and then in Ephesians 5:1-33, "Servants be obedient to your masters" comes in again; but with the wives — "Submit yourselves unto your own husbands." In this chapter the husband is looked at as being the representative of the fulness and authority of God for his wife; all that Christ is to the church the husband should be to the wife. We are obliged to think of these things in a somewhat abstract way, for what husband is there amongst us but must feel how far he comes short of it. But the wife is to submit herself to her own husband as unto the Lord, finding in the husband the one who directs and leads. It is not a question of obeying exactly, but the husband regards the wife as given to him of God to be his helpmeet in the partnership; and that loving her as Christ loves the Assembly he may be the supplier of all that the wife needs; giving guidance, direction and help, in every matter; the wife meanwhile submitting herself unto her husband as unto the Lord.

Then in verse 23, we read, "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the Head of the church." Let us humbly seek to take it in. Christ is the Head, and we gladly bow before Him owning His supremacy and glory; we can say, "How rightly crowned is Jesus, Who once atonement made." Is it not wonderful that you and I, and all the redeemed of this dispensation, are to be with Christ, and to be to Christ what the wife is to the husband? In verse 25, we read, "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." It is not the individual saint that is in view, but the church; that he might sanctify and cleanse it. "That He might present it to Himself a church glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing"; that it might be in every sense suitable and compatible with Himself. A true wife will always seek to enter intelligently into the responsibilities in the midst of which her husband is Placed, she will not regard herself apart from him, walking in a spirit of independence, but will freely enter into her husband's concerns; not to disown his leadership, but to be sympathetic and intelligently able to enter into all the circles of his interests.

What a wonderful thing it is that we Christians should be made meet companions even for Christ. What a wonderful thought that we are to be such in the midst of all the stupendous glory that He

will enjoy, able to enter into His interests, and be sympathetically and intelligently companionable to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not exactly like an earthly prince who may place his affection on a partner very much below him in station, and then have to feel how difficult it is for her to share his dignities and glories, because she is unable to look at things from the prince's point of view. God has given us the same life and nature as our risen Lord, and brought us into the same relationship as He; we are really His kinsfolk, His brethren, and can enter into the whole range of His interests. The Christian even down here is acquiring competency in view of that coming union with Him. Whatever we can learn of Christ's interests today let us give ourselves very heartily to them, so as to be more and more qualified to take our place intelligently in that wonderful day, when we shall be with Christ and like Him, and associated with Him; sharing His administration in all that vast scene of glory. There is (1) the Purpose or Plan of God in Ephesians 1:1-23, (2) the Person Who is the centre and Head of all that Purpose, and (3) the church looked at in Ephesians 5:1-33 as the Partner in that wonderful position To that church, by the grace of God, you and I belong at present It is our privilege to study all we can learn of His love, His greatness, and His will, in order that we may be more intelligent and qualified to share with our Lord Jesus Christ when the day of display and glory comes!

## 07. The Church of the Living God.

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The Church of the Living God. The pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15).

W. H. Westcott, Inkongo, Congo Free State.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine Volume 2, 1910, page 353. The house of God is the church of the living God, "the pillar and ground of the truth." The idea of the house being God's house and the church being God's church or assembly makes plain that its inception and form and administration, as well as its destiny, can only be rightly appreciated as we listen to what God has to say about it, and can only be properly responded to as we are subject to what He says.

Then what He says through the Apostle in this verse is that it is the pillar and base of the truth. With both of these ideas there is a necessary suggestion of solidity and immutability. A pillar — whether forming part of a habitable structure or standing like a triumphal column detached — conveys less than anything else the idea that it can be moved at will. A base, a foundation is equally suggestive of unalterable stability, for if the foundation be shifting and changeable, what structure can be reared on it?

Here we have an answer to such as state that the Christianity of the New Testament is to be "liberally" understood, and is to be adapted to the environment of succeeding centuries. The fact is that there is nothing more unbending than a pillar nor more unshifting than a foundation; and in whatever age the church is set for Christ it is the witness for God against any and every innovation from the thoughts of men. Of Christ it is said — or rather He Himself says — "I am the way, the TRUTH, and the life." Our thoughts of Him may be narrow or circumscribed, but, let others advocate what person or system they will, the truth is contained alone in Jesus of all that God is — the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. In Him resides all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. It was pleased to dwell there; and none can gainsay it without denying Christianity. How restful to the heart it is to know Jesus. There is nothing false in Him, nothing of disappointment, nothing of change. It is a reduction to absurdity to say that when the human mind can enlarge itself to find something greater than God, then will Jesus cease to suffice. But if God be God, then Jesus is the manifestation of Him. The very next verse in Timothy states this. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Of whom is that premised? Of none other than Jesus. And this is the mystery of godliness, the mystery that produces likeness to God. There is an outline of the Truth there, and its ethical result. It is a mystery, because all do not see it, nor can they without divine blessing; but it is not mystical, for it produces practical piety, and shows how one ought to behave oneself in the house of God — in the assembly of the living God, which is the pillar and base of the truth. But this truth of the person of Christ, God manifest in the flesh, is stamped upon the church for her testimony and for her own internal stability. Perhaps the pillar gives the notion of testimony, i.e. it is made to be seen of men. Samson, when the sport of at least 3000 spectators, was put near the pillar. Two pillars were conspicuous before the eyes of every worshipper who went to Solomon's temple. Often there were

inscriptions written on pillars, hieroglyphics and the like. And the church is here for positive testimony, to possess the writing of Christ, to stand erect and unbending in uncompromising witness of the truth as it is in Jesus, neither softly absorbing any notions which are not of Christ, nor consenting to part with the least detail of the truth as to Him — His deity, His incarnation, His atoning death, His glorious resurrection, His priesthood, His advocacy, His lordship, His eternal sonship, and all the co-related truths of His glory, His church, and His kingdom. But these truths of Christ have an internal relation to the church — a relation of faith and hope and love. If it be true — and it is true — that God was manifested in Christ, it is no less true that Christ is seen in His church. The assembly formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and being completed for the day of glory, is the vessel in which Christ will be hereafter displayed to the world. But it is even here the transcript (in its normal state) of His nature as the risen Man, and of His character as the Christ; enjoying relationship even as He does with His Father and His God.

None knew this so well, perhaps, as the saints at Ephesus, where Timothy was. Every feature, every trait of Christ, every delineation of the truth as it is in Jesus is projected into the saints who form the house of God, the church of the living God. This is true if we view them as God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God has before ordained that we should walk in them. This solid, perfect, permanent work of Christ's delineation in the saints seems to me to represent the idea of the church being the base of the truth. To get a true idea of it we have to abstract them from their present external and really misleading condition: to see them apart from the flesh in them, which is actually condemned in the death of Christ, and apart from their position in this present world, which is, so to say, accidental (for it falls out so, and is no part of their heavenly calling), and to view them in all their purity — justified before God, having been blessed in Christ, sealed by the Holy Ghost, and brought to God. They are possessed of life after Christ's order; the graces of Jesus are all in them in germ, by the Holy Spirit's work, and need ministry and pastoring and use to draw them out. They are unknown in the world, but are shortly to be displayed in glory; they are now sons of God, and are predestinated to be conformed fully to Christ's image, holy and without blame in love. In them faith, love, and hope abide, these three; and by their means Christ is responded to in all His love and glory. What is there, then, of Christ outside of them, so viewed, on earth? The church being the base of truth, all that does not tally with the truth of God intended to be set forth and wrought out in her is off the foundation, and is only at best some human structure not destined to remain.

Such, for instance, are all designs of empire that do not head up in Christ supreme; and all thoughts of ecclesiastical organization or reformation which are not begun, continued, and ended in Christ. Yes, and all systems of ethical teaching, too, which start not with the new birth and the exclusion of all footing for the will of unregenerate man. "Christ in me" is the secret of moral change, and "I live by the faith of the Son of God" is the secret of moral superiority to every diversion here.

It seems to me that if we understand that the church of the living God is thus the pillar and base of the truth, we can humbly but firmly reject all idea that Christianity is to absorb a little from Buddhism and a little from Mohammed and a little from Darwin, etc., to become a perfect religion for all mankind. It comes to dictate, not to listen; and rightly so, for the living God, to whom all ages are ever present, has marked out the lines of the foundation on which everything true and answering to Himself is to be constructed for the and eternity. "WITHOUT CONTROVERSY, great

is the mystery of godliness." What can evolution do after God manifest in flesh? It is not the working up into some state higher by any means, whether survival of the fittest or the striving of the whole race after its grandest ideal, but it is the coming down of the mighty God to us in Christ that is to be the true lever for man's recovery to God.

## 08. The Danger Point.

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The Danger Point.

Edification Vol. 6, 1932, page 93.

W. H. Westcott. The song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32:1-52 and Revelation 15:3) is a wonderful summary of God's ways with Israel. It gives the sovereign call of that nation on God's part, their perverseness, their subjugation by enemies in consequence, and their dispersion; the ultimate overthrow of those enemies, and the recovery of both land and people through sovereign mercy, to enjoy with the spared nations the favour of Jehovah. But to every Spirit-taught heart the song of the Lamb (Revelation 15:3) has to be added to the song of Moses to make the fulfilment of the latter righteously possible.

"The river of God's grace, Through righteousness supplied, Is flowing o'er the barren place Where Jesus died."

It is in the song of Moses, and after the introductory paragraph indicative of the purpose of God for them (vv 1-14), that we have the words, "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." This verse indicates the danger point in a soul's history, or in the history of God's people; the point whence radiates every feature of departure and disaster among saints. The meaning of Jeshurun is not perhaps definitely obtainable. It appears to lie between "upright ones," and "beloved of Jehovah." We start thus with God's thoughts of His people, the beloved of His heart, qualified to be here on earth in uprightness in full consistency with their calling. Every true believer in Christ is not only redeemed from all condemnation and secured for ultimate glory, but is set up with a new life and nature, the work of God's holy Spirit; and the Holy Spirit Himself indwelling, to enable him to be consistent with all that God teaches him concerning Christ.

"But" — begins our verse, — "but Jeshurun waxed fat." Evidently God had not failed Israel as to abundance of supply. Verses 13 and 14 give a picture of the land of blessing and of its resources, a perfect Elysium of delight and food. Even its very rocks — usually (apart from God's blessing) the most unyielding of substances — seemed to roll out honey and oil; while increase of the fields, butter of kine, milk of sheep, rams of Bashan, goats, fat of kidneys of wheat, the pure blood of the grape, all told of the wealth of God's provision for them.

"But Jeshurun waxed fat." How easy it is, and yet how perilous; the very wealth of favour which God has provided for all Christians, and of which all may so freely partake, to become perverted in our enjoyment of it, so that it ministers to our self-aggrandisement and self-importance. Unto us is this land given in possession" say these advanced ones of themselves (Ezekiel 11:15), while saying to others not so advanced "Get you far from the Lord." You have no part with us, they seem to say. To US has God given all this ministry of His bounty, not to you. It is the point of danger, to go on eating and feeding and indulging appetite, most appreciative of good food and rich provision, but making it minister to our own self-importance. Perhaps one of the greatest tests of grace is to be greatly privileged and yet to be lowly in mind and patient with others. The verse

proceeds, "and kicked." This is an early, if not the earliest, sign of departure. Instead of lowliness, and meekness, forbearing one another in love; instead of quiet submission to and acquiescence in the will and way of the Lord, there is the substitution of a will and way of our own. There is impatience of spirit, a determination by hook or by crook to get rid of what resists our idea of things, a resistance to authority or correction, as well as a fretful impatience that will not wait for the direction and handling of the Lord. As we accentuate our self-importance, there is an increasing desire to make things yield to our will, and we do not like to be pulled up and corrected; we kick against truth that clashes with our accepted notions, or that tends to damp our pride and upset our self-complacency. We believe that our brethren ought without question to accept our version, and bow to our application of things. Our "liberty" we think consists in our overriding all that lifts itself up against US.

Lack of exercise contributes to the accumulation of fat, but the only safe exercise for Christians lies within the limit of the will of God. When the exercise is the doing of our own will, and insistence on our own way, it is the precursor of open departure and the portent of disaster. Hence "he forsook God that made him." There are different circles of authority which the Christian is called upon to recognise. He is set as a child under parents. He is as a subject before powers that be. He is, if a young believer, to be submissive to those whom Scripture would honour as elders in the faith, who are examples to the flock and teach the behaviour that is proper to the house of God. But above all, the highest privilege is to give GOD His place. The fear of God, the trembling at His word, is the most urgent of all forms of submission and subjection. Concentration upon self, or upon ourselves, is certain to be accompanied by increasing moral distance from God. There is claim to liberty — often under specious pleas — always a kind of liberty that permits of our choosing when and how we serve; less and less regard to the whole economy of God's will. In point of fact no-one has less liberty for the exercise of his own will or predilections, than the Lord's servant. He is the Lord's, body and soul.

"I have not sent these prophets," (Jeremiah 23:21) had to be said of those who professed to serve Him, "yet they ran." Much activity, yet not sent there by the Lord, whose will should have contented them. Thus while professing to be His servants, they did their own will, dreamed their own dreams, chose their own messages, and in truth "forsook God which made" them. Where a servant ceases to be consistent under any plea with the truth the Lord has made known unto him, he has ceased to be practically one of the "upright ones", he has so far forsaken the God that made him. Made him for what? Surely to be the instrument of His will, the vessel of His pleasure, the witness to His Name (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). Our verse adds, "and highly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Where there is a diminishing sense of obligation to be held by the reins of God's sovereign will and pleasure, there is lessened the desire for salvation from the present order of things. There is more and more disposition to accredit the movements by which men propose to accelerate the work of God. There are efforts which appear most commendable in the judgment of many Christians, efforts that group saints together for evangelistic and other purposes, into which are easily drawn the young and eager spirits, who tire of conflict and controversy, and long — sometimes with very commendable motives — to "get on with the work." There are pilgrims and crusaders, there are evangelical unions, missions, and circles of many kinds, all of which we may conclude are to draw out the best in a Christian, and are calculated to provide channels for the activities in which he would devotedly engage. But, however outwardly commendable by our minds, the reader must

forgive me if I express the conviction that the form of these movements lays them open to the saddening charge, they "lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation." Do we really esteem that we can wisely add by these moulds and movements to the provision GOD has made for the conduct of His testimony and service? Have we discovered in truth that it is a wise policy to paint the rose to make it the more beautiful? or to add our concoctions to God's prescriptions for His assembly and for His service, to make them more successful? To do so must surely imply that we lightly esteem the wonderful adequate, all-sufficient and effectual instructions of the all-wise God. He is the Rock of our salvation, from whom flows blessed, perfect grace and supply for every need; stable, solid, real, for the youngest, most eager and active, as well as for the most mature, of the saints of God. People who do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God, may unwisely create these movements to supplement God's instructions for us; but is it not in result an impeachment of God's wisdom, and a challenge to all that He teaches us of the All-sufficiency of Christ, and the power of His Holy Spirit. The song of Moses pursues the early departures of Israel to their bitter end, and then shows how the aboundings of God's mercy will secure their blessing and His own glory. But it is well for us to ask ourselves, Are we set on doing our own will, or the will of God as expressed in Christ, and recorded in His word? While delighting in all the amazing tokens of God's sovereign love and favour, are we also humbly seeking to be among His "upright ones" who are restfully content with His wise will, and as broken in under His discipline desirous of being consistent with all He has taught us? May we answer the questions to our God.

## 09. Difficulties of a Missionary

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### Difficulties of a Missionary

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Vol. 8, 1916, p. 229.

Comments on a letter from the Foreign Field, in which certain perplexities are stated, and a complaint uttered over the dearth of manifest blessing. While the paper is submitted in the first place for the consideration of missionaries, yet it should yield help and interest to all who serve the Lord. My dear Brother, Your correspondent in China "would like to see something in your pages dealing with the difficulties we as preachers of the Word face, in the failure to see the signs following which from the Scriptures we are led to expect." After suggesting that a good deal of declension on the part of missionaries and native helpers may be due to this, and commenting on his own long service and scant success, he proceeds: "I would like to know what others have found revealed in God's Word about this. Because I feel many drift into error, when overwhelmed by the startling apathy of heathendom and the continual disappointments in really spiritual results." Finally, with a message of thanks for the valued "bits" in your magazine, he finishes by saying rather sadly: "We keep on sowing in faith, but I cannot but sympathize with some who have turned aside in face of the curious contradictions they find — promises pleaded that don't seem to hold good, — and so on."

I have selected the above as giving the tone of his letter, and will seek grace to answer some of the perplexities he names in detail.

One can hardly have been for nearly twenty years engaged in arduous work among heathen in Central Africa without feeling most sympathetic toward the writer in the difficulties he finds in his distant field. You have suggested that I compress within a short compass any considerations that might help; and though brevity is at times taken for brusqueness, I will endeavour to set out the thoughts that arise while pondering over his communication (1) By whom is the Servant Sent? The first inquiry would naturally be on the lines of our Lord's question to His opponents: "The baptism of John whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" (Matthew 21:25). A servant of God will not shrink from asking himself, "Was I sent here by God? Or is my appointment of and from men?" All confidence in our after-life and experience may be said to turn on the answer we are able to give. If one be able humbly to reply, "I know that God sent me where I am," then — come long waiting for success, or come success speedily — we are encouraged to go on. But if otherwise, and our movement be on the initiation, and under the dictation, of men, who though servants of God are not the Master, maybe God has a controversy — not with our preaching of the gospel everywhere, but — with our state of soul which waited not on Him. It will be noticed that there are two Hormahs in the Book of Numbers. Both are concerned with the heathen Canaanites. In the first case the Israelites went against them on their own initiative; and the Hormah in Numbers 14:45 referred to their own cruel disappointment and discomfiture. In the second case they first placed themselves

in the Lord's hands, and then were sent by Him; then the Hormah in Numbers 21:3 was the discomfiture of the enemy. Be it remembered that for a messenger sent of God to the heathen it is written, "To whom He was not spoken of, they SHALL see; and they that have not heard SHALL understand." We have personal experience of this. We were seven years working with our Congo tribe ere we could baptize a convert. But God fulfilled His word broke down the apathy and the opposition in numerous directions, and encouraged His servants in widespread interest and much blessing, continuing at this day.

(2) The Effect of the Condition of Christendom. The second thought that impressed itself on me as I weighed your correspondent's perplexities was that we cannot escape from the results of the general condition of the Christian profession. We are part of it; and the Spirit who dwells in us is He who dwells in every true Christian, and in the house of God as a whole. His power is undiminished, and He is working as distinctly for the glory of Christ as on Pentecost's memorable day. But the mode of His activities is very decidedly affected by the state of things amongst us. The rule in apostolic days was immediate blessing with the preaching. The rule in Laodicean days is for the mass to be heartless, and the individual, after some knocking, to be awakened to the voice of Christ and blessed. We have certainly passed out of the first; we are almost as certainly in the second. Man asserts his self-sufficiency, and alas! his steady progress towards Divinity; and can the Holy Ghost trust blessing into the hands of men whose trend is practically anti-Christian? Happy those who are delivered in spirit from this age, and seek to do the Lord's will in dependence upon Him; yet they must bear the sorrow of the state of the people of God, as did the prophets and men of God of old. Even Joshua and Caleb, with all the individual faith they possessed, and the readiness to go on that they showed, were required to identify themselves with the people of God as a whole, and the success they longed to see was in their case postponed for thirty-eight long years because Jehovah was grieved with that generation. But it came. The experience of most missionaries who look for new birth and true discipleship in their converts is that the Spirit of God keeps them waiting for a more or less extended time ere blessing takes a widespread form.

(3) The Need of the Fear of God. With the third consideration I have to offer all may not agree. But it is put out as a personal conviction, and — speaking as to wise men — your readers may judge what I say. The gospel was not presented in the ways of God till the testimony of His Creatorship, and of His righteous law, had had their place. The approximate result in souls who were affected by these testimonies was the fear of God on the one hand, and moral exercise on the other. The truth that "God is" has its corollary in this, that "He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The ever-present thought of God before the mind leads it into exercise as to the difference between good and evil. There is no inherent power in man to attain the good or to conquer the evil; hence soul distress, which it is the genius of the gospel to meet. Applying this to the question of labour in a heathen field, broadly speaking we may find ourselves led to press primarily the truth of the Being of God, His majesty, and power, His Omnipresence, and Omniscience. Later the way may open more clearly to show how the questions of good and evil are raised by such a Being in relation to men who have revolted and rebelled against His goodness. Here the searching claims of His holy law may be brought to bear, showing how holy He is and how sinful sin is. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Finally, scope will be found for the application of the gospel's healing balm where sin-wounded souls are found. All this requires time, perhaps years of plodding, patient work. It is on the principle of "one soweth and another reapeth." The Lord gave a true value to all

the prophetic basis that had been laid in the nation of Israel, as preliminary to the apostolic blessing about to follow (John 4:38). Do not let your kind readers misunderstand me. While this general line of regular progressive ministry may be followed, there may arise a hundred, a thousand, occasions for the servant to meet individual inquiries, to lead special cases right ahead into gospel light and liberty. But I speak on the one hand of the progress of God's ways in the Scripture leading up to the gospel; and on the other hand of the very reasonable inference that something corresponding to those ways should mould our dealings with the masses of heathen met with. In passing, one may commend the study of Peter's address to the Jew in Acts 2:1-47, to the Gentile seekers in Acts 10:1-48 (in whose case the fear of God and the working of righteousness were discernible), and Paul's addresses to the heathen in Acts 14:1-28; Acts 17:1-34.

#### (4) Satanic Opposition.

Fourthly, in reply to your correspondent's opinion, "For myself I believe the lack of better results is probably due to Satanic opposition, such as in the case of Daniel 10:13," I submit that such opposition has least to do with it. "All power," said the risen Christ, "is given to Me in heaven and in earth." If He work, opposition is useless. Our part is to be in absolute touch with Him, in dependence upon His power. Of this dependence prayer is the tangible expression. Prayer is the link between the gospel commission of Luke 24:1-53 and Acts 2:1-47. The apostles, and the mother of Jesus, and the brethren are all found in the position and spirit of prayer in Acts 1:1-26, and so they made room for the putting forth of the might and power of Acts 2:1-47. Where was Pilate on that day? Where the Romans? Where the religious opposition? Where the power of Satan? The enemy may rage and fume and organize when the blessing has come, but he cannot prevent it coming. Hallelujah!

#### (5) The Practical Results.

Then comes the complaint in the fifth place, that converts have so little sense of sin, and so little intuitive knowledge, apparently even by the Spirit, of what is becoming to Christianity. He says: "Years after our converts have been recognized as Christians we find that their consciences still seem dead as regards most glaring sins. We have to tell a man 'This is wrong,' or 'You must not do that,' about most ordinary things; as if even years of Christian exercises had developed no sense of spiritual guidance or inward perception. "Now let us remember that there are cases where the grace of God refuses all method. In heathendom souls are at times undoubtedly converted who have had little previous self-knowledge, little light as to the absolute holiness of God, scant experience of the bitterness and heinousness of sin. They are suddenly snatched as brands from the burning, and handed over from the devil that sought their doom to the Saviour who loves them. These have a whole world of spiritual exercise to confront, the discovery of the perverseness of a natural will opposed to God's control, the diagnosis of every habit and custom of their lives in the light of a slowly growing knowledge of Scripture, the temptation at every turn to do what they have been accustomed to do in their heathen days without asking counsel of God, the immoral training of their generation which leads them to think many things meritorious which we know to be wholly foreign to the Christian regime. For all these things the grace of God provides; but souls are slow even in nominally Christian lands to lay hold of grace's provision for a godly walk. Let us have patience. Nearly all the epistles bring us up against the conditions in which the

early converts moved, and many a sad fall was there, many a state that caused the apostles anxiety, some things that well-nigh caused disruption in the church (certainly compromising gravely the truth of the gospel) and deeply serious moral scandals. Some were met by discipline, and some by ministry; but all only served to bring out in more detail and in permanent form the conduct suitable to that grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men. If the preaching of apostles had such setbacks, may we expect less? The Ministry of a Living Person.

Then in ministry, do we present the living personal JESUS? If we speak of the miracles or parables or incidents of the Gospels, do we expound them, or present Him? In telling of Him in His suffering, triumph, and present glory, do we ourselves throb with the reality of His love, realizing Him to be near and dear, and not only everything that we need for time and eternity, but also the Exponent of the Living and True God to us, His resource for all the requirements of the universe, and of the saints through all ages? Affections formed for Him, desire for His company, and His approval soon induce a distaste for sin, a keen instinct against it, which faith alone even in the great verities of Christianity — will not do. For What Kind of Results Do We Look?

Further, be it noted that great writers, and thousands of prominent Christian workers, mistakenly look for the influence of Christianity in due time on the great unchristian faiths of the world, and suppose there is to be a great movement among religiously inclined people in the direction of a wholesale reception of Christianity. One such writer issues a book styled "Conversion by the Million," cherishing the vision of the total abolition of Poverty, Ignorance, War, and Devilry. Many seek to pave the way for a sort of 'rapprochement' between Buddhism and the Christian faith, popularizing the latter by showing in how many features Buddhism resembles it! The true inward meaning of the Lord's coming for His own, the present eclectic calling of the church, and the change of testimony after the church has gone, seem to be missed by such. Perhaps wilfully by some, for it involves the utter condemnation of man as he is, and the consequent uselessness at bottom of many of the philanthropic efforts to evolve him successfully in which they glory.

What is Success?

Finally, being assured before our God of the divine character of the service to which we have been called, let us seek in every way to be conformed to God's ways and will in that service, knowing that when the Lord Jesus returns and all our deeds done in the body will be reviewed, and our work inspected, He will reward good and faithful work. Where there is this, the good and faithful work, He will find for Himself the kind of success for which He sent His servant. Was the cross success? Was His spending His strength for nought success? Was a cursing Peter, a cowardly lot of disciples, a betraying Judas, success? Was a compact of Jew with Gentile to crucify Him success? Yet said He, "My judgment is with the Lord, and My work with My God" (Isaiah 49:1-26). It was good and faithful work, and His God gave Him in resurrection a countless host of souls, the result of His self-sowing into loneliness and death. If we find long years after our earthly service is closed that God gave the greatest results to our sowing after we were supposed to be dead and done with, will the discovery not reward us amply for our apparent lack of success? May the Lord encourage each tried worker in every part of His work.

Faithfully yours in His service, Wm. Hy. Westcott.

## 10. 'Eis'

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'Eis'

W. H. Westcott.

"Windrush", 12 Stonehouse Rd., Sutton Coldfield,

Warwickshire.

March 28th, 1932. My dear -, Herewith I return the typed copy of J. T.'s letter to a brother in Croydon . . .

. . . I have read over Mr. Taylor's exposition, and without entering into controversy over his exploration of Greek prepositions, entirely disagree with his conclusion as to John 1:18.

Mr. T. on line 21 of his first page adroitly expunges from his reference to that Scripture the words "the only begotten Son," and substitutes the title "Christ"; then adding what he brings from his own mind, — "the preposition conveys that He is viewed as Man." But the passage surely teaches to every simple soul that, in the clause in the middle of the verse, the qualification and competency of our Lord to declare God is given. It was not that after He became Man He moved into (or towards) the competency to declare Him. The "who is" is not the present tense in the Greek, but the present participle, and this signifies the (One) being (existing) in the Father's bosom. . . What Mr. T. presses is the force of 'eis,' and he states in effect that 'eis' the bosom of the Father means that He was not in the bosom of the Father formerly, but moved into, or towards, that position as Man. But in so doing he nullifies, and flies in the face of, the whole force of the verse. For the whole point is that the knowledge of the God unseen by any man at any time has become available by the declaration of what God is in the Word become flesh. The only begotten Son "being in the bosom of the Father" was the only One competent to declare God. That He became Man to do so, and that the declaration is in Manhood, we all admit, — with gratitude and worship. But it was contingent upon His eternal position in the Father's affections. The preposition 'eis' is, I judge, the only one that could fully represent what the Holy Spirit would have us to understand at that point. For the distinction of His eternal Personality in Deity, the preposition 'pros' (with, by, or near), was used by the Spirit in John 1:1-2 : "The Word was 'pros' God." And be it noted, the eternal Personality so defined is "the Word." Scripture does not teach that the eternal One Who was with God became the Word; but that the Word Who was eternally with God, and was God, became flesh. He was the Word before He became flesh. Nor could 'en' or 'epi,' — the words used for the disciples' position on the bosom of Jesus in John 13:1-38 — that simply describe the physical position in John's case, — have been suitably employed in John 1:18. For it was not a mere position of external nearness, or juxtaposition, that qualified our Lord to declare God.

It was as the only begotten Son that He had inherent access to the innermost thoughts and affections of His Father. For in all the blessed activities of that God Who is Love, and Who longed to declare Himself, there was full responsive movement on the part of the only begotten Son.

There was not and is not a pulsation of God's blessed Nature, even in absolute Deity, as well as in all the counsels in which Deity was to reveal Itself, to which the Son did not yield an answering flow. This inter-communication of Divine Love, in which God is glorified before our hearts, bows us in profound worship. We see the Son in unique and ineffable blessedness taking up every attribute of God, and every activity of the Father's love, and in a competency that no Christian dares to question, responding to it. In the volume of the book it is written, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God."

Returning to the use of the preposition 'eis,' with its implication of motion towards an object, what other word could so aptly suggest this active response to "all that in that bosom lies"? It is not a question of mere position, or place, or proximity of Persons, but the fact of our Lord's competency to respond to the whole nature and mind of God, which qualified Him to be the Declarer of all that God is. Taken up in affection more grateful to the Father's heart than we can ever tell, the Eternal Son became Man, the Word became flesh. And a universe filled with the knowledge of God, and with infinitely varied blessing, will be the outcome of the Son's love to the Father, and devotedness to His will. It will delight every family named of the Father to know that all its bliss issues from the Son's glorious response to all that was in the Father's bosom. This is conveyed in the preposition used in John 1:18. Deprive Him of His eternal place "in the Father's bosom," and His eternal response as Son to all that God is, and you deprive Him of His competency to reveal and declare God.

Very affectionately your brother, Wm. Hy. WESTCOTT.

## 11. The Endurance of Job and the End of the Lord.

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The Endurance of Job and the End of the Lord.

Scripture Note on Job 27:6.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine Volume 9, 1917, page 82.

"My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go." This passage, as usually quoted, is taken to mean that Job was determined to appeal to God for standing before Him on the ground of his own righteousness, as contrasted with that righteousness of God which we know to be revealed in the gospel (Romans 3:1-31). This meaning is, on the face of it, unlikely, for the righteousness of God in the gospel sense was not revealed until the gospel came (Romans 1:1-32). The testing which Satan was allowed to bring on Job was not to discover whether he had soul-salvation and a righteous footing before God, but whether or no Job feared God because of the prosperity and the material advantages which Satan alleged to be quite sufficient to induce piety in a man.

Job's Friends. The men who heard of the calamities which befell Job seem to have taken the ground that the ways and providences of God were always to be interpreted by the worthiness or unworthiness of men. They evidently had in their minds certain standard instances of men who were pious, and whose circumstances showed every mark of the favour of God; and of others who, being wicked, were overwhelmed by public judgments. With a comparatively superficial knowledge of the wisdom of the Almighty, or of the reasons for His discipline, they deduce for themselves, and then bring before Job in an aggravating way, their conclusions, that he richly deserved all that he was suffering. Their Suggestions.

Without going into details, these "miserable comforters," as Job calls them, endeavour to hit upon some possible sin in his own past life which might account for his miseries under God's displeasure. Or, suggested one, his children must have been very wicked to be cut off so suddenly. Or, perhaps the stubbornness with which he resists these insinuations might be occasioned by pride which had to be broken. Or, there might be some secret sin nursed at the moment which made the consolations of God so small. Or, there might be some motive in his heart, some secret counsel, which the all-seeing Creator had to thwart, and for which he had to judge him. Past, present, and future are all ransacked by them to try and fix on the poor sufferer some adequate reason for such unique sufferings and calamities.

Job's Replies. To all these, Job answers that neither in the past nor the present was there the smallest known departure from his duty; and as to the future, he had not the slightest intention to move from the orbit appointed for him by God's will. At his wife's suggestion he might have cursed God and died, and so ended his misery, which she felt to be insupportable. But he felt it was a poor thing to give God a bad name; for although he knew Him but dimly, he knew Him too well to do that. All the past when recalled could be considered with a good conscience in the fear of God;

in the present, although he was so crossed and burdened and suffering, he was sure God would explain everything satisfactorily if only he knew where to find Him; as to the future, far from being diverted from piety by any calamities undergone, or by any lust of sin or gain — he was determined that even if God slew him, yet he would trust in Him. His Point of View.

While feeling in the keenest way every pang that Satan had been (as we know) allowed to inflict upon him, and while refuting with all his heart and energy the insinuations of his "friends," Job powerfully clears the character of God from the injustice which he knew their suggestions involved in His ways, i.e. of condemning him for sins he had not committed. At the same time it was perfectly inexplicable to him that he, who had daily feared God, should be so abandoned to anguish. Any challenge as to the rectitude of his conduct he was prepared to meet; and if the miseries were not a judgment for misconduct, it seemed as though the Creator had become cruel to him for nothing, and that he was set as a target for the arrows of the Almighty from mere caprice. His Lessons.

Poor Job. He little knew the tenderness of the heart that was leading him to sound the depths of his own mind. He was to learn himself in his own insignificance, in the smallness of his outlook, in the poverty of his conceptions of God. He was to learn the moral nothingness of his being, and the depravity and loathsomeness of it, in that it could impudently arraign the Almighty at its tribunal, and pronounce Him cruel and unjust in those providences which befell Job, simply because he could not see the reason why. In short he was to learn through deep sorrow that all unconsciously he had been making JOB the centre for himself; and that the worst immorality is to judge of GOD by what Job thought He ought to be and do. For in effect this was to make himself better, greater, more just than God — as Elihu points out (Job 30:1-31). The Text in Question. But now as to Job 27:1-23. He evidently passes censure on God for the apparent cruelty that made his life so bitter. But as long as he lives (ver. 3) he is determined that he will not yield to sin. Whatever the three friends allege, he will not admit a false charge (ver. 5), and in spite of their harsh judgment is determined to pursue the integrity of all his former life to the day of his death. It is in this context that he says, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go." That is, that nothing could induce him to turn from what he knew to be right. He therefore adds, "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." He was for maintaining a good conscience all his days, like Paul later (Acts 23:1, 2 Corinthians 1:12, 1 Timothy 1:19).

It may be urged that Saul of Tarsus discovered that his good conscience did not preserve him from error, and that his righteousness which was of the law was found to be but dung in the presence of the glory of Christ. This is true. But while he learned to value Christ as displacing all that man is even at his best, this did not induce him to give up the cultivation of a good conscience. In fact for the maintenance of a good conscience in the future it was necessary that life for him should be "not I, but Christ." The End of the Lord. Could it have been otherwise with Job? Once his lesson was learnt, that he was a part of a vast scheme of order and government which depended upon God, and which therefore had God for its centre and circumference, and not Job, would he not henceforth have new thoughts of the majesty and unerring goodness of God; goodness which knew how to bring order out of chaos, and good out of evil? Would he not also have learnt to distrust himself, and the reasonings and conclusions of his own mind, as well as those of his friends' minds, and have discovered the wisdom of waiting on God till the bright light that was in the cloud could be seen?

He would by no means surrender his integrity, he would by no means let go his righteousness. But, as Elihu puts it, his "righteousness," or his "uprightness" (see Job 33:23; Job 33:26) would now be to bow under God's hand, to trust in the searchings of His discipline, to learn the lesson God would teach; in short, to look away from himself to God, and to live on that new principle before Him, centred in Jehovah and no longer in self.

## 12. Notes on Eternal Punishment.

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Notes on Eternal Punishment.

(Scripture Truth, Volume 14, 1922, page 256.)

W. H. Westcott.

Words in italics may all be examined in Young's Analytical Concordance.

Eis tous aionas ton aionan (to the ages of the ages). Used exclusively of what is eternal, and absolutely so. Relating to the glory, praise, and dominion of God (Galatians, Philippians, Timothy, Hebrews, Peter, Revelation). To the life of God (Revelation 4:9-10; Revelation 10:6; Revelation 15:7), to the smoke of judgment on those who compose and actuate the apostate church (Revelation 19:3), to the torment of the devil in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10). See Young's Analytical Concordance under EVER (and ever), Nos. 5, 6, & 7. The simple word aionos (for ever, everlasting, age-lasting) depends of course on the character of the age in question. It is applied to consolation (2 Thessalonians 2:16) which as far as we are concerned reaches us during the present age or our own lifetime: to the millennium (2 Peter 1:11 : aion — world to come Matthew, Mark, Luke, Ephesians, Hebrews 6:5), and to the life which will be in vogue then, manifestly in vogue (Gospels, Epistles and Revelation), and to eternal life abstractly as in 1 John 5:20, where it is applied to One who is eternally before God in resurrection, and certainly cannot mean age-lasting in any limited sense.

If therefore, the word aionios be used in relation to that which is in its own essence and nature time-lasting, it bears its limited application to the age or time under consideration. If it be applied to that which is in its own nature and essence absolutely abiding, its use extends to eternity, the eternal age. And in this context, the eternal life granted to the saint but subsisting in Christ and the eternal judgment of the lost, stand or fall together (life, — Gospels and Epistles. Fire, damnation, Punishment — Matthew and Mark. Salvation, judgment, redemption, Spirit, inheritance — Hebrews. Also 2 Corinthians 4:18 in contrast with things temporal, the things that are not seen are eternal. Such are instances of its use).

See what value attaches to the expression "to the ages of the ages," which every honest soul must admit refers to absolute eternity. Three things are spoken of under this absolute category. (1) The life of God (Revelation 4:9-10, etc.); (2) The smoke of Revelation 19:3; (3) The torment of Revelation 20:10. So that the eternity of God, judgment administered in wrath, and judgment felt by the subject of it, are all referred to as absolutely eternal. Satan himself will absolutely and eternally reap the consequence of his sin. This is because his sin has affected God in a way we are not prepared nor competent to measure. When once this is conceded (and it must be, or we lose God Himself) then solemn as the issue is the objection against the doom of the wicked breaks down. The sin which is punished cannot be measured by any measure we possess; God alone can estimate what sin against God involves. The garden of Gethsemane bears witness that no other outlet could be found for the sinner. Christ must die. And Revelation 21:8 proves to every

subject mind that those who reject Christ in favour of sin, undergo the same doom as the devil. Not necessarily the same measure of woe, but in the very nature and essence of things (when time is no more) eternal. Not only judgment administered but judgment felt, to the ages of ages. To be cast into it for such unutterable grief and immeasurable distance from God, is the second death.

## 13. 'The Eternal Son.'

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'The Eternal Son.'

(Comments on a Book by C. A. Coates)

W. H. Westcott.

Windrush, 12, Stonehouse Road, Sutton Coldfield,

Warwickshire.

July 9th, 1932.

Comments on a Book by C. A. Coates. concerning 'The Eternal Son.'

Mr. Coates has recently issued a book entitled, "Remarks on a pamphlet by A. J. Pollock, entitled, "The Eternal Son."

It is with no slight grief of spirit that one places a few observations before the readers of Mr. Coates' "Remarks." Years of early and sacred memories lie behind us, in which so much was held in common with this beloved brother, that very reluctantly one finds himself in serious conflict with him. Let it be understood that his distressing and unaccountable departure from what we have learned of our Lord, does not lead one to ignore or undervalue what he has ministered of Christ to the hearts of saints by pen and voice in the past, when the truth held him.

I will not touch the personal controversy between him and Mr. Pollock in Mr. C.'s advocacy of what is hailed as "new light" and Mr. P.'s denunciation of it. There are times when a man in jealousy for the Lord's glory sets himself to contend with what he holds to be wrong teaching, and yet states things in a not quite perfect way. In such case he may be attacked over an incomplete sentence or an imperfect word, where his main position is nevertheless unassailable. The casual reader, and especially he who has read Mr. C.'s "Remarks" alone, may observe that Mr. Coates meets one and another of Mr. Pollock's protests to his own satisfaction, and may conclude that C.A.C. is right concerning the whole matter, and that A.J.P. is wrong. But I desire to call attention to five outstanding and incontestable features in C.A.C.'s book which will show in a clear way what the writer is teaching, and will lift our consideration of them out from the atmosphere of any personal aspect of controversy or conflict. At the outset, when it was first publicly advanced (at Barnet in 1929) that it was not Scriptural to speak of "Eternal Sonship" in connection with our Lord's Godhead glory in the past eternity, it was stated in the report of the Reading that the brethren who thus spoke "neither denied or affirmed" Christ to be "Eternal Son." It was stated in a tentative form in the Report, though the fact that it was questioned by notable brethren startled and alarmed Christians throughout the world. But that stage of subtle and tentative presentation of the error has passed, and now not only has the denial of it been most generally and positively accepted by our "London" brethren, but those who advocate the "new light" have prefaced their issue of a new hymn book by a formal statement by the revisers of their exclusion of all reference to this eternal

Sonship, and certain other glories of Christ, from their hymns. The whole fellowship in which this hymnbook is used stand committed to this exclusion by their acceptance of the book with the introductory description which states it.

Now in this paper by Mr Coates, will the reader note the following five elements of his recent teaching?

1. The glory of the Lord Jesus, Who as we gather from Scripture is the Son of God from eternity, is by Mr Coates limited as to His Sonship to His incarnation as born Son at Bethlehem, and the subsequent story. He no longer accepts that He was the Son in the past eternity. (See the first sixteen pages of his book.) He admits three Persons in the Eternal Deity, but will not have it to be believed that They were Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in that past Eternity, because we do not happen to have in the Bible the words Eternal Father or the words Eternal Son.

2. The glory of our Lord Jesus, Who as we gather from Scripture is "the Word" from eternity, is by Mr Coates limited as to His Word-ship, to His becoming Man. It is not accepted that He was the Word in the past eternity. (See his pages 26-29). He perverts the fact stated in John 1:3, that there was expression given to God and to God's mind in the creation of all things, by the action of "The Word," though it is stated most emphatically that all things were created by the Word. It is most important to see that there is in the physical creation a testimony as to the Creator God (See also Colossians 1:16, first clause). The Apostle Paul comments on this in dealing with the sin of the heathen in Romans 1:1-32, and brings them in guilty on that ground.

3. The glory of our Lord Jesus, Who as we gather from the Scripture was eternally in the Father's bosom (John 1:18) is curtailed in this respect also. His being in the bosom of the Father is limited to His life here on earth, and subsequently (pages 20 and 30). It is denied that His being in the Father's bosom has reference to His eternal place as the only begotten Son in the Father's affections. (This denial is also noticeable in the revised Hymns, where every such expression is eliminated by alteration.)

4. But Mr. Coates goes further than others. Having in his mind refused the Sonship of Christ in the past eternity, whatever else he allows, it follows as a necessary corollary, and is unequivocally stated on his pages 17, 18, 20, that the Name of Father must likewise be eliminated from the mind in thinking of God in the past eternity. As one has never met with this teaching before, among brethren out-gathered to Christ, it seems that it has become necessary for C.A.C. and the brethren with him to surrender this Fatherhood in the Godhead in the past eternity, even as the thought of Sonship in the past eternity is to be given up. Mr. Coates says on page 18, "It would be misleading for us to say that He was always with the Father." And again, on page 20, "It is quite beside the mark to say that the Father was the Father, before the Lord Jesus was born into the world."

5. Finally, on page 24 Mr. Coates boldly hints to us that the Name Jehovah properly belongs to God only from Exodus 6:1-30, onward: suggesting that Moses, having heard it then and there, uses it in a retrospective way in writing the account of Creation, etc. in Genesis 2:1-25, and later chapters. This is a crude and careless way of thinking and writing; for in Genesis 22:1-24, Moses himself records that Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-Jireh. This new doctrine is used by C.A.C. as an illustration of the way the titles "Christ" and "Christ Jesus" are used of Him in relation to the past eternity, though He was not the Anointed Man then. But is this so? Are we now

to believe that God only became Jehovah when He thus revealed Himself to Moses?

Let us examine this a little more closely, and in conjunction with the parallel passage in Exodus 3:1-22 In chapter 6, we have the Name of God revealed to Moses for Israel as Jehovah. In chapter 3, we have the same God revealed to Moses for Israel as "I AM." The Hebrew leader is to inform the people of Israel that "I AM hath sent me unto you." We are to understand if led by the argument of Mr. Coates that Jehovah, being the Name assumed in Exodus 6:1-30, was not Jehovah in the past eternity, because the communication of that Name was not made to Israel for the purpose of revelation until the time of Moses. But equally must he say that the revelation of God as I AM was not made to Israel until the day of Moses. Are we then to apply the same reasoning to the I AM glory of God as C.A.C. does to the Jehovah glory of God? He must assent to this if he be honest and consistent. But if so, this would run counter to what our Lord says of Himself in John 8:1-59, namely, "Before Abraham was, I am." This proves a death-blow to C.A.C.'s reasoning. The revelation of God as I AM was given to Moses; but it was the declaration of Who God was before He was revealed. Christ was I AM even before Abraham's day, and of course from eternity. Jehovah — the Self-existent one, He who is — was the declaration of Who God is, from all eternity; but only adopted and given as a covenant Name to Israel from Exodus 6:1-30. It seems to be something more than a mere slip that our brother should logically pursue a fallacious argument to the point where he would deprive us of the Name of God as the Self-existent One, and only apply that designation to Him subsequent to Exodus 6:1-30. Closer examination on his part would show him very clearly the connection there is between the I AM of Exodus 3:1-22, and the Jehovah (HE WHO IS), of Exodus 6:1-30.

There are other assailable subjects in Mr. Coates' paper, but the above five points show how far a landslide has already taken place, and one wonders where these leaders will stop. It is an awful feature of the present day that Christians who are thought to be in a path of separation to Christ, and who have been favoured by so much light, should now and in a way suddenly — have agreed to give up what their godly leaders of the last century, men of God as they undoubtedly were, reverently treasured and assiduously taught as light from God. But surely there must be some amongst them who read their Bibles differently; to whom the simple voice of Scripture speaks in its own convincing and unreasoning way; and who enjoy holy and true communion with God in the faith of these cardinal truths, however discarded and discredited these truths become in the minds of those departing from them.

Other attacks are impending, and on foundation truths also, and brethren are hereby warned that having induced many saints to surrender so much that is vital, the enemy who seems to be acting through their minds will not be content with what their leaders have already given up, but will further attack what we have learnt of Christ's atonement, and even of resurrection. Of these things there are also premonitions and ominous signs. The enemy hates every mention of the blood of Christ in the Assembly. and every reminder of his defeat in the literal and actual resurrection of our Lord, and of His saints in due time.

"Ye therefore beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness; but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and ever. Amen."

W. H. Westcott.

## 14. Present Exercises and a Loyal Path.

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Present Exercises and a Loyal Path.

Reprint of a letter, 1923. W. H. Westcott. 2nd Edition, 1932.

(1st edition entitled 'Present Exercises and a Middle Path.')

My dear -. Your letter of the 8th is before me with all its reminder of the difficulties of today. Fain would we give ourselves undistractedly to the pursuit of Christ in God's presence — His joy, and the Man of His pleasure. Fain would we study without cessation all that the Spirit brings before us in the Word, of God's thoughts in connection with Him, and be in all the liberty, the beauty, the power of the new order of man of which He is the Head. We can appreciate the position of Jude when he says, "I have been obliged to write to you, exhorting you to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." In the pursuit of ministry, it is at times necessary to face evil, as well as to teach or learn the good.

There is nothing so heart-breaking as facing the state of things in the Church today. We humbly bear our share in the failure in its widest aspect; the corruption and ever-accelerating apostasy, the trend Romeward (in principle) of pious minds, and the leaning to Modern Thought in its great variety of forms, on the part of nearly all the rest. But particularly, one could spend his time sighing and crying in the spirit of Jeremiah, over the terrible collapse of those who have claimed to be delivered from these palpable and general failures, and have contented themselves with the name of "brethren," so plainly God's name for all Christians (John 20:1-31, Acts 12:1-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28).

Here, where human machinery no longer exists to maintain outward unity (though that outward unity be ecclesiastical agreement and not the unity of the Spirit), nothing could have kept us together but the faith of the Son of God and walking in the Spirit (Galatians 2:20, Galatians 5:16). The first keeps us right objectively, the second right subjectively. This is primarily individual; but we can never be prepared for collective exercise, unless right individually. All the practical use of the truth unfolded in Ephesians, Colossians, or Corinthians; in Timothy, Peter, or Jude; requires that the individual be in the light of Christ in glory, the risen Son of God, and that he be, by the Spirit, responsive to that light.

Alas! more of disintegration and more of disruption has set in among those who have protested against the disunity of the Church (whether Greek, Roman, Anglican, or Nonconformist), than ever has happened in these main sections. We may say that about a century has passed since the exodus began from these human and national systems, that saints might meet on the ground of the Assembly of God alone, according to the Scriptures, under the Headship and Lordship of Christ, and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. It is a marvellous conception, and it showed a path which instructed, exercised, devoted Christians felt and do feel to be of God. It seemed to be the realization of the Lord's own word, "I have set before thee an open door." But it is so pre-eminently a spiritual thing, stripped of all vestige of man's methods of co-ordination and cooperation, so entirely dependent upon the giving Christ His place, and walking in the Spirit, that

it could the more easily be damaged the moment any individual allowed the flesh and his own will to act. As time has progressed, we have seen not only individual failure, which could be dealt with locally, but the failure of strong men of dominating influence, who — not content with ministering the truth in simplicity for its own sake, nor making sufficient allowance for varied aspects of truth, — have tended to rally admirers round them. Perhaps unconsciously have they done so at first; but, in the long run, and finding that a considerable number have supported their line of ministry, they have lost sight of the Headship of Christ (or certainly their supporters have lost sight of it), and have cultivated the special friendship of these who saw eye to eye with them, until a party has been formed. Without adjudicating in every instance of this as to whether the teaching in question is such as to necessitate separation, facts of this past century prove that many of the separated saints thought themselves compelled to take sides; and to our shame and confusion of face, we have to own the heart-breaking and much multiplied divisions of today. Is it possible that the so-called "London" brethren or so-called "Glanton" brethren, or others, glory in that which is our common shame?

Now with regard to those who have followed Mr. Kelly, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Lowe, and (in America), Mr. Grant, it seems probable that the parties who have rallied round these leaders, may tend steadily to disintegration, as these men steadily recede into history. Personal influence counts for much, but naturally it diminishes in force after the death of a leader; and the question comes to be raised by the new generation, "Was this division or that warranted as a division at the time it occurred, or was it the outcome of party feeling which at that time ran high?" Admitting that certain teaching is defective, and militates against the presentation in that locality, or by those persons, of Christianity at its full height, has there been, according to the Word of God, a justification for the excommunication which was in the heat of controversy exercised?

It is right for us to own the hand of God upon us in discipline, when our state is allowed to produce disruption. No mere confession of mistakes in past divisions can produce unity according to God. Divine unity in Christianity exists on the ground of the excision of the flesh in the death of Christ, and the establishment of a new order of man in Christ risen, into which we have entrance experimentally only so far as the Spirit of God forms Christ in us. I say experimentally; for had one been writing of what is true of every Christian in Christ, and according to God's thought and counsel, i.e. what is true of a Christian before God — there is no measure and no degree. To reach this practical unity of which I write, do we not need to judge that state in which division was thought to be the only method possible? Flesh takes many forms, and one of its forms is that of attaching the Name of Christ to its own decisions and actions. We say we do this or that in the Name of the Lord, and yet, how the heart breaks and we have to hide our faces in the dust, as we think of the actions to which the Name of the Lord has been appended. O God forgive us! The spirit of John 16:2, is at times in evidence, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Not that it is done against conscience: he will verily "think" that he is doing nothing but right. Ezekiel 11:14; Ezekiel 11:16, often recurs to my mind, in which the people who claimed to alone be in the peace where the Lord at first set His name, debarred their brethren and their kindred from fellowship with them; yet the Lord in His grace says (if I may so put it), "Do you think you are going to hinder Me from vouchsafing My presence to them by your expulsion of them from Jerusalem?" So some of these sentences of excommunication may ultimately be found to be excesses of fleshly zeal under

pretence of acting in the Name of the Lord; but while owning with deep self-judgment the sorrow of division, must we not go deeper than the act, and judge the previous allowance of the flesh which called down the governmental judgment of God? But now, if we eliminate the thought of those sad divisions with which we have to connect the names of prominent leaders, we are confronted with the exercises to which you more particularly referred: viz., the position taken by "London," and the position taken by the "Open" Brethren. For everyone who knows the principles and practices of these two groups, can see that they lie at the opposite ends of a straight line.

I love the "London" brethren, and was heartily at one with them if we speak of the exercise caused by looseness and lawlessness. Whether in England or in Africa, one's whole heart revolted against the inconsistencies of men who demand the privileges of the outside place with Christ, where Christ is all, and yet form associations and adopt methods which are thoroughly inconsistent with that outside place. One is almost against one's will, reminded of Nehemiah 13:1-31, and the grave relations of Eliashib and others with Tobiah the Ammonite; not because Tobiah can be put on a par with Christians, but because one of the people of God. Like Eliashib, can be so inconsistent with the place he took. Alas! Tobiah only used his place inside the favoured circle to keep up a 'liaison' with the enemies of the remnant. See Nehemiah 6:16-19.

I love the brethren who are now with "London," for no one wants to deny how much they have of truth amongst them; and their separateness of walk has, no doubt, attracted many of those who are sick of the ever-growing looseness in Christendom. But their creation of a new fellowship, the time at which they did it, and their claims since they did it, with grave tendencies more and more pronounced to one-sided and false doctrine, have put me outside and have kept me outside of their ranks. They are too "rich and increased with goods" to miss a poor insignificant brother like me, though I own with a broken heart how much I miss them. But they were, I feel, wrong in their attitude in 1908 over the Alnwick matter; and my Scripture to prove them wrong would be an Old Testament one — Deuteronomy 22:1-3 — where Alnwick and Glanton are depicted morally in all but names. The spirit which they showed in that year of sorrow, and the spirit of Christ as enjoined in all the New Testament, have been lamentably contrastive, as proved in bitter truth by hundreds of humble saints who — even if unable to meet them in argument — could not think their dictation in church matters right, nor according to grace and truth. But while their present lines of ministry would, in some ways, be a great change and a great help to us who need it, in other ways it is so sadly one-sided that they do not know their own deformity. It is so unguardedly subjective in its enforcement of the Spirit's work in saints that it obscures, and in some instances, denies the truth that God has made true of His saints in Christ. But the saddest and most distressing feature of all perhaps, is the consummate self-satisfaction of nearly all their writers and speakers; their pitying condescension toward those who are outside their wall. I do not want to associate with those who ignore what is of God among them, any more than one would ignore what is of God in any Christian; but I wish they knew their own deformity in these respects. It is not because of any disagreement with their exercise about separation that one is apart from them; but they have forced brethren's consciences on a false issue, and have hurt themselves as much as they have hurt others (as will be proved in the long run), by cutting off saints who would have supplemented their own ministry, and perhaps have helped to preserve them from extravagances. But at the other end of the straight line I have referred to, are the "Open" Brethren. Individuals are among them, as are in every Christian circle, who are models of piety, devotedness, and gospel zeal. But

of the ground taken by 'Bethesda' characteristically, I have no more doubt than I have of Anglicanism. Their origin as a separate group of brethren is their considered acceptance of Christians who sat habitually under Mr. Newton's ministry (though they had to recognize that Mr. Newton himself was not sound as to the Person of Christ), if these Christians said that they did not themselves hold the doctrine. Such might be constantly supporting Newton's doctrine by their presence, and yet verbally deny their participation in his heretical tenets. For in this case it was not some matter of church discipline, or some interpretation of a disputed text. It was an assertion of the peccability of Christ, and hence, if consented to, left us without a Saviour, and with no Christianity — (1 Corinthians 15:1-58). Our faith would have been vain, we should yet have been in our sins. But apart from the historical origin of "Open" Brethren, their refusal, at that time, to concede the Divine principle of defilement by association with evil, has given birth to the whole method on which most of their meetings are based; for anyone claiming to be a Christian may demand to be received, and, in general, would be invited to break bread; and each meeting is independent of each other meeting, since no corporate responsibility is owned. It is an easy come and go method of congregationalism; and those with them fail altogether of giving any expression to the truth of the One Body, and indeed, of the Headship and Lordship of JESUS, the Christ, in a collective sense. For obviously if the latter be held in any practical sense, the judgment to which He leads in one locality, would be confirmed and upheld whenever He is so acknowledged. Their notorious looseness in this is sometimes bad enough to shock themselves; and here and there in the country, you hear of meetings where some brothers insist on more care, though at the same time, receiving from and commending to "Open" meetings everywhere. So that if on the one hand, one has been shut out from the "London" brethren because of their ultra-exclusivism, one is equally debarred from "Open" brethrenism by its inordinate and systematic looseness.

Now, in between these two, lies our present position. There are many, who know at least a little of the Headship and Lordship of Christ, who wish to walk in this loyal path of fidelity to Him, neither re-adjusting the conditions of fellowship as the "London" brethren have confessedly (through their leaders) done, to the exclusion of those who ought not to be excluded; nor lapsing into the indifference and looseness of "Open" Brethrenism. They wish to keep in the truth of Paul's gospel, while owning their feebleness in presenting it. They wish to be conversant with God's mind in the Assembly and with Christ's glory in it too, and consistent with its every aspect; but own with shame and confusion of face, the terrible failures of today. They have exercises upon exercises. They see some tiring of the looseness which marks the day in which we live, and slipping into the "London" enclosure to escape that exercise. They see on the other hand, some tiring of the very suggestion of corporate testimony, and in their weariness, and also to escape exercise, slipping into "Open" Brethren practices and positions. And between these two lesions, it sometimes looks as if everything were going. But what are we to do? Are we to shun the difficulties, or are we to call on the Name of the Lord?

I see nothing for it but in this very difficult, and perhaps narrowing path, to call upon the Name of the Lord. My heart is broken, the sorrows of God's saints press on my spirit; yet will I not surrender this confidence, that in Christ there is resource today for the day. Whether He will revive ministry, whether He will gather others, whether He will by some overturning of social order and the outbreak of persecution, draw saints together, or by any means soever lead us to own our common sin in the dust before Him, I know not. Whether He will Himself come, whose coming is,

after all, the only panacea I know of, and bring to a speedy end all this sinful strife among His saints, I cannot say. But at least, through every exercise, and in spite of every sorrow, one finds himself loving all saints more and more, one finds the beauty and glory of Christ becoming to one's heart grander and sweeter and one learns hopefully to say, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my Salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17-18).

Warmest love, dear -, from Yours faithfully in Christ April, 1923. W. H. WESTCOTT.

## 15. Faithful Men.

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Faithful Men.

W. H. Westcott.

"Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:1-2): In connection with this passage, I read in Exodus 25:10-11; Exodus 25:16; Exodus 25:21-22 : The ark was made of shittim wood. In studying the tabernacle, the ark is that which suggests the Person of Christ. The shittim wood represents His humanity, the Son of God come down here as Man. I take the pure gold to represent that perfect suitability to God which was and is found in Christ, perfect suitability to the glory of God. In the ark was to be put the testimony which the Lord gave to Israel. The two tables of stone, or "the testimony," showed that what God required was perfect love toward Himself and perfect love toward men. These things are seen in Christ in all their completeness, and are fulfilled in Him alone. Upon the ark was placed the mercy-seat of which I do not now speak particularly. Christ, in the presence of God, is the One in whom God's testimony is from first to last preserved intact. As to the wanderings of the children of Israel, when they left Egypt they turned eastward to Sinai, and from Sinai they turned northward to Kadesh-Barnea. From thence, they went southward to the shores of the Red Sea, and again turned northward to the plains of Moab; finally they went westward into the land. But whether they turned east or north, south or west, the testimony of God was preserved intact in the ark There was no abatement of God's standard, and His eye rested upon that which, in the type, maintained that standard at its full height You may wonder what that has to do with the Epistle to Timothy. But no one can read the second epistle without noticing how that again and again in the midst of all the frightful failure spoken of, there are certain things that are preserved intact in Christ Jesus. Israel, the people of God, in the course of their journeyings, at times seem to be turning their backs upon their true and proper direction, as when they turned southward to the shores of the Red Sea. Nevertheless, the ark, with its testimony inside preserved everything for God in perfect suitability to Him In this 2nd Epistle to Timothy we have seven things preserved for God, and for us, in Christ Jesus. In 2 Timothy 1:1-18 we have "life which is in Christ Jesus" What a comfort for us, what security, what suitability for God, that the life which God in grace has made ours is secured and set forth in Christ Jesus. Then lower down, in verse 9 "His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus" Further, in verse 13, "faith and love which is in Christ Jesus," and in the verse which I read in 2 Timothy 2:1-26, "the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Further on, in 2 Timothy 2:10, "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory," and then "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus," in 2 Timothy 3:15, and finally "faith in Christ Jesus." in verse 15. You have the testimony preserved in the ark. Christ's perfect suitability to the glory of God secures everything for people, whatever their changing experience may be.

Now, as to the condition in which we are found in these last days, turn back to 2 Timothy 1:15. You will notice that Paul says, "This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from

me," a very serious state of things when we remember the peculiar place that was given to the apostle Paul in the Christian economy. He is the one to whom was committed the administration of the mystery, and who committed the administration of the mystery, and who was constituted pre-eminently minister of the Gospel. For these Christians of Asia to turn away from Paul meant decline from, and the surrender of, the teaching of Paul. In 2 Timothy 2:16, you find "Shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase unto more ungodliness." If men turn away from the full truth of Christ and take up with profane and vain babblings, these things spread like a canker.

Then in 2 Timothy 3:1-17 it says, that "in the last days difficult times shall come," and, in verse 5, there would be found "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof," and in verse 13, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." There is the intensifying of evil as time goes on. Finally, in 2 Timothy 4:3, "the time will come . . . when they shall turn their ears away from the truth and shall be turned unto fables." We seem to have reached this fourth chapter. In journeying through this Church period, from the day of Pentecost until the return of the Lord, a long period has elapsed, but these are the last days. One need hardly stop to speak of it, but it is unquestionable that people are turning their ears away from the truth, and what they offer us in the place of the truth is "fables." We marvel sometimes to see the writings and hear of the speeches of the cleverest men of today in the Christian profession; we marvel that they descend to such profanities and frivolous ideas, but they are turned from the truth to fables, and the professed people of God love to have it so.

Now, in these two epistles to Timothy, what has struck me is this, that a great deal seems to be connected with Ephesus, and the teaching of Paul, which reaches its highest unfoldings in the epistle written to the Ephesian saints. In order to see what I mean, will you turn to the 1 Timothy 1:3. "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus . . . that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine." We shall see in a moment what doctrine it was they had received; but he wrote these words to Timothy, who was his own child in the faith, and who was true to him, of whom he wrote, "I have no man like-minded." He was willing to part company with this close follower and imitator of him, and to leave him at Ephesus, because he saw the coming in of that which would corrupt the very best bit of Christian work we find in the New Testament. Then a little further on, in 1 Timothy 1:10-11, of that chapter he speaks of the "sound doctrine according to the glorious Gospel (the Gospel of the glory), of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust." Further in 1 Timothy 4:16, he says to Timothy, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." That is, Timothy, by personal continuation in that teaching which he had received from the apostle, would not only be preserved himself in the midst of all the growing corruption, but would become an instrument in the hands of the Lord for delivering others from it too. Then, see 2 Timothy 1:15. Time had elapsed between the first and the second epistles, not much perhaps, but Paul draws attention to the fact that by this time, beside those who were teaching evil doctrines, the whole of the saints in Asia had turned away from him. They were giving up the truth as he presented it at Ephesus. Again, in 2 Timothy 2:2, it says, "The things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men, that they may be able to teach others also." Even then there had come in the necessity to call for faithful men.

Now, if you are going to have faithful men, they must be faithful to something. I have suggested that at the back of all he says in the first and second epistles, you have the doctrine or ministry of

the apostle as unfolded in all its breadth and length in his epistles, and crowned by the blessed truth embodied for us in the epistle to the Ephesians. In order to test what there is around us we need to have some definite understanding, more or less large, according to our measure, as to what this teaching of the apostle was. I would just like to refer briefly to the stages in which the truth of God has been unfolded to us, as written by Paul in Romans, Corinthians and Ephesians. I hope not to weary you. In the epistle to the Romans you have the individual brought out from this sinful world, his guilt covered, and propitiation made so that he can be brought to God in a manner suitable to the divine glory. You have him set up in this world for the will of God, and brought to know God in such a way that, not only is there peace and deliverance, but the will of God becomes a positive delight to his heart. Beloved fellow-Christian, is there not a danger of our wasting a lot of time, and squandering a great part of our lives in doing our own will because we do not understand God's will, and because our hearts are not definitely and intelligently committed to it. I commend the epistle to the Romans to everyone that wants to get on in the things of God. Therein you have the laying of the foundation in the soul of the believer of the holy work of God. Note that first of all, the individual is blessed and set here for the God's will. Then at the end of the epistle, we are introduced to the fact that we, being many, are one body. The subject is not opened out, but the fact is stated in the way of an illustration. It shows we are not all alike, and it is not intended that we should be; but every one — in that mould in which the grace of God has cast him — is to be here definitely and positively in the will of God. This adjusts us in our relations as responsible men, living in this world; the one thing that governs our life and conduct is the will of God. In the epistle to Corinthians, the very first verse links on with the preceding epistle in this way, that Paul is an apostle by the will of God. But he talks in this epistle not exactly of individual, but of collective responsibility — collective responsibility viewed in connection with the locality in which each one of us lives. Let me turn to 1 Corinthians 1:1-2, because it may be important in connection with our subject of this afternoon. "Paul . . . unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, both their's and our's." I suppose that it is all based upon the truth which we find in Romans. But notice again, "With all that in every place, etc." Locality is before his mind; but not only Corinth. The instructions given in this epistle were not given only to the Corinthians, not only to Christians in that locality, but apply equally to every locality wherever there are Christians. Moreover, they are to, "all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord," in that locality — that is, they are not addressed to any select number only, any tiny community, any part of the Church of God; but the whole church of God in any locality; all Christians in the town or city are instructed according to what we have in these two epistles to the Corinthians. Thus no one can say, "This is out of date." Jesus Christ is Lord still. He abides, thank God, and all that is committed to His keeping is in safe keeping. The testimony is hid in the ark and nothing can take it out; the standard is irreducible. Wherever Christians are, in that locality these instructions hold good. In a double way uniformity is to be secured in the administration of the Assembly; namely, first by the written instructions of the apostle, inspired as he was by the Holy Ghost, which remain to us for our guidance down to the end; and, second, it is to be secured by the unchangeable and universal Lordship of Christ; we call on the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. I think this important in connection with our subject this afternoon for this reason; the idea of several independent assemblies in one city is very widely held; and perhaps increasingly held, and is attractive to many people because of the way in which they escape exercise the one with the

other. The result is a spirit of independency which is gravely opposed to the maintenance of that fellowship into which our faithful God has called us (see verse 9). The epistle is directed to every locality where there are Christians, and to all the Christians in that locality, so that that which is instruction for one meeting in a city is instruction for one meeting in a city. They are united by one common Lordship for all matters of administration. This applies to binding and loosing also. Now we are in days of brokenness, and we cannot get back to the re-constitution of that which, outwardly at least, has tumbled to pieces, but if we are to be faithful men this is what we are to be faithful to. I fear many drop out of testimony in regard of that very thing, and that there is not that subjection to the Lordship of Jesus, not that attention to the instruction of the apostle which the apostle which the Spirit is here to produce. In Corinthians, then, you get instruction for the saints in connection with the locality in which they stand. Wonderful it is to study all the detail of it; but — not to linger over it — turn to the Ephesian epistle. It is different from Corinthians in this way, that it speaks of what Christ is, and what the Assembly is, according to the counsels and purpose of God. That is not its local order and administration, seen to be governed by the written Word and revealed will of the Lord; rather is it the viewing of the Church of God from the standpoint of God's eternal counsel and that which He has wrought in the saints in view of it. I will briefly refer to one or two things that seem to be salient features in it, so as to help in a more detailed study. The Epistle to the Ephesians is the crowning ministry of the apostle Paul; is the crowning ministry of the apostle Paul; he unfolds to us there the counsel and purpose of God. He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. Observe carefully the Name of the One with whom the blessed God connects Himself in Ephesians 1:3. The central thought in that wonderful name is, of course, Jesus. We know Him. Have we not often sung, "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds in a believers ear"? Here it is not exactly in our ear; we are introduced in this verse to, "the God and Father" of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not so much what we think of Jesus, but what God thinks of Him and what God has set forth in Him. In Acts 2:1-47 we are told, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ." Both His Lordship and His Christhood are brought into view when we use the full name, the Lord Jesus Christ. I ask fellow-Christians not to use that name indifferently and thoughtlessly, but seek to consider what is unfolded in it; viz., that the One who bore the Name of Jesus here is now exalted by God's right hand is made both Lord and Christ. It was the sphere where He is thus owned on earth into which those, on the day of Pentecost, were introduced. By their baptism they came under the Lordship of Jesus and into that circle where the fulness of blessing connected with His Christhood was available for them. This Person is the One in connection with whom God now speaks. His eye is upon the One who, in His life and death here, and in heavenly glory now, is found covered with pure gold; in every place and circumstance, and under every condition, in absolute suitability to the glory of God. He, and not Adam, is the One in whom we see the divine pleasure He is the One upon whom the eye of God can turn with unchanging delight, and in whom the testimony of God is abidingly preserved This speaks to our hearts; we are encouraged, and having to share God's delight in Him. God, then, is presented here as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ This I commend to you as the first great theme. With His eye upon that holy and blessed, and now glorified One, it is as though God turns round and says, What can I withhold? What is there that I may not do in connection with Him? The apostle, in intelligent response to that which God had bestowed, says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." The heart of God is opened without reserve, and all the wealth and

resources of God in grace are opened too, so that every spiritual blessing is unreservedly poured out upon us and secured for us because God loves Jesus. It accounts for everything you find in the epistle.

Now, when you come to look at what follows, because of our being in Him, it is impossible to compass all the glories of Christ that are referred to. You turn your eye on a clear night to the sky and you see some stars that are unquestionably prominent. They are visible by their own light to the naked eye, and you can distinguish them. But you turn your eye on the milky way, and there is such a collection of glories that the mind cannot conceive their number. You cannot possibly speak of everything in detail. But here and there are great constellations that stand out and our eye notes them. In connection with Ephesians you get a milky way of celestial glories opened out in connection with the counsels of God and the delight of God in Christ. However to look at just one of them, see verse 9. After speaking of the blessing God has bestowed, he says, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will," etc. That is, the second great theme, that comes out in this epistle, the Headship of Christ. First of all, the fact that God has found a Man in whom everything is suitable to His glory and in connection with whom His heart has found rest and perfect complacency, and on account of whom He can open His heart in immeasurable blessing; next Christ is referred to and distinguished as Head over all things in heaven and in earth. We must distinguish between "Christ" and "the Christ." Some of our black Central African friends used to marvel when we told them that the same sun which shone in their country shone in our distant land of Europe. Said one to me, when journeying from village to village. "I cannot make the sun out — it seems to rise in a different direction every day," he could not place himself. He had no compass, and when the sun rose it seemed always to rise opposite from where he thought it would. He said, "I have always had the impression that every fresh place we went to had a sun of its own." After all, it was the same sun everywhere. If we study the sun we see this ball of fire coming out of the horizon in the morning and taking its journey across the sky. Some inquire as to its movement and constitution, its revolutions and its spots, and puzzle their brains over the material of which that sun is composed. That is studying the sun by itself. Another may study it as it is known to be, the centre of a great solar system, this marvellous system in which we find ourselves. This earth is a planet in it; other planets revolve around it; the comets move in relation to it; the sun is the centre of this huge system. It is the same sun which we were considering before, when we were examining its own individual make-up; but then we considered the sun by itself. Now we think of it in relation to that whole system in which it moves, and as the centre around which the planets, etc, revolve. If you think of Christ, He is always the same Person, but "Christ" personally may be studied in His own personal glory; but when you read of "the Christ" it seems to be more Christ in connection with the whole system that revolves around Him and the whole universal system of blessing. All things are to be headed up in the Christ in heaven and in earth. It includes the mystery of the Church and a great deal more beside, but if we read of "the Christ," it is Christ in relation to all that is His. The third theme is the Spirit. That is in itself such a vast subject in the epistle that I can only commend it to your notice. If a person wanted a theological study he should sit down and make Ephesians his study for life. If you take up the subject of the Spirit of God alone in this epistle, the various themes suggested in connection with Him are a profound theological education. I hope our beloved brother who follows me this evening, may be able to set Christ before us in some such way, that our hearts may be drawn out to Him in bounding affection — but one just looks at the outline of things in Ephesians to see what it is we

are to stand for, and to be faithful to, in second Timothy days.

Then, not only is there the Spirit of God, the competent Person to undertake the making good in our souls of everything God has substantiated in Christ, but you have the Church, presented in so many different ways in connection with Christ that, as I was saying, you see a milky way of glories, yet cannot speak of them all.

Another thing is power. In Ephesians 1:1-23 you find power toward us. The apostle prays to God that He might make known to the saints the greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ. All God's power wrought in Christ, and took Him from the lowest place in death, where He had gone that He might make it possible to fulfil the counsels of God, up to the right hand of God. That same power is in operation now in order to take us out of things here just as death and resurrection would take a man out of things here. The mighty power of God is to usward in order to give us this mighty uplift, that we might apprehend Christ in the place where He has gone. The church already sees Him there, Head over all things. The Church, which is His body, is to be enabled to be in full accord with Him, though still down here.

Then in Ephesians 3:1-21, the power is seen to be working in us. The Holy Spirit sets the Christ in the hearts of the saints, giving effect to all the counsels of God, enabling us to apprehend the breadth and length and depth and height of those counsels, and to know the love of the Christ which passeth knowledge, that we might be filled unto all the fulness of God.

Then, finally, in Ephesians 6:1-24, we have the mighty power from us, that can enable us to stand against the wiles of the devil. In the midst of all the enemy's wiles and the saint's weakness, the apostle says to Timothy — this promising young man, eminently gifted, and desiring to get on, yet weeping because he saw the state of things around — "Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." It carries us back to the teaching of the apostle, to "the things which thou hast heard of me." We do not of course attain to teach others in five minutes. But would you not like, dear fellow-Christian, brother or sister, to be numbered among the faithful, faithful to the full light God has given us as to the Christ (because, of course, Christian sisters can be faithful too). Would you not pray to be numbered among these faithful ones who, while maintaining the whole truth which God has taught us, are able to teach others also? Right down to the very end we should be able to stand in all the good of that which is revealed, in spite of the slide-away on every hand. May God grant this to be the case with us all. Every line of the truth remains true in Christ, and we may give nothing up. The Fateful Hour His hour was not yet come: And all the hate of scornful men, And all the plans of malice born, And all the power of Hell opposed, Could nought avail — His hour was not yet come. His hour was not yet come: And so in peace the Saviour moved, With heart in sweet commune with God Unruffled by Satanic storm That o'er Him broke — His hour was not yet come. But when the hour was come Calmly He sat with those He loved And spread the Eucharistic feast, Speaking of love supremely proved In death itself —

Now that the hour was come. And since the hour was come With force unchecked the tempest broke, And all Hell's legions sprang to arms.

Out from His own the traitor slunk To sell his Lord. For now the hour was come. At last the hour was come: And the dread outburst of God's wrath 'Gainst all the sinfulness of men Was borne in

love supreme, divine, By Jesus then: The hour of hours had come.

Another hour is come:

He speaks with power as Son of God, And all who hear, though dead in sin, Are quickened by that mighty voice And live anew. The gospel hour is come.

W.H. Westcott.

S.T. 1918

## 16. Filled with the Spirit.

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Filled with the Spirit. An article written long ago by the late W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 38, 1953, page 65. The present dispensation is peculiarly characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Christ, having finished the work of redemption, is gone on high, and the Spirit is now here to represent Him. All the work of the Spirit tends to make much of Christ. "He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14). This being the case it would be well for us all to be filled with the Spirit, that we may get to know Him in His fulness, and in the beauty and wisdom of His ways. It is thus that we shall learn to find our delight in Him as God does, and get the power to represent Him worthily here. The words, "Wake up, thou that sleepest, and arise up from among the dead, and the Christ shall shine upon thee" (Ephesians 5:14, New Tr.), seem like the New Testament paraphrase of, "Arise, shine for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isaiah 60:1).

Those who sleep are in appearance very like the dead. The Apostle calls on such to arise, shake off their slumbering inactivity, and, he adds, "the Christ shall shine upon thee." At this fag-end of the Christian dispensation there is a strong tendency to grow heavy with sleep. It is a solemn thing that the company who know more than many, as at Ephesus is the one to which the exhortation is given. They had the highest truth, and were in danger of going to sleep over it. Shall we consider how we arrive at such an experience as is here enjoined? And how God would bring it about in our souls?

Ploughing up of heart and conscience — a preparation we know little of — is doubtless the first thing (Romans 1:16 — Romans 3:20). Then Christ is set before the soul; and when there is rest, and we have come into Christian liberty, then we are free to learn (Romans 3:21 — Romans 8:39). Light displaces darkness. The work of Christ being before God in all its unchanging and eternal efficacy, the Holy Spirit produces in the soul desires Godward. He gives a real sense of the existence and the presence of God, a true view of our present state and what our solemn future might be. We are led to see things not merely as they affect us, but in their relation to God. The fear of God is created, which is the beginning of wisdom. We realize that to be God, God should be holy, He should be just. We get a growing sense of the holiness of His throne and of indwelling sin. Hence in Acts 13:26, it is said, "Whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent." I think we should be ready to acknowledge the sovereign and gracious ways of God, who uses various instrumentalities in awakening souls. The testimony of an itinerant or open-air preacher may be used to awaken; then perhaps God permits the awakened soul to go elsewhere, to get peace through hearing the Gospel preached more fully. Herein is that saying true, "One sows and another reaps," for it is God that is working all the time. The Spirit is here in Christ's name. When He finds one who has trusted in the atoning work of Christ which the Gospel presents, one who has definitely yielded himself to Christ, He comes and takes possession of that soul on behalf of Christ and for God. He seals him for God, as belonging to God. The Spirit links Himself with the believer and dwells in him as one who is of Christ, and as belonging to God. Note

well that the blood was first placed on the leper's ear and hand and foot, and afterwards the oil (Leviticus 14:17), The Spirit's power is not something added to what I am as a mere natural man. The work of Christ must be apprehended, its results formed in the soul, see, Romans 3:25. Have you not found this out? You felt that as to yourself you had not a word to say (v. 19), and God having closed your lips, then set forth Christ as your Saviour. See how He directs your faith: first, in the blood (v. 25); secondly, in Jesus (v. 26); thirdly, in Him that justifieth the ungodly (Romans 4:5); and fourthly, in Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead (Romans 4:24). Instead of yourself, God sets before you Christ, raised from the dead — once delivered for your offences, but raised again for your justification. It is on this ground that the Holy Ghost is given to you (Romans 5:5). Faith in the blood, in the Saviour whose blood it was, in the God who gave the Saviour and raised Him up again — wherever such faith is found there is peace with God, and the Spirit is given. The exhortation to be filled with the Spirit implies that the Spirit is within you and is able to fill you. He is prepared to bring you completely under Christ's control. If you were filled, you would be engaged with Christ and all that is His, and would do everything unto Him. How much of you has the Holy Spirit really got under His control?

We sometimes think that the filling of the Spirit will be like a sudden effusion after long prayer and waiting, and much seeking. But let us understand that here is the Spirit, the Spirit IS, He is within us who are saved. He is a Divine Person in great earnest to fill us with positive, divine energy — willing, longing to do it.

How, then, may we be filled? Just by being free from everything which would grieve or obstruct Him. There are two other exhortations in Scripture to the Christian in regard of the Holy Spirit, and both are negative. One is, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" do not grieve Him by unseemly or unsuitable behaviour. The other is, "Quench not the Spirit;" do not hang back when He urges you to some act in daily life, service, or ministry. To quench the Spirit is to refuse to obey some leading. You yield to human motives or listen to natural reasonings, and the thing is not done. On the other hand, if you obey, you get all His divine power to carry you onward. But He will always carry you along on well-defined lines laid down in Scripture. He never leads contrary to it, therefore let us study the Scriptures ever.

If you are awake you will often be conscious of the distinct leading of the Spirit. Many illustrations are found in the Word. "Arise, and go.... And he arose and went" (Acts 8:26-27). "Run, speak to this young man" (Zechariah 2:4). He would have your every faculty subjected to the operation of the Spirit.

All the verses which refer to the Spirit are like rosebuds. Linger over them, and you will be astonished to see how they open out, and how much sweetness there is in them. For example: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). Then, if filled with the Spirit, God's love to you would surely flood your soul, and everywhere you went you would show to all the love of God. It would sway us in all our actions towards our fellow-men.

Take Romans 8:2 — "Life in Christ Jesus." What is that? There is no fret, nor disturbance, nor turmoil in His life, no ruffle there. If Satan could have succeeded in extracting from His lips one expression of impatience, all the work of redemption would have been spoiled. Then, if the Spirit filled us — the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus — He would so engage us with Him that we too should

be freed from every element of unrest. Instead of weakness and failure in seasons of temptation, we should be held up and enabled to exhibit His life by the Spirit. So with each passage in which is stated anything of the office and work of the Spirit. Each suggests a line upon which the saint may be filled, and come under the unchecked control of this Holy and Divine Person.

Accompanying this exhortation in Ephesians 5:18, there is the other "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess." If we were set for being Spirit-filled, we should guard against anything that would simulate it without being it. We should never mistake exhilaration for unction. All extravagancies would be shunned, however pleasing to the flesh: a sober, holy, happy devotedness unto Christ, altogether beyond the flesh, would take their place. The natural excitement of wine and the Spirit's power, that takes a man outside of himself, are not to be confounded (see, Acts 2:13-17). They are as different in their origin as flesh and spirit.

Further, there are given some marks of one filled with the Spirit. There will be not only singing, but the making of melody in the heart to the Lord. There will be a thankful spirit for everything — not only for the agreeable things, but for all things; and there will be subjection to one another in the fear of Christ, the regarding of each other, brother or sister, as more worthy than myself.

Let us go in for being "filled with the Spirit."

## 17. Some of the Food in Heaven.

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Some of the Food in Heaven.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 9, 1917, pages 16 & 65.

1. The Hidden Manna. Revelation 2:17. The miraculous food of Manna was a temporary supply for the nation of Israel alone during their passage of forty years through the wilderness from Egypt to Canaan.

Incidentally it is a proof of the power of God to sustain His redeemed people even when they are cut off from every earthly resource, however great may be their number and however incessant their need. Nature may supply no answer; the heavens rainless and the earth barren meant neither food nor drink for that mighty host, yet they lacked neither food nor water; and so far as we read not one Israelite died from either hunger or thirst. But from 1 Corinthians 10:3 we learn that the manna had a spiritual significance over and above its meeting the hunger of Israel. There is certainly one spiritual lesson which it was intended to teach the nation to whom it was given. This is found in Deuteronomy 8:3 : "He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna . . . that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." The commissariat department of an army is indispensable, and we have a saying that an army fights on its stomach. But in things divine our great concern is to live under the control of the Word of God. We may be most amply supplied with rations, and yet not truly live according to God. And we may be tested as was our most holy Lord in the wilderness by the lack of provisions (and indeed later by Satan himself) and yet live to God in absolute dependence, refusing even to work a miracle unless directed by Him (Matthew 4:1-4). Though Jehovah, Jesus took the place of man Godward, and no temptation could ensnare Him, no bait induce Him to depart from that dependence proper to man; He would not move under any direction save that of God. "By every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." Hence Satan was foiled. Perhaps nothing contributes so much to spiritual disaster as the saint acting before he has received guidance from the word of the Lord. But when subject to Him, our bread will be given and our water be sure. The discourse in the latter part of John 6:1-71 seems to warrant our seeing in the Lord Jesus the Antitype of the manna, although (as is always the case) the Antitype appears to be so much greater than the type. For example, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die." Again, the manna was for Israel only; not for Amalekites, or Moabites, or any Gentile nation. But, says Jesus, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread which I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The manna came noiselessly into the scene of need, falling so gently that it did not disturb the dew. It was God's provision and gift, a heavenly food, unthought of and unasked by man, by no means the product of chemical analysis or experiment, nor wrought by labour; but God's own and ample provision to meet the need. In it

was every element to sustain life and to give the people strength for their daily march or daily duty. It baffled Israel; the very name they gave it (manna; what is it?) showed it to be outside the range of their ken or their comprehension. But its suitability for its purpose is proved by the fact that they lived on it, and on nothing else, for the whole of their sojourn and journeyings in the wilderness. It was just as nourishing for young as for old; the man partook of it with his household. It was lovely in appearance, the colour of bdellium, free to all, without money and without price; and as it followed the Israelitish camp in all its travels it was always within the reach of all. It was in the simplest of positions, upon the dew, and none could complain of the effort required to come at it, unless it were the effort of going down. It was a small round thing, such as the veriest infant could pick up and feed upon without detriment; and it had a most wonderful elasticity in its properties; for he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack. None of it, if taken according to divine instructions, had ever to be thrown away. Everyone who fed upon it was happily satisfied as long as his heart was right with God; a little made him happy, yet as long as his appetite craved more there was always more for him. It was only when his heart murmured against God that he pretended to find fault with the manna. It was capable of being ministered and taken in a variety of ways; there need not have been any monotony in the food. Eaten as it fell, its taste was sweet and its quality sustaining; but it could be baked or boiled, it could be ground in mills or beat in mortars, and cakes be made of it, and it was in every form pleasant to the taste and sustaining to the whole person. It was indeed a stupendous miracle of forty years' duration, and its cessation, when other food came in Canaan, was just as remarkable as its provision had been so long as it was needed (Exodus 16:35; Joshua 5:12). Of what was it the type? Of Christ surely, of Christ come down from heaven to earth, of Christ the Incarnation of God's grace to His people; primarily available for Israel, but as we shall see, ultimately for all believers through faith and by the Spirit. How truly was He sent of God! How really was He out of heaven, a heavenly stranger here!

How gently He came as the Babe in an unambitious household! How lowly was the place He took and the path He trod! What food there is for the people of God as we see Him from the outset of His life here, increasing in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man; subject to His parents, yet His heart set on His Father's business! How absolutely was He here for the good of men and for the will of God! But in what language can we unfold all the grace that came by Jesus Christ? It is especially set before us in the first three Gospels; and the fourth, written from a different standpoint (assuming His rejection by Israel from the first), presents some of the most charming examples of the same theme although overlapping it.

He was Man here. The greatest element in our apprehension of Him must be God's appreciation of His worth. He was here for God. His motive in coming into this scene of need, and primarily to the chosen nation of Israel, was the fulfilment of God's will. He was sent by Him, and came here, a new order of manhood. It was not as a superman, an evolution of the old Adamic order, a phenomenal production of human generation that He came. He was born of woman truly, or else He would not have been Man, but He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and not of Joseph, and so was a Man of a new Order, holy from His birth, Son of God eternal, but now Son of God in manhood. No wonder that the world has been trying ever since to unravel the profound mystery of His glory, and has in effect been saying, "What is it? What is it?" Darwinism knew it not; Spencer has no light to offer; German philosophy stumbles over it and gives it up; Jew, Gentile, barbarian,

Scythian, bond and free, all in turn examine it, attempt to analyse it, and still say, "What is it?" But our hearts, taught of God, echo the Master's own words, "The bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."

He is the Bread of God. Not only might men delight in Him, but the heart of God traced His way, and in His every movement found satisfaction as when man taketh food. Over Matthew's Gospel the living God can write, "Satisfied." Over Mark's Gospel, "Satisfied." Over Luke's Gospel, "Satisfied." Over John's Gospel, "Satisfied." In thought, in word, in deed, He did always the things that pleased Him. In His birth it was announced "Good pleasure in men." At His baptism, "My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." At the transfiguration, "Well pleased; hear Him." At the grave in the garden of Calvary not words greeted Him but deeds. For God raised Him from the dead and gave proof of His infinite delight in Jesus by exalting Him to the highest heaven and investing Him as Man with eternal and unbounded glories. But more of this in a moment.

He was characterized by obedience. He truly lived by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord. His experience tallied in every point with all that was forecast concerning Him in Holy Scripture, because He was always found in the pathway of God's appointing and in a condition in absolute accord with the mind of God.

He was never at fault, however circumstanced, because the grace of God could always express itself in Him without friction or loss. The resources of God to meet man's need flowed most fully where the need was greatest; and the greatest marvel was where man's unbelief hindered its outflow. In the expression of that grace He was accessible to all. His activities were chiefly in the lowest walks of life; one feature of His service so markedly in contrast with the hirelings of His day was that the poor had the gospel preached to them. He brought all the fullness of God into contact with empty vessels. In Him the fatherless found mercy. He healed the broken in heart, and bound up all their wounds. His disciples in zeal for His comfort might repel and drive off little children; He recalled them, and by laying His hands upon them and blessing them has taught us for all time that God's blessing is for little ones. He encountered the woman at the well with that marvellous tact which fills our inmost soul with delight, and that won her from a life of shame to be a worshipper of the Father and a messenger for His Christ. He met a dying thief on the verge of death and damnation, and though in trials of His own unfathomed by mortal ken, found leisure to pour in oil and wine from the resources of God when He found repentance there. But these are instances; there are multitudes more of them. The manna was found in every camping place of the Israelites. The grace of God in Jesus was found wherever human need presented itself. In many cases, all unsought and unasked, the Lord from heaven touched men. The pool at Bethesda bears witness to it. The blind man in the ninth of John tells the same tale. Did the demoniac in Mark 5:1-43 seek the Lord, or did the Lord seek Him? In other cases He was sought after, and wanted. The bearers of the palsied man, the woman of the seventh of Luke, the centurion, the nobleman, the woman with the issue of blood — such swiftly occur to mind. Did He turn one away? Did not the boundless grace of God show itself to be at the disposal of human need?

He was as tender as He was gracious. He understood the shock on Jairus' heart when news came of the death of his little daughter. Instantly comfort flew as on seraph wing to the breaking heart: "Be not afraid, only believe." He knew that amid all the crowd at the gate of Nain one widowed and bereft woman knew not where to turn in her grief, and He hastens to her side with His most

compassionate "Weep not." But wonder of all wonders, that, in Martha's and Mary's sorrow, the Lord of glory brings down the crowning display of divine sympathy, mingles His tears with theirs, and (as the narrative all but tells us) in a voice broken by a sob, says, "Where have ye laid him?" Others might discuss His apparently unkind ways in permitting Lazarus to die; but some who seemed most touched by His grace could only say, "Behold how He loved Him!" Not alone in His compassions and resources in meeting others do we see His suitability for meeting our need. His own experiences qualify Him to be support and strength to us. He was in all points tempted as we are apart from sin. He chose a life of poverty and exposure. He who laboured for the comfort and good of others, and used God's power to supply all real wants, suffered want and hunger and thirst Himself without working any miracle. He often spent nights under the open canopy of heaven; He had no place to lay His head. His labours were so arduous that at times He had no leisure to eat bread, and His friends thought and said He was beside Himself. He was ever the target of men without principle. Time-servers and hirelings, who fleeced the flock but fed them not, regarded Him remorselessly as an enemy. They watched Him that they might accuse Him, they intrigued to entangle Him in His talk, they prejudiced the common people against Him where they could, they misrepresented His works and His mission, they spent money freely to overthrow Him and, by and by, the truth of His resurrection. He told them the truth of God; they sought to dash Him over a precipice and to stone Him, and in the end they crucified Him. They sought to turn Him from His service and His path by the threat of what Herod would do to Him. But nothing stemmed the flow, the torrent of grace. No murmurings, no failures on the part of Israel in the wilderness stayed the rain of manna from heaven; and no opposition and no treachery stayed the goodness of Jesus. He was just Himself all through infinitely well-pleasing to God, and full of blessing for men. His disciples misunderstood Him, and often practically misrepresented Him, their loved master, to those around. He patiently corrected their mistakes, showed what His mission was, and made their every failure not an occasion of depressing them but of lifting their thoughts on to a higher plane, even into fellowship with His own. No wonder they loved him! Yet in their weakness they shrank from full identification with Him, they forsook Him when He looked for comforters, they failed Him when He wanted them to watch with Him one hour. Yet He patiently excused their sleep when He needed them, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." He would fain have let them sleep on and take their rest while He went on in His magnificent devotedness to shame and death, but that He knew how their hearts would reproach them if He did not give them opportunity to follow Him. So He said, "Rise up, let us be going." Yet they failed Him, and He was left alone. Lover and friend were far from Him, and His acquaintance hid away in the darkness. How capable is He of understanding our every loneliness, our whole adversity, even the worst of sorrows, the being misrepresented and deserted by our brethren and our friends! And sorrow? And suffering? Ah! Whose suffering and whose sorrow were like His? For we must remember that Jesus was holy. His sensibilities of body and mind were not numbed as are ours by sin. We often reach the don't care state; He never did. Every slight was felt, every unkind look or remark as we never could feel them. Above all, who can measure what He felt as He bowed in Gethsemane and looked the morrow in the face? Who has ever prayed with the intensity of His prayer, the heart-agony expressing sweat of blood from His sacred Person, "Abba Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt?"

Why do we speak of all this? Because in these things we read the heavenly grace presented in the Lord Jesus. We are not speaking to-day of His atoning sacrifice, though by means of it we are set

in peace and rest before God, and are enabled to discern in the humbled Christ these beauties and attractions. But our faith and our affection attach themselves to Him as the Spirit shows His ways to us. We come into the company and share the feelings of His disciples, although separated from their era by hundreds of years. We love Him in measure as they must have loved Him. He was more to them than all beside. Their hearts burned within them as He talked with them by the way.

Yet He was rejected by Israel and by the world, and was taken from them. The manna ceased to be seen here on earth, and the Person who was It, the Life, the Food of their spirits, was transferred to the regions unseen, to the presence of God in the holiest, up to His place within the Throne. Was He now beyond their reach, never to be known again in all His lovely grace? So far as the world is concerned it will never see Christ in lowliness and humiliation again. The same so far as Israel after the flesh is concerned; they will know Him thus no more. When again He appears it will be with the splendour of many crowns upon His brow and with ten thousand times ten thousand in His train. No more the Man of Sorrows, acquainted with grief; nevermore the suffering, the despised, the rejected One. But dear fellow-Christians, has God lost that precious One? Does Christ cease to be all this because He has gone from earth to heaven? Nay, what He was He ever will be; God will never lose it, nor shall we. Do we not remember even in the history how that a pot of manna was gathered and laid up before the Testimony in the Lord's presence to be kept for their generations; that they might see the bread wherewith He fed them in the wilderness? Contrary to all precedent, outside the experience of any Israelite, this pot of manna was kept, not days and weeks only, but months and years, in pure and uncorrupted state. God ever had it near Him, and although it was hidden manna, it was not for Him only, but that other privileged eyes might see it too. It is to this that Hebrews 9:4 refers; and it is from this that the figure of Revelation 2:17 is borrowed. In uncorrupted and incorruptible excellency and sweetness does Christ remain. Every grace which made Him precious and indispensable in His life and ways on earth is perpetuated in Him where He is. He is hidden from men's eyes; but the Spirit has come from the very spot to which He ascended, empowered to conduct the faith of every believer to where He is, and to inform the heart of every saint in what He is. He is accessible to us all; He is food to our souls, He is sympathetic as ever, full of grace and truth, not a feature lost of all His infinite attractiveness. The greatness of His resource is the same, His obedience and love to His Father still the same. His circumstances are altered, but nothing can alter the beauty, the sweetness, the sustaining character of this "manna." But it is only to be found in the presence of God. It is only to be appreciated by faith and true affection. It is only to be apprehended by the teaching of the heaven-sent Spirit. Those who are indifferent to Christ, and those who know not the privilege of access into the Holiest, cannot be said to understand it, still less to feed upon it. It is mentioned in Revelation 2:17 in contrast with Revelation 2:14. Such as eat things sacrificed to idols may not eat of the "hidden manna." Those who participate in the food of a world estranged from God may not feast on God's treasured store. Those who wish to get on where Satan's seat is (ver. 13) will never understand fellowship and intimacy with Christ once humbled here. It is he that overcometh that feeds upon Him, not he that is overcome.

Such then is some of the saints' food in heaven. For ever to revel in, and to be in contact with, the perfections of Christ as they were brought out in His circumstances of humiliation here. They required the setting of humiliation to bring them out, and the environment of human need, yea,

even of opposition; His obedience and love, His meekness and lowliness, His patience, His suffering grace, His sympathy and tenderness, His faithfulness to God, His compassion toward men; how could we have learned them fully apart from His incarnation, His coming down out of heaven to earth? But once known, they remain for our eternal delectation and satisfaction, a support and a stay to our spirits for ever. If the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7), the food of saints, represents to us the fullness and charm of Christ's glory and greatness, the manna in the same chapter brings home to us the eternal freshness and grace and charm of all that was learnt through Christ's humiliation. As we learn what is to be our portion for ever, may we seek grace to feed upon Him now, being overcomers and not overcome.

## 2. The Tree of life. Revelation 11:7.

Every Bible student has probably noticed the similarity between the beginning of the Bible and the end of it. We have Paradise, the tree of life, and God with men; showing that, all the history of sin notwithstanding, God carries out His plan through Christ. The serpent who came in in the first book is cast out in the last, while the woman's Seed promised in Genesis is seen triumphant in the Revelation, with heaven and earth in sweetest accord acclaiming His victory. A few suggestions are offered as to the Tree of Life. It is mentioned in some five or six places in the Word. In Genesis 2:1-25 it is found at the heart of things in the midst of the garden of Eden. Adjacent to it was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Now while the latter was forbidden to Adam, the former was not. It seems certain that two actual and special trees stood there, to which God in wisdom attached certain moral lessons. That of the knowledge of good and evil represented Adam's responsibility to his Maker, while that of Life represented the privilege that he might enjoy as long as he remained unfallen. The forbidden tree was by no means a privation or a denial to Adam of pleasure or taste; for the Lord God had set in the garden every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. Upon it hung fruit truly; but the restriction imposed as to its consumption was purely to remind God's wonderful creature that he held all in trust under his Maker. Beneath man was everything in this lower creation. Above him, God. The one simple security for his tenure of the position, obedience. And obedience, not to a complicated code of laws, but to one simple command. Obedience would have maintained him in the knowledge of good and good alone. Disobedience would leave him with the knowledge of the good he had once enjoyed, but with the added knowledge of the evil he had acquired, which would overpower and condemn him. It was the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But the tree of life was there, unfenced by any such law. It was available for the man's advantage. Whatever we may learn of its teaching, the tree itself stood there for his good. It represented what was really life in its fullness for Adam in the condition in which he had been created. We venture to think that few people realize the greatness of the intercourse which was brought within the reach of man who was made in the image of God. Far from the idea of the original Adam being a man in a very undeveloped state of evolution, his mind was capable of the widest intimacy with his Maker Himself. There was no perverted will, there was no debasing lust, there was no degrading conception of idolatrous worship, there was no distraction such as we feel in a world that puts ten thousand interests in the place of the living God. The wisdom of God surrounded him with an infinite variety of objects, in which he might discover the glories of his best Friend; there was illimitable fullness in which his soul might bathe from day to day; while his heart was made capable of uttering its praise at every fresh communication or discovery. Sciences that men are struggling over now with minds be-drugged by sin, and which

they misuse to praise their own powers of observation, were all open to him with stainless purity, and without the painful effort man now puts forth. Every growth, every hue, every colour, every form, every sound, every force in nature, had its spiritual lesson to convey to him; and all affording themes for adoration Godward. The Bible intimates that the Lord God Himself sought to commune with Adam in the cool of the day. Probably all that Adam touched during the daylight would have afforded reason for wondering inquiry in the evening, and the delightful business of the Creator would have been to explain cause and effect, and to instruct him how to proceed in his responsible position as head of all. We may almost imagine Proverbs 3:13-26 to have been Solomon's summary of Adam's position; showing at any rate what the tree of life suggested to him. It was all the wisdom of God, made available for the creature, according to the capacity with which he was created. If we put it more in New Testament language, the tree of life in Eden may set forth what Christ was as the Revealer of God in creation; and the fruits of the tree in that position, all the glories of Christ so far as the first creation could be the expression of them. But Adam would think within the compass of the thoughts proper to his creation; and to him all would be a knowledge, not exactly of Christ, but simply of the Creator, the beneficent God.

All this privilege was lost through Adam's sin and fall. Neither now was he fitted to commune with God, for his sense of shame and guilt prevented any desire for such intercourse; nor was it possible for God to resume intercourse with the creature who had apostatized from Him, with that awful sin question opened but unsettled. A dreadful gulf had been created, man had become a pervert from good; feeling utterly wretched, yet having a taste for the evil that ruined him, that led him and his posterity deeper and deeper into the mire, and that placed an impassable distance, and set an insurmountable barrier, between God and man. Of this the end of Genesis 3:1-24 is the picture. The tree of life, the fullness of life for man in his innocence, was cut off from him, and he from it, by the sword of flame which turned every way.

Passing from this material representation of the goodness of God in Eden, and from the consideration of what might have been enjoyed by Adam had he remained sinless, we come to a later period in man's history, to an experience which confirms and corroborates the former one, and to an event more momentous still in its issues for God and for eternity. For Christ Himself came. He was not a mere pictorial representation of some unseen reality, nor was He sent to a Paradise on earth. He was life itself, and life adapted to the conditions in which He found men. The tree was bearing another manner of fruit now according to its season. The goodness of God brought privileges to men that were unknown before, though they had been foretold by the prophets. "Jesus of Nazareth was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." Proposals were made to Israel, and to man, all guilty and helpless as they were, to avail themselves of the grace and goodness of God. He would forgive their iniquities and heal their diseases, He would satisfy their poor with bread, comfort those that mourned, and bring deliverance to the captives. He would bring them the truth about God, long misunderstood by, and misrepresented to, their hearts. He would discourse to them, not now about creation glories alone, and the privileges of intercourse with the Creator, not now about God's demands in law, but of a Shepherd Who sought lost sheep, of a Father Who welcomed repentant prodigals. God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. He sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. No flaming sword now turned every way

to keep men from Him; rather the sweetest of invitations called men to Him. He had to expostulate with the Jews, "Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." God's compassions and mercies fructified in Christ for man's good, and once more possibilities of blessing and immense privileges were put within man's reach.

Alas! what are we? What is man proved to be? A hopeless wreck, an utter failure, rotten to the core, not only forgetful of good but hostile to it; so that the greatest good that ever came from God into a world of sinners was met only by scornful hatred, and the carnal mind was seen in its true colours at last, enmity to God. The very grace which brought the one only Son to the vineyard, sent by the Father, encountered the almost incredible, the most malignant, proposition: "This is the heir, come let us kill him"; as the Lord says, "Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father." The compassions that brought Him to men's side for their blessing gave range for the spite that spat in His face, crowned Him with thorns, and nailed both hands and feet to a cross of wood. The overtures were fruitless, the reconciliation was refused, the tree of life was sneered at and rejected, the Author of life was slain. The Tree of Life is not on earth now. "Though we have known Christ after the flesh," says the Apostle Paul, "yet now henceforth know we Him no more." He has been removed from the reach of the natural, earthly man, and has been transplanted on high. He is to be found alone in the Paradise of God. God is not defeated; nay, far from it, His grace is triumphant. For Christ has been exalted as Man out of death into boundless glory. Happy as might have been Eden, the blessedness connected with Christ risen in the new scene which is opened out by reason of His death and resurrection is greater still. Paul was caught up into Paradise, and the communications of God's wisdom there, and of Christ's fullness, were simply unrenderable, incommunicable, in any language under the sun. Joy unspeakable, unsearchable riches, love surpassing knowledge, glory excelling, communications unutterable, — such is the vista now open to faith and Christian affection. However much we know, we know only in part; but one day we shall know as even we are known. Illimitable blessing will fill heaven and earth, with Christ as the centre and fullness of it all, the Tree of Life with privileges new and eternal, setting out all the resources of God in grace for our enjoyment for eternity. Who that knows these things does not exult in the victory that God has gained? The Epistle to the Ephesians shows how that God, working in the very world whose condition was so alienated from His life that men must be regarded as dead in trespasses and sins, has begun at the bottom in the death in which He found them and has quickened saints together with Christ. He has imparted life and character of a new order, derived from and consonant with Christ, has associated them with Him risen and glorified, and set them in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Even now the privilege is accorded us in the Christian company, of entering into, enjoying, and expressing the all-varied wisdom of God; but in coming ages God will fulfil to the outermost bound His purpose of displaying the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. I have little doubt it was intended that the Ephesian saints should be fitted by the instruction in their epistle to enter by the Spirit into that heavenly Paradise, and to taste now the fruits of the Tree of Life. There was at least no reserve on God's part; Christ in glory as the Centre and Life of the new scene was set before the eyes of their heart, and God intimated His wish to initiate them into, even as He had opened out to them objectively, the knowledge of the mystery of His will, that He would gather together all things in one in Christ. But the Ephesians were, and we are, still in the world actually, where hostile spirit-powers will spare no pains to divert us from Christ. Ten thousand wiles do they employ to distract us from our calling, and to alienate our affection from the Source and Centre of blessing. A

tendency to teach some other doctrine is found at Ephesus in 1 Timothy 1:3.

Departure from the faith is foretold in 1 Timothy 4:1. Defection had already set in, in 2 Timothy 1:15, of a most widespread character in Asia where Ephesus was; the wonderful vessel Paul who had told them of Christ is seen forsaken, save by one or two. But Christ, the Son of Man, dealing with His faithless church on the ground of its responsibility, lays bare the secret of the whole departure in His address to this very church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-7. "I have against thee," He says, "that thou hast left thy first love" (New Tr.). They had given up the sense of His love, He was no more to them personally what He had been in their first days; He was no longer their one absorbing Theme, their Object, the known, trusted, and beloved Lover to their hearts; and He missed their warm response, their sweet affection, their loving confidence, their complete absorption with Himself.

It is in this connection that He says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." Our present object is not to consider the path of the overcomer, though that path may be very simply summed up in this, that we make everything of Christ; again let us say it, — that we make everything of Christ. But it is to learn if possible what may be meant by this eating of the Tree of Life. What thought is conveyed to us now by this figure, the Tree of Life? May I suggest that it represents to our spirits the infinite privilege accorded to the saints in the knowledge of Christ, in Whom is seen the fullness of Life according to God's purpose? Not seen now within the limitations of created and material things, but in His new acquired Manhood glories; ever revealing on the one hand all the wisdom, and glory, and love of God, and on the other ever defining for us our place in the fair scene of blessing, and conducting our hearts into all the fullness of that Life which has been designed for us from eternity. If a material creation so vast as this was required to express the creatorial glories of God, how infinite must be the delights in Christ, Who expresses every glory of God! And further, how infinite must be the capacities of that life which is formed for the enjoyment of all God's glory for ever! Of this life Christ is the living expression. Eternally will He conduct our hearts into the apprehension of the blessed God, and discourse with us of the infinite wisdom that has created such a scene for His own delight and glory, as well as for the delectation and blessing of the favoured subjects of His grace. In this sense I suppose we shall eat the fruits of the Tree of Life through that golden age which we call Eternity. But the beginning of the feast will be during the millennial reign of Christ, when overcomers will taste the sweetness of reward.

One element remains to be examined. It is probable that Ezekiel 47:12 refers to the same thing as Revelation 22:2. In both passages we learn that not only does the Tree yield meat, but the leaves are to be used for medicine. In the Revelation it distinctly applies this feature of the Tree of Life to the nations, i.e. such as are spared to enter the millennial blessing on earth. We shall not need medicine in heaven, beloved saints of God. Neither will there be there crippled or diseased bodies, nor broken and sorrowing hearts again. Ours to eat the fruit, ever varied, never palling, of all that Christ is, in its season. But how comforting, as we look around today and see the "open sores" as Livingstone called them, and the fevered condition of the nations on earth, to know that the Tree of Life will afford in its season healing for them. They will not learn war any more; and even to earth's utmost bound the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will spread as the waters cover the sea. Earth will unite with heaven in that thousand years of His glorious reign in glad acclaim of the benefit derived from being under Christ, Israel and the Gentiles sitting down under His shadow with great

delight.

## 18. From the Form of God to the Form of a Servant.

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From the Form of God to the Form of a Servant.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 8, 1916, page 281.

"No one knows the Son but the Father" (Matthew 11:27).

We are met on the threshold of any study as to the Person of the Son of God by this intimation of its vastness. Statements are made in the Holy Scriptures to enlighten our hearts regarding the One who has reconciled us to God, and has revealed the Father to us; but they are like an open heaven to us, sunlit and starry, ever full of new discoveries, and surrounding the saints with their benefits and lustre.

As, however, there are certain cardinal points in the mariner's compass, so there are certain great revelations in the Scriptures toward which the thoughts of the believer's heart may turn, reverent and adoring; where we may learn the Majesty of the Being who before He became Man subsisted in separate personality, eternal and Divine in the Godhead. To touch upon such in their order in the New Testament we have:

John 1:1-51. The Eternal Word.

Php 2:1-30. The Form of God, and equality of glory.

Colossians 1:1-29. Creator Fulness for creation's sustenance and recovery.

Hebrews 1:1-14. Glory incapable of diminution or change.

Humbly we touch on such themes. In the Gospel by John the Spirit of God opens out to us the glories of the Word. As the Word, He is the universal Representative of all the mind and thoughts and ways of God, both in His own Person and by means of what He says and does. If at any time any revelation required, or requires, to be given of God's thoughts and plans and will, the revealing thereof took place, or will take place, through Him. We are to think of Him as the One adequate, and He alone, to fully disclose all that is in the mind of God, and to bring into being all that the mind of God has planned. In the first verse, the Spirit goes back to all that is called "beginning," however nebulous this may be to the mind of man, and He shows us there that the Word "was." "In the beginning was the Word." This teaches us the eternity of His being. For whatever had a beginning, He had none; He only was. All else began; He subsisted when it did begin.

Secondly, the Scripture shows that, commensurate with the eternity of His being is the fact of His possessing separate personality. "In the beginning . . . the Word was with God." If the evangelist had written "the Word was in God," our foolish minds might have thought that just as Levi was (Hebrews 7:1-28) in the loins of his father Abraham when Melchisedec met him and only received actual being later, so perhaps our Lord, the Son, the Word, had only received separate being at a

special date in eternity. But the Holy Ghost is too jealous of His glory and too accurate in His words to admit this erroneous idea. "In the beginning . . . the Word was with God." As certain as the Eternity of His being is the separateness of His personality. There never was a time, however remote, when the Word was not with God, ever distinguishable from the Father as the Father, and from the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit. Yet there is no suggestion of a second Godhead, for though distinct in personality, He was with God.

Finally, as though to forbid for ever any comparison of Personalities or of glories in the Godhead, or in our conceptions of the Deity, He says "the Word was God." Whatever language the Lord used of Himself after He took a servant's form, or whatever terms might apply when He had become a Man, we should be utterly wrong in supposing that He held an inferior place in Deity before He came. This last clause in our verse is absolutely destructive of any idea of an inferior place in Godhead. "The Word was God"; and God cannot be inferior to God. In one verse, Divine wisdom sums up His Eternity, His separate Personality, His absolute and equal position in the full glory of Godhead.

Another thing is added. Without bringing in any other title, He says, "The same (i.e. the Word) was in the beginning with God." That is, whatever other glories He possessed, there never was a period in the eternity past when He was not the Word. It is in this connection that the inspired evangelist adds, "All things were made by Him." The One who is the Expositor of the mind and thoughts of God, and who was capable of putting the imprint of God's thoughts into form, created the material universe, the "all things," that they might be the transcript of God's glory, so far as that could be in creation. All that we have around us, the immensities and wonders of space, the beauties and uses of light, and heat, of form, and colour, and sound, originally bore the impress of the glories of God through Him who was adequate in wisdom and glory and power to declare Him. Every element in earth, and sea, and sky, was designed to express some ray of the Creator's glory, — a well-stocked library in which the man who feared God might study His eternal power and Godhead. The chapter goes on to speak of man's condition after he had fallen, and to show how the Word, ever true to His character as the living Exponent of God's mind, became flesh; to deal with sin in due time as the Lamb of God, to baptize men who had repented with the Holy Ghost, and to make Himself known to their hearts as the Son of God, the new and living Centre of all God's ways. But let us pass on to Colossians, leaving Php 2:1-30 for later consideration. In the Epistle to the Colossians (Colossians 1:1-29) it seems clear that the first fourteen verses are to prepare us for the contemplation of the glory of the Son of the Father's love from a fresh point of view. Much of this glory is true of Him as having become Man; but in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses we are faced with Godhead glory pure and simple. It is evident that the creation of thrones, etc., was prior to the date of the incarnation of our Lord; and His necessary condition of pre-eminence when He did become Man takes its rise in what He was ere He became such. He is the Firstborn (the most eminent) of all creation; "for by Him were all things created."

It is of the utmost importance to reverently study what is said of Him. By knowing Him as He is set before us in the Scriptures of truth we are fed and encouraged, and we are fortified against the too evident effort of many to depreciate His glories. It is said of Him that "He is before all things." This is a necessary truth, because of what was said just before, viz. that "by Him all things were created." We say that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. Yes; but who was He? The chief priests and scribes at Jerusalem, who ought to have known the truth, told part of it only. "Out of thee," they

quoted, "shall come a Governor that shall rule My people Israel." But the quotation should have gone on, "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). He comes into the creation, and the place of pre-eminence was His by right; but He who came is the One to whom creation owed its being, whose own glory is from everlasting.

Moreover, it is the Son to whom this operation is here attributed. He was the Son when He wrought the work. This relationship of Son with Father in Godhead glory is antecedent to the creation of everything. It is not a relationship originating in His immaculate birth, though as born into the world He is also styled "Son of God." But being Son in the inscrutable glory of Godhead, the Fullness of the Godhead was pleased to dwell in Him; He was capable of being the Image of the invisible God. While we may say in general terms that God created the heavens and the earth, we learn that the Godhead was pleased to act by Him who was Son. He was adequate and competent for this. There was no defect or inferiority in Him which would have rendered His work inefficient, or that would require it to be supplemented by some other agency. How great the Son must be! The Father is content to be revealed in the Son, and all His fulness is detailed in Him. The Father can be known, because He is revealed in the Son of His love. The Holy Spirit too, holy in character and infinite in power, is content to be set forth in the Son, and to bear witness to Him. But the language in which His creative work is described is very wonderful, too wonderful for us to do more than love it and pray that we may understand it. There are three words (really) used in the sixteenth verse, "In Him were all things created . . . all things were created by Him, and for Him." We can humbly thank God for as much as we grasp of the "by Him," and of the "for Him." He is the Alpha and He is the Omega, the First and the Last. He is the Originator of the universe, and it is designed and built and governed so that in the end all will be found to have conduced to the furtherance, the working out, of His glory. But what is meant by the "in Him" at the beginning of the verse? The word used implies that He has set the stamp of His character upon what He has created. It is intended to exist and to operate in constant dependence upon Him, acting only as He wills it to act, and drawing for its subsistence and its sustenance upon the Fulness ever resident in Him. For the purpose of the present paper we do not enter upon the question of whether the responsible creation failed in its responsibility. All that is considered in the chapter, and the difficulty met from the same inexhaustible Fulness. But in our verse we find that the whole creation, and all the authorities that were constituted in it in heaven and in earth, were created and ordered by Him with the impress of His Personality upon them. Himself the Image, the Representative, of God. These subordinate thrones and dominions and principalities and powers were created by Him, each to act in its own sphere and within its appointed scope, but all in dependence upon, and taking their character from, Him. "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God." They are not supreme in themselves, nor is any one of them self-sufficient so as to be independent of Him. We may feel how small we are in comparison of them; even earthly potentates seem inaccessible by reason of their greatness; but there is One higher than the highest; and they are all dependent upon and responsible to Him. Nor are we to think only of earthly powers; there are potentates in heaven of whom we know little or nothing. We read of them, "principalities and powers in heavenly places"; but though we know next to nothing of them, we learn that they are created to bear the impress of Christ's character, and are equally responsible to Him with their earthly compeers. But consider the greatness of the One on whom such a vast system of glories can hang, and upon whose fullness all may draw without turning to another! All resource is in Him, wisdom, power, love, and boundless good. All that is represented

by thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers, — the rulers and the ruled, — may come and come again to this inexhaustible Person, and receive all nourishment, all support, all direction, without troubling to seek it from another or elsewhere. Such is the One who is available too for the church; but this is digression so immense that it must be left. In Him then all the Fullness was pleased to dwell, in Him, the Son; and the creation of all subordinate authorities in the universe is only the working out into a peculiar form of the boundless fullness eternally pleased to dwell in Him. How foolish, how erring, the heart that looks to other quarters, or has hopes in other directions than Christ. In Hebrews 1:1-14 the same glorious Person is the theme, seen in far-reaching glory from before the earliest creations down to the end of time, when all material creation will have served its purpose and will be changed. But He remains unchanged. He has assumed Manhood, and will never put that aside again; but what He ever was in the essential glory of His Person, He is, and ever will be. His becoming Man, and His fulfilling the many offices designed for Him by the will of God, does not in the least degree diminish His essential glory as the Son, or extinguish one ray of His bright blessedness. By His Son, God made the worlds. But He by whom He made them is the brightness of His glory, the express Image of His Person, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. Nothing of this is lost by incarnation. These things are as true to-day as when He created the universe; they will be as true in eternity to come as they are true now. "Thou remainest . . . Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail." He is the One in whom every attribute of God's glory is realized, and is made effulgent; He is the exact impress of God's nature. It is not only that He has wrought marvellous works of wisdom and power, and upholds them all throughout the vast universe without weariness or intermission; but He is perpetually capable of representing to us the attributes and nature of God Himself. Not one distinguishing feature in the character of Deity but it finds its revelation and expression in the Son. God has spoken in Him. In knowing Christ we are set in the light of what God is. Nothing is withheld of the glory of God, for the Son is the shining forth of that glory, the bringing forth into visible expression of all that God is. It will be noted that this is not something which the Son became, or was made, in the course of time. Other glories connected with His work and His offices might have a beginning; but this of which we are now speaking is what is proper to Him as Son, the essential glory of His Person, true of Him before time began, and true of Him when time shall be no more. The brief statement in Php 2:1-30. can only be understood in the light of other Scriptures. It speaks of Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. We cannot issue an explanation of what is meant by the Form of God. It is beyond us even as God is beyond the creature. But with other scriptures in our hearts and hands we can say with certainty what it was not. The true rendering of the second half of the verse helps us: "He thought it not robbery (He did not esteem it rapine, or an object of rapine) to be equal with God." He was not in an inferior or subordinate position, like Lucifer or like Adam, to look up and crave after Godhead honours through lust of possession. No; being already in the Form of God, and possessed of the Godhead glories we have been considering, He could not crave after being what He was already. The Heir-apparent to the Throne of England does not lust after being the Prince of Wales, nor seek by ambition and robbery to attain that status. He is Prince of Wales by virtue of his family position. To Christ it was no robbery nor object of robbery to be equal with God. To humble Himself was possible; to exalt Himself to a higher level was not. And this mind was in Him; He humbled Himself, He emptied Himself, He did not appear with any of the insignia of His Royalty, He veiled His Godhead splendours, He came incognito among men and took the

servant's form, that He might complete the path of obedience in Manhood even to the death of the cross.

How easy it becomes to reject error when possessed of the truth. We have lately seen a perversion of this passage foisted on Christian readers as follows: "Who being in the form of God, did not meditate a usurpation to be on an equality with God, but (contrariwise) made Himself of no reputation, etc. "To which is attached the wretched explanation . —

"Hence the Divine proposal to the Logos — that if He would become a man, taking the sinner's nature, but not participating in the sinner's weakness or sin, He might thus be the Redeemer of men and accomplish the Divine Will. Attached to this proposal was the promise that so great a manifestation of love, loyalty, and obedience to the Father would receive a great reward — an exaltation to the Divine nature, glory, honour, and immortality. Thus Jesus declared that for His faithfulness He had been rewarded by His Father with a place in His throne" (Revelation 3:21).

How base is the thought of man when brought to the test of the Word of God! The underlined words are underlined by ourselves. Does Scripture then not teach that the Word was first God, and then became flesh? Does Scripture not teach that in Him all the Fullness was pleased to dwell? Does Scripture not teach that after laying the foundations of the earth and making the heavens by the work of His hands He remains the same in essential glory throughout eternal years? Does Scripture not teach that the Son of Man ascended up where He was before? The Bible speaks of the humiliation of the Lord Jesus, and it speaks of His exaltation; but not in the terms of the theological explanation quoted above. May we see the greatness of the glory from which the Son came, that so we may better understand the greatness of the humiliation of the Lord; and may be enabled the more to love the mind He showed and the pathway He took.

## 19. Four Interruptions.

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Four Interruptions.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 13, 1921, page 254. The communications of John 13:1-38 and John 14:1-31 were given to His disciples in the house where the Lord celebrated the last Passover. His love was about to lead them out from this world — with all its wondrous record of the mercies and ways of God, and all its sad story of the hatred, treachery, and failure of man — to the Father. He had first made Himself dear to them by the glories and graces recorded in John 1:1-51; John 2:1-25; John 3:1-36; John 4:1-54; John 5:1-47; John 6:1-71; John 7:1-53; John 8:1-59; John 9:1-41; John 10:1-42; John 11:1-57; John 12:1-50, gathered them round Him as sheep around a beloved Shepherd; and then by departing would cause a movement of their hearts in the direction He took. Ultimately they were to be with Him, as John 17:24 shows; but in the meantime every facility was to be furnished for the flow of affection between Himself and His followers. The last testimony was borne to the world in John 12:1-50, and was rejected as the first had been. In John 13:1-38 we seem to enter a retreat where Jesus is alone with His disciples. In faithfulness to His own institutions for Israel He takes the passover supper; and having thus completed His relations with the earth for the time being, He prepares for the entire change from the Jewish position to the Christian by girding Himself for service and washing the disciples' feet. This was not for the correction of failure; we should lose greatly by supposing that this washing of the feet is for reasons of breakdown in walk. The dust of travel is one thing, the soil of sin is another. No one would accuse the Eastern traveller of wrong when he reached his friend's house with dusty feet. Comfort and suitability required that the traces of his journey be removed, in order that he might not be distracted in his host's presence by any thought of his own untidiness; the washing of feet was as much necessary for the visitor's comfort as it was in keeping with and in suitability for the divans of the host's house. The Lord was to introduce His disciples into the Father's things and into the atmosphere of the Father's house, and love would make them perfectly at home there, free to enter without distraction into each of the thoughts of Divine love.

How often when we go to a meeting are we quite a time before we get into the spirit of it. Our minds revert to the circumstances out of which we have come, our homes, our families, our business, our work for the Lord. It is the same when we would fain have a quiet time alone with the Lord. Our thoughts wander away to memories of earth, past experiences, persons, places, books — things which in themselves are perfectly right, but which at that time, and in view of what we are then seeking, are intrusions, things out of keeping with the communion we long for. In all this there need not be sin; it is the dust of earth which clings to us as the result of our travel across it. But obviously it distracts us in the matter of communion with the Lord in His own things; and here comes in the Lord's gracious personal service to wash our feet; i.e., to remove from our minds the memory and thought of the way we have been travelling, and to bring about by His word the displacement of this "dust," so that we may be free and happy and undistracted before Him in the

new position He has taken in resurrection. The major operation of bathing, the Lord refers to in John 13:10. This seems to cover the great work of regeneration when the Word of God is applied for our conversion to God, with all that it implies. It is the time when our whole being is brought under the power of God's truth; when, as with Naaman bathed in the waters of Jordan and made anew, we first submit to the Son of God, trust in His death for us, are cleansed, and receive eternal life. This is once for all. But the need of feet washing remains. For though we have eternal life, the enjoyment of that life is often intercepted by the things of earthly life and service. Nothing but the love of the Lord on the one hand, and His very gracious service in feet washing on the other, can give us sustained enjoyment in the Father's things. And what the Lord does in this way for us, we should each seek to be spiritually capable of doing for each other. Be it noted that only He who abode in His Father's love was capable of washing all His disciples' feet; and only when we are sufficiently near to the Lord are we capable of so helping another saint. This is the minor operation which is repeated as often as may be necessary. In John 13:30 Judas goes out. Love's last service has been laid at his feet, only to be spurned, and he goes out into the betrayer's night. The contrast becomes very marked between the communion of the world outside in its thoughts and purposes of evil, and the communion of this other world inside, where the thoughts and purposes of love are unfolded. JESUS was alone with His true disciples.

John 13:31 then begins the most intimate disclosures, where the Lord in unreserved confidence speaks of all that is in His heart. How privileged are those whose feet are washed and whose hearts are true. The Lord prefaces His communications by deep unfoldings of the meaning of His wondrous death. Not now the human side of it as in the foretellings of the other Gospels, the betrayal, the shame, the spitting, the crucifixion. It is here presented as the glory of the Son of Man; the crowning presentation to God of the Son of man in a love that did not falter and an obedience that would not fail. He presents it also as that by which God should be glorified every day in the bright glory of God Himself brought into fullest and deepest display, so fully revealed that God would owe it to JESUS to glorify Him in response; the Son delighting to honour God, and God delighting to honour JESUS. But in this none could be at His side; He is alone in atonement and in this supreme act which reveals God and secures glory to Him in the scene of man's sin.

Simon Peter is the first one to interrupt. Knowing that His Master was dear to him, and dearer than his own life, he avails himself of the intimacy afforded by the Lord's grace, and proffers his company and his assistance, his devoted assistance, in this approaching moment. Poor Peter! say we. Had it been possible for ardent love to bring another to the Lord's assistance in the great work of bringing glory to God in this world of sin, and in relation to sin, Peter had been the man. But while the Lord stands for God in the breach, not only does Peter recede from the position, following afar off, but in the end repudiates- the One he loved, and invokes a curse on himself for the very suggestion of possessing a link with Him. He denied his Lord with oaths and curses. How truly was the Lord alone; and how truly His love distances that of His most ardent disciple. Single-handed He laid the foundations of blessing, and constructed the road into blessing and the Father's House.

Thomas, materialistic Thomas, next interrupts. JESUS had spoken first of His death as glorifying God; then of the Father's house into which He would enter in risen life, not for Himself alone but as preparing the place for them too; assuring them, further, as proof of His deep love for them that He would personally come again to usher them into it, that they might ever be with them. This may

seem clear enough to us when we read it in communion with God. But Thomas failed to grasp its meaning; not apprehending the Lord's objective, the place into which the Lord was travelling through death and resurrection to have them with Him, he asked, "How can we know the way?" The Lord goes beyond his question in the answer for He says, "I am the way, the truth and the life," and adds, "no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." With the eye steadily fixed on JESUS we can read the Way. Dying alone out of life here, He rose again, not alone; Head of a new Race now, His true disciples are associated with Him as the risen Man; and He has ascended to His Father. But it is after such a fashion that the One who is His Father is our Father too, the One who is His God is our God. We are given the same place in relation to His Father and God as He has in relation to Him (John 20:17). The steps He has trodden in reaching that objective are an education to us; and while the position is defined for us in the place that JESUS has taken, it seems clear that for the practical enjoyment of that position we need to learn the lessons which His death out of this world, His resurrection, and His ascension, so plainly teach us. But He is not only the Way, He is the Truth also, He is the Exposition to us of all that the Father is. The Father's name, character, love, glory, purposes, are all completely revealed in the Lord Jesus, so that in proportion as we study the Lord Jesus in His new position do we become instructed as to the Father; and acquaintance with the Father makes the Father's house doubly dear to us. Finally, He is the Life. For, after all, neither the Father's house where JESUS has gone, nor the Father Himself, could be understood or enjoyed now or hereafter, had we not the life that is suited to that enjoyment. In JESUS we see a life of relationship and affection which is wholly in consonance with the place into which He has entered; and as those who have been identified with Him in His death for us, and through faith in that death, we participate with Him in life. We are of His order; eternal life is ours. And it is life eternal in order that we might know the Father and Jesus Christ His sent One (John 17:4).

Philip is a third interrupter; yet always in the intimacy of love, and giving the Lord His due place. "Lord," he says, "show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Slowly do our minds rise to the conception of the majesty of Godhead glory. Little do we apprehend of the relations between Divine Persons. If we thought to see the Father in a form different from the Son, or the Spirit in some independent form, would it not divide our attention at once? In JESUS all the fulness was pleased to dwell; in Him we see the gracious and mighty activities of the Spirit, and in Him all the glory of the Father. The Lord patiently explains to Philip that in Him as a Man here, and in His communications and activities, He was a complete and blessed setting forth of all that the Father is. His words were the Father's words; His works were the Father's works; He was before the disciples' eyes, but the Father was in Him, and He in the Father. In looking at JESUS the Son as Man here, they were looking on what the Father is, for there is no disparity between the Father and the Son. The Son is the Son, the Father is the Father, the Spirit is the Spirit, yet is the Father revealed in the Son. It is privilege untold that we may behold Jesus, follow Him in the recorded details of His life here, and feel that we are in contact with the Father in every word and work.

Judas brings in the last interruption to the ministry of the Lord in the upper chamber. He voices the inquiry which we all long to have answered, "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Of His public manifestation to the world we are told in a hundred places. The Jewish mind was ever looking forward to it. But here the Lord had brought together two seemingly contrastive ideas, "the world seeth Me no more, but ye see Me," and again, "I will manifest Myself

to him." How reconcile His concealment from the world and His manifestation to the individual? This is subsequent to the Lord's intimation of the coming of the Comforter (verses 16, 17). "Ye see Me" is the privilege of disciples, open to all. The subjective state of the disciples, which would enable them to enjoy the manifestation of the Lord, is found in verse 21. While the world is not able to see Christ, the disciple is allowed the manifestation of Him. Heart-love to the Son of God produces obedience to His commandments; and where obedience to the revealed will of the Lord is the fruit of love to Him He vouchsafes the disclosure of Himself, His glories, His offices, His graces. The cloud or fog may intercept the fair shining of the sun, but when the veil of fog or cloud is removed, the sun's brightness is revealed and the sun's warmth is felt. Yet even this external revelation of Himself to the obedient and loving heart is not the whole extent of the thoughts of love. It is as though the Father and the Son were yearning for closer intimacy than the mere revelation of glory could admit of, and propose to make the disciple the dwelling place of their affection even though he be still actually on earth. For this, with this in view, the Lord says to Judas, in reply to his question, "If a man love Me, he will keep My word" — i.e., love not only obeys when it has a direct commandment as suggested in verse 21, but when through a deeper acquaintance with its Object it becomes acquainted with His tastes and the whole revelation for which He is set, it acts with the intuition of what is acceptable to His mind. It may have a commandment, and then it acts in swift obedience; it may not have a commandment, and yet through intimacy with its Object does instinctively the right thing and avoids the thing distasteful to Christ. Where there is this spiritual sensitiveness, the keeping of "My word" (as it should read in verse 23), the Father responds to this affection for the Son, gives a peculiar sense of His (the Father's) love, and Father and Son come in holy and happy freedom and unreserved delight, to hallow as Their "mansion" the individual who thus loves JESUS. Of communion so rare and sweet, of such a foretaste of heaven itself on earth, who can write or say much? It is remarkable of those raised from the dead, none have told us their experience when in Hades. Paul, caught up to the third heaven, into Paradise, heard unspeakable things which it is not lawful for man to utter. Human language fails to utter "fulness of joy" as found in God's presence, or "pleasures for evermore" as found at God's right hand (Psalms 16:1-11.). If in Psalms 36:1-4 we get the machinations of evil (in the midst of which Judas would find himself in going outside in John 13:30), in the latter half of the Psalm may we not see something of the joy of the true disciple with his God? "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; and Thou wilt make them drink of the river of Thy Edens." (For the word translated "pleasures" in our Bibles is the plural of Eden in Genesis 2:1-25, God's Edens!) One Eden, once seen in this poor world, has left us all hankering for its renewal. The lowly disciple to whom Christ is everything may have the presence of the Father and the Son, with all of Divine delights that Their presence brings, Edens of Divine delight; the river of God's Edens flowing into and through the soul. May writer and reader drink of the river of His pleasures more and more. Then will there be the blessed ministry of the Comforter; as found in John 14:26; then daily, hourly peace in the midst of the world's unrest (verse John 14:27); then joy in the Lord's exaltation in the Father's presence (verse John 14:28); then the acceptance of the Lord's own path of faith, love, and obedience, in this world in which Satan rules (verses John 14:29-31). Then can we come out from our sacred intercourse with the Lord where He is, to be here for Him in the place where He was.

Wm. Hy. Westcott.

## 20. The Gift and the Grace.

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The Gift and the Grace.

Ephesians 4:7; Ephesians 4:15; Ephesians 4:17.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 28, 1936, page 225.

Many of you who are accustomed to speaking will feel sympathy for the one having to follow on after the important address to which we have just listened. I would continue on the same line, only in a different setting. I will speak of the setting in a moment or two, but you will notice in the first verse I read, you have the gift of Christ, and the grace of Christ. The first gives us the position that we have in regard to the truths of this chapter; the second gives us the provision that is to enable us to support the position. Then the third speaks of the progress that we may make, growing up unto Him in all things, and, finally, the practice that flows from these exercises. To put them into the language of the epistle itself, you have first of all the gift, secondly the grace, thirdly the growth, and then the good works that follow (see Ephesians 2:10).

Now as to the situation that is presented to us in this chapter. It is, of course, based upon what has been stated before in the first three chapters. God has a wonderful project in view, and He knows how urgent it is to have material that is suitable for the project. As to man, as to ourselves naturally, we are written off as dead in trespasses and sins. If you wanted to have a plantation, you would not go into the forest and look out for some tree that had long been laid low by the tempest and was rotting on the ground. You would want young saplings, young trees, in which is life; and the energy of life, to assimilate food from the soil in which it grows. But certainly you would never take a piece of rotten wood to build up anything on which you wanted to rely for strength, to make use of it. That is the lesson that is first of all set before us, that God, in looking over the race of men from top to bottom has found nothing but material He cannot use. It is a good lesson to learn as preparatory for true service.

God must create the material that He is going to use. We were dead in trespasses and sins, just living to ourselves, doing the will of the prince of this present world, and not available in any sense for God's purpose. Now it was into that world and into the midst of that race of men that God gave His Son. The Lord Jesus came in order to give effect to this project, this purpose of God. But to do so it was necessary for Him to go down into death. We do not find the pathway indicated here by which He went, but we do find this, that God raised Him from the dead. He went down there in order to close up all our sinful history under the eye of God and inaugurate a new life, a new race of men associated with Himself and deriving from Himself in resurrection. The service then that one has to speak of is in this setting; it is the service of those who are associated with the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead. He is now seated in glory. In looking up to Him where He is we have the definition of the place to which God destines us.

I will try to show in a word or two the setting which will indicate our position while here on earth. You will find the apostle in Ephesians 4:1 urges upon Christians, that they walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called. And then you will find the spirit in which alone that walk can be sustained, "with all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love." Anything like an overbearing attitude is altogether out of place in connection with this new life and new service, this walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. Instead of being proud of ourselves, asking people to observe how beautiful our order, how gracious our lives, and how wonderful our testimony, there is lowliness and meekness; readiness to take affront and never turn a hair. Look at the Lord Jesus, meek and lowly of heart. People spoke and acted against Him; people discredited, defamed Him, injured Him physically; they smote Him, buffeted Him, spat on Him; yet mark all the way through this meekness. If we are going to answer in any way to the vocation wherewith we are called we have to be prepared to face trial, to submit instead of asserting our rights (as people speak), or standing on our dignity, or defending ourselves in the spirit of the world. He was meek and lowly in heart.

Then forbearing one another. We all know how we have to put up with a lot from each other. It is necessary to speak of that in the pursuit of this service. You will find that this new character, this new life, this new generation, is one-that is marked by the presence and the power of the Spirit of God. The life that we have is associated with the Lord Jesus Christ raised from the dead, but the power by which that life is worked out in us is, of course, the Spirit. So in this wonderful epistle you find many mentions of the Spirit of God.

Beloved friends, if we are going to take up service as presented in this chapter we have to recognise that God has set aside every energy every thought, every activity that emanates from the flesh; and that He has brought in a new power, a new character of life answering to the life that is seen in all its perfection up there in glory. What He has saved us for is to set us down here in the very world from which Christ has been rejected in order to reproduce the fulness which is in Christ while He is absent. I do not think it has struck me with such force before, as of late, that the Christian economy is on this line, that the Lord Jesus Christ is rejected here but is set in honour and glory in the heavens by God, and unseen by the world. But God has formed this new race of men associated with Christ risen, yet in this world, and energised by the Spirit of God; in order to be here a community that corresponds with and is a reproduction of Christ in glory. In other words, as it goes on to say, we are to use diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit. That comes into our third verse, the endeavouring — using diligence — to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We are to use every energy, all diligence, in this aspect of service, refusing among ourselves everything that emanates from the flesh. As we have seen in the earlier part of the epistle, man after the flesh is set aside, or written off, as a thing that is absolutely useless for God. Dead in trespasses and sins.

It says that people corrupted themselves after their deceitful lusts, going from bad to worse, but, on the contrary to that, we, having this new life, energised in harmony with the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, are collectively to reproduce Christ here on earth. That, briefly, is the position.

Now will you please notice carefully, it is in verse 3 that you read of the unity of the Spirit. Then in verse 4 there are two words in italics which I want you to leave out. As printed it looks like a statement of fact, a statement of doctrine, but that is not quite the point. Anybody might well ask,

what is this unity of the Spirit which we are to endeavour to keep? The reply is — "One body, one spirit, one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all." In other words, that sevenfold unity is not three circles, it is the unity of the Spirit. Verses 4, 5, and 6 are explanatory of the unity of the Spirit in verse 3; it is the unfolding of what the unity of the Spirit really is. The gospel of God's grace is going out into all the world, and this work is carried on in different nationalities, different countries, people with different tastes, dispositions, and environment; and instead of leaving them where they are, to continue to be part of that nation, or association, or order of things, they are brought out from all that. In their identification with the death of Christ and they form one body; that is where the unity of the Spirit begins. We now look out over all the world and think of multitudes, who like ourselves have come as poor sinners to the Lord Jesus Christ; we have put our confidence in Him, owning Him as our Lord, and we find ourselves not saved individuals only, but baptised by one Spirit into one body. It is a tremendous thought that here on earth and scattered all over the earth amongst the nations, are individuals whom it has pleased God to bless in order to make them a vessel in which He may display collectively the life of Christ. It is grace indeed on God's part that He not only saves us as individuals and sets us to individual service, but He has formed this one body and it is energised by the Spirit of God. There is one Spirit. It is not that in England we have one Spirit and in Ireland they should have another, or in Germany another. There is one Spirit and one hope of your calling. There are efforts to divide even the church into separate societies or groups as though a certain class had one calling, and a certain other class another calling different from the first. There is one hope of our calling. God is gathering out of the nations a people for His Name and they form this one body.

It is in that condition that we find this gift of Christ presented. I trust God may enable one to show your position in regard to it. I am speaking specially to those who are Christians. Of course, if a man be unconverted he has no part nor lot in this matter. But to speak of every Christian in Bangor and every Christian in this hall, you have a special place in this one body which no one else can fill. It is the gift of Christ, the living Head in glory. His design is to produce here on earth a number of people who in the aggregate will be able to act as the vehicle of His own life down here. He saves you individually, and in His infinite wisdom as Head of the church, He gives you your position in the body that no one else can fill. If God creates me with a little finger He intends it to do its own function; and it is not intended that that member, small as it be, should be inactive or inert. There is one activity of life operating through the body. You individually are set in your place by the living Head in glory. His object is that your life with that of your fellow Christian may be the vehicle by which we live out His life while He is absent, and while we are left here.

Secondly, there is not only the position but the provision for the maintenance of it. Some say, I am such a poor thing, I am not worth taking any notice of. But look at that verse again, verse 7. "Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Whatever may be your place in the body, that living Head in glory, Christ, is always rolling down the grace to enable you to function according to your place in the body. To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. One feels that this is a splendid position, that we are put in touch with a living Head whose resources are all infinite; and if He sets you in your place in the "body," whether it be in this locality or in that from which you come, and in your particular environment, the local assembly, the family, the business, and so on, whatever may be the position He has given

you as a member of His body, He is everlastingly engaged with you and rolling down grace to support you in it. Unto every one. Should you say, I know so little, look to the Lord and He will give you whatever knowledge He knows you need. You need patience and grace. There is grace rolling down from the Head in glory, and in your direction, to support you.

There is not only position given to us, determined for us by the Head in glory, and for the express purpose of setting out His life in the place of His absence, but there is this rich provision, grace from Himself alone. One has often sought for an illustration, but it occurs to me that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they lacked water. Moses was told to smite the rock in Horeb, and there came water flowing forth, and they drank of that rock. That rock was Christ. I think we must draw the conclusion that, in ordinary circumstances, wherever they went under the direction of God, they always had that water flowing alongside of them. It never failed, they drank of the rock that followed them. Wherever they were led of God there was this resource available from the smitten rock. Whatever they required, it might be a drink, water for cooking, for washing, for various uses, there it was, flowing, flowing, and available for every call, every camp. And there was no other resource in the wilderness. That river received no tributary, it never ran dry. It was always full and available for them in whatever position they found themselves. Beloved friends, the Lord Jesus Christ is up there in glory the unfailing source of everything God has for Christians, taking account of all the environment through which they are passing, and the desert which they are crossing. May the Spirit of God direct us to the Lord Jesus Christ as God's fulness for every requirement.

Whether yours be a large position in the body or whether it be a small position, it has been determined for you by the Lord. This would preserve us from jealousy. Sometimes one has to confess to a great danger of jealousy. I hear a person ministering Christ and I feel a wish that I could speak like that. I wish I could touch people's hearts as I see others do it. Well, each one has his own place; and whatever be the his functions in the body, the source is Christ; the unfailing, ever rolling, ever abounding supply of grace for every one of us. Will you take that home with you? You may desire to serve in the gospel or to serve the Lord's people; in some simple way you want to serve your Master; and above all to serve the living Head in glory, and His members on earth. Whatever may be the character of your service there is always grace for you from the Lord to enable you to carry it out.

You might think if we lived in the days of Pentecost we could understand it; but that in Laodicean days we cannot expect the fulness to be the same. But it is, it goes on. It says in the eighth verse, He gave gifts unto men. The victory, the overthrow of Satan's power, the defeat of everything that stood in the way of the fulfilment of God's project, have entitled me to this position in grace; and now He is up there in glory devoted to the service of the saints who form His body, and He is the Giver of gifts. It is He who gave — mark — some apostles some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers. They were given from the Head in glory. We have their ministry of the eternal truths they unfolded; Christianity has been inaugurated on earth; and we have the advantage of the ministry of these early servants in the Scriptures. There are some that carry on. We have still evangelists and pastors and teachers who have all come from Him. It is not that they are trained in colleges, or formed in meetings; the gifts are every one of them set in his or her place according to the wisdom and grace of the Head in glory.

We have the ministry of pastors, evangelists and teachers, and of saints less prominent, all given according to the grace of the Head in His wisdom, where He knows they are needed. And it goes on as you see until we all come in the unity of the faith. It is not intended there should be dissensions, parties, sectarian ideas, schisms. Till we all come in the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. It is in proportion as we know Him and get into living touch with Him that by the power of the Spirit of God we are enabled to represent Him down here, and until we all come unto a perfect man. I do not think that means till every individual is perfect. It is not a question of my becoming a perfect man in an individual sense, but it is the full grown man, the one body composed of all its living members, developed to the fullest extent in order that there should be an adequate and well proportioned representation of the life of Christ. Such is the design of God in forming the one body, giving us the Spirit as the power, and the grace of Christ for our provision; that there might be the working out of the fulness, the full stature of the fulness of Christ.

Thus we should be no more children tossed about by every wind of doctrine. We are made conscious that man may use cunning, crafty ways in order to divert us from this wonderful vocation; but nevertheless speaking the truth in love we may grow up unto Him in all things. This is a collective growing as I understand; the all of verse 13 growing together up to Christ. How harmonious! You can understand if a man grows on one side only he will be called a hideous object, a monstrosity. If in some way or other the growth of my hand had been arrested when I was a boy it would be called out of proportion. Every Christian contributes to the expression of the fulness that is in Christ and it is for us to see that we are not stunted in our growth. The Lord help us, because so many things appeal to us on the right hand and on the left, and our minds get entangled; and very often our interests get merged in the things of the world so that we lose the blessedness of this vocation. But holding the truth in love we are to grow unto Him in all things, till we come under the influence of the Head in every direction. Secret life with God, service in the church, family life, business life; in every circle learning to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as the directing intelligence. The Christ is the anointed One. As those who have received of the Spirit we partake of the anointing, and by the power of that Spirit of God are enabled to get everything under the control of Christ. The grace of Christ, the very life of Christ flows out to His members. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Here you find not only the progress but the practice. It is developed very fully in the remaining chapters, the practice that flows from this new position in which we have been set, in the enjoyment of this rich provision flowing from the living Head in glory and ourselves making progress in acquaintance with Christ. There comes the practice, and the consequence of it that there is the effectual working in its measure of every part. I would that I knew how to convey to you the comfort of that phrase. Of course, we are supposed to be growing together mutually, jointly, but it is according to the effectual working in its measure of every part. There are some who seem to be dormant Christians, some who seem to be dumb Christians. You wonder whether it could be said of them that every one is functioning according to the measure of his part. So much depends on your fulfilling the function that is assigned to you by the Head in glory. We were reminded in regard to our personal service it is not man who sets us on, but if you ascertain that you are a member of the one body energised by the one Spirit sharing in the one hope of your calling, you will remember that much depends upon your effectual working in your measure. If you are idle, if you are irresponsive to the grace and glory of Christ you cannot

contribute to the prosperity of the whole. As it says, when it is the case that there is the effectual working in its measure of every part, it makes increase; of the body unto the building of itself in love, in the very nature of God; wrought out in the saints, but: it depends on the effectual working in its measure of every part. To put the four things together, we have this position given to us in relation to the vocation of the calling of God. In regard to this project that God has in view we are to learn that the material God uses is not the energy, the notions, the ideas that emanate from the flesh, from fallen man. He is regarded in this epistle as dead in trespasses and sins. God has set him aside, as it goes on to teach in the remainder of the chapter. You are regarded as having put off the old man and being renewed in the spirit of your mind, you have put on the new man, and the character of Christ grows up with no contribution from the mind or crafts of man; all derives from Christ whose grace is unfailing. The Lord Jesus Christ in the glory rains grace upon you — as though He would say to each one, young or old — I have redeemed you, brought you to Myself, given you a new life, set My Spirit in you and given grace that you may act in this capacity. What we heard from the preceding speaker is service of the greatest importance for us as individuals, but there is also this service in relation to the calling of God. May God give us each one in his measure to seek to answer to it, so that as far as we can contribute to that which every joint supplieth, the effectual working in its measure of every part we can give expression to the life of Christ among those that have rejected and turned from Him.

## 21. The Glories of the Lord Jesus ■ Joh\_1:1-51.

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The Glories of the Lord Jesus — John 1:1-51.

Notes of an address by W. H. Westcott, 1921.

I propose to look at some of the leading glories of the Lord Jesus in John 1:1-51. In John 1:1, He is spoken of as "the Word"; in John 1:7, as "the Light"; in John 1:18, as "the only-begotten Son"; in John 1:29, as "the Lamb of God"; in John 1:34, as "the Son of God"; in John 1:41, as "the Christ"; in John 1:49, as "the King of Israel," and in John 1:51, as "the Son of Man." It is a very real thing that the Lord Jesus is our Saviour, and that we trust in Him. We love Him because He first loved us! Our sins were borne by the Saviour and our sinful nature has been condemned in His death; all that we were as children of Adam has passed under condemnation in the place that He took for us when He died. Moreover, we have been made partakers of His risen life in the sight of God; we have been given the Holy Spirit, we know that Jesus, our Saviour, is in heavenly glory; the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us down here, forms a definite link with Christ in glory; we can look up there and know that we are associated with Him — His Father, our Father; His God, our God; we are children of God and can say, "Abba, Father." In this chapter, the Spirit of God brings before us the greatness of the One who is our Saviour. One effect of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ in the greatness of His person, love and glory, is to make us love to own Him; to find out His people; to honour, worship and serve Him.

1. THE WORD. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Before the earth was ordered for man it had existence, because "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). However old this earth may be, it was ordered for man's dwelling place 6000 years ago; but when was the beginning? When God did begin to order the earth for man's dwelling place the earth was there. How did it get there? In the beginning, if 600 million years, really it does not matter. But if you could find out a beginning to things, we read, "In the beginning was the Word." The One who is your Saviour and mine, there He was. "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." So things had their beginning from Him. But He had no beginning, because "In the beginning the Word was." "What may the Word mean?" If you were to look at my face, naturally you would not be able to tell what was in my mind, or the secret working of my heart. But when I give you my word, it brings a good deal to light; of what was in my mind. In some such simple way we might understand John 1:1. The One who is now our Saviour, was then and at all times, competent to bring out every thought in the mind of God.

We can bow reverently before Him in the knowledge that He is God, and spoken of here as the Word. Whenever the Godhead would express itself and tell out what the Godhead was doing, or about to do, the One in whom all the mind of the Godhead was brought to light, was the Word. The exact expression of all His wisdom was perfectly set out in this Person called the Word.

"All things were made by Him." Hebrews 1:1, says that it was the Son who created all things, "God . . . hath spoken unto us by His Son . . . by whom also He made the worlds." So that we can think of Him as the Son. He is the same Person but spoken of under "the Word." He put into each thing a little expression of the glory of God. Therefore everything that was made carries with it an expression of the glory of God. In the grandest part of the creation you see all the beauty of the heavens. "The heavens declare the glory of God." If we understood the language of that wonderful creation it would tell us something of the glory of God, so with this earth. There is not a single thing that has ever been created but expresses the glory of God, because it was made by the One who is the expression of all that God is — "The Word." In the blue of the sky, the green of the vegetation, frost, snow, vapour, storm and wind; the sea, the mountains, beasts, flying and creeping things; if we knew how to interpret them we should see some of the rays of the glory of God. Christ, who is the expression of all the mind of God, has put expression of God on every part of the creation; and although it is true we belong to a new creation, still the Lord takes pleasure in all His works. Every blade of grass might speak to us, of the mind of God; every leaf and twig, and all the sap that is drawn up from the ground into its outermost branches is an expression of the glory of God. Now the One who is your Saviour was and is God. He is competent to put some expression of the glory of God into every part of this wonderful universe. He must be a great Saviour!

2. "THE LIGHT." Then He is called "the Light"; John was sent to bear witness of the Light. If all this creation carries the expression of the glory of God, we might ask, "Well! think of the centuries of sorrow, do you mean to tell me all the things therein express the glory of God?" If we look at the condition of man today we must see that there is something wrong and that this state of things cannot be what God desires. This glorious Person, the everlasting Word, came down here and shone as the Light, representing what God was "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." The Lord Jesus came here, and from the very start to the finish you can see a Man in the midst of all the surrounding evil who was wholly for the pleasure of God. The eye of God rested upon Him with exquisite delight! In that wilderness, what an oasis for the eye and heart of God! How joyous God was in seeing that every pulsation of His heart was according to His will; every word from His lips pure; every work of His hand and motives were absolutely pure! But then by that light we are able to take account of the awful background of man's sin. The Light shone here, and the purity of the Light showed up all the blackness, the evil of men. The coming of Christ was the great test which brought to light the awful condition of man. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." "He came to His own things" (neuter) and "His own people (masculine) received Him not" (not as in A.V.). He came to His own things in the land of Israel where He had the right to the throne of His father David; to the temple, to the priests and to where the sacrifices were offered; but in the midst of His own things, His own people, the Jews, received Him not. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born of God." So that His coming became the great test for the condition of the world. Those people that had been most privileged, and had information as to His coming in the written prophetic Scriptures, who ought to have known place, time and manner of His birth, turned against Him. His coming brought to light what was in man and the animosity of the human heart to God. This exposed the sin of man's heart as nothing else has. The One by whom the world was made, was given a stable at His birth, a gibbet and a borrowed grave at His death. So the light brought out the awful condition of sinful man. Our condition has

been exposed, just Adam sinning against and hiding from God, and putting the blame on someone else; delighting to get rid even of God shewing Himself in grace.

3. "The Only Begotten-Son." "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him." Now that brings in a third view of His glory. First, "The Word," then "The Light," now, "The only begotten Son" of the Father has been here to declare Him. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ not only exposes what man is, but He brought down into the world the full knowledge of what God is. So that, you have man declared, and God declared. All that man is in his sinfulness, his unsuitability for God, and his hostility to God, are brought to light; and on the other hand "The only begotten Son of the Father," He hath declared Him. Now that refers to His coming into the world. It was God's approach to man, and showed the way in which the blessed God sought to reach men and show them what was in His heart. We can see in the coming of the Word into the world as a babe, what is the end of it to us. God has approached man in such a way to take away their fears. When the angels spake to the shepherds their first words were, "Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." So, though they were frightened at the appearance of the angel, the message he preached was calculated to take away all their fear. The only begotten Son has come here and has shown the character, the glory, and the heart of God in all His life, wherever there was pressure, or need, He acted in such a gracious way the people could see that He was there to do good. "He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." When He came to a blind man, his eyes were opened. That shows God does not like to see people blind. When He came across the paralysed man the Lord healed him. That means God is so good that He does not like to see people paralysed nor to see people suffering. So when He found a leper, the Lord instead of standing right at a great distance looked at him, saw all his misery, and actually touched him, and the leprosy departed instantly at the word of Jesus. God does not like people to have leprosy. So it was with every disease. When a sinner came to the Lord, as e.g., that paralysed man who at Capernaum, was let down through the roof, the Lord instead of being angry because the meeting was interrupted, looked on him and said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." God does not like people to have their sins upon them. The woman of Luke 7:1-50 who came into the Lord's presence washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head; He said about her first of all, "Her sins which are many are forgiven"; and then He said to her, "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." That means again, that God did not want that poor woman to go on carrying her sins unforgiven. He wanted her to be saved and in peace. So it is, we find in all the ways of the Lord Jesus here, He is bringing out what was in the heart of God for man. And when we look at the cross of Christ we can see something of the unswerving truth of God, the righteousness and all the holiness of God brought to light there, because when Jesus went there to the cross it was for sin. He was there on behalf of the Godhead, very Man as Jesus was undoubtedly, yet when made sin He cried, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" It tells us very plainly that God had forsaken Him. Oh! it is wonderful! God forsook Him so that there was no relief, no succour in that moment. It tells us as nothing else can the immeasurable holiness of God and the immeasurable awfulness of sin. We can see "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In that moment we can see, in the very way God did deal so thoroughly with the sin question, His great love for sinful men. See then these two things. He was the Light bringing out all that was in the heart of man in its wickedness, and He was the only begotten Son, bringing to light all that was

in the Father's heart. Put these two things together — man's need and God's glory. Can these two things be reconciled?

4. "The Lamb of God." "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Now there you get the solution of this difficulty. I am sure it must be to you a very great delight to know that all you are has been examined and probed right down to the bottom, there is nothing in you nor in me that has not finally been brought to light; it has all been searched through and through. It has been searched out, measured and weighed up, on the one hand; and on the other hand all the glory of God has been taken account of; God's immeasurable holiness, His righteousness, all His claims, the sovereignty of His throne, the truth of His Word, all the pronouncement of His judgment upon sin, all that has been taken account of, as well as the love and grace in His heart. The Lord Jesus Christ has come as the Lamb of God to meet all that need in its awful exposure, and to meet all the glory of God at its full height and power. Being the Lamb of God, He would be One competent to meet all the glory of God and to sustain the whole weight of God's glory when it shone forth in that moment against sin. Then at the same time, "The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" has come down to meet all the glory of God, and all the need of man. We can see the solution of this great question of good and evil in the cross and death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here He is particularly represented as the Lamb; and only in this gospel do we read the story of how a soldier when Jesus had died, finding that He was dead, took a spear and pierced His side, and when he did so there came out from the dead side of the Lord Jesus blood and water. John 19:1-42 refers to the blood of God's Lamb. He is the One whose glories are concentrated for us in John 1:1-51. When you read about that precious blood shed, it speaks of the blood of that One whose glories are so great. How precious that blood must be to God!

4. "The Lamb of God." You can understand that a father's heart in his deep love for his son, valued one drop of his son's blood. But God and God's Son! God's Lamb: and the blood of the Lamb shed! Do you not see this stupendous fact, the value that God must attach to one drop of His Son's blood — more than all the world. If all the world were to come at one time with a rush and make application to God for the pardon of all their sins, and to receive the blessing, because of the infinite value of that precious blood, God could and would receive them all. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." It does not mean that all do come nor that all repent of their sins, or want to be blessed, but every one who does repent of his sins and wants to be cleansed, he, coming to God, finds there is value in that precious blood to cleanse away all his sin. So we find that our need is met; at the same time, the glory of God is maintained, and we can rejoice that our sins are pardoned, our sinful nature is condemned, our whole position has passed out of sight in the judgment of Christ for us; so that we should be linked with Him in resurrection in the sight of God. We can say, "It is right that God should do it. He has given His Son for that very object, He has maintained all the glory of God, and at the same time has met all our need."

5. "The Son of God." Now look a little further at what is said in John 1:34. John the Baptist says, "I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." He has referred to Jesus as the One who was to baptise with the Holy Ghost. He says at first, "I did not know Him." "I only knew He would come. I knew He was to be made manifest to Israel, but I did not know Him, and I had a mark given to me by the very One who sent me." He said, "Upon whom you see the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and abiding on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. When he was

baptising people the Lord Jesus came to him; sure enough the heavens were opened, the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and there came a voice acknowledging Him. John says, "I saw it, and bare record that this is the Son of God." Now have you ever thought of the Lamb of God bearing sin and its judgment? You have seen His blood shed as God's righteous answer to this. Can you not see Him now raised from the dead? Because He certainly is not dead now; but God has raised Him from the dead and given Him glory, and has sent down the Holy Ghost to us, because as the risen and ascended Man He had received of the Father the promise that had been given to Him (the promise of the Spirit); it was shed forth, as we read, at the day of Pentecost. There He is, the Lord Jesus, the risen Lord. He is there. The glory is just what it is; whether you see it or not. But what a grand thing it is when the soul can say, "I saw it." John says, "I saw it." It is just the moment in John's history, when the Person of Christ shone before him in all His majesty. In another sense, it was concealed; it was the glimpse of faith. To all appearance He was as other men, coming in the flesh. He says, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not." There He was, Jesus of Nazareth, and John looked upon Him and said, "I saw it." You cannot see the Lord Jesus with your natural eyes. You see the ceiling with them; but with your faith-eyes you see taken out of death the One that bore all the judgment, and is now risen, and up there in the glory of God. Oh that the blessed Spirit of God might give you those faith-eyes. Christians, I mean, not merely sinners; but thank God for the day that a sinner's eyes are opened. But you who love the Lord, you know He died for you and put away your sins. How one would desire that you might be able to look up and to say in reality, "I saw it, and bare record that this is the Son of God." I tell you what it means. That by reason of the supremacy of the Son of God, He just supersedes every other person, He extinguishes every other object, and then you are entranced with Him. The day when the risen Son of God comes before the soul, you have your eyes upon Him, and you can see something of His glory, His triumph, His majesty, all the Father's satisfaction in Him. When the Lord Jesus Christ simply outshines everything else, is a grand day in the history of your soul! What was the result? Well, he says the next day, "Behold the Lamb of God." Not so much now in connection with His work as His Person. And it says two disciples heard Him speak and followed Jesus. They had the temple in their eyes before, and the priests, the sacrifices, and the religious system as it had been originally set up of God, the earthly centre and the sacrifices and the ordinances, and the whole order of things connected with the temple before them, they had their eyes turned in that direction. But now that day there was a divine Person come down into their midst and they followed Him — set free from every entanglement; the Lord's free men set free from the religion of antiquity, and their interest in that attractive order of things, and attached to this living Person, the Son of God. The Son of God was competent to hold them and attract them to Himself.

6. "The Messiah." Now look at John 1:41, "One of the two that heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." Messiah, as called by a Jew, was the Christ. He was called in Isaiah 61:1-11, and in Psalms 2:1-12, the anointed One. It brings before us the Lord Jesus Christ as the Man who God intended should be the Centre of the Old Testament, because you will see, all the way through the O.T., there was the promise of the Messiah: He was intended to heal Israel, and the nations of the earth for God. The promise centred round the coming of the Messiah, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham and David; He was to come to answer to God's will in all those Scriptures and hold every thing for God. So that when they said, "We have found the Christ," it meant that they had come to the Person who was competent to hold

everything for God. But then that was only as far as they had learned it in connection with His place on earth. But, since He has died, risen and gone above, and God has made Him in resurrection both Lord and Christ, He is seated at the very centre of everything, in the midst of the throne of God; God has made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself that He would gather and head up everything in the hands of the worthy One, in whom we have obtained an inheritance. God in that way introduces us to Him not merely as the One who is supreme in God's eyes and the centre of His purposes, but as the Christ, who will hold everything for God. There is an illustration of it in natural creation. In the solar system the sun acts throughout the whole. Our planet, with all the other planets, are held in their position by the mighty attraction of the sun.

7. "The King of Israel." The blessed Lord Jesus Christ has been constituted God's Centre, and as the risen Man, the Christ, He will hold every part of the creation in right relations with God. You and I have been saved in order that we might have our part in connection with Him in the thoughts of God. We, who are Christ's, are to have a very peculiar place as associated with Him, just as Eve was associated with Adam. Now while that is so, it does not mean to say God is going to give up His promises regarding Israel. This same Person who is our Saviour, and holds all God's system of blessing together, is spoken of in John 1:49 as "The King of Israel," He is the One who, in due time, will fulfil every promise of God in regard to the land and seed of Israel. He will free the land; He will take all in hand. He will come from heaven and will claim all lands; but He will claim the land of Israel specially, and then bring the people of Israel into it. People are going into it from political aspirations. They have gone into it under the auspices of the British Government. But, that is not in accordance with the mind of God. The Lord Jesus Christ will bring them into the land according to God; He will bless them, and all Israel will be saved; then blessing will go out to the nations. He will inherit all the rights of His father David, sit on the throne and rule. We shall rule with Him from above, but He will establish all the promises of God with regard to the earth.

8. "The Son of Man." The last verse says, "He saith unto him, verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." So we are introduced to the great moment when God will put everything into the hands of the Son of Man (Psalms 8:1-9); He will rule and exercise His beneficent sway over the whole of the creation.

Thus in John 1:1-51, if we consider it patiently and seek to take in the thoughts of the Spirit of God, we can see how very great our Saviour is. Those who simply know their sins forgiven and think there is nothing more that matters lose much real enjoyment. They little understand the vastness of the glories connected with Christ and how many interests He will serve; you and I have the privilege of entering into them with Him. We can look back into eternity and see Him glorious beyond telling there. "In the beginning was the Word." Then we can look on to the end and see the winding up of all human affairs, everything at last committed into the hands of the Son of Man. He is the First and the Last: in verse 1 "The Word," in the last verse, "The Son of Man." He has universal dominion. He is our Saviour. May God give us to value Him more, to honour Him, to delight in Him, and to esteem it a very great privilege to serve Him. If you had been living in those days you would have felt the judgment of those two disciples was right when they turned their back on the whole religious system of that day, even though it had been inaugurated of God. No religious system has been set up by God beside that one: all others are set up by men. But Christ

came apart even from that one. He directed people to Himself apart from that, because all was going to be set aside. He is greater than all and will hold everything together. They heard John speak and they followed Jesus. Now that is exactly the place in which God puts us. If we do thus get set free from all entanglements, we find Christ sufficient to hold us together, we are gathered to Him. In keeping our eyes on the Lord Jesus Christ, He is sufficient to hold us together. When we get our eyes on one another we get cast down and lose courage: but when we turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, we find One who can certainly meet all our needs, and He satisfies all the affections of the heart of God. To this One we are brought, and He is sufficient to hold us together. The whole heavenly system will find its centre in the Son of Man.

## 22. Glories

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Glories A Meditation on John 17:1-26.

W. H. Westcott.

(Also in Scripture Truth, Volume 18, 1926, page 87.)

Enjoying the privilege one evening of a family reading with friends, the seventeenth chapter of John which we briefly considered lingered in my mind on retiring to rest; and FIVE GLORIES OF CHRIST which are named therein opened out with freshness. In the hope that some readers may share in this meditation, and even follow up the study for themselves, I note them down. The position of the 17th chapter of John's Gospel is well known. In the twelfth chapter Jesus closed His public ministry among the Jews, for it says, "He did hide Himself from them" (verse 36); "they believed not on Him" (verse 37). The mass became judicially hardened, as had been prophesied by Isaiah; and although many among the leading men were persuaded of the Divinity of His mission, all their influence on the mass was nullified because (for fear of the Pharisees) they would not confess Him. Christ's words at the end of the chapter state the issue; even if judgment did not fall there and then, the rejection of Him and His words meant judgment at "the last day."

Hence from John 13:1-38 He occupies Himself alone with His disciples down to the end of John 16:1-33, showing them definitely what His going away meant, and indicating how intimacy with Him in the place He was to reach would be maintained, though they remained on earth; and how they would be supported here in peace, fruitfulness, and testimony during His absence. This service having been rendered to His beloved followers His prayer to His Father is recorded for us in John 17:1-26, and was spoken in their hearing that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves (verse 13). They were permitted to hear His intercourse with the Father that they might know the place they had in His own, and in His Father's affections, and have the joy that flows from it. Into this intimacy and joy we — even we — are introduced, in verse 20. I commend the examination of these verses to my readers, familiar though they be. In this prayer we find the five glories referred to. The first and earliest glory in point of time is that mentioned in verse 5. It is clear that this is DIVINE AND ETERNAL GLORY.

"the glory that I had with Thee before the world was." He addressed the Father in all the calmness of known intimacy, and as having calculated the bearing of His words (for He prayed as being conscious of His listeners, and with a view to their joy); and went back in His prayer to that eternity of companionship with Him in glory, antecedent to the creation of temporal and material things. We are earlier here than Genesis 1:1. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. There was an Antecedent to the heavens and the earth; and that Antecedent is Elohim — God. In the third verse of that chapter in Genesis, which commences the written revelation of the Godhead, the Spirit of God is the first of Divine Persons to be separately referred to. But in John 17:5, the Father and the Son are shown to our adoring hearts in the glory proper to Divine Persons, and as antecedent to the world's creation, Themselves uncreate; thus completing our view of the Eternal

Triune God.

John 1:1 The Word.

Three great Scriptures suggest themselves in this marvellous revelation of the glory of the Lord Jesus. The first chapter of John is a contrast to Genesis 1:1-31 and goes back into an immeasurable eternity. Evidently there is vast difference between "In the beginning God created" and "in the beginning was." The former relates the beginning of that which did begin; the latter refers to Him Who existed and had being when everything else that began did begin. The Word never did begin to be the Word; in Him we see eternity of being, though our finite minds stagger in the contemplation of it. The Word was distinguishable in His own Personality from eternity, for He was with God. He is not the same as the Father, nor is He the same as the Holy Spirit. He was not an emanation from the Father; He did not become the Word by either creation, or evolution, or birth, in some remote point of time in the past eternity; otherwise He Himself would have had beginning which is a contradiction of what is stated in the first three verses. For at the time of the beginning of anything that began, He was. The glory He had with the Father before the world was, was Divine and eternal glory. The Word was God. But as the Word in the Godhead, He is the One in whom Godhead ever could and did express itself. For illustration we may say with reverence that the Father remains invisible, and the Spirit (though assuming at times emblematical forms as dove or flames, and typified by oil), does not take personal form. But the Son became man, the Word became flesh. In what way the Godhead expressed Itself to Itself when Godhead alone existed and nothing else was, we cannot of course say. No one knows the Son but the Father. It cannot surely grieve us that there are glories deeper and grander in the Son uncreate than we created beings can comprehend. But in whatever way and at whatever time God gave expression to Himself, the eternal Word was that Person in the Godhead in Whom He did it.

Hence, for example, when the Godhead willed to express Itself in creation, all things were created by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. It may be difficult to utter the meaning of that wonderful verse; but we may glean from it that everything, from highest to lowest and from greatest to the least, came from the hand of the Word, and was intended to be, each thing in its measure, an expression of the glory of the invisible God. (See Romans 1:19-20; so also Psalms 19:1.) Not merely that it was created, nor merely that it was created by the agency of the Son (both of which remain true), but that when it was so brought into being it took its form and function as part of a vast creation intended to give expression to the eternal power and Godhead of its Creator. It is thus possible to find in nature — in its laws, its forms, its colours, its minerals, its forces — illustrations without end of divine realities. Material things themselves are not the great ultimate reality, but they serve as vehicles to convey to intelligent creatures the great Reality that lies behind them. And that Reality is God Himself.

Thus also, as in creation, so in providence, in incarnation, in redemption, in resurrection, and in glory, and in the coming days of rule and government, as well as in final and eternal judgment or blessing, Christ is the One in whom God is ever pleased to express Himself. A second great Scripture which refers to this glory of Jesus is Hebrews 1:1-14.

Hebrews 1:1-14. The Son. The dignity of the Son appears to be the theme of the writer, along with the grandeur of everything He has introduced and established. We have substance in having Christ. Type and shadow, illustration and prophecy, had existed before; partial disclosures of the

thoughts and will of God, each suitable for its time and place of utterance. But in the end God has spoken in His Son, who in the fulness of intelligence, power, and dignity has completely revealed Him; and by focusing in Himself the fulfilment of every type and shadow, has rendered all the former system of ritual and law not only unnecessary, but weak and unprofitable (Hebrews 7:18). But all this hinges on the dignity of the Son. He is greater than angels (chaps. 1 and 2), than Moses (Hebrews 3:1-19), than Joshua (Hebrews 4:1-16), than Aaron (Hebrews 5:1-14), than Abraham, or the Melchisedec who blessed Abraham, or the Levitical priests who were in Abraham's loins when the less was blessed of the greater (Hebrews 7:1-28).

It is not only that God says of the Son, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," or that He contrasts the honour of Moses, who was faithful as a servant in all God's house, with that of Christ, who as Son is over God's house; but in Hebrews 1:2 He reminds us that as Son He was antecedent to all the ages, and that in all the ordering and formation of successive ages He was the Agent by whom God has introduced or will introduce them.\* So that in knowing Christ we are in living contact with One whose dignities and glories as Son in the eternal Godhead were before all ages; we are, in fact, carried back to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

{\*In each aeon following its brother aeon, Some part of the plan of God has been brought into evidence, a foreshadowing of the vast glories which are all fully expressed in the Son. Nor will these unfoldings cease when we are transferred to glory, and enter on the eternal state. For while eternity itself is often spoken of as an aeon, it is described as the age of ages. Ephesians 3:21; and often in the Revelation as ages of ages, Revelation 4:9-10; Revelation 20:10; Revelation 22:5. We gather that there will be eternal unfoldings of God in Christ, each requiring its own age for the redeemed and delighted hosts to take it in, and to be formed by Him in intelligent and affectionate response to God.} In the epistle to the Hebrews, however, it is not so much the unfolding of the Father's grace and love (which is John's theme) as the establishment of a new system of nearness and approach to God, the very antithesis of that which had gone before in the old tabernacle system of distance and imperfection. The latter was but provisional: that which Christ the Son has brought in is eternal. As Son, He had not beginning any more than as the Word; His Sonship is a glory which He had with the Father before the world was. He was competent in the dignity and glory and greatness of His Person to hold counsel with the Father as to doing His will and bringing about a system of blessing in which God could find eternal pleasure, having His people in happy and holy nearness to Himself. (See Hebrews 10:1-39) Colossians 1:1-29. Son of the Father's love. A third Scripture also brings Him before us, connected with His glory with the Father before the world was. It is Colossians 1:1-29. Christians are said to be translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love (verse 13). The very thought of "kingdom" brings in the ideas of sway. We are not saved to be lawless, of course; but to come under the sway of the Son. Everything is regulated from the full height of the Sonship glory of Jesus. He it is who is supreme in this realm, and over our lives as the lives of those brought into it. But behind all His authority and dignity is His Father's love; He is the Son of the Father's love.

Greatness of itself might be cold, formal, official. Greatness in this case is connected with warmth, and the sweetest warmth of all — that of holy love. The Father loves the Son and, as fruit of an affection which designs the greatest pleasure and honour for Him, brings us into a realm where He — as Son of that love — can exercise His blissful sway over us, body, soul, and spirit. The greatest influence in the world is not that of matter, nor even of mind; it is that of love, the love of

God. The Son is that wondrous Being in Whom the Father's love doth rest; He is in every way competent to be the object of it, Whose dignity and moral loveliness mark Him off beyond every other in the Father's eyes. He is, moreover, the One in Whom responsive love delights God's heart, Who loves His Father as His Father loves Him, and Who is competent and resourceful for God's will as He is worthy for God's affection.

It is He Who is God's accredited Representative, Who adequately presents Him to all the vast creation. Invisible as God must be in His infinite and essential Godhead, we are no losers thereby, for all that God is, is brought into vision in Christ. He is God's image. (To make an image of Christ is, of course, ridiculous: we do not require the image of an image.) The living Christ, alive as He is in Resurrection to-day, is the veritable image of God. He is representative of Him in moral glory and fulness; and also in the way of direction and authority. Other authorities and powers there are, but all are derivative from and subordinate to Him; they have a place in the ordering of creation, but only as created by Him and for Him; they only subsist as subsidiary to Him, having their spheres appointed at His will, and all their character of rule and resources of supply being in Him. The created "all things" in the which they serve, and the form and character of their service and authority, and the measure of their power, are all amenable to His law; He is supreme among them all, Firstborn of all creation, because He created all. He is the Former of all things; however far back they may be dated in time, be it perhaps millions of years, He is before them all; and in Him they all hang together. We are carried back before the times of all authorities and powers, lordships, and principalities, and find one great Figure, outstanding and glorious, the Son of the Father's love. We admit that disorder and even enmity has come into the time scene; but He it is who is entrusted by the Godhead to bring about deliverance from Satan's power, and to reconcile things to Himself. But before the disorder came in, whether in the visible or invisible world, He it was Who, in Godhead glory, was Subject of His Father's eternal affection. He it was Who, being designated Head of all things in manhood, created all the spheres of authority in which His supreme sway and infinite Godhead fulness might be (and in the redeemed creation will be) fully realized. He will impart His own character to the whole creation, and bring everything into subjection to, and accord with, God, in heaven and in earth. But the reason of it all is, the greatness of His Person before any of these things existed at all. In Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell: every element in Godhead fulness and majesty, all of authority and power, all of character and activity, all of wisdom and knowledge, all of God's very nature of love, is set forth and made available for man. When the disciples were relieved in the storm by the stilling of wind and wave, they were impelled to exclaim, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the waves do obey Him?" The more we ponder His words, "the glory which I had with Thee before the world was," the more our hearts must be subdued in worship and praise before Him.

He is the Word in Whom God is ever expressed: He is the Son eternal, Whose dignity is greater than that of any created being, and who according to Divine counsel was to become Man and bring many sons in nearness and relationship to glory; He is the Former of all things, who, being eternal Object of His Father's love, and God's Representative, could be Creator and Upholder and then Reconciler of all things and all authorities to God. The second glory in order in John 17:1-26 we must describe as MORAL GLORY.

It is found in verse 4, "I have glorified Thee on the earth." This does not mean a physical or material display of glory or splendour such as would affect the human senses. There are qualities

of character which draw the heart and affect the mind more than the pomp of outward display. A Nero may command the display of colour and the pageantry compatible with the might of Rome, while the heart that has sense of moral worth may feel the utmost contempt and repugnance for the very Caesar who is the centre of it all. To find moral perfection, to become intimate with some One who is everything that can be desired by the most perfect and happy beings, to know a Person in whom rectitude and affection, mercy and happiness, are fully realized, and not only are made available for others, but are reproductive of their own kind in those who are attached to Him, — this is far beyond outward show.

Seen in His life. In the Lord Jesus as Man here was expressed all the moral character of God. Everything that can rightly be connected with the thought of God is found in its perfection in Jesus. Do we speak of holiness? He was holy in His very conception and birth, and holy in life and ways. Do we speak of mercy? When did the appeal for mercy fall unheeded or unanswered on His ears? Of truth? Of righteousness? Of tenderness? Of humility? Of obedience? Of faithfulness? Of confidence in God? Of authority? Of power? Of wisdom? Of love? All these things are seen in Jesus. Not some goodness or obedience, not some mercy or humility, but these very things themselves in their essence, in their essential perfection. The renewed mind never reaches to the end of His perfection as though it had a limit; far as we may travel in our thought along the line of any one grace, there yet appear depths unfathomed and heights unclimbed; the story may ever be told, but never be fully told. His language is simple, the incidents in His life story are but few in number as recorded, a hundred and twenty pages or thereabouts are all that divine wisdom has deemed necessary for the four-times-told gospel by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; yet apostles and prophets, saints and servants have been digging in those mines for nigh two thousand years; and the marvel with all is that, though we know enough to fill our hearts with unfeigned and adoring worship, there remains enough to fill them for all eternity.

It is not only that the greatest apostle to the Gentiles almost plaintively, certainly yearningly, cries, "That I may KNOW Him" (Php 3:10), but the greatest apostle to the Jews voices the same interminable and illimitable delight: Whom having not seen ye LOVE; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, full of glory." Knowing and loving — these sum up the twofold testimony to the matchless worth of the Lord Jesus Christ. To know Him is to love Him; to love Him is to want to know Him more. We would like to be in His company for His own sake. Such was the spell that acted in the fishermen and others who followed Him in days of old; such is the attraction that draws us still.

Seen in His death. But what shall we say when we come on to the close of His life here? What of His cross and shame? What of His suffering and death? What of His obedience to God's will, and His devotion to God's good pleasure? What of His love?

How can we speak of His bearing God's judgment upon sin? Of His being made sin on the cross? Of his facing death as our penalty, and as the awful limit of Satan's power? For in all these ways have His perfections been tested and proved. It is not only that in Jesus we reach One who is perfect, but One who has been tested in circumstances whose character had never been experienced before. The best of other men break down somewhere, Jesus nowhere. The heart in its craving for a perfect object reaches finality and enjoys unchanging rest in the Son of God, while the conscience has its abiding rest in His atoning work.

Here, indeed, God is glorified; glorified not only in the exhibition of every moral beauty in perfection's highest height, but in respect to all His holy claims as to sin and the sinner. For this word of the Lord Jesus, "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do," must surely have been uttered anticipatively in view of His death. It covered all His life down to the moment He uttered it: this we know. But the whole of the section, John 13:1-38; John 14:1-31; John 15:1-27; John 16:1-33; John 17:1-26, anticipates His going out of the world to the Father, and speaks of the conditions which would obtain when He had thus gone. At the close of John 16:1-33, as a summary of His own pathway, and looking over to its assured close, He says, "I have overcome the world." As surely as this includes the final hours of testing, so surely does "I have glorified Thee on the earth" look on to and include His death where His journey on the earth was ended. The Father Glorified. But after all the point in our Lord's words which we are considering is "I have Glorified THEE." It is tantamount to saying. "I have made Thee glorious." In this Gospel in particular we have the Lord bringing to light in His own life and testimony who and what His Father is. So that while we behold the Son in His own unique perfection and glory, and are necessarily drawn to Him, we are to convey our thought and affection likewise to the Father. Christ remains, but the Father is so identical with Him in character, in grace, in love, that he that hath seen Him hath seen the Father. Such is His own word to Philip in John 14:1-31. Is Jesus superlatively attractive and admirable in our eyes as enlightened by grace? Such also is the Father who sent Him. Though the Father be separately invisible, yet we know Him, know Him lovingly, know Him reverently, know Him adoringly. He has been fully revealed in Christ, and every feature in His character, every attribute of His Being, every depth in His nature, awakens responsive affection and worship in our hearts. Every ray in this glory speaks its own wonderfully blessed language to us; we are thankful that ever we were created to know such a God. The grace that recovered us from our sin has brought us so near that the Father's house has become the home of our hearts, the Father's love the delight of our spirits. What we have said of the Son we must say of Him also; to know the Father is to love Him; to love Him is to want to know Him more. To be morally like Him becomes the hope, as one day it will be the realized portion, of every soul that has learned the Father in the Son. The third glory in John 17:1-26 is DIVINE GLORY IN RESURRECTION.

It is conveyed in the Lord's request in verse 5; "glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." May we humbly seek out the meaning of this wonderful demand. For it was uttered by a lowly Man, by One often referred to as Jesus of Nazareth. It was said

Then to all intents and purposes He was scornfully rejected by all that stood as having religious authority, and despised by such as stood high in the world's social scale. He was ere long to be the sport of soldiery, the jest of passers by, the Object of mockery to chief priests and elders, the deserted Leader of His most intimate disciples. He was about to be condemned as a blasphemer and a malefactor by the Jew, and executed as a rebel by the Gentile. Above all He was about to become the Victim for sin, the Target for all God's infinite judgment upon it, a Curse under the Law which His people had broken. He was to touch that awful thing which His spirit revolted from, to have contact with that sin of man which necessitated banishment and wrath. He was shortly to taste death, to be buried in His grave.

Yet placing Himself anticipatively on the other side of it all, in view of a work finished and His God glorified on earth, He — He, the Despised and Rejected of men — looks up into His Father's

heaven, its blue purity taking its character from the purer blue of His own Divine and heavenly glory, and says — as Man — "Glorify Thou Me with the glory I had with Thee before the world was." Quickening out of death, and resurrection were implied; for in departing out of the world and going to the Father, He went by way of death; and to glorify a Person who has died, in any real way, He must be raised from the dead. But these words of Jesus are not a mere request for honours; He demands now as a Man that glory which eternally belonged to Him as the Son with the Father. If Jesus were not eternally Divine, never was blasphemy or falsehood so awful; if He be the eternal Son, never was truth so splendid, or glory so grand. Come from above, The Son of God who dwelt in light Unreached by mortal eye, Came forth as Man the foe to fight And won the victory. As Man, and for men, He died; as Man He arose. A hundred insistent voices on the pages of inspired Scripture proclaim it. The Corinthians questioned the reality of His resurrection only to be countered by the mighty phalanx of witnesses marshalled in 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. The Jews bribed the Roman soldiers to hush up this tremendous reversal of their rejection of their Messiah; but the real personal resurrection of Jesus was the irrepressible testimony of all the apostles of the Lord. The Lord Himself showed Himself alive by many infallible proofs, and in His own inimitable way chided those hearts who thought the facts were too good to be true. He says in Revelation 1:18, "I am the Living One; and I became dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore."

He it is of Whom it is written, "by Man came the resurrection from the dead." He is the Son of Man to Whom and not to angels, not to spirits, is put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. It is because He is "of one" with His brethren and they with Him, that He can be Captain of our salvation and High Priest of His people. Not less true is His Manhood to-day than His Deity from eternity. But let us examine the bearing of this unparalleled demand of the Lord. There is a verse in John 13:1-38 which throws light upon it. When Judas had left the company in the supper chamber, "Jesus said, 'Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.'"

Thus we have three things:- 1. God glorified in the Son of Man.

2. The Son of Man glorified in God.

3. The Son of Man straightway glorified. The first we have been considering. The second is what we are considering now. The third shows us that the glory with which God would respond to the work of the Son of Man would be immediate, not delayed.

Man Glorified in God.

We find it more easy to understand the thought of God glorified in Man, because it comes down to us-ward; it brings the glory of God within our view as fully represented and expressed in a Man among men, though it require opened eyes see it. But — Man glorified in God — a Man — Son from all eternity indeed, yet as Man — passing from circumstances of lowliness, humiliation, desertion, weakness, death, in this world, up to the Godhead glory and the Father's throne — this is marvel among marvels where all is marvellous. It is always wondrous that God, infinite and eternal, Love, Light, and Spirit, should be able to express Himself absolutely and adequately within the compass of Manhood; it is — dare we say it? — almost more wondrous still that a Man, this unique Man, should require Godhead position and glory to adequately express Himself. The fact is there. If any reader should ask the writer to explain himself further, he would have to reverently

stand and own, "No one knows the Son but the Father."

Yet at least we may study what is revealed. Jesus is not only crowned with honour, but crowned with glory, and that, too, in the presence of God. He is not only advanced above everything and beyond every created being that possesses a derived and God-given name (Php 2:1-30), but to Him as Man will that homage be rendered which God has sworn shall be rendered to Himself; for "in the Name of Jesus shall every knee bow," while "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." To Him as Man has been accorded that place which belongs exclusively to Deity, for He is seated at the right hand of God. He has overcome, and is seated in His Father's throne. No one else will ever sit there. Marvellous advantages accrue to us, but the position is His alone, He is unique.

Four times over in Hebrews is this position affirmed. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, [He] sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3). "[He] is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1). "He sat down on the right hand of God" (Hebrews 10:12). [He] is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). Shall we for a moment consider the first of these four passages? The height — dizzy height for our minds — to which the Son laid claim and which He re-took at the end of His service here, is obviously that of Divine, Godhead glory. It is that of which He had said "glorify Thou Me with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." There are assuredly thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, in the earth, or in the intervening heavens, which are quite enough to make our head dizzy by their height or grandeur; but this Person has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God. He is above and beyond them all, and they are all made subject to Him. They were created, each to represent God in the way of authority in the limited spheres of His appointment, whether in the heavens or the earth, He, Who is indeed their Creator, yet become Man, has passed as Man to the height supreme from which He descended; Man in resurrection glorified in God. The language of Hebrews 1:1-14 is extraordinary, especially if we read it in English as it is stated in the Greek. "When He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become by so much better than the angels as He hath inherited a more excellent name than they." This latter clause "He hath inherited a more excellent name than they," is gloriously explained in verses 2 and 3, and covers His eternal Deity; while the first clause "Having become by so much [or "Taking a place by so much"] better than the angels," shows the resumption by Him as Man of His position in Godhead glory, after the accomplishment of that work which He wrought as Man when He made purification for sins. Never did He cease to be Son even here; never will He cease to be Man there; but the Son is the Man, Christ Jesus, and He has carried Manhood into Godhead. That part of His glory is incommunicable, it is His alone. Yet its light and influence thrill our hearts, for this is the One who bore our sins and made purification for them.

Where, then, are the sins? Gone. Gone for ever. Whose sins are gone? Mine, and those of every believer, thank God. The presence of Jesus there in the unstainable purity of the throne, and in the unsullied splendour of the Divine glory is proof enough that our sin, our sins, are gone from God's sight, gone by His atonement and death for them. The fourth glory in John 17:1-26 is REDEMPTION GLORY. A glory in which we share.

"The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." This is different from the preceding. It is not this time such glory resumed as He had with the Father before the world was, in which others could have no part. Yet all that His love could share with us He imparts; and He deliberately speaks of this to the Father in the hearing of His disciples that they might have His joy fulfilled in themselves. The things of which He speaks were a joy to Him.

"That love that gives not as the world, but shares All it possesses with its loved co-heirs"; found its pleasure in this largesse of grace. He could not leave them ignorant of this grand destiny of bliss. Though He had drawn them around Him as those given to Him of the Father, and would love them to the end, yet their dowry of blessing was to be won for them by His sweat and passion, by His conflict and death. It was to be shared by them when He was past the cross and in resurrection; for again let us remember that this prayer places Him in spirit on the further side of His death.

Until He died He abode alone; alone, of His own order; grand in moral glory, but alone. To have others, His like, He must as the Corn of Wheat go into the ground and die. He must first suffer, and then enter into His glory if that glory were to be shared by them. First the walk and work in humiliation alone; then the resurrection answer with His loved ones brought on to the same platform of triumph and blessing with Himself. First the cross, and then the crown; first the shame, and then the splendour. First the Son in Manhood meeting all the claim of God in respect of sinful men, abandoned, in loneliness, working out redemption, His life taken, His blood shed; then the Son in resurrection, alive as Man to die no more, Head of a new race, Pattern of a new order, able to speak to His brethren of His place and relationship as theirs too now (John 20:1-31). For though Deity is incommunicable, yet Christ became Man that through death and resurrection He might share all that can be shared by Man with believing men. He assured them of their place with Him in the same favour before His God and theirs, and of their part in the same relationship as Son in manhood before His Father and theirs. He as the risen One, the last Adam, breathed on His disciples, thus imparting life of His new order, life characterized as Holy Spirit (See John 20:17; John 20:22). Relationship, favour, and life — these are given to His loved ones, these are given to us. That these things are all to be displayed in glory is true, blessedly true. But these things are true now, and are to be enjoyed by us in the power of the Holy Spirit. They come out in the way of character even here. The world knows us not because it knew Him not. Now are we children of God. Yet we are "incognito" here, and what we shall be is not yet manifested. The people of the world see us and do not know who we are. When He shall be manifested publicly, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is. And they shall see too, and the world will know that the Father sent the Son, and has loved us as He loved Jesus.

We are made participants in the love which the Father has for the risen Son, and in the glory which is the fruit of His work for men. Life eternal, victory over death, deliverance out of the world of Satan's power, the heavenly calling and inheritance, relationship with the Father, association with Christ as His brethren, the Father's name and heart made known, and His counsels revealed to us — all this has been opened out and set forth to us in Christ in resurrection it is glory that has been given to Him as Man (Who is Son) in resurrection, and He has given it to us. And He has given, too, the Holy Ghost that all these things may become consciously and intelligently ours. We are not, as paupers, begging our way from door to door of this world's charity, nor asking its smiles and favours or applause; we crave not its company nor its pursuits; we are sons of God, to walk with satisfied hearts in dignity and intelligence here, with power and wisdom unknown to men, holy

dispensers of heaven's rich bounty to the need around. He has given largely, freely; we, too, freely give. Such were the disciples, such are we who through their word believe on Him.

We have access to the Father, we are in the light of what He is doing in the midst of this world's confusion, we have the key to its present miseries, we know the solution to its problems. The rejection of Christ has postponed its deliverance; its peace awaits His return. The whole creation will only be delivered from its bondage at the time of the manifestation of the sons of God (Romans 8:19). But when He does appear in glory these will appear with Him as sharers of it all. We co-suffer; we shall be co-glorified. For the glory the Father has given Him, He has given us. We do not want glory while He is absent; we shall have it, share it with Him, when He comes. Only even now we have the Spirit of the Glory (1 Peter 4:14). The fifth glory in John 17:1-26 is GLORY OF PRE-EMINENCE.

"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." This glory is referred to in the same terms as the preceding. That is, it is the glory that is given Him. It is not in this case "the glory which I had with Thee before the foundation of the world." It is glory given to Him as Man subsequent to His path and service on earth, and hence is expressive of the Father's satisfaction and pleasure in all that HE was and did here.

Given, yet to be beheld. As to the position won in resurrection we share it as we have seen; as to the glories which will be displayed as the fruit of His redemptive work, we participate in these by His own deed of gift. But He Who gives is greater than His gift; and in His personal greatness will always be the Object of wonder and adoration even among those who partake of His favours and love. All the New Testament bears witness to this. As to relationship, favour, and life, these are shared by the risen Jesus with His believing people. Yet even in stating it He says, "My Father and your Father." He is distinct in His personal greatness even in passing on this relationship to them. He says again, "My God and your God." It is favour conferred in Association with Himself; yet our hearts gladly accord to Him the homage of His leadership and His distinctive desert of that favour. For we are recipients; He shares it with us truly, but it is He Who is the Giver.

He says, "Receive ye Holy Spirit," and thus communicates of His risen life to His beloved ones; but it is He Who is the last Adam, and not they.

We if asleep through Jesus shall be raised from the dead as Scripture abundantly proves; but He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father — a distinction indeed which it is our privilege to regard and appreciate.

We shall be like Him, for God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son; yet even so He will be the firstborn among many brethren.

He is the Lord and the Christ, and not we.

He has made us priests, but He is the High Priest.

He has made us kings, but He is the King of kings.

We are God's house, He is Son over God's house.

He brings us into gladness beyond all telling; yet He is anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows.

Among all dignities and authorities He shall have the pre-eminence.

He is given to be Head over all things to the church, though grace unites the church to Him in that glorious position.

God will head up all things in the Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth. The angels, ten thousands times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, with elders and living creatures, will say with loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

These are glories we shall behold; and we shall be placed near enough to Him, even where He is, to be able to see them. Wondrously as we are loved, blessedly as we are favoured, we shall every one of us own that, even in regard of those positions in which we are nearest to Him, He has a superlative excellence all His own. The Father's love which had no beginning will secure this transcendent glory for Jesus, even amidst glories which are bestowed upon Him as resultant from His suffering and rejection here. And that same love will secure us to be intelligent spectators of this glory of pre-eminence. We — the many sons brought to glory — shall own Him the Captain of our salvation; even as He will say, "Behold, I, and the children Thou hast given Me." Who is there that does not here appreciate the grace that associates us with Him, yet the unique glory which is His alone for us to contemplate it?

"Lord of glory, we adore Thee, Christ of God ascended high;

Heart and soul, we bow before Thee, Glorious now beyond the sky." May the reader and writer learn to love and praise Him more!

W. H. Westcott.

## 23. The Glories of the Lord Jesus.

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The Glories of the Lord Jesus.

Extracts from notes of an address on John 1:1-51.

W. H. Westcott.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 39, 1956-8, page 193.)

Let us look at some of the glories of the Lord Jesus as revealed in this chapter. In verse 1 He is spoken of as "the Word" in verse 7 as "the Light;" in verse 18 as "the only-begotten Son;" in verse 29 as "the Lamb of God;" in verse 34 as "the Son of God;" in verse 41 as "the Christ;" in verse 49 as "the King of Israel;" in verse 51 as "the Son of Man." Thus the Spirit of God brings before us the greatness of the One who is our Saviour in His love and glory, and the effect of this is that we love to honour Him — to worship and serve Him. The Word

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Suppose you could get right back behind everything, and find the point where everything that had a beginning began, there the Word was. And in verse 3 it says, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." So that when things did have a beginning, they had their beginning from Him. But then He had no beginning, because in the beginning He was there to create.

Then we may well ask, When He is spoken of as "the Word," what does that mean? Well, in the simplest way, if you were to look at my face, or watch me walking in the street, or observe me in my home, you would still not be able to find out what was in my mind or in the secret working of my heart. But when I speak and give you my word, a good deal of what is in my heart and mind is brought to light. Now in some such simple way we understand the first verse of John 1:1-51. The One, who is now our Saviour, was in the beginning of creation, is now, and at all times, competent to bring out and express every thought that was in the mind of God. All the deep thoughts of God, all His wisdom, all His knowledge and all His purpose, perfectly set out in this Person called the Word.

If we turn to the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find it stated there that God has both spoken to us and created all things by His Son. But here the same Person is spoken of as the Word. And since it was the Word who created, every little thing that He made carried with it some expression of the glory of God. We look at the grandest part of the creation — the heavens, — and observe its order and beauty. Well, as the Psalmist said, "The heavens declare the glory of God." And so it is with the earth apart from the mischief that sin has wrought. Everything created expresses in some way the glory of God, because it was made by One who is Himself the expression of all that God is — "the Word."

Because we belong to a different order of things, being a new creation in Christ, it does not do for us to overlook the wisdom and glory of God seen in all His works. The One who is our Saviour was

competent, being Himself God, to put some expression of the glory of God into everything He made; and becoming Man, as verse 14 says, He has brought the glory of God into full display. The Light

Then notice that in verse 7, John the Baptist is only a man sent to bear witness of the Light, whereas Christ was the Light, for in Him was the Life that was the Light of men. If we consider the creation that surrounds us today, we might wonder how it could in any way set forth the glory of God. We think of the centuries of sorrow and of death, of misery, of pain and suffering and wickedness. This is not like God nor according to His will. The sin of man has spoiled everything.

Well now, this glorious Person who is the everlasting Word came down here and shone as the Light, representing perfectly what God is, and living wholly for the pleasure of God in the midst of the surrounding sin and darkness. In every point the eye of God must have rested upon Him with infinite delight. But while the Life shone as the Light, making God known in all His purity, it brought into display the awful background of man's sin. The coming of the Light has been the great test, and has shown up the blackness and evil of mankind. He was in the world and the world did not know Him. Its ignorance and blindness were revealed.

Also He came to His own things and His own people did not receive Him, though there were some that did receive Him and thereby became children of God, and were born of God. So the Light has shone and such as these saw it, while for the rest it only brought to light their awful condition as fallen sinners. Our condition has been exposed. When tested, we are shown to be just "Adam," sinning against God, hiding from God, delighting to get rid of God, even when showing Himself in grace. The Only Begotten Son

Now the Word became flesh, and so the 18th verse brings to us a third view of His glory. The Father has been declared by the only begotten Son, who is ever in His bosom, knowing all the thoughts of His heart. So the coming of the Lord Jesus not only exposed down to the bottom all that man is but also brought to us full knowledge of what God is. In His becoming Man there was God's approach to man in truth, showing them the grace that is in His heart. In the early days of pioneering work on the Congo, there was a Dr. Grenfell, who had a small steamer built on the upper river, on which he went exploring. One day they got into a large tributary river quite new to them, and they found the hitherto undiscovered natives very hostile. They could not make out what this thing was that came panting up the river, breathing out fire and smoke. From the bank they could see it was being fed with logs, and they thought it was some kind of monster come up to do them harm. Whenever there was any attempt of the missionaries to land so as to get provisions, they were armed and showed fight. The position got serious, for at every place it was just the same.

Then Dr. Grenfell thought of a plan. His wife and child were on board but had been kept in the cabin because of the danger. He spoke to her and got her consent to come up and show herself and the infant child to the natives. This simple plan was effective. Though the natives did not understand the new monster before their eyes, they did understand that men do not go out to fight with women and babies. They interpreted it at once as a message of peace, a message to do them good. The men were allowed to land and they got on all right after that. In the coming of the everlasting Word into the world, as recorded in Luke 2:1-52, when He was seen as a Babe in His mother's arms, we can see God approaching men in such a way as to take away their fears The

angels spoke to the shepherds not of fear but of "great joy." And as we read through the Gospels we see Him in incident after incident so acting as to remove all fear. He "went about doing good." Thus it was up to the cross when God forsook Him as the Sin-bearer. There we see the immeasurable awfulness of sin and the immeasurable love and holiness of God. But how can these two things — man's need, and God's love and glory — be reconciled? The Lamb of God

We look at the 29th verse to see the One that "taketh away the sin of the world." Nothing has been slurred over. Sin in all its terrible darkness has been judged. The glory of God — His holiness, His righteousness, the sovereignty of His throne, the truth of His judgment — all has been taken account of and displayed, as well as the love and grace of His heart. We see the solution of this great question of good and evil in the cross and death and blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus. This Gospel which starts by presenting Him as the Lamb, ends with the record of the shedding of His blood by the thrust of the soldier's spear. How precious must that blood be to God!

I read some time ago an affecting story of a friend visiting a very wealthy man in the United States shortly after the war between the north and the south, who took him to a fine view-point and bidding him look in every direction said, "All this is mine." An immense estate it was. Then taking him into his house he went to a cupboard and took out a small piece of a pot, saying, "I value this piece of pot more than all my estate." The friend wondered and waited for an explanation, which was given. In the civil war his son had been killed and a friend by his side, when he was shot down, picked up this piece of a pot on which his blood had fallen, and gave it to his father. The poor father said, "I value this piece, on which is a drop of my son's blood, more than all the property you see today."

I think you can understand this feeling of a father's heart. But think of God, and the Lamb of God who shed His blood. No wonder it is called, "the precious blood of Christ." We can rejoice that our need is met — our sins are pardoned, our sinful nature condemned — but at the same time the glory of God has been maintained, His holiness and love brought into full display. The Son of God

Before John spoke of Jesus for the second time as the Lamb of God, he had seen Him, and he bore witness to Him, as the Son of God, as we find in verse 34. John knew that He was to be made manifest to Israel, but he did not know Him in the full sense of the word until at His baptism the Spirit descended and remained on Him. Then he realized His greatness and could testify that He would Himself baptize with the Holy Spirit. This He did when He had ascended up into glory.

Speaking of the descent of the Spirit upon Jesus, John could say, "I saw it," with my natural eyes. Can we say, not with natural eyes but by faith, that we have seen the Son of God in His glory, from whom the Spirit has been shed forth upon us who believe the Gospel. We rejoice when a sinner's eyes are opened to see in Jesus their Saviour, but we rejoice further when our eyes are open to see the greatness of the Son of God, from whom the Spirit is given, to see Him superseding all others in His supremacy and majesty and glory. The day when the Lord Jesus Christ simply outshines all others and everything else, is a grand day in the history of the soul. Then, as in the case of the two disciples in verse 37, we follow Jesus. The two disciples were set free from the trammels of their old religion to follow Him. So may we be. The Messiah

One of these two disciples who followed Him was Andrew, and he sought out his own brother Simon, as we see in verse 41. His testimony was, "We have found the Messiah — the Christ." This

means that they recognized Him as "the Anointed One," as He had been prophetically announced in Psalms 2:2, and again in Isaiah 61:1. All the way through the Old Testament there occurs this promise of the Messiah who was to come as the Centre of all God's good purpose for the earth — the One in whom Israel should be blessed and the nations of the world healed. This was as far as they knew at that moment, and although we have obtained an inheritance as connected with a heavenly Christ, we can rejoice in it too. What the sun is to this planet in a material way, the Lord Jesus will be to the whole earth in a spiritual way in the millennial age which is to come. The King of Israel The blessed Lord Jesus has been constituted God's Centre, and as the risen Man He will hold every part of the creation in its right relation to God. We have our part as associated with Him in a heavenly portion, but that does not mean that He has abandoned His promises to Israel. Hence what we have in verse 49, from the lips of Nathaniel. He who is our Saviour is so great that He can hold all God's system of blessing together. He will claim all the land of Israel for His people. At present people may be going into it from national or political motives, but that is not in accordance with the mind of God.

Whatever men may do the Lord Jesus will bring Israel into the land according to God. All Israel will be saved and blessed there, and through them blessing will go out to the nations. He shall sit upon the throne of His father David, and establish all that God has promised The Son of Man

We come now to the last verse of the chapter, and are introduced to the great moment when God will put everything into the hands of the Son of Man, as predicted in Psalms 8:1-9. He will rule and exercise His beneficent sway over the whole of the creation. Angels will be His servants and do His bidding in every direction. All will be subject to Him.

We began with the Word in a past eternity. We end with everything in the hands of the Son of Man in a future eternity. He is "The First." He is also "The Last." He is our Saviour. May God give us to value Him more, to honour Him, to delight in Him, and count it a privilege to serve Him, while we wait for Him.

## 24. God revealed and Sin Removed.

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God revealed and Sin Removed.

W. H. Westcott.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 39, 1956-8, page 131.)

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1:18).

It stands to reason that no man hath seen God at any time. We can take account of a thing if it be a score of miles in length or breadth, and if it be a solid substance to be weighed. But can we imprison the wind to measure its dimensions, or tell where the light ends? God is a Spirit; and heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. He is everywhere present throughout this vast universe, greater than all He has created, not subject to change or break-up. Where could we begin to take account of Him? We may well ask this, as we read Job 38:1-41. He is "the King of the ages, incorruptible, invisible" (1 Timothy 1:17, New Trans.). But when the time came that God would reveal Himself in all that He is in nature and character, there was in the Godhead an adequate means of doing so, for the only-begotten Son in the Father's bosom, in all the intimacy of His Divine and eternal relationship, knew all that God is. It was in God's mind that His Son would become Man, and that in Man, and to men, should be made known all the depth of the Divine nature and all the lustre of the Divine glory. We cannot comprehend this by argument; it is one of those simple but stupendous facts that deny analysis. We cannot define life, nor can we measure space, nor explain eternity. So, without controversy — great is the mystery of godliness. When I see God in the Person of His Son, a tender infant in Mary's arms, I am dumbfounded, and can only cry, "Great is the mystery." When I see Him, in the seclusion of a carpenter's home, increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man, yet truly God manifest in flesh, "great is the mystery." When this Divine Person makes Himself friendly with poor sinners to secure their ear for the holy message He brought, calling the weary and heavy laden, touching lepers, healing demon-possessed men, to express God's mercy to them, "great is the mystery." When at last I see Him hated and despised of men, and submitting to it; spit upon and scourged and crucified; and in the hour of His deep sorrow and suffering abandoned of God for my sin's sake, enduring wrath and judgment for me, that nothing might remain untold of all that God is, then I bow my head, and in deepest self-abasement own, "Great is the mystery."

God is fully told out in His Son. But the Son is now risen, glorified, seated in the Father's throne as Man; so that there is a present and continuous delight in studying Him as the Revealer of His Father's Name. But soon another great fact comes to light for we read that,

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

There is only one gospel that speaks of the act of the soldier who pierced the side of Jesus on the cross, and it is the gospel which alone speaks of Him as the Lamb. Moreover, the page which describes Him here as the Lamb is full of His Divine glories. While we think of Him in His sacrificial character as the Victim, slain to secure God's glory and to put away sin, it is important to remember who the Lamb is. No one less than He who is God could meet God about sin, and glorify Him; and no one but He who is man could atone for men. John said, "After me cometh a Man" (verse 30). But he added, "He was before me." The first speaks of a Being who is truly a Man in His holy nature; the second refers to the truth of His eternal Godhead glory, as described in the earlier part of the chapter. Such is the Lamb. It is a title taken from the types and shadows of the Old Testament, and especially from Genesis 22:1-24. This One is the Lamb of God. He is the One brought forth when man's lambs had had their day and served their purpose as foreshadowings of Christ. He it was whom God provided for Himself, as Abraham said, for a burnt offering. He was truly here in weakness as the very figure of a Lamb implies, yet to Him was entrusted the mighty task of securing the glory of God, and of removing sin ultimately from the world. But it was not a living lamb in the Old Testament type that sheltered Israel from the destroying angel in Egypt; it was the blood of a slain one. It is not the life of Jesus here, though without blemish and without spot, which avails for our redemption, but the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19). To its value all the heavenly inhabitants bear witness (Revelation 5:8-12). The representatives of sinners saved from earth, and the myriads of angels too; the first as having experienced its efficacy, and the second as spectators of God's ways, and filled with adoring praise. It is the Lamb whom God entrusts with the task of bringing order out of sin's chaos, and of establishing His supreme authority where man and Satan have so grossly and daringly refused it. It is the One who suffered here for God's glory and our sin who is the centre of all administration in God's throne; and the day of His blest intervention in the world's affairs will be the day when Satan will be bound, and there will be no more curse. From the throne of God and the Lamb will proceed life and healing and light, and holy and happy service as none have served below. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

## 25. God Speaking in the Son.

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God Speaking in the Son.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth Volume 4, 1912, page 84, 117.

Hebrews 1:1-14

It is in keeping with the character of this Epistle that there should be an abrupt and complete contact between God and the reader. Its object is to prove that God, in the sovereignty of His Being and in the excellency of His ways, has ordained the removal of all intermediate ranks and offices between Himself and His responsible creature, man. On the one hand, He speaks to us immediately and directly in the One who is the Son; on the other, when that language is received in faith and obedience, the soul — renewed by grace, and perfected by virtue of Christ's one offering of eternal value — is emboldened to enter into God's immediate presence, the Holiest, by the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:1-39). In all the Epistles save those of John and Hebrews the inspired writers give their names, as authorized vessels of inspiration. They are used by the Holy Ghost to outline the Christian faith and the conduct which is suitable to it; and also to refute what man would fain have introduced into Christianity of tradition or philosophy or sinful living, the product of the human mind or will. The inspired writer of this Epistle however, whoever he was, carefully conceals himself; for it is plain from the opening verses that the gist of the communication is God's grace in speaking to us directly without human mediation. In Old Testament times God spoke. The fathers were the recipients of the things communicated. The prophets were the intermediaries of His utterances. In these last days we are the recipients; God is still the speaker. But in place of certain of our own race standing between us and God to receive the communications and pass them on, He puts Himself in immediate contact with us and speaks to us "in the Son." This attaches a supreme importance to the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and to His place and His activities in the heavens. Therein God has given to us the highest, greatest, most complete interpretation of all that He is, and the fullest unfolding of the blessing which He bestows on the sons whom He is bringing to glory. There is not a movement of the Son, nor a position in which He was found which does not speak. Its language may not necessarily be articulated in words, but what the Son is is itself language from God to us. In Christ God has come near to us, to delineate in an active, moving Person, His own character, feelings, thoughts, purposes, yea, His own very nature.

Let us consider one or two scenes which will illustrate this. In each of those selected the SON OF GOD is designated, one scene being taken from each of the four Gospels. His Birth (Luke 1:35).

"That holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the SON OF GOD." We have the birth of a Babe foretold here, conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of Mary the Virgin. He is here called Son of God as born in time. Though seen in the weakness of infancy, and so partaking in humanity perfectly, yet is He sinlessly holy; and He does not forfeit His Sonship by accepting human

conditions. Had His mother been divine, He had not been human. She was woman, singularly favoured because chosen out of all the virgins of Israel to be the mother of the Lord; yet the more we make of Mary, the less do we make of the divine miracle of this holy birth. The body in which He appeared was prepared for Him (Hebrews 10:1-39); and in it was He to effectuate all the will of God. It was guarded from every taint of sin in the Virgin's womb; not by any immaculate conception of the Virgin herself (as affirmed by Rome), which could be supposed to free her from taint of sin, but by the power and wisdom of God the Holy Ghost. The fable of the Virgin's immaculate birth, had it been true, would have required the same miracle in her parentage and birth which Scripture declares with regard to the Babe in David's royal city. But what is the language of God in the Babe? What does He intend us to understand by the birth in the stable in Bethlehem, while as yet there was no human speech in the lips of Jesus? What the angels saw in it is gathered from their praise. They said, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure in men" (Luke 2:14). They looked on Him, manifest in flesh, and at once foresaw three results, namely, the glory of God to be made good and secured in a world of sin; the earth to be delivered from the enemy's grasp and brought into righteous blessing; and, finally, the fullest and freest intercourse to be established between God and men, the blessed God being able to find pleasure in men on the ground of what Christ has introduced and inaugurated.

What did it at once imply, however, for men? Has it struck the reader that the first utterance out of heaven to men after the birth of Christ was "Fear not?" (Luke 2:10). Does it not suggest that His advent as a Babe was designed to remove all fear from our hearts, to remove all suspicion from us, to enable us to understand that His disposition towards us after our four thousand years of sin was still friendly, loving, gracious? It is so hard for fallen man to believe anything but the lie that deceived him at the beginning. He cannot accredit the living God against whom he has sinned with any kindly disposition towards him, but supposes Him to be the author of his misfortune, and the vindictive executor of judgment against his sin, only opening His lips to utter wrath against the sinner. To all such ideas does God give the lie in the birth of the Babe. His language therein is one of accessibility to men. The gulf between the holy Creator and the world that has morally strayed from its orbit is so far bridged over from God's side that there suddenly appears in the midst of men One who is God's Son. But He has come, not to repel, but to attract; not to menace, but to woo; not to command, but to accept the lowliest conditions of poverty, dependence, and weakness.

Thus the veriest or poorest child in whom has dawned the consciousness of sin may realize that the Son of God has been younger than he is, lower than he is, bringing all the might of Omnipotence into swaddling clothes, and all the wealth of God's matchless grace into a stable. Or, again, the oldest sinner, grieving over his years and years of sin, and despairing of mercy, may learn in the light of that marvellous birth — occurring, as it did, after four thousand years of sinning in all ways and under all conditions — that God loves still. For no sinner has yet lived four thousand years in his sin, yet there is the testimony to God's love in Jesus' birth after all that long-drawn story of unnumbered crimes. Not that the Babe spoke. But His very presence here under such a guise told it out. When Dr. George Grenfell was first exploring on the upper tributaries of the Congo River in his missionary steamer, the natives, who had never seen a steamer before, feared that its pounding machinery and its belching funnel meant war; and they gathered together with weapons of war to oppose the missionary's landing. But seeing that they

did not understand the pacific intentions of his heart, the Doctor asked Mrs. Grenfell, who was on board with her infant child, to show herself at the side of the boat with the babe in her arms. This simple action at once disarmed the natives' fears, and led them to abandon their resistance to his landing; for no one, they felt, would come to war against them bringing women and babies. Such was the language of the unconscious babe to their minds. Any one can understand such a language. So Bethlehem clearly establishes the desire of God to hold communication with men; and that, not to crush in judgment, but to attract for blessing. Had He appeared in all the brightness of His future manifestation, it would have spelt destruction for those who knew not God (2 Thessalonians 2:8). His Baptism (Matthew 3:17).

"Lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased." Here the Son is discovered and designated in a new position. The forerunner John, sent of God, had appealed to the nation of Israel, calling upon them to repent, as the kingdom of heaven was at hand. His teaching clearly emphasized the fact that this was to be of a spiritual nature, so that the mere external relations with the people of God were unavailing; to have any vital interest in the coming Christ, men must repent and confess their sins. The mass of the Jews boasted in their natural descent from Abraham, and were represented in the Pharisees and Sadducees who came and heard him. But the test was not, "Are you a Jew?" It was "good fruit," proceeding from a sincere repentance before God. The Roman axe was already laid at the root of the Jewish trees, ready for its work. If the nation did not repent, the axe would fell the trees, and the fire would follow the axe. Nevertheless God would preserve the true remnant, the wheat would be garnered; all who did repent would be saved. The unrepentant ones were the chaff who would be burnt up with unquenchable fire. The consequence of his mission was that the nation as a whole stood on the one side, with temple, sacrifices, ritual, priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, scribes, and unrepentant Jews of all kinds, on the other a heterogeneous number, drawn from all classes, who had only one thing in common; they were sinners, sinners confessed, sinners encouraged to hope only because God is the God of salvation. Their confession, moreover, was not a secret; they were openly marked off as a repentant minority by their baptism, publicly administered by John in the river of Jordan. To this repentant company, ostensibly guilty, but truly repentant and confessing their need of a Saviour, apprehending in some degree the spiritual requirement of God's kingdom, and made conscious by His holiness of their sin, came the Messiah, the Son of God. Entitled indeed to the homage of all, from the highest to the lowest, He passed by the masses who felt no need of a Saviour from sin, who looked only for a political leader or an ethical teacher. He came to where John was baptizing; and though discerned by him, and though having no sins to confess, insisted on being baptized and so publicly identifying Himself with the repentant band.

What is the language of this act? What does it speak to our hearts and minds of the intentions and thoughts of God? Does it not proclaim as loudly as though it were written across the sky the fact that Christ's mission was not to call the righteous, but sinners? Does it not show us that the Physician's journey was not for those that were whole, but for the sick? It encourages the man that is most conscious of his sinful estate, who is most burdened in conscience by reason of his guilt, for it is God's language to assure him that it was his case the Saviour came to undertake. Nor is this all. As though to add an emphasis impossible of contradiction, it was when this action of Jesus, the Son of God, proclaimed His taking up of the cause of these confessed sinners, that the Holy Ghost descended like a dove and alighted upon Him, and a voice from heaven — the

Father's voice — said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He might have said it at any time. It pleased the Godhead, however, that this most glorious manifestation of the activities and pleasure of the Triune God should be reserved for the moment when the Son openly espoused the cause of the confessed sinner. It tells us in ringing accents that God willeth not the death of the sinner, and that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. It proves to us that when the Son publicly identified Himself with the sinner's cause, Father and Holy Ghost were swift to give public demonstration also of their supreme delight and absolute complacency in that course. In Christ God has come near to us to delineate, in an active, moving Person, His own character, feelings thoughts, purposes, yea, His own very nature. In a former paper we have seen this at the birth and baptism of the Lord Jesus; we now go on to His cross and resurrection. His Cross (Mark 15:39).

"When the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the SON OF GOD."

All the gracious and blessed ministry of Christ among men spoke out the readiness of God to bless. It told His ability to meet every form of need, it showed the versatility of His grace. It was Jesus who acted, but He was the transcript of God — the tangible, visible, audible expression of all that God is. He was not an optical illusion failing of substance, as a reflection in a mirror; never did mirror reflect so faithfully the person standing before it as Christ reflected — or rather expressed — God. In every mirror the left is right and the right is left; and most of us are accustomed to remark how inaccurate the reflection of the eyes is to a second person looking on. But in Christ there was no inaccuracy and no disparity. He expressed God without defect, or loss of a single gesture, or accent, or manner. In the Son, God was speaking.

This, then, is the light in which we are now invited to consider the death of our Lord Jesus. We are to understand the language of the cross, the substance of God's communication to us in the Son when He was put there. Where all is so marvellous, and so infinite, we are sure to omit much; yet, if we remember our smallness, and the greatness of God, it is little wonder if we do not easily grasp all He would show us. The defect, however, will not be in the showing, but in our seeing; not in His language, but in our apprehension of it. In the first place God was speaking out His love for men. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son." "Not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Then, again, He was giving utterance to His utter abhorrence of sin, and exhibiting its infinite consequences before all worlds. The suffering Saviour was really forsaken when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" He was made sin for us, and God condemned sin in the flesh. His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, and Christ suffered for sins — the just for the unjust. His soul was made an offering for sin.

Further, He proves to us that He is able to make even the wrath of man (and we may say the wit and power of Satan) to praise Him. David prayed (2 Samuel 15:31), "O Lord, I pray Thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness." This was answered by making Absalom listen to the counsel of another. But man's wicked counsel to get rid of Christ was allowed to be carried out entirely, to its own defeat. "For of a truth against Thy holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together

for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." What a comfort for believers to realize that God is greater than any combination of men that can be against Him; even though there be behind them all the subtlety and force of Satan himself. But in the cross of Christ there is the fullest declaration of what God is in all His glory on the sinner's behalf. For him death was met, its sting borne, its victory reversed. On his behalf the sins were collected by divine omniscience and laid upon Christ; the darkness gathered, the wrath fell, the storm burst, the sword awakened, the fire consumed. The Substitute from God drained the cup of wrath, exhausted the judgment, bore the curse, tasted death as the wages of sin, died unto sin. The heel of the woman's Seed was bruised by the serpent, but the serpent's head was bruised, and his power for mischief for ever brought under control. The grave was entered by our Lord, but it was that God might show us the way out of it by resurrection.

God has indeed spoken in the Son. Sin has been laid bare in its uttermost unloveliness, and in all its latent possibilities, and has met its utmost due. Hatred has risen to its highest height against incarnate love, but love has risen higher and has overflowed it. The river of God's grace, supplied through righteousness, is flowing over the barren place where Jesus died. If we would see the greatness of sin, it is there. If we would see the greatness of God who has put sin away we see it there. But at what a cost! Lord Salisbury, at the news of the first defeats of British troops in the Boer War, set his face and said, "We must see this through." Blood and treasure flowed, and gallant men died, and the widows and orphans remain to this day to prove at what a cost Britain "saw it through." But the One who at His baptism seemed to say, "I will see the cause of the sinner through" had to lay down His own precious life that God might reveal all that was in His heart and put our sin away. Truly as we look upon the cross we may say that actions speak louder than words. That mighty action is indeed language from God. The veil was rent, the way from God to man was righteously opened by Christ's death; the soul approaching God by virtue of the blood of Christ finds no barrier now. The hand of man might indeed ignorantly renew the veil, and might ignorantly continue the sacrifices of old as though God had not rent it, and as though Christ had not died; but there is now no need of renewed sacrifices. God Himself has opened the way in. As we gaze on Christ's death, and think of all its far-reaching results, we say with the centurion, "Truly this Man was the Son of God." His Resurrection (John 20:30-31).

"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, THE SON OF GOD; and that believing ye might have life through His name."

We have had the testimony of angels in Luke 1:1-80 and Luke 2:1-52; the testimony of the Father and the Holy Ghost in Matthew 3:1-17; the testimony of man in Mark 15:1-47; and now, in John 20:1-31, the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. All concur in proclaiming Jesus as the Son of God. But these last verses are said of Him when He had offered up Himself as a sacrifice, and when He had risen from the dead. By His resurrection God put the seal of His own approval on the work He accomplished by His death. The Holy One who, as Lamb of God, had borne judgment, had by His blood made atonement, and was now seen in resurrection in all the power and joy of acceptance before God, and of relationship with the Father. In what respect, we may ask, is there any language from God here? What may we gather in the way of communication from God by the resurrection of Christ? Is it not in this, that the Lord had gone (as He told His disciples in John 14:1-31) to prepare a place for them? He was yet to ascend to His Father and God, and to His

Father's house, to complete the preparation (ver. 17); but are we not to interpret Christ's resurrection as indicating the place He had won for us? He had stepped out of the grave on to a platform of ineffable peace; but it was peace, eternally and righteously complete, which He had secured on our behalf. He said, "Peace be unto you." He was also in the energy and power of resurrection life, beyond all reach of death and judgment; but it was not for Himself alone: He breathed on His disciples and communicated His risen life to them. He stood in unclouded favour before His God — no question open, no cloud remaining, no judgment left; but it was that He might say, "My God, and your God." He rose in the fulness of His blessed relationship with the Father (ever true of Him as Eternal Son, but possessed of a new phase and a new character for Him in Manhood on earth), knowing the Father's inalienable affection to be on Him, but it was to make it all ours who believe upon Him, for He said, "My Father, and your Father." All that He took in resurrection He took not for Himself alone, but for us, that we might share it with Him. His place determines our place; every detail of it, so charming and blessed, is the detailed setting forth of our position and relationship and privilege before His God and Father. What He is as eternal Son remains His own and incommunicable, so that He must ever be pre-eminent; what He is as risen Man is shared in grace with us.

It is in this way that all is language to us. His position speaks. It tells us of what God has planned in His own mind, triumphing over all our sin, defeating Satan with an utter defeat, revealing His own glory, and setting us before His face as sons. And He will bring all the sons to glory. All shall be consummated in glory. In John 20:1-31, though Jesus had not yet ascended, He said, "I ascend." He was going there into all the completeness of the position designed for Him of the Father. Will the purpose of God break down, then, as to us? No more than it broke down as to Him. Thus for the complete thought of God as to us we need to turn our eyes higher, and still higher, even to God's own presence, to the Father's house on high, where we see Jesus, in all the blessed homeliness of that glory. By that position God is speaking to us, and telling us what is His determination as to every soul that believes upon Jesus. This is the purport of the last two verses of John 20:1-31. "These are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" — that you may commit yourself unreservedly to Him "and that believing ye might have life through His name" — that you may understand that He makes you participator in His risen life before the Father.

All hail, then, blessed SON OF GOD! We have learnt in Thee what God is. Thyself art language to us; interpreting all that He is in His nature, all that He is in His triumph over sin, all that He is in His thoughts of blessing to usward. We thank Thee because He has drawn nigh to us in Thee, removing our fear, taking up our case, setting our once guilty consciences in divine rest by the one sacrifice of Calvary, and introducing us into the Holiest of all. There we learn in His own very presence the greatness of His grace, the blessedness of His love, and the infinite glory of the Object — even Thyself — who art for ever to engage us there. Revealer, Interpreter of God, in whom God has spoken to us, we worship, we adore Thee.

## 26. What "Going forth" means.

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What "Going forth" means.

W. H. Westcott. The Bridegroom is absent, but coming. It does not say who the bride is. A company exists during His absence whose responsibility it is to be ready to meet Him. Instead of making His return the pre-eminent consideration and seeing to it that all was in order, they slept though half were unready. The ready while waiting became criminal in this, that the wise who were ready did not concern themselves to see if their companions were ready too. And the unwise put the thought of their own ease and comfort first, intending maybe to get ready at the expected warning cry. The sequel proves that there was not time.

"Going forth" involved their quitting the seclusion in which they had taken their ease. It showed that one only business was now before them, to meet Him. To apply it to ourselves as Christians, what a tremendous soul-movement, quitting and getting rid of all that has to be left behind at His return. Some leave the ecclesiastical entanglements so contrary to God's word, to be simply separated unto Christ. Some leave the comforts of an easy-going home life, to serve His interests. Some clear themselves of worldly friendships and earthly ambitions in devotedness to Him. Some drop their cherished hobbies that they may spend and be spent for the Lord. All who hear and act upon the cry calculate — not how much may be clung to without final loss but — how much that is unnecessary may be dropped that they may be exclusively for Him. It is the actual result of Christ's coming anticipated in the soul. What shall I part from and leave behind when He comes? Let me go out from it now.

Whatever association, influence, friendship, bond, circumstance, affection, pursuit, there be which would hinder my entire practical readiness to meet Him, let me "go forth" of all.

Matthew 24:1-51; Matthew 25:1-46 of include the subjects of the kingdom even after we who form the church are gone. We cannot apply Matthew 25:1-46 exclusively to ourselves, but its moral teaching applies to us.

Matthew 25:1-46 teaches that three things will be considered when Christ comes. Verses 1-13, loyalty of heart to Himself during His absence; verses 14-30, the right use of opportunities entrusted to us; and verses 31-46, loving service rendered to Christ's people. The meeting Him is the main thing in the going forth, I suppose, and involves our moral suitability to Him Who is coming, our correspondence in effect with every bit of the truth we have ever learnt of Him.

## 27. "The grace that is in Christ Jesus."

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"The grace that is in Christ Jesus."

2 Timothy 2:1-10.

W. H. Westcott. The Assembly of God, — the company of people called out between the day of Pentecost and the moment when Christ will call us home — has been gathered out for the express purpose that, during the season of Christ's rejection, we should be here in exact correspondence with all that Christ is, and this not merely individually as saved sinners, but as an Assembly in which can be set forth certain glories and certain functions which no individual could possibly set forth.

Now as to Christ in glory, it is not that He is a different Person from what He was on earth, but that all He was on earth has passed through death and resurrection and so into glory, and is seen there in Him. In connection with this I would like to refer to the gospels of which we have four, and each one represents the Lord Jesus Christ in certain graces. Just as this epistle begins with the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, I would take the gospel of John first. In this gospel we have certain things set out in the Lord Jesus Christ as a Man on the earth, of great importance. We get first of all life seen in the Lord Jesus Christ, life that is entirely according to God. Secondly, I think we get relationship; we get the Son down here as a man but in relationship with His Father. Thirdly we get communion, uninterrupted, holy, blessed, intimate, wondrous communion. In this gospel He is presented down here as that Eternal Life which was with the Father. It is a life of a distinct kind from that which the ordinary natural man lives born of Adam. The Lord Jesus truly came down in the condition of flesh and blood, but He lived here after a new manner of life, a life that had its home with the Father; as it says, that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested unto us. Then relationship. Although when people looked at the Lord Jesus Christ they might speak of Him as Jesus of Nazareth, and somewhat contemptuously speak of His lowly birth, His apparent lineage, relations, and His trade as a carpenter, yet nevertheless, that lowly, gracious, perfect, blessed Man was found here as Son in relationship with the Father. He could look up into His Father's presence and commune with His Father in all the joy and blessedness of that known relationship. To sum up briefly, we have these three things presented in the gospel of John, life, relationship, and the deepest communion with the Father.

Now remember that that Person has gone on high and all these things are found in Him there, are they not? As He says in the end of the gospel, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Then He breathed upon them and communicated His life to them here, saying, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

We are left here then to represent Christ in these three things. In the Christian Assembly there should be seen this grace which was in Christ Jesus; there should be seen in us a character of life different from the character of life that you see in men in the world; there should be seen in us all the blessedness of our relationship with God as Father, and there should be with us all the depth

of communion that nothing can disturb. I think that when we begin to consider for a moment something of the grace that is set forth in Christ Jesus we can see that it opens out tremendous possibilities for us.

Now come to the third gospel, the gospel of Luke. In this gospel we have set forth all that God is in grace, in a Man here on earth; so that as you watch the footsteps of the Lord Jesus and His ways, and listen to His ministry in the gospel of Luke you are brought into contact with the resources of God in grace for every condition of man; and that too, even if the earth closes up, opens heaven to us. Now that is a second thing connected with the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and one of the things that has to be worked out in the Assembly of God on the earth; that is that the Assembly of God should be down here through grace enabled to represent the thoughts and the love and the grace of God working in a world such as this is. The Assembly of God while it is most wonderful and has connected with it the most wonderful truths, is yet to be down here the great exponent of the heart of God in a world such as this is. And therefore you cannot dissociate the thought of the Assembly from the gospel. It could not possibly be.

Then you take the second gospel, the gospel of Mark. I think we have the thought brought out there in wondrous detail of the Lord Jesus as the Servant of God, and as Servant not only doing the works of God and meeting the necessities of men, but also speaking the word of God, so that the words that He spake were God's testimony to men. And you find that all His works commanded the appreciation of God, and at the same time He was tireless and swift in His meeting of every need that came across His Path. And the Assembly of God is formed also to be the great exponent of Christ, the transcript of Christ with regard to this love of service. You might say it is summed up in Peter's address in Acts 10:1-48, when He says, "He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him." Now we who are Christians are united by the Holy Ghost to Christ, and we are so formed and constituted that we should be down here in this world reproducing what Christ is, as He was presented in the gospel of Mark about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. I was hearing the complaint of one dear sister who said that the Christians she knew seemed to think nothing more than about going to meetings and never seemed to have any time to do any good works. I wonder if we are like that? How many poor do you care for and visit? In what way do you exhibit this activity of the love and grace of Christ in the presence of all the needs around? And remember that He whom you love and whom you are left on this earth to represent went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him. So while we value meetings and value opportunities of getting together, and we need to abide by the truth and learn it and to be in the power and good of it, let us see that it is found in our affection. As it works in us it will produce in us likeness to Christ that we shall be representatives of Him here, and there will be with all our learning the doing of those good works that are in correspondence with it and we shall love to be connected with the testimony of God, the truth of God's word, and the ministry that God has to send out whether to His professed people or to the world. And then, lastly in the gospel of Matthew. I think we find the Lord Jesus Christ coming down as the great Administrator of the will of God, to the carrying out of His promises and purposes with regard to the earth, and to administer that which God has put under His control Now the Assembly of God is intended to be down here, a company of people in the world under the rule of Christ, in which all the functions and all the administration should be ordered according to His will, and where the will of man is ruled out.

Now I have only given a little summary, but brief as it is, I think it will suit these words, "The grace which is in Christ Jesus?" and you will see it opens out tremendous possibilities, and it shows that when we speak of the Assembly of God, after all, we know very little about it. As long as we break bread we say, we are in fellowship: we seem to be quite content with coming to meetings and going to meetings, and we attend the breaking of bread and the gospel meetings, and perhaps one in ten at any rate attend the prayer meetings, and perhaps two in ten attend the Bible reading, and we think we are getting along very well; and as long as we do not have a regular good fall out it is alright. Oh! but is that Christianity? You remember that we are left here so that although the world cannot see Christ it should be able to look at us and understand what kind of a Person He is. Is there not a whole field of acquisition before us? Is there not everything to learn? And it is not only a question of information and getting our minds instructed, but the Holy Spirit working into our souls every line of the truth, and bringing it out in power.

We have been looking at that word, "The grace that is in Christ Jesus" as it is presented in the four gospels. Now the Apostle says to Timothy, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." These things should not be mere theories, but every line of the truth ought to be wrought in living power in our souls. What is the secret of having the truth of God in real power in our souls? An honoured brother once said, "I think the secret of having the truth in power may be said to be this, That every line, every bit of the truth that we learn should be accompanied by a corresponding self-judgment in our own souls . . . Paul, the moment he got the light of Christ's glory shining in upon his soul, was broken down and bowed himself in the dust in self-judgment before Him; for three days and three nights he neither ate nor drank. And the result was that the truth of the glory of Christ acquired such a place in his soul that when he got on to his feet he straightway preached in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God."

Now it seems to me that being strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus involves this, that with regard to every part of the truth which we learn from God there must be the getting into the presence of God in connection with it and judging ourselves as deeply as we know how in the light of the truth that God has made known to us, otherwise you are likely to lose its force. It is not that the thing becomes untrue, but so far as you are concerned, you, who might be the vessel of it and the exponent of it, lose the force of it because when you learned it you never learned it with the corresponding self-judgment. Now what does that mean? If I see that God has Christ before Him and His intention is to reproduce Christ in us down here, what does it mean but the setting aside of all that I am, and of all that man is, and all that the world can bring, in the Holy Spirit just displacing everything by Christ. So that if you see anything in connection with Christ and you wish for it to have its real power in your soul, get before the Lord with that bit of truth which you have learned, and judge yourselves in the light of it. Make room for Christ, for you find the opposite in yourselves, and in your associations, or in things connected with you Judge yourselves; allow the light of that truth to shine in upon your soul and judge yourselves in the light of it, so that the truth may become a living power and force in your life. I do not know anything that more discourages me, humanly speaking, than to see people coming fifty-two Sundays in the year, and as many weekday nights to hear addresses, and never budge an inch, getting on in their souls. You come year after year and find them just where they were. And why? Just for that very reason they have fallen into the habit of listening to the truth and never allowing the spirit of self-judgment to enter and accompany the hearing of it.

Then the apostle says "The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses. the same commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. Now it seems to me that the apostle recognises that the mass of Christians were giving up the truth but he recalls Timothy to what he had heard from himself. We have these things in the epistles; but, he says to Timothy, "These things you have heard of me. Now if Timothy through exercise of soul became strong in the grace that was in Christ Jesus, and in his own life, and own way, was brought under the power of the truth he was to commit these same things to faithful men. That is, I suppose, the apostle in a way expects that these faithful men would be distinguishable among the general unfaithfulness. But Timothy was to seek them out and getting into their company and into exercise with them he was to speak of these things together with them so that they might become suited vessels to carry it on. You often feel that speaking of the rank and file, that the very things we ought to be most familiar with we can hardly speak about. We have to speak of elementary things, and it is very nice to speak about elementary things when you meet a simple child to try and help him at the point where you find him. If he is not clear about the forgiveness of sins, well. try to help him. If he is not clear about peace with God, try to help him. If he has not yet learned the seventh of Romans, go patiently over it with him; get it deeper into your own soul while helping him. but help according as to how you find him But how seldom you really find saints of God who are eager to learn the deeper truths of Christ and God's purpose in connection with Him. And therefore you are greatly limited and do not even have time to speak about these things; but wherever you find a faithful men, it is your privilege and mine, to share with him what we can of all that we have learned.

"The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." If you are getting into exercise as to the proper truths of the gospel and as to the deeper truths of the Assembly of God, wherever you find an open ear, and a heart that appreciates these things with you, share together what you are learning about the Lord. Make sure it is what we have heard of Paul among many witnesses; we have it all recorded here in the Word, but what you are learning of Christ share with your brother, and in that way you are preparing some who in their turn will be able to teach others also. I think that we cannot rely upon the continuation of gift in the way in which we have known it in past years. We are all conscious how that in past years there have been outstanding men, there have been those whom we have recognised as getting a distinct impression from the Lord, and they have preached the truth and been in the exercise and power of it, and they have brought the truth before us in such a way that we recognise their message from the Lord. But they have passed and their places are not filled, and we are left very very weak we are left where we have the truth but we have not these gifts, but we are weak, and we are made conscious of this. Now supposing we had no longer these eminent and special gifts and we were left in our weakness does that mean we can no longer get into touch with the truth that is in Christ Jesus? Certainly not. We have it here, and we have the Holy Ghost given to us, but if we are to pass it on there must be this communication, as it says here, "The things thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

Now there are three things in the following verses that I would like to refer to. You will notice in the fourth verse you have the warrior spoken of; in the fifth verse what you might call the wrestler; and in the sixth verse, the worker. The warrior, the wrestler, and the worker: these are the three ways in which the Christian is called to stand in these days. With regard to the warrior, we read, "No

man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." It seems as though there must be an undivided heart for Christ if we are going to stand in these difficult days. The warrior — the soldier — is a man who is called at the bidding of his king and country to put those things first that relate to the king's honour, and the affairs of life have to be relegated to the rear. He is a man chosen to be a soldier, and in his capacity of soldier his one business is to please him who hath called him to be a soldier. Now you are in that position in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ, seeing the battle-field, and knowing all the power of the enemy, and the difficulties among His own people, has called you to be a soldier. One of the first things we have to watch is the way in which the affairs of life absorb our attention to the exclusion of the Lord's interest. Whatever shape the Lord's interest may take in your life, and whatever service you are to render, be on your guard that the affairs of life do not occupy such a place in your mind that they shut out the claims of Christ. It is very difficult: the state of affairs in the world is such that we feel the distraction of these things, the uncertainties of employment, the difficulties of trade and business, and all the things that are pending in social and political life; all these things tend to drift into the mind like a sand-drift blown by the wind, and to extinguish all the devotedness to Christ. I would ask you whether this may not be the secret in your case of a great deal of indifference to the Lord's interests? Is it not that there has come in such a crowding of duties, such a pressure, that you can hardly find time to discover what the Lord's will is with regard to you, and when difficulties come in you are non-plussed, not having the habit of referring to the Lord and having His will? The result is you are liable to be carried about by that influence and the other influence, because you have not time to get into exercise yourself. The second thing is the wrestler. It says, "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." That is, there are certain rules of the ring, and if you are going to strive for masteries, if you are going into special games you must make yourself acquainted with the rules of the games, for if you transgress you may be ruled out, disqualified. In connection with the prize we are looking for it is of the greatest importance that we should make ourselves familiar with every desire of the Lord's heart, and with all these rules which He has given us to walk by. I might ask you, do you read the Word systematically? Do you read only certain portions that you are rather fond of and fancy? Our first verse reads, "Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." As far as I can understand, in this epistle there are seven things that are said to be "IN CHRIST JESUS", beginning with the promise of life in the first chapter. Seven things seem to suggest the idea of a circumference within which it is safe for the Christian to walk in the midst of all corruption, and that "IN CHRIST JESUS" involves our knowing all that is included and all that is shut out. "IN CHRIST JESUS" — you cannot bring in anything which is of Adam, you cannot bring in anything of your own will, or of man's organisation, or of man's resources. "IN CHRIST JESUS" shuts it all out. And what we are to be strong in is "THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS." That is the circumference within which it is safe for us to walk. Well if I do not know what it includes I obviously shall be at fault; a difficulty will come in and I shall be distracted, and will not know where to look; or I may strive unlawfully in my earnestness, and when putting forth my strength I may do it in some way the word of God condemns, and as far as playing the game is concerned I am disqualified.

Well, may God give you to strive according to the illustration, "Striving lawfully for the mastery;" but see that you strive lawfully; that you know what the rules of the game are. Supposing that you were for instance to say, "I want to see everybody converted." and you were to set yourself out to

preach the gospel and see the whole world converted. Oh how you would set out with tremendous energy! But have you studied the rules of the game? Is this exactly what is set forth in the mind of God for the present time? Supposing you say, "Well now I want to win souls and see them saved." and you adopt some of the expedients which are very popular today. Well I wonder if you have studied the circumference, what "IN CHRIST JESUS" means, and have you given a thought to what is consistent with that word "IN CHRIST JESUS!" A great many of those methods are brought with the best of intentions but are they according to the rules of the game? Is it striving lawfully or unlawfully? God give us to test ourselves.

Then the third thing is in the sixth verse, which you require to alter a little, for the true translation is, "The husbandman must labour before partaking of the fruits." (N.Tn). The idea is that before the partaking of the fruit there must be labour, there must be the toil. And I think that any amount of toil is worthwhile in connection with the interests of Christ, because, "Ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." If you do strive according to the rules and do your service according to the mind of the Lord, shutting out your own thought and will, and man's ways and methods, and do it in the power of the Holy Spirit consistently with the Spirit that is in Christ Jesus, there will be certainly the working and the toiling, and the praying and the tears, but your work IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD. There will be the answer. Turn to that passage in 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. You may apparently be defeated your work may seem to disappear, your scholars that you have loved and prayed for may be scattered, and you may think, "Well it has all been labour in vain. But look at verse 58, in that resurrection chapter in which God shows that everything that goes into the grave will have to come up out of it. The apostle says, "Therefore my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." It makes it as plain as possible to me I have only to see that my labour is in the Lord. I have only to study what the Lord's will is, and to do my work, of whatever kind it is IN THE LORD, and as sure as God's work is true, that work will reappear, nothing will be lost.

"Your labour is not in vain in the Lord." You visit a sick man; before you go get into touch with your Lord and then visit him, and just be in His hand, and what He gives you to say, say it and commend it to Him. Do you think that the Lord is ever going to forget that visit? Perhaps there did not seem much result. Perhaps you were not well received. Perhaps it all seemed to be in vain. But in so far as your visit was in the Lord you will see that visit again in glory. I do not know in what shape the answer will be, you will have your Lord's approval. You go to your Sunday School class, and have the boys or the girls, as the case may be, and you pray and seek in every way to shut out all that is merely superficial and sentimental or emotional, and you seek to bring Christ before their souls, praying that God will teach the young Christians and save the unconverted. Do you think that your service falls to the ground? Do you think that it is simply done and forgotten, and there is no more of it? In so far as your labour is in the Lord you will see that again. There is not a word spoken in the Lord, a thing done in the Lord, at home or abroad, but you will find God's answer in resurrection. And so it says here the labourer will be "partaker of the fruits". You will get the fruit, but be content, if God so will it, to go labouring on; only see to it that your labour is in the Lord. In connection with your labour, read verse 8, "Remember Jesus Christ raised from among the dead, of the seed of David, according to my glad tidings" (N.Tn.). The very Master whom you wish to serve and whose graces you wish to represent on earth, was One who toiled and laboured and wept. And Oh! how He pleaded with Israel again and again! Was it not He that said, "O

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Did He not say, "I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain." Did not the Lord feel it? Yet He says, "My judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God" (Isaiah 49:4). That work, which in His lifetime, seemed to have been all in vain was found in resurrection to be of such a character that it will fill the whole universe with blessing. "Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead." Remember that though you may labour in your lifetime, and may say, "Well, somehow or other, I have not been allowed to see much result of my labour", if your labour has been in the Lord, you shall, as sure as God's word is true, see the fruit in the resurrection day. God is faithful to His word, "He that goeth forth and weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalms 126:6). And so with regard to all that we may think to be breaking up on every side, study what your Lord's will is, and see to it that your life's testimony and service and everything are IN THE LORD, and you will certainly be partakers of the fruits. The apostle adds, "Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding in all things." May God give us to learn more of the grace which is in Christ Jesus, and seek to be consistent with it. "Thou therefore, my child, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus." Find faithful men if you can and communicate these things one to the other. Even though you do not get the mass, go on with everything you can learn of Christ Jesus, keeping within the circumference. And be assured of this that nothing that is wrought here by the Holy Spirit for the Lord will ever disappear. Only set the Lord before you, get into exercise as to His will, and do it in all humility; but with this confidence that as sure as God's word stands for ever, and is settled in heaven, you will see the results in resurrection. AMEN.

## 28. The Greatness of the Son

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The Greatness of the Son In Whom God has spoken.

W. H. Westcott.

Hebrews 1:1-4.

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. The Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written in view of the fall of Jerusalem, and the removal of the established form of religion initiated by Jehovah when the people of Israel were delivered from Egypt. The holy places made with hands — the altar, the sacrifices, the priesthood, the very covenant to which these things were attached, and the law which foreshadowed good things to come — were all passing. In place of the whole system of material things, hallowed by the history of centuries, the Hebrews were called upon to realize the blessedness and glory of the Person who is the antitype of it all.

Instead of the State religion of the day, the temple (which, as a place of worship, was the envy of nations), the hierarchy of priests, the impressive ritual, the charm of instrumental and vocal melody, they were to find themselves outcast, ill-treated, defamed, poor, despised — with CHRIST. WERE THEY LOSERS? The Epistle is the answer. They exchanged the transient thing for what is eternal. Attractions for sight and sense were displaced by the blessed realities of which faith alone can take account in this dispensation. The types were superseded by the antitype. The twilight of the old days gave way before the light of day. The partial communications from God through the prophets of earlier times were more than eclipsed by the full revelation of God's communication in the Son. The object of much that is written in the Epistle is to set forth the greatness of the person of Christ. We have also therein the greatness of the presence of God as it is now opened up to believers, and the greatness of Christian privilege, whether inside the veil, or among Christians, or outside the camp. But let us consider the first as it is presented to us in the first four verses of the first chapter. The Son.

It is evident that the Holy Spirit intends to emphasize the fact that the Messiah of the Jew is divine, in contrast with prophets who were not so, though divinely inspired. This is necessary, for in whom could God (who is God) speak adequately to reveal Himself save in a divine Person? When the time came for Him to do away with partial revelations of Himself and to fully reveal all that He is,

He spoke in the One who is Son. No other was competent; neither prophet among terrestrial beings, nor angel among celestial beings would have sufficed to bring to light all that is in the heart of God, nor to express all His character, nor to establish God's promises and purposes. The Son was the language in which God spoke. It is not that God spoke merely by the Son as He had spoken by the prophets; it is more justly rendered in (the) Son. He was the interpreter of God; and he who imagines that one of lesser glory than the Son could interpret God does not know God. Only one who is God could in any adequate sense be God's interpreter of Himself. His Sevenfold Glory. In the short compass of two or three verses the writer is empowered by the Holy Ghost to utter seven of His glories. They bring the majesty of the Godhead down into contact with the creature's littleness, the purity of the throne into contact with the creature's sin for its removal. They look out from the present world with all its problems to the righting of all things under Christ. They bring the reader, taught by the Spirit of God, into the holy light of all that God is, to have his whole being adjusted to God's will under the sway of that glorious Person who has revealed God to him. He is left here for a little while to tread the path of faith, with the knowledge of an Object for his love and adoration so glorious, so attractive, that no suffering can deter him, no material interests divert him, no allurements entice him away. He has seen a light past the brightness of the sun. He knows no object and no joy that he can compare with Christ and communion with Him. His soul humbly and reverently responds to God, thrills with happiness in His presence, loves to be near to Him, to study the language in which He has spoken; for He has spoken in the Son. The birth, life, ministry, works, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the Son of God are all language to him, for they interpret to his heart what God is.

Heir of All Things.

After the indication of His glory as Son, this is the first assurance given to our faith, viz. that God has appointed Him heir of all things. He became poor for our sakes, and instead of being accepted by Israel was cut off and had nothing. But His rejection but served for the accomplishment of God's will that He might atone for sin and make the love of God known. Now He has risen, and it is decreed that all things shall come into His hand. The heavens and the earth are all bequeathed to Christ, the Son. It will be the pleasure of God to see His Beloved in possession of all things. In the present confusion, and amid the blindness brought about by Satan's malignant power, men are toiling to take possession of the earth for themselves. Nation intrigues against nation for the widest possible power on land and sea; company vies with company for the possession of wealth and influence; individual competes with individual in the struggle for recognition and ease. All are being swept along in the pursuit of pleasure, fame, riches, honour power; but each for himself and none for God. The thought of interference from the Supreme Being is resented; man wants to evolve himself, to work out his own redemption. There is less and less time for thinking. A feverish haste to be rich, a lust for human learning and research, a mad race for sport and pleasure, control the masses today. But we look ahead. And there across the future, writ plain and large is the hope of our hearts — Christ, HEIR OF ALL THINGS. Everything will revert to Christ. Power has been perverted to man's own ends, it will come into Christ's hands for the execution of God's will. Riches have been abused by man to the furtherance of unholy plans and carnal lusts; they come to Christ, for the service of God. All the millionaires' millions, all the wealth of mines, all the resources of the earth will come to Christ, to be administered by Him in accordance with God's will. Wisdom will be at His disposal. All the forces of education, though more and more perverted

from their right use now, all true scientific knowledge all the studies of matter and force, all the knowledge that men hope to gain will suddenly come under Christ's control, and He will not fail to inherit it and to use it all for the glory of God. Strength — long used to crush the weak - will be His; honour — long given by man to his fellow — will be given by God to Christ; glory — only stained by corruption and lust in the fallen creature — will be rightly centred in the person of the Lamb once slain; blessing — only lost when entrusted to sinful Adam or any of his race — will be put into the hands of the Second Man, the last Adam, where it will never, never fail (Revelation 5:12). The future is all filled up with Christ, nothing but Christ. He will supersede everybody, all will be subservient to Him.

Maker of the Worlds. But if we look into the past eternity, even as we have looked forward, we see the Son's glory resplendent and eternal. The personalities in the Godhead were distinguishable in the ages previous to all time. "By whom [the Son] He [God] made the worlds." This teaches us clearly that in the Godhead glory before all time the Son was distinguishable as Son. This is enough, for if we have Son, we have Father, and if we have Father and Son, we have also Holy Ghost. These are not merely names connected with the revelation made in time, but are subsisting and related glories in the Godhead outside of all time. It served the divine purpose to withhold this as a revelation until Christ came, who fully revealed God; but when the Godhead was fully revealed, and we come to know God, we find Father Son, and Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). By the eternal Son then, before all ages, God was pleased to make the ages, or worlds. If geological and astronomical science require incalculable ages for the production of the present universe there is nothing necessarily in conflict with the glory of the Son; this only shifts the point farther back in the mysterious past at which we discover His glories as the Creator of all worlds for God. As to the history of responsible man on the face of the earth that is a later thing. Of Christ it is said, "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Whatever there is of beauty or glory in things great or small, in all the wide universe of God, it has derived its shape, its beauty, its lustre, its functions, from Him, and He is greater, more glorious, more beautiful, than all that He has created. "Part of His name divinely stands on every work impressed." Behind all that can be called nature or creation, and earlier than the earliest forms of all matter, there is this glory; accounting for the "all things" that appeal to us now; the worlds piled upon worlds, the ages heaped upon ages. It is the glory of the eternal Son. It fills up the vision of our faith as we gaze backward into eternity.

Upholder of All Things.

Passing for a moment the two glories in between, we reach the middle of the third verse, and find Him to be the One who upholds all things by the word of His power. This spans the time which we call present, arching over from eternity past to eternity to come. It is the third phase of His glory in relation to the created scene through which we are passing. He created all things, made the worlds; He upholds all things now; He shall be heir of all things.

What a vast range of His creatorial power and wisdom does this open up to us. Supposing the law of gravitation to be true not only in the universe that we survey, but everywhere throughout the infinitude of space; granting that the moon revolves around the earth according to that law, the earth round the sun, the sun (possibly) around some "fixed" star in the Pleiades — what then? What holds up the Pleiades? If we go farther afield and in our imagination create some yet more

distant or mighty centre around which ten thousand universes roll, it only makes more vast and stupendous the system which demands some fixed point capable of sustaining the whole. The mind of man reels, and is baffled. Faith, guided by inspiration, quietly points to Christ, the Son, and utters the only possible solution — "He upholds all things by the word of His power."

What is true in things infinitely great is true also in things small. The equipoise maintained between land and water, the exquisite composition of the air that envelops our earth, the rotation of the globe that produces alternating day and night, the orbit it pursues to give us the changing seasons of summer and winter, wet and dry; the evaporation from the water surface of the globe balanced so beautifully with the flow of rivers into the sea; the preservation of the forces in the earth's crust and atmosphere that are so accurately placed as to serve man's needs while leaving room for the play of man's ingenuity; all speak of supreme wisdom and power in the One who directs and upholds the whole fabric.

All things serve His might. Stormy wind fulfils His word. The lightnings obey Him, and say, "Here we are." It was the marvellous truth that Jehovah "upholds all things by the word of His power" (read Job 38:1-41; Job 39:1-30; Job 40:1-24; Job 41:1-34), accompanied by the sense of His grace, that broke Job down. The Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus (Jehovah-Saviour) of the New, as Isaiah 50:1-11 clearly shows. The very beating of our hearts, the expansion and contraction of our lungs are problems that can only be solved by the same wonderful fact, "He upholds all things by the word of His power." The Brightness of God's Glory.

We come now to something different from simple creatorial majesty in Christ, different from the relations in which He stands with created things. For He is the shining forth of glory. All that can be called glory in God shines out in Him. Our Lord wears human form now, and His humanity has served to bring out in the most illuminating way, in the very midst, too, of human circumstances, all the attributes of God, which, when viewed together, compose glory. Light is the outshining of what is in the sun. But precious as the light is, and pleasant as it is to behold the sun, we might have great difficulty in describing light. So, what is glory? Above all, what are the elements in God's glory, its constituent parts, so to say? We take a prism, and we allow the light to fall upon it. Instantly that which is diffused so sweetly as light becomes broken up into its component parts, and we discover the beauty of the several rays which, when blended, form light. Even so, with reverent hearts may we study Christ in whom the varied rays of God's glory are severally discerned. His character and ways bring before us the exact delineation of God's holiness, righteousness, truth; they utter to us, in an intelligible way, His grace, goodness, longsuffering mercy; they set forth those divine perfections of obedience, dependence, humility, meekness, lowliness, which could be discerned only in circumstances of humiliation. Moreover, in the cross and death of Jesus, we find every ray converging; the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. Never was all that God is so seen as in that wonderful moment. All the outgoings of His holy nature against sin were present in infinite degree; and yet every consideration of pity and compassion for the sinner was combined with them. Nor is this all. Raised from the dead, triumphant over death and sin and Satan's power, Jesus has become in heaven the complete expression, the effulgence, of all that God is. What would be to us otherwise unknowable or inexplicable is resolved, and in the face of Jesus — unveiled and glorious — we behold the glory of God. That face speaks to us; it is language that our ransomed hearts can understand. It makes our own will appear loathsome, it makes the world appear a poor selfish system without God, it

attracts our affections and expands our minds, and stirs our energies for God and souls and heaven, as nothing else could. It makes the presence of God our home, and the glory of God our goal in the hope of which we boast. The Image of His Person.

More correctly, "the expression of His substance, or Being." Who are we, that we can sit down and ponder the Deity, the Supreme Being? What material have we on the basis of which we may draw conclusions as to the infinite and eternal God? The mind of man craves for some representation of the being he worships. From the degraded savage who tries to represent the supernatural forces around him by amulets and charms, to the idolater who invests his carved or molten image with divine powers, or the devotee who vainly prostrates himself before crucifix or images of saints, all betray this instinct for a tangible representation of the object of worship. Christ is the Image of God. An image of Christ is therefore absurd, and a negation of all that He is; for if He be the Image of God, why require an image of Him? God as God is invisible. He fills heaven and earth, and no finite creature could take account of so glorious a Being whose time is eternity, whose dimension is space, whose being is Spirit. There was every necessity why He should be adequately represented to our ken. But who among created beings could be the embodiment of the Uncreate? Our marvel is that all that God is in His own being is adequately set forth in Christ. There was no deficiency in Him; He brought down here the entire fullness of the Godhead — setting it forth without flaw from the stable of Bethlehem, the waters of Jordan, and the synagogue of Nazareth, right on to the grave of Lazarus, the garden of Gethsemane, the cross of Golgotha, the emptied tomb, and the throne of glory. There is no one else capable of compassing in his own person all the majesty and the nature of God. Jesus is the Son; there is therefore, no disparity between Him and God, in Him was most perfectly expressed every element in the divine nature. Renewed by grace, we draw near to our Saviour with unshod feet and gaze into His face; and in Him is the absolute, complete, final revelation of God. Never, in any religion or philosophy before, has it been written "GOD IS LOVE." But the truth is out now — in Jesus. God's nature is disclosed, set before men and celestial beings, revealed in the Man who is also, and must be, eternal Son. The Sin-Purger.

Now, think what it must be if such an One take up the sin question. I do not say for us, though of necessity we come into the matter by reason of our sins. But supposing such an One come down, unaided and unasked for reasons of His own, to apply all His infinite resources of wisdom and power and love to the sin question, what must be the result for Himself first, and then for those who believe upon Him? Being the adequate representation of God, the Son knew all God's unsullied holiness and inviolable purity, all the claims of His throne, all His wrath against and judgment upon sin. Being very God in His own essential nature and being, though become Man for the accomplishment of all God's will, He knew all that sin is in its varied forms, and in all its ramifications in the history of this world and in the nature of fallen man. He alone of all in the vast universe was capable of understanding all the activities and glories of the divine nature, and withal the gravity of sin. Moved by unutterable love, and jealous for the majesty of the supreme Being, the Son, in human form, sinless and pure, went and made purification of sins at Calvary, dying to remove them, dying to overthrow them, dying to vindicate God against them, dying to reveal God in His grandest glories at the moment of His putting them away. That I, believing in Jesus, benefit by it goes without saying. My sin has been unearthed, weighed in divine scales, repudiated, broken, judged, execrated, damned in His death, the wrath of God has found it out, fallen upon it,

burnt it up, made an end of my sins (and me also, in a judicial sense) — but in the death of the One who died for me. But it was not only a question of me. He did this for Himself, from Himself, by Himself. He took it up as a matter in which His own glory was involved, and for His own sake made purification of sins. All the perfection of His person was thrown into the work He did; and the sins have been perfectly atoned for, purged, as only a Divine Person could have done it. I am benefited infinitely indeed, for I stand in the presence of a glory that has removed all my sins, and has declared itself infinitely, but in such a way as to be more than friendly to me. My God is the best Friend I have; and I know Him, for He is fully revealed in the One who has put my sins away. The Sitter at God's Right Hand. This is the seventh glory of this all-glorious Person. Would it not have been a grief to us had the Lord in some way been deprived of His right to sit there? Could His contact with our sin, His undergoing the judgment of God and death for us, have resulted in some loss of dignity, some diminution of glory, how our hearts (ever grateful to Him indeed) would have chided us for eternity, and have been filled with distress, to think of it. But this is not so. So completely has sin been judged, so entirely has God been glorified as to it, that the Son — now wearing man's form to be the Image of God for ever — has gone back to the height from whence He came, taking a place by so much better than the angels as He hath by inheritance a more excellent name than they. So absolutely has His divine right and glory remained through all the story of incarnation and sin-bearing that in this passage — when correctly rendered — His session at God's right hand is not represented as

God raising Him but rather that in virtue of the unstained glory of His own Person He took the place that ever belonged to Him in all the ineffable glory of the Majesty on High. But He is now seated there as Man, ever the Son, but now Son in human form. There is a Man upon the throne of God; and that Man, the Son, who put my sins away. May God fill our hearts with worship as we think of Him. May He also teach that even if for His sake and in His service we become poor, despised, isolated, outcast, stripped of all the accessories of consecrated temple, etc., we are — in having Christ — more than well off indeed.

## 29. Green Pastures

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### Green Pastures

John 10:1-42.

W. H. Westcott.

It will be noticed that the first five verses of this chapter are spoken as a parable to the Pharisees. Apart from an understanding of the truth conveyed therein, the whole of the chapter must be an enigma, even where certain verses are enjoyed by Christians.

Chapters 9 and 10 are closely connected; and on careful examination we find that the blind man's cure and its consequences are really the explanation of the parable; or, rather, that the Lord puts in the form of a parable the truth which exactly unfolded the position which He Himself occupied, in company with the blind man cured. The sheepfold expresses the guarded enclosure of the Jewish faith, in which all the Jewish believers were kept up to the time of the coming of their Messiah, Jesus, the Son of God. Morally they were supposed to be shut off from the nations around them by the laws and worship of Jehovah. Evidently no person possessed the right to lead the sheep, until He came whose right it was. (Ezekiel 34:1-31) There had been impostors who came not in the appointed way, who preferred claims over them — hirelings, and not shepherds. But Scripture had pointed out certain marks by which the true Shepherd was to be known. His very birthplace, the character and glory of His Person, and the circumstances of His life were foretold. The only One who ever possessed these marks — and who thus came in by the appointed way, the door — was Jesus. To Him the porter opened; and we may easily see that John the Baptist — or the Holy Ghost through John — flung the door wide open, at the commencement of the mission of Jesus. His voice was heard and recognized by the waiting remnant, i.e., those souls who possessed true faith in the midst of the unbelieving mass of the Jewish nation. At the end of chap. 8, we see how the mass rejected Jesus, notwithstanding the mighty grace which longed to bless them. Being thus refused by them, the sheepfold could no longer be the place for the sheep. Jesus as a divine Person takes His place outside, and it became a necessary consequence that the true sheep must also come out. For the believers of that day it was a question of either going on with a religious system which rejected Jesus and refused Him His place, or going right outside to Himself, whatever the consequences might be.

Unconsciously the man of chap. 9 was led into this position. Disowned by neighbours and relatives, he is at last excommunicated by the religious authorities, because he persisted in giving Jesus credit for being what He was, and for doing what He had done. So now, if we persist in giving Jesus the only place of which He is worthy, we shall find how decidedly the religious world of today endorses their action towards the blind man cured, and casts us out. Was he the loser? The man had lost his religious status with the Jews. His communications with friends and relations were all broken off; he was for the moment against all the religious opinion of the day, and was regarded as a stupid upstart. Again we ask, was he the loser?

There could not have been a more fitting moment surely for the blessed Lord to appear on the scene; and by privately disclosing His own personal glory to the solitary outcast (chap. 9: 35-38), He vindicated his position against his opponents (compare Isaiah 66:5), and showed the incalculable gain that accrued to one who was outside of any, or every, religious system in the company of the Son of God.

Such is the position unfolded to us in the parable at the beginning of chap. 10. Although rejected by the corrupt Jewish professors, the sheep had really heard the voice of the Shepherd Son of God, and had followed Him outside of all that he had known and valued. But the Lord now goes on to describe the marvellous gain that this man (and with him all who occupy a similar position with Himself) had received. The ninth verse points out instantly three blessings which were the common and known portion of those who entered in by Him, the rejected Shepherd. It is well known that neither salvation, liberty, nor food, in the sense of this verse, could be enjoyed by Old Testament believers.\* By pasture we understand that the sheep have access to the place where the food grows.

\*Blessed as it was to know Jehovah in the old dispensation, its chief characteristics were 1 a priestly order between Jehovah and His people; 2 the repetition of sacrifices which never settled permanently the question of sin; and 3 the consequent impossibility of the believer's happy approach to, and delight in, God. The veil was not rent till Jesus died.

It will be noticed how the Lord throws the door open to any poor sinner; and if one were now to enter in by Jesus, i.e., avail himself of that blessed, rejected Saviour, he would straightway be saved, and become a sheep. What does a man want with pasture?

Now there are four things which may be said to constitute that pasture. The first is life (v. 10); the second, intimacy (vv. 14, 15); the third, unity (v. 16); and the fourth, security (vv. 27-30). With regard to the first, life, Jesus says, "I am come that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" (v. 10, R.V.) The life which all the sheep have is "in abundance," i.e., there is no stint of it. How much we have apprehended of it is another question; it is ours. It is a life completely beyond any imputation of sin (Romans 8:1-4), a life of victory over sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:1-58), a life, too, of relationship and favour with God (John 20:17), and of fellowship with the Father and the Son. (John 17:3.) Nothing less than this, let me repeat, is the portion of Christ's sheep. The ground on which it is made ours is necessarily His death, for how else could the judgment that lay on us be removed? As He says, "The good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." We have now no fear in approaching God. The second thing is Intimacy. Most will have learned that in the Revised Version there is no break between verses 14 and 15 of John 10:1-42 It reads, "I am the good Shepherd, and I know Mine own and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father." We are baffled by the depth of such a statement, but its nature is clear; that just as there was an unbroken freedom of intercourse between Jesus and the Father, even so it is our portion to have the same character of intercourse with Him, as our Shepherd. He once more reminds us of the basis of it — His own death. We are learning, I trust, what this is. Jesus was ever in the Father's bosom (John 1:18): John rested on His (John 13:23). What Jesus enjoyed with the Father, John was free to do with Jesus. Oh! to think that such a home has been opened to us as the Shepherd's breast! Young believer, this is a special privilege for you (Is. 40: 11), to have no reserves with Him. There are none on His side; let there be none on

yours. The third thing is unity. Gathering the Jewish sheep out of that religious system which had so long held them, the Shepherd tells (in v. 16) how He was about to associate others with them, doubtless believers from amongst the Gentiles ("not of this fold"): and that there would be one flock, and one Shepherd. There is a great cry for practical unity amongst Christians today, but how many of those who seek it are aware that the only ground upon which it is possible, is that we should rally round the One Shepherd? You may devise new rules that appear to afford a wide basis for unity: but, at best, it will only be like a new enclosure — an abiding contradiction to that liberty of following Himself, which the Lord points out as the portion of all His sheep. It is only as you give the Son of God His place, and allow Him to have His way, that practical unity can be realized.

Moreover, it is blessed to see that it is in the midst of the company thus rallying round Him as one flock, that we have unfolded the Father's love to the Son (v. 17, 18), and the Son's perfect accomplishment of the Father's will. Would that we knew more of Him! Depend upon it, there is a power and a warmth little dreamed of by most, in such a place. It may be "winter" outside (v. 22), but not for those within who are reposing on Jesus' breast. No chilling blasts are felt within the circle of the Father's love. The last thing is security. The Jews challenge the Lord's rights to the sheep, when they ask Him if He is the Christ (v. 24). This leads our Shepherd to state clearly enough (for any who have ears to hear) that He has indeed rights over the sheep, and that He will never, no never, give them up. Being the Shepherd, the sheep heard His voice, and followed Him. This was a very convincing fact, that should have brought home to everybody the truth that Jesus was the true Shepherd come at last (contrast v. 8). He tells the Jews seven things about His sheep which may well gladden our hearts. Four things mark their intimacy with their Shepherd: — (1) They hear His voice. (2) He knows them. (3) They follow Him. (4) He gives them eternal life.

Let me point out, without going into detail, that He says "I know them," before He says "I give unto them eternal life." It is in the full knowledge of all that we are, that Jesus has bestowed upon us eternal life. The remaining three things are — (5) The assurance that they shall never perish; (6) That they are protected by the Lord's own hand; and (7) That anyone attempting to get them would have to reckon first with the Father, who "is greater than all," and whose hand covers them likewise.

Nothing could be more conclusive an answer to the Jews' cavil about Jesus' rights to the sheep, than the fact that the Father had given them to Him. It is this that makes us so precious to Him that He will never let us perish. As we survey the wealth and freshness of such a place as this, into which the Son of God has brought us, we feel that they are, indeed, green pastures. Truly, "the Lord is my Shepherd: I shall not want." Some may say, "How shall we be supported, if we act upon such truth?" Well, dear reader, if the blind man was a beggar at the beginning of chap. 9, receiving from man's hands from day to day, he was still a receiver at the end of the chapter, only now not from man, but from the Son of God. Jesus never calls your faith into a path where His faithfulness will not sustain you, and His resources are equal to every emergency. Even if you have to go into a desert with Him, remember He can, out of your "five barley loaves, and two small fishes," not only feed the "five thousand" around you, but give you a goodly twelve basketsful for yourself as well.

W. H. Westcott.

## 30. "Head over all things to the church."

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"Head over all things to the church."

W. H. Westcott.

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

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1948, page 42.

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

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

God's picture of Christ and the Church is set forth so clearly and simply, before man's fall. Adam was made in the image and likeness of God, set up as head over the earth, rendered competent to be God's delegate on the earth. He was allowed, in that sphere of glory to feel a want. There was none with whom he could communicate his thoughts, he had no companion like himself; he was alone and felt his need in this respect. Then God gave him a bride, formed of his life, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, comely, suitable to himself, a competent partner in that glorious headship. She is taken out of his side while he is in a deep sleep and on his awakening, God brings the woman to him for the satisfaction of his love and to be the sharer of his glory. This is all a beautiful picture of Christ and the Church in that transcendent glory of Christ as Head over all things. Blessed happy portion of each of us who have, through grace, been called into this wonderful Assembly of God. It is interesting and instructive to note that in the Epistle to the Ephesians the Spirit of God through the Apostle does not begin with the life of Christ, but with His death, of which the deep sleep of Adam was a figure. The truth of the Church was not made known in the Old Testament, and the first mention we have of it is by the Lord, given to us in Matthew 16:18, "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and in the Scripture quoted at the head of this paper we have the first mention of the place of the Church with Christ in His glory as Head over all things.

It is the Church of the living God and everything in it is living; it is formed of "living stones" (1 Peter 2:5) and, as we learn from Romans 8:8-9, everything of man after the flesh has been judged and ruled out of the Church since, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is formed of those

born anew of God and indwelt by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, by whom all are baptised into one body, in which all earthly distinctions are gone. In that Body there is no ritualism, no rationalism and no lawlessness. There is variety in action and function, yet one body, as Romans 12:3-5 shows; and under one control, it is here for the will of God, set free and separate from the world, entirely transformed. From 1 Corinthians 12:4, we learn the differing members of the body and their functions, but one permeating life throughout the body. Then the differing capabilities of the members, but one Lord controlling (verse 5); the different detailed works but one God whose end is to be served (verse 6). A simple illustration of this is to be found in men working on some construction. All operations are to fulfil the plan and will of the contractor. The foreman directs the men, and then the detailed operations, the fruit of life, eye, brain, fingers, hands, feet, etc. In Ephesians 4:1-32 we have the administration of the Head in giving gifts to men. He gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the saints — speaking the truth in love and growing up to Him in all things, every part responsive to direction. In Colossians 1:1-29; Colossians 2:1-23 we have brought before us the truth that all fulness resides in Him, the Head, and thus there is the exhortation to hold the Head in contrast to heeding the beguiling persuasions of men.

Again, how great is the grace that has not only wrought us for a place in the Church but has revealed to us His thoughts and purposes concerning it in Christ Jesus, and the Ephesian assembly was the masterpiece of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, under Christ. Alas! he had to visualise the sad failure that would come in after his departure as recorded in Acts 20:29-32, and which has developed over and over again throughout the history of the Church on earth. In the light of this, well might we take heed to the warning of the Apostle given to Timothy in the first chapter of his First Epistle and also in his Second Epistle in each chapter of which he calls attention to the influences militating against the maintenance of the truth. Jude also warns us of Apostasy and the need for loyalty. While Revelation 3:1-22 gives us a door closed against Christ on earth, in Revelation 4:1-11 a door is opened in Heaven, indicating that our viewpoint is henceforth to be from above, not from anything on earth.

## 31. A Lesson the Holiness of God.

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A Lesson the Holiness of God.

W. H. Westcott.

One thing stands out very clearly in the books of Moses. It is that God, in dealing with man fallen, used tangible and visible, means to bring out His intrinsic holiness and His abhorrence of evil, with His judgment upon it. At the same time He indicated ways and means whereby men might be delivered and reconciled, and right relations be established or restored; and whereby God might righteously bless them, rule over them, and dwell among them, according to His own heart.

While all persons and nations are involved in the fall of Adam, and have a common heritage of sin, the ceremonies and ordinances appointed of God for the people of Israel are particularly important in respect of this necessary holiness.

Numbers 5:1-4 is a case in point. The whole of this particular chapter indeed, we may say, makes it clear that His holy eye was upon His people, and that neither defilement nor trespass nor unfaithfulness could be overlooked.

Let us consider the position in which He stood with them.

God redeemed Israel from Egypt and its dominion and first brought them to Himself in the wilderness of Sinai. Then secondly, He brought them into possession of their promised blessing in the land of Canaan.

Now while in the wilderness as a redeemed people, all their supplies were from God, their movements were directed by God, and their entire civil and religious arrangements, order and organisation, were of God. The Tabernacle in all its beauty in their midst was in every detail and appointment of His design. The camp in its perfect order was pitched or struck as He might indicate by the Pillar of cloud and of fire. The tribes were not a disorderly horde, nor did they evolve out of their own minds a better system as time went on; they took their positions from the first in the way He prescribed. What was to be allowed was clearly defined; what was not allowed because of His holiness and glory was equally clearly stated. The whole code of laws was framed to remind the people that they were nationally God's people; and the question was ever to be asked in every matter, "Is this commended of God? Is it comely in God's sight and consistent with His presence and glory?" The Tabernacle then having been constructed\* (as in Exodus), instructions too having been given for priests and Levites, offerings, festivals, and for the practical conduct of the people of Israel from day to day (as in Leviticus and Numbers); and the whole system having been acknowledged by the visible presence of the glory of God (see Exodus 40:34; Exodus 40:8); we come to this reminder in Numbers 5:1-31, that the presence of God must challenge the condition of those He has chosen to be near Him.

{\*With all its suggestions for us of Christ, Christ's work, Christ's glory, Christ's people, and of our relations to God in the Spirit.}

Heaven is God's dwelling place, as Solomon said, and nothing that defiles can be allowed there. Hence, in connection with that which represents heaven's rule on earth, there must be the exclusion of defilement also. The word is, "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and everyone that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead, both male and female shall ye put out, without the camp shall ye put them, that they defile not their camps in the midst of which I dwell."

Notice, that in one sense God regards the camp as one complete whole; hence all His people were to be concerned about putting out the leper, etc. Actually according to Numbers 2:1-34, there were five camps, namely, of Judah, of Reuben, of Ephraim, and of Dan; and that of Levi in the middle surrounding the tabernacle. The individual leper would have defiled his own camp, but that in its turn would have defiled the whole nation where God dwelt, hence it was not enough that he should be put out of his own camp, he must be put outside of them all. No such thing was possible as that a man put out of one section according to the word of Jehovah could be welcomed or even tolerated in another section. There were differences in the tribes, and each had a place peculiarly its own; but there was no difference in their relations to the holiness of God; all were tested by it and regulated according to it. What a solemn lesson was taught to the whole camp then, as well as to the individual who became defiled! How blessed, indeed, the privilege of being near to God; yet how solemn the responsibility of the place of nearness and communion.

Briefly then we consider

(1) THE LEPER.

(2) THE PERSON WITH AN ISSUE.

(3) ONE DEFILED BY THE DEAD.

(1) THE LEPER, as generally considered in Scripture, was one whose malady could not be subdued (2 Kings 5:7) His condition was pitiable indeed, and every compassion might well be shown him; but his disease was contagious and defiling. Sentiment might have pleaded hard for exceptions to be made to the law, but in this case in addition to the soundest sanitary reasons there was the Divine command, "every leper." Leprosy is such that, though you may do much to alleviate the trouble, trying plasters, and bandages, and ointment, giving good housing conditions, and supplying pleasure as far as possible, it is always breaking out in other places, or extending in spite of the sadness connected with it, or the care, the anxious care, that might be bestowed upon it. It is true that according to Leviticus 13:1-59, every care ought to be taken lest a boil, or local inflammation or burning, should be called leprosy, and a mere invalid suffering from a temporary disorder be hastily and wrongly excluded from intercourse with God's people and deprived of fellowship. But when leprosy is discovered and recognisable as such, there is no alternative, the leper must be excluded. As an example of the bearing of this, a man may do a thing a first time which God's saints discern to be disorderly, and yet the evidence be not clear that he is wilful, and there may rightly be patience, and the bringing of God's word to bear in love upon the case. But if the disorderly thing be repeated, becoming more and more aggravated in spite of the care taken, or if one detail be adjusted in the man's course only for the same disorder to break out again and again in other ways, it indicates an unjudged will at work, and this is leprosy. This would not be ignorance, for when a man insists on liberty to do evil, his presence among the people of God

must be detriment and loss, and places them all under the discipline and governmental Judgment of God. It is not sentiment that must govern their action, however prominent or dear or able a leper may be, they are to consider that the Holy God dwells in the midst of His people, and He says, "every leper" Alas! these are days when even the platforms in the Christian profession are occupied by men who, claiming the right to be regarded as ministers of God, use the inside place to attack, or in a less open way to vitiate, the very truths upon which true Christian fellowship is based, and thus depreciate the standard of what is due to God.

(2) THE PERSON THAT HAS AN ISSUE (whether it be dysentery or any other kind of trouble), was equally an undesirable associate for sanitary reasons, and Leviticus 15:1-33 shows what strenuous care was to be exercised as to him. But — still more important for the right understanding of the purity and holiness of God — every such person was to be excluded from the camp of Israel. A man that had an issue was one in whose case there was the expenditure of vitality in a wrong direction. Vital fluids of the body were in some way escaping, and everybody knows what terrible havoc may be wrought among huge masses of population by the non-segregation of these contagious diseases. There were, of course, sanitary and good reasons for this law; but we should ill understand it if we did not see that there is moral significance also as to what is right in the sight of God. Usually, for example, the plea is urged in these days that if a man, and as long as a man, be sincere, we ought not to interfere with his convictions. He may have a tremendous zeal, like Israel after the flesh in Paul's day (Romans 10:1-21), going about to establish his own righteousness, and not submitting to the righteousness of God! but, says sentiment, "he is in earnest, and that is all that matters" "If," say others, "we do the best we can and leave the rest, will not God accept us?" In a hundred ways we may be expending vitality, but is it only an unholy discharge which God regards as a disease? Further, under the plea of devotedness or zeal, tens thousands, even among the saints of God — more's the pity set themselves to services which are contrary to the ways and will of God revealed in Christ. So seriously does He regard every trace of this misdirected vital energy that in the type every thing that such a person touched or used was defiled in His sight, and had to be either cleansed or broken. (Leviticus 15:1-12). Is it not melancholy to consider and yet sadly true, that a man — Israelite born — might yet become a danger to his fellows by an unchecked and uncontrollable flow of nature? and that instead of contributing his full quota to the prosperity, the unity, the purity, the separation of God's people, his presence everywhere contributed to distress, to defilement, to discipline from God among them?

(3) ONE DEFILED BY THE DEAD. In common with those of the Gentile nations, Israelites had their families, their relatives, their neighbours, any one of whom was liable to be stricken down by death. Of every day occurrence as death must have been, and involving the handling of the bodies of the dead, every occasion of contact with death meant defilement and consequent exclusion from the camp. The High Priest alone, by virtue of his office as Representative of all the people, and maintaining them all in their relations with God, was forbidden to defile himself for the dead, however near or dear (See Leviticus 10:1-7). No considerations of self-pity or mourning were to be permitted for a moment to cause interruption in the service of that one on whom typically the fate of the people depended. So, surely, the cause of the saints of God never undergoes intermission in the hands of Christ, our risen and ascended High Priest (Leviticus 21:10-12). The ordinary priests, of Aaron's sons who offered the bread of God from day to day, were permitted by law to

mourn and to be defiled by the dead, but only in the case of the death of one of their nearest relatives. God did not intend that His people should become unnatural, however spiritual they might be. Yet their service of ministering to Him in the sanctuary was of such prime importance that only on rare occasions was a priest permitted to absent himself from this holy service. And as a reminder of the holiness of that service, on the one hand, and of the taint of contact with that which spoke of sin's presence and penalty on the other, outside of the camp — as defiled by the dead — must he go (Leviticus 21:1-9). The Nazarite, peculiarly and utterly separated unto his God as he was, whether from his birth, or within the limit of a certain length of time if he so dedicated himself, was very seriously affected by contact with death. Even if by accident, as we say, he happened to be with a man who died suddenly, the whole of his previous period of Nazariteship was lost, and he had to recommence the days or months Or years of his separation. Meanwhile a mere expression of regret would not do, defiled by the dead, the inexorable law of defilement applied, and not till the sacrifice that removes defilement in such case had been offered could he be suitable for God's presence and company (Numbers 6:6-12). His place and character of separation to the lord depended upon his personal freedom from defilement. The ordinary Israelites, male or female, were taught in the same striking way the seriousness of having anything to say to sin in its result in man. If a man died in a tent, not only did it become a house of mourning but all who were therein and all who came therein were defiled by the dead. Even in the open field too — as for instance on a field of battle — or lifting the corpse of one killed by accident, or touching a bone, or a grave, this lesson pressed itself home on the minds of the people; all were defiled by the dead in the sight of that holy God Who tabernacled in Israel's midst. A very solemn consideration is offered us in Numbers 31:19-24 namely, that even in the exhilaration of a victorious campaign, never were the purity and holiness of God's presence to be forgotten. When the governmental judgment of God fell on the sinning nation of Midian, those who came into contact with their dead bodies were to remain outside the camp until cleansed (Numbers 19:11-20). Their stay outside and their forfeiture of the privileges usually enjoyed by God's people might be only temporary, as Numbers 9:6-10 shows, since those precluded from taking the passover by their defilement in the first month were permitted, by the grace of God, to take it in the second month; but always on condition of the defilement being removed in a manner suited to the glory of God.

Finally, in Numbers 19:1-22, we have instructions as to how — when defiled by the dead — men were to be brought within the camp according to Divine holiness. The ashes of a red heifer slain and burnt were to be stored for this purpose, some of them mingled with running water, and the liquid thus obtained became a water of separation which, when sprinkled on the defiled one, met his defilement in God's own way and made his restoration to communion and privilege possible. This was the usual course; though the Nazarite (Numbers 6:9-12) brought his defilement offering of a different order.

Leaving the conscience of the reader to be exercised as God may direct in the detailed application of these undoubtedly serious principles, it maybe possible to discover certain broad aspects of their meaning.

What makes the consideration of this subject so searching is that we have in defilement not the thought of outward sins, offences against the moral code, such as idolatry or injustice to one's neighbour, which would bring in direct and righteous penalty, but the solemn reminder of

disqualification for communion with God and fellowship with His loyal people by association or contact with what defiles.

Even if as individuals we weigh this, we can see how sensitive the Holy Spirit within us must be as to our environment and associations, whether in daily life or Christian service. But in our chapter the lesson is given more in connection with the people or assembly of God as a whole. There was diversity among them, for God speaks of "their camps." But here was unity, for "the camp" comprised them all Administratively there were tribes, and a position, a testimony, a duty, for each and all. Religiously they were one nation in the midst of whom dwelt Jehovah, their God. And I submit to the reader that (1) Israel was not many fellowships, but one, (2) That the conditions of that fellowship were defined by God alone, and

(3) That God was always in their midst on the wilderness journey, so that never to the end of it could those conditions be amended or withdrawn. On their part conformity to those conditions was imperative. Even though redeemed, no real joy, no communion with God, was possible save under those conditions which His holiness required and which His wisdom prescribed. Whether in the east section of the camp or the west, whether in the north or the south, the rule was the same, the leper, the one with the issue, the person defiled by the dead, was excluded, and the exclusion lasted as long as the defilement lasted. Had it not been so, the defiled one would have affected the whole camp of Israel, and would have brought down the discipline of Jehovah upon them all. His presence did not simply defile the section in which they might so wrongfully permit him to stay; the whole of the people were affected by it in whichever of their parts he was found. Hence, on the one hand, the gravity of indifference anywhere; and hence, on the other hand, the folly of any section of the people of God saying or thinking that "their" fellowship is not involved in the general failure. All are involved in it, and no movement from one section of the people of God to another takes us out of the shame and grief or relieves us of the governmental judgment of God. The question may be asked, In what way can this lesson on the holiness of God be applied for our guidance at this period of the Church's history?

It is clear that if we regard the people of God as a whole as they are to be seen on earth to day, they are deeply involved in guilt because terribly mixed up with almost every evil. The holiness which should have marked the Church as the dwelling place of God is exchanged for a state in which may be found defilement at every turn and in every shape. Not only is the simple and clear instruction of God's word for the Christian assembly set aside or ignored, but man has substituted his will and way in God's things till it is questionable whether the apostles would recognise the "Christian profession "as Christianity at all So terribly is defilement bound up in it that he who would dream of purifying the whole is a dreamer indeed, and however reluctantly the Christian may have been to admit the crushing of all his once bright hopes, he comes to see — if taught by the Spirit and through the Word — that the governmental judgment of God will fall on Christendom as a profession on earth as surely as it fell on Israel in the flesh in days gone by. As a witness for God on earth, Christendom is doomed (1 Peter 4:17, Jude, Revelation 3:1-22 & Revelation 17:1-18).

Yet even at the end God's word has cheered us by showing that all which is vital remains and will remain. Not a true believer will be missing in the grand "finale" when Christ comes. Further, the Holy Ghost remains with us now, and will do to the end; Christ in glory remains, accessible to all

who call upon Him out of a pure heart; and the word of God is preserved to us, speaking to us as it does of the whole truth of our calling on high in Christ Jesus, and ever pointing out to us the way in which we may walk so as to have the approval of the Lord, and enjoy communion still with Divine Persons and with each other. Moreover, it assures to us that if as few as two can clear themselves of every divergent interest, and be in truth (not merely nominally, but in truth) gathered to HIS Name, His presence is assured. But if so, then the lesson of the holiness of His presence must be learned and practised, or else no group of individuals no company, but would fear to say the Lord is among them. His presence imposes conditions, and where conditions are not maintained it only means judgment. We may not couple the holy Name with independence or licence or carelessness of any kind. Let each reader then very definitely refuse to countenance that defilement in his own environment which is inconsistent with the holiness of God and look out for the company of any saint who likewise seeks grace to be free for God's will and pleasure and their joint prayer and exercise and service may be one means God will use for saving others with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Oh! let us not be of those who imagine that to come out from denominations and to repudiate a sectarian name is the same thing as being gathered to the Name of the Lord and being assured of His presence. The latter — His presence — can only be connected with the condition of being gathered to HIS Name; and that implies the self-judgment in the individual which leads to the removal of all defilement. Jehovah's presence might not be associated with defilement in the days of old; nor can the Lord's presence be enjoyed where defilement is allowed today.

## 32. How Perfect was the Lord Jesus!

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How Perfect was the Lord Jesus!

W. H. Westcott.

Holy from His birth, intrinsically so, He had nothing in common with the pursuits of this sinful world. There was no home for Jesus here. His affections and all the activities of His holy being were trained on what suited God. His meat was to do His will. As Man, He fixed His heart Godward, and found in God all that man could desire. In Him the devil was given the lie. The enemy of our race had subtly infused into the first man's mind that he could do better for himself if he shook off the allegiance to the Deity, and acted contrary to God. In Jesus we see the new order of Man, the woman's Seed, destroying the works of the devil. His heart — with all its affections so infinitely pure, His mind — with all its powers so great, His will — all steadfast and true, found unceasing and unchanging delight in God. He reposed there, He retired there, His communion lay there, in God.

## 33. The Intercession of Christ.

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The Intercession of Christ.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 35, 1945, page 211.

There are only two passages in which this is referred to: the first in Romans 8:34, and the second in Hebrews 7:25. In the Epistle to the Romans the saints are considered in the light of what they were before the grace of God reached them, and then in the light of the position and character granted to them on earth by that grace. They are justified, and are brought into the circle of the love of God. They are indwelt by God's Spirit, who empowers them to suffer now with Christ, even as they will reign with Him hereafter. But, though delivered from condemnation and set free by the Spirit from the power of inherent sin, they are surrounded by pressure. There is groaning in the whole creation, till Christ returns; and there is opposition from men who reckon Christians as sheep for slaughter. The pain of trial on the one hand, and the perils of persecution on the other would depress and discourage the elect of God, did they not learn that their Representative, Christ, both died and rose, and went to God's right hand — there to make intercession for them. Assured of this Friend in the high court of heaven, they are not only enabled to endure, but to triumph whilst enduring. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the believing company, associated with the glorious Person of Christ, is seen coming out of old and venerable traditions; quitting Moses and Aaron, Canaan and the temple, law and sacrifice — all to go forth unto Him, bearing His reproach, until the day when the kingdom which cannot be shaken shall be visibly established in heaven and earth. They need, consequently, not only to be led into the enjoyment of heavenly associations, but also to be sustained in the persecution sure to occur from their former religious companions. For them Christ, having superseded all former leaders, has made their final triumph secure, is seated on the right hand of the throne of God; and in calling upon His people to follow, is ever living to make intercession for them. His sympathy with them in all their experiences is most perfect, making them to realize that He is their best and dearest Friend; while He leads their yearnings up to Himself in God's presence, giving them an at-home feeling within the Holiest of All.

These, then, are the two passages wherein the thought of intercession is connected with Christ personally. Of intercession itself, and what is meant by it, it is plain in these instances that Jesus the Christ is interesting Himself actively in heaven on the behalf of His people on the earth. For their atonement, His sacrifice on Calvary renders them for ever clear in the sight of God. There is no condemnation now to them that are in Christ Jesus; and being once purged they have no more conscience of sins. But His resurrection and ascension did not terminate His interest in His saints. The last action at Bethany, when He lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples, is an assurance that-even the thought of ascension into glory did not obliterate His deep concern in their welfare; while the words "for us" in Romans, and "for them" in Hebrews, both emphasize the truth that He is using His position and His power on behalf of His beloved ones here. But intercession involves the idea of His speaking to some One about us and for us. Is it not affecting to think of this, that the

risen and exalted Saviour, the Great Priest of our confession, sitting on the right hand of God, is closely watching us in our weakness and trial, and is speaking to God about us, incessantly requesting on our behalf what we are often too ignorant or too feeble to ask for ourselves? One consequence is that no circumstance can be conceived, of things present or to come, which can separate us from the love of Christ. If we think in some weary moment that He has forgotten, or that His intercession has ceased, let us be assured that He is at that very moment more surely soliciting mercy and grace on our behalf; and that in looking to Him we shall be supported beyond ourselves.

Another consequence is that instead of being overwhelmed in an environment of sorrow, or pressure from business care, or loss of friends the very contrary is the case: they are found to be means of loosening our minds from this world, and of setting us free for a fuller appreciation of our Lord and Representative where He has gone. He measures the effect of all such occurrences upon our spirits, and utters our names before God with the suitable request that either the circumstances may be altered for our good, or the ministry of His Spirit and His servants be so directed, as that we may occupy our hearts with His perfections rather than with our own distress.

Thus we see that our Lord (who is over all, God blessed for ever) has taken and retains a place in Manhood for us, in which He still prays even though seated upon the throne. He cannot be other than or less than He is, the Son. He was the Son in the days of creation, He was the Son in humiliation on the earth, He is the Son now upon heaven's throne, and will ever be the Son when He comes to His kingdom for ever and ever, and wields the sceptre of righteousness.

## 34. A Jealous God

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A Jealous God

John 16:31-32

W. H. Westcott.

Bethany appears to be one of the very few places in the whole of Palestine where the Lord could make Himself at home. It was a spot where He found an ear for what He had to say with regard to the Father and where His human affections were drawn out; for we are told: "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus". But a great sorrow had come into the household. The very spot on earth which seemed the nearest to heaven was allowed to feel the withering blast of death. When Lazarus fell sick, they sent to the Lord in the hope that He would come at once, and arrest the case and prevent it reaching such a sorrowful climax but no, though the Lord received their message, knew their desire, entered into all their sorrow and pressure, He allowed matters to go on to their dreaded end. Lazarus died, and the consequence was that His action was very unintelligible to those who surrounded the household. "Could not this Man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

They wondered, as we sometimes wonder, why it is that the Lord allows distressful sorrow and crushing bereavement; why He does not come in and deliver. We go to the Lord, and it seems as though He neither heeds nor hears. Nor is the loss of loved ones our only trial. Many sorrows press upon the saints in a world where it is becoming increasingly difficult to live; what business disappointments and worries there are. We cry to the Lord, we say "We have told Him about it, surely He will deliver"; and somehow or other, it has not been His way to deliver. The blow that we feared has fallen; we wonder, and think how can it be that no deliverance has come?

We think also of the sorrows of the beloved church of God, of the place she has in the affections of Christ, of the love of the Father who has given her to Christ, and the fact that each individual saint is the subject of divine affections. Yet if we look at her actual state we are tempted to exclaim, Does God love the church? Does Christ care for His saints? We have seen troubles impending, afflictions looming, sorrows pressing and when we have cried to Him He has not arrested the disaster. Why did He not prevent the catastrophe? The breach has come, the sorrow is here, and all the pressure of it, as though it were the pressure and the bitterness of death itself. The Jews who came to comfort Mary, seeing her rise up hastily, said, "She goeth to the grave, to weep there", to weep in hopeless sorrow. Perhaps some of us are inclined to think all hope is gone, and have allowed despair to seize us, since our loved ones have been snatched from us, our business shattered, our earthly hopes dashed to the ground, and, worst of all, our expectations with regard to the saints have received a bitter check; and here we are scattered, cleft, broken, with the bitterness of death upon our spirits. It may appear as though we have nothing to do now but to sit down and mourn and weep over all the sorrow, just as the Jews thought that Mary went to the grave to weep there. But instead of going to the grave with all the pressure of hopeless sorrow,

she went to the feet of Jesus. That is where God wants us to go, no matter by what means the end is reached; only let us accept the pressure from Him, and just get right to the feet of Jesus with it; this is His aim with all His ways with us.

I was rather struck in our reading this morning in the last chapter of Luke. You will remember how the Lord led His disciples out as far as Bethany, and then lifted up His hands and blessed them, and was parted from them and carried up into heaven. Why, surely, if there were a place which might have detained Him, it would have been Bethany, the one spot on earth nearest heaven to His spirit. Worship, service, adoration were all there; but Bethany was not the Father's home, so He says, "I cannot leave your spirits even here; I must have you right away from this world in every shape or form it may assume to you. I do not want you to linger even in Bethany; I want you to go clean out of it all to where I go". Their spirits might have hoped to rest at Bethany, but He leads them further still, up to the right hand of God.

It may be we have thought that if I join this or that company, I may find a Bethany for my spirit, and I may settle down, and I may really go on with a free and happy spirit, without any hindrance to serve my Lord. Well, it is all right to find Bethanys here, but, brethren, if our hearts stay in Bethany the Lord will smash it up for us; He will roll death in; He will break up everything, if thereby He may get our affection for Himself. Do not you desire this? Is it worthwhile that He should detach our affections from even the best things down here, from what sight and sense would build upon, and just draw us up to Himself alone in the glory? Yes, the Lord has such an affection for us that it is akin to jealousy. I have been reading in Exodus a little bit lately, and I thought the nearest revelation to the christian revelation comes out where it says, "The Lord thy God is a jealous God". Do you not see, love takes the form of jealousy if there is the smallest rival to it? The nearest revelation to the christian one of love that could be given in Old Testament times is that God is a jealous God. You remember Solomon's Song says that love is as strong as death. Do you know what follows? It is that jealousy is as cruel as the grave. Jealousy is the form love takes the moment there is a rival, and if the Lord sees we are going to set our hearts on anything down here, building up some little system for ourselves, clear of this error and the other error, He will smash it all up, because it would very soon be an object to us and draw us away from Himself. What He claims and what He wants is that we should be wholly and entirely for Himself. He draws us up by one method or another. Yes, there is death, there is the pressure, there is the breakup, but what is it all for? Well, I think that He is knocking at the door in the breakup. In the third chapter of Revelation He says, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock"; and that is what He is doing by the bereavement, by the pressure, by the breakup. He is knocking. "And if any man hear My voice, and open the door. I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." I will take My last meal with the man who has got a heart for Me. May the Lord just write the desire in our hearts to respond with undivided affection to the true and undivided affection He has for us, and trust Him to order our pathway according to the love of His heart and the skillfulness of His hands.

(This article was written about 1911 by W. H. Westcott. To those who have enquired the article "Man Dwelling in God, and God in Man" which appeared in the May/June issue, was from the pen of the same contributor and was written in the Congo Mission field also about 1911.Editor.)

## 35. A note on Joh\_1:14

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A note on John 1:14

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1948, page 89. In the Authorized Version this verse reads, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth." In Darby's New Translation it is, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth."

Differences will be noted in the above, worthy of reverent consideration; reverent because they speak of One whom all true Christians revere. The first change is from "was made" to "became." The same Greek verb is used five times in the same form in verses 1 to 14 of this chapter, and several times also in another form. All things were made (became or received being) through Him and without Him not one thing received being (became) which has received being. There was (became) a man sent from God. The world was made (became) by Him. "The Word became flesh."

It is clear then that Scripture, in saying that the Word became flesh, teaches us that this was a new beginning, a condition not existing before, but now become true of the One who was and is the Word. And all true Christians agree surely that the words "became flesh" refer to His becoming Man; to the Incarnation of the Word, in fact. The second difference is in one sense a minor one. "We beheld," in that context, would probably convey to any spiritual mind that it was spiritual vision and not mere physical sight. So that it would not mean a mere incident in the lives of the beholders, but a continuous impression upon the mind, and hence is rendered in the New Translation as, "we have contemplated "His glory." But this note more especially relates to the words that follow. The Authorized Version has, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." The New Translation has, "a glory as of an only-begotten with a Father." The actual words in the Greek give no definite article to either "glory," "only begotten" or "Father." Hence the Authorized Version is too specific. The translation therein given would imply that John and the other Apostles with him had some data in their minds of the eternal relations between the only-begotten Son and the Father, before He became flesh, which enabled them to identify them with their beloved Lord when He did become flesh. The absence of the definite article, while it forbids this idea, does, to a certain extent, lead the English reader to lean towards the indefinite article as the New Translation gives it. But — is the indefinite article altogether right? It is needful to make proper English of it, for in such a case the English language requires either the definite or the indefinite article. Does not the insertion of the indefinite article, however, somewhat obscure the passage? So much has been made of the change from the to a, that some have thought only of the phrase as an illustration, and in consequence have involved themselves in a comparison between Christ and anybody in that relationship of an only son with a father. Many would repudiate any such thought. But while there is an indefinite article in English, the Greek language does not possess an

indefinite article at all, so that if they base such teaching on the indefinite form of the article in English, they are building on a flimsy foundation. The Greek words for "His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten son with a father," taking them in their order, and literally translated are, "the glory his, glory as only-begotten (or unique) with father."

Now if their meaning be limited to illustration, then we must find some only son with a father in human history who answers to such a description. He must possess glory and be full of grace and truth, else the illustration is only a fictitious one. Can we find one? The nearest that I can think of would be Isaac with Abraham. One would not ignore for a moment the typical bearing of their history; but no one who knows it would think of them being full of grace and truth. Both Abraham and Isaac denied their wives, and publicly dishonoured the holy name of Jehovah whose saints they were; and Isaac very nearly put the blessing on the wrong man because of his appetite. It will not do to use the indefinite article in that verse, because there has never been in human history any such instance as is suggested, to give basis for the comparison, either in respect of glory, or of grace and truth.

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

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

## 36. A Lesson on Separation.

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A Lesson on Separation.

W. H. Westcott.

Swanwick, Sunday Afternoon, August 26th.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 20, 1928, page 261.

Leviticus 18:2-3 : "I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances."

Leviticus 20:24-26 : "I have separated you from other people."

Things "which I have separated from you as unclean."

"I have severed you from other people that ye should be mine."

There are one or two general remarks to be made to start with. In Leviticus 18:1-5 we have brought together certain instruction with regard to the lands of Egypt and Canaan. The land of Egypt is characterized in Exodus 20:2, and Deuteronomy 4:6, as a house of bondage. The Egyptians may not have experienced it to be such, but the people in whom God was working for blessing found it to be such. The mercy of God brought them out of it. The Exodus was for them an entire change of condition. Instead of Egypt and bondage they were brought to God as God's redeemed people.

Canaan, the land of milk and honey, was pre-eminently the land of blessing, the territory promised to Abraham and his seed.

There was a negative side and a positive side. (1) Negative, in their deliverance from bondage. (2) Positive, in their being brought into the enjoyment of the land which He had purposed for them. In Leviticus 20:22-26, which speaks of the inheritance of the land, we see that — a. Separation was with a view to the blessing that God had determined for them (v. 24). b. Separation was with a view to the purity and holiness of the people of God, already enriched (v. 25). c. Separation was with a view to intense and utter devotedness to the Lord.

I purpose to take up these three things, and urge them upon our spirits this afternoon. We have been brought out of bondage with a view to our blessing, to be holy as He is holy, and to have our hearts so brought under the sway of His grace and love that it is real liberty to be for Him and His delight alone. On the score of obligation alone the redeemed people of God ought to be wholly set for God's pleasure, apart from every other influence. Over and over again — some twenty-five times, I think — in Leviticus 18:1-30; Leviticus 19:1-37; Leviticus 20:1-27, is emphasis laid upon the fact that the One who spoke to them was Jehovah their God. A right sense of who He was and of the sovereign favour He bestowed upon them would lead to great exercise that they should be

pleasing to Him, and be absolutely clear of anything diverse from His will for them. They were not brought out of Egypt to be a disorderly rabble, nor even to devise for themselves the best way to order their conduct or movements; they were to be a consolidated nation under His rule and direction. He who delivered them promised to give them the land of blessing, and would bring the nation in. As to ourselves, once sinners of the Gentiles, we were under Satan's bondage, but we have been delivered through the death and blood-shedding of Christ, and brought to God. Some of us, if we look back, are amazed at the amount of wickedness and sin which we crowded in, in the time we were unconverted. God only knows what would have become of us had He not arrested us and intervened. But He brought us out of bondage. We became miserable in our sin, and because of our sins; the sight of our wretchedness was hateful, we wanted to flee from ourselves, as well as to escape the deserved judgment of God. Thank God we were set free. In Christ we have found the Antitype of the Passover and the Red Sea; the judgment of God is past for us in the death of the Passover Lamb, and the power of Satan and our links with the world as the sphere of Satan's power are broken in the Red Sea deliverance of Christ's death and resurrection. We find ourselves to be God's people, redeemed in His own way and by His own work; brought to God, the subjects of His eternal favour and love in Christ Jesus our Lord. But not only so. He has a plan for us. While heaven and the Father's house and glory with Christ are our ultimate destiny, I think we must take the land of Canaan as set before Israel to be the type or picture for us of what God wants us to enjoy now. As there was a land from which we have been delivered, so is there a land set before us for our present possession and enjoyment. The Lord Jesus who has died here has gone back to heaven, and having strangely won our hearts by His love expressed in death, has sent down the Holy Ghost to draw us after Himself in spirit, and to bring us into the realization of all the heavenly blessedness He has won for us even while we are still physically on the earth.

Now the present application of this is as follows. Had the church taken full possession in a practical way of its heavenly calling, had there been no failure and no departure, the heavenly life of our risen Head and Lord would have flowed unhindered through those associated with Him on earth; and holiness, unity, and love would have marked all. The power of Satan would have been overcome in spite of his determined opposition; the heavenly blessings and the heavenly calling would have been realized on earth. As Israel would have been a nation for God's pleasure and God's true witnesses on the earth, had they carried out God's will, so would the church have been an amazing expression of Christ in His beauty, love, and purity here on earth, and a mighty and blessed witness to the grace of God to the world, during the period of Christ's absence and rejection. But Israel failed. There were two main snares, idolatry and lawlessness. In Samuel's days there came in a third, a desire to be like others and to have some visible head or leader other than the Lord. Jehovah had certainly said they were not to do after the doings of the land of Egypt. But He also added, "after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I bring you shall ye not do" (Leviticus 18:3).

"The doings of the land of Canaan" actually became a variable factor as time went on. The first phase was encountered when the nation entered in Joshua's day, dispossessing the wicked inhabitants the baseness of whose lives needs only to be known to see how justly God acted in ordering their extinction as men on the earth. But as succeeding generations of Israelites were born, so did they come into different phases in the "Canaan" of their day. I may name, for instance, the days of the Judges, to which further reference will be made in a moment. Or again, the days of

Rehoboam, when frightful division followed the brighter days of David and Solomon, and the people had to choose between the divine centre (and the weakened testimony associated with it) and centres that were not divine (1 Kings 12:1-33). Later still, in the days of Hoshea (2 Kings 17:1-41), when the ten revolting and idolatrous tribes were removed, and the "Samaritans" took their place, what a mixture followed; and what different "doings of the land of Canaan" had the faithful Israelite now to face! Later still, when Judah also had failed and had been carried captive, but through God's faithful goodness a remnant were brought back, "the doings of the land of Canaan" were still their danger and their snare. Finally, in those days when the Son of God appeared, how peculiar the path of His followers, when those "doings" culminated in His rejection and crucifixion.

Now all of these phases have their lessons for us, and indicate phases of difficulty which we meet after we have got our spiritual footing on divine ground. We first are to learn what God's purpose for us is, and the heavenly calling that puts us into association with the risen and heavenly Christ. Against this Satan will fight with might and main. The moment he finds a Christian who wants to enter into and enjoy all God's purpose for him (being not content with his individual salvation, but earnestly set to be here for the will and pleasure of God in the full light of Christ's heavenly position and glory), he will use every endeavour to divert him, or to discourage and to oppose him.

Alas! many a Christian meets the second phase as we have it set out in the book of Judges. Briefly, after the death of Joshua and the elders who outlived him, the first sign of losing touch with God was relaxation in the forward movement (see Judges 1:19; Judges 1:21; Judges 1:27; Judges 1:29-31; Judges 1:33). The Lord was with those who went on (verses 2, 4, 19, 22), but it is solemn to notice how many flagged, and the growing persistence of the enemy may be seen in his determination to keep a footing among them. In verse 19, "they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron." In verse 27 "the Canaanites would dwell in that land." In verse 28, "they could not utterly drive them out." In verse 29 "the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them." So in verse 30. And sadly it goes on — "the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, for they did not drive them out," and "Naphthali dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land" (verses 32-33). Finally you have the "Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain, for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley" — a humbling position for Israel, tantamount to defeat for them, and leaving an undisturbed and unbroken frontier for the enemy.

Dear friends, it is very sad indeed if there come a time in our Christian experience when things begin to slacken, if we lose zest and cease to thirst for the Lord's things. When that is so, and if it be so, I beg any brother or sister to get before the Lord to search out the cause. Should any here have ceased to press on to the apprehension of the heavenly calling, may God arrest you today.

First, then, we have relaxation. In Judges 2:2 we discover negligence and disobedience. One thing leads to another. If there is not energy to go on steadily to learn more of the Lord, and there be negligence of His word and will, you may soon get direct disobedience. Then in verse 10 is a further step — forgetfulness of what the Lord had done for Israel. The popular idea today is that we are the summing up of all the wisdom of the past ages, to belittle what has gone before in the applauding of what we think and do. (What a mercy it is that we are constantly reminded in the Lord's Supper of what Christ has done, and of what God has done for us in Christ!) But is there not

a danger as one generation gives place to another to "pooh-pooh" that which God has taught saints in ages past?

By-and-by, as the Israelites became more self-satisfied and complacent, the Lord became displaced altogether. The next step was idolatry (verses 11-13). Forsaking Jehovah, losing the sense of grace that had delivered and blessed them, they followed what one might call the craze of the day. Baalim and Ashtaroth, with all the orgies of sensuous indulgence attending, took the place that the living God had at one time possessed, and God's discipline in government became heavier and heavier upon them. From time to time the Lord raised up judges (verse 16) as in mercy the Lord now raises up faithful men from time to time, to stem the tide and help His people; and there were local movements when He caused exercise. But verse 19 of our second chapter of Judges shows the continued drift. The judges passed, and then they resumed the down-grade. "They ceased not from their own doings nor from their own stubborn way." That is a terrible stage. No remonstrance touched them. It is a serious thing when a man, though going in an entirely wrong course, sinning against God and misleading his fellows, stubbornly goes on in it. Stubbornness is the last stage in that chapter. It seems to fittingly lead to that solemn verse, the last in the book (Judges 21:25) when the principle of independence was openly adopted: "In those days there was no king in Israel, every man did that which was right in his own eyes." It was the crowning sin in that dreadful book, the climax among God's people, when every man made his own individual judgment the test of right and wrong, and — be it noted — did that which was right in his own eyes. It would be a mistake to render it, "he did what he knew to be wrong."

We are all liable to these sins of departure. Through all Israel's history the one unchanging guide, the Word of God, was always sufficient to show them the good and right way. Spoken or written, it was the one sure guide for the faithful soul. Neglect of it was always weakness, and surely led to disaster; attention to it, subjection to it, giving the Lord His right place, meant light and help and recovery. Some conditions could be altered, some could not be altered. The faithful ones, if delivered at all, were invariably exercised and recovered by prophetic ministry, by the word of God, to that which was the mind of God for the moment. And even when the time was passed for recovery, the presentation of the Person and glory of the coming Christ sustained their faith and fed their souls — and at last He came; and so will come again.

Now to come back to Leviticus 20:22-26. In verse 24 we read of "a land flowing with milk and honey." On the authority of God's word and promise it was set before Israel, "I have said unto you." They were the people of God's choice, "Ye shall inherit their land." The Lord of heaven and earth it was who bestowed it upon them, "I have given it unto you." And though enemies had to be dispossessed and there would be conflict, the mighty God guaranteed His intervention in their favour, "Ye shall possess it." Moreover, it was an inheritance well worth obtaining, whatever exercises were necessary to get the good of it, "a land flowing with milk and honey." A definite locality was set before them, the land of Canaan; and blessing full and overflowing in that locality. For the blessings in the Old Testament were of an earthly order and connected with an earthly centre. In the Gospels of the New Testament we read of Christ, their promised Messiah, presented to them to see if they were ready for Him to fulfil all God's promises on their behalf. But they were not ready. They disbelieved Him and would not credit His mission. They dubbed Him "that deceiver," took up stones to stone Him, mocked Him, condemned Him as a common malefactor, crucified Him, pierced His side, and His life-blood poured on the earth was the witness to His

rejection here. But God raised Him from the dead; and alive now to die no more — He has been exalted to the highest glory and transferred from earth to heaven. God is detaining Him there for a certain period, this present dispensation, during which He is working out a secret plan that was in His mind from all eternity. He said nothing about it to the Old Testament prophets, so that it was a mystery until now. It is a very elementary lesson, but a most important lesson for us to learn, that we who believe in Christ as our Saviour, though enjoying His love here and now, are blessed with heavenly blessings, not earthly as the Jew. We are called with a calling that is centred in a heavenly Christ in the heavenly place. No one can over-estimate the importance of this, or the need for young Christians to understand the character of the blessings brought to us. In our case the very nature of our blessing detaches us from man's present world in which he boasts so much. It has become to us an Egypt from which the grace of God has delivered us. But the place where Christ has entered in risen and triumphant life has become the Canaan of which we are to take possession by the leading of that Spirit who is Christ's Spirit, delegated to lead us into the enjoyment of the place where Christ is our life and portion, and the delight of the heart of God. The mass of Christians seem to know very little of this. The great slogan of man, and of Christians whose ideas lean towards the betterment of the present world, is "Leave the world better than you found it." But the truth of God is as stated in Acts 15:14, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name." Ours are spiritual blessings not seen or handled, nor centred on the earth, though enjoyed here; they are spiritually discerned. And because that is the case God has sent down His Spirit in order to create us anew, to indwell us, and to lead us into all the truth. The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he discern them. If that elementary truth were learned it would be a great start. But further, even during this dispensation, as succeeding generations of Christians take their places in the present testimony, the phases of their experience vary just as we have seen to have been the case with Israel. The Canaan of Joshua's day was one thing, the Canaan of Rehoboam's day, or of Nehemiah's day, or of the day of the Lord's life on earth, were all different. Yet, as it remained true throughout, "after the doings of the land of Canaan wherein ye dwell shall ye not do," so is it incumbent upon loyal Christians to-day to test all that goes on religiously around them in Christendom by the infallible word of God, and by the truth of the calling wherewith they are called. Satan will not leave us alone any more than he would leave Israel alone. The most favoured Christians, if they become self-centred and self-complacent, are liable to deceive themselves in the most disastrous ways, such as we find exemplified in the different forms of Israel's failure. The first reference to separation is then in view of the blessing that God has in view for us. The second reference is in Leviticus 20:25. This is separation in view of purity or holiness. In this case, as will be noticed, it was not a matter of one nation being separated from other outside nations. It was rather a moral education for those who were already in that path of outward separation from the world. In the land of Canaan, where God was so wonderfully known, it was still necessary that God's people should be a people of exercised consciences and minds, and especially in relation to the character of God and the associations which were compatible with that character. Hence the remarkable chapters in Leviticus which form the centre portion of the book, i.e., from Leviticus 11:1-47 to Leviticus 17:1-16. Our verse tells us, "Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean; and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast or by fowl or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean." This is a serious part of our spiritual education. No one

could think of a camel, a coney, a hare, or a pig, as being creatures morally wrong. The same could be said of fishes, fowl, or creeping things, prohibited by divine law as food for the Israelite (chap. 11). But for certain wise reasons, one of which was their typical application for our learning (Romans 15:4), Jehovah separated from His Israel certain creatures as unclean, and also added certain natural functions as bringing about conditions in which communion with Himself was interrupted. There is no gainsaying this. The animals referred to were His creation, each perfect in its own way and form, yet for Israel they were set aside as unclean. We may or may not see why: the fact is there. The Apostle Paul in the light of Christianity says, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself " (Romans 14:14), i.e., that even the animals spoken of and prohibited under the law were not inherently unclean, not essentially so; but for wise and, as we see, typical reasons, were forbidden. God had His people's moral education in view in forbidding either contact or assimilation. As confirmation of this, it is known that in the garden of Eden the Lord God planted a garden, and made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. All were His work. Yet for moral reasons He forbade the eating of the last-named tree. And He was wiser than His creature, and knew what He did this for. So with the unclean beasts, or fowls, or creeping things: they were His own creation, His own work. Yet for causes already considered, and to test His people as to their submission and loyalty to His will for them, He separated these things from them as unclean. They were unclean for those to whom God had forbidden them.

I consider it as evident that while there is much in Christendom which is the work of God, and that we have to thankfully recognize it and pray for it and bless God for it, there is often found with it something of worldly admixture from which we are led and taught (led by the Spirit and taught by the Word) to keep apart. It would be utterly wrong to say that the work of God is unclean, but it would be equally wrong to justify or to associate with the worldly conditions condemned of God, under which this work is sometimes done. A certain relation to God makes certain things unclean to His people; not intrinsically unclean, for they are His creation, yet separated from them as unclean, to develop and strengthen their sense of the holiness of His presence and the delicacy and sensitiveness of the communion to which He has called us. People who are not separate will not understand this, but those who are truly separated to Christ in the full light of the Christian calling will see it, and recognize the propriety of it. The third reference to separation is in Leviticus 20:26. After all, the greatest object of our separation is not our blessings (verse 24), nor our purity (verse 25), but for that we might be wholly for Him. He wants our affection, He wants us entirely for His own heart's pleasure. "Holy unto Me" is His language here. "I have severed you from other people that you should be Mine." Could anything so operate in our hearts as this? In Titus 2:13-14, we read of "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people for a possession" — that He might have us for Himself. The death of Christ separates us from all that which God has separated from us. The love of God and the love of Christ separate us in affection, so that the separation becomes hearty and not legal.

Separation is no difficulty if our hearts are satisfied in the joy of knowing God, and in the love and glory of Christ. It is when we hanker after popularity, or ease, or gain, that separation becomes distasteful.

If you are saved and yet have no affection for Christ, there must be something wrong. A few days ago I heard of a woman who will have it that she is saved. She says she has heard people talk of affection for Christ, and though she cannot explain it, says she never had affection for Christ. I wonder if there is anyone here like that.

Oh, may God bring it home to your soul: "The Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me." May God give you to search and see any defect in this utter separation to Christ, and bring you near to Him. And may the affection of all of us for Him be deepened.

## 37. A Letter on Eternal Sonship with Notes.

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A Letter on Eternal Sonship with Notes.

W. H. Westcott.

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Reprint of a letter (revised), as to Divine Relationships in the Eternal Godhead In view of the discarding by certain well-taught Christian brethren of the truth of SONSHIP of Jesus our Lord in connection with His Deity IN THE PAST ETERNITY, this little paper gives a letter and a summary of some exercises upon this most sacred subject. W.H.W.

August 18th, 1931. My dear Brother in the Lord, In reply to your further enquiry, in reference to 1 John 2:22-24, the Lord Jesus as there contemplated — whether confessed or denied — certainly is the One now in risen Manhood at the right hand of God. Of course if you start with the assumption that there was no such relationship between Divine Persons in eternity as Father and Son, you must then interpret those verses as relating only to His incarnation, or resurrection. That they speak of JESUS CHRIST, THE FATHER'S SON, is clear from chapter 1: 3. He is MAN now, but was not ever Man. That He is ever GOD is manifest from John 1:1. That He is ever discernible as a distinct Person in the absolute Godhead is not challenged by those who offer us "new light." Yet I see dangerous possibilities in the words of a prominent leader who recently wrote to me, endeavouring to discredit the term "eternal Sonship."

He says, "The Godhead as such is incomprehensible by creatures; dwelling in light unapproachable, Whom no man hath seen nor is able to see" (1 Timothy 6:16), to which He adds) . . . "The essence or being of God is not a subject of revelation, and I think we may say with all reverence it could not be." The danger in these words lies in the fact that he writes thus of Sonship, and confuses the inscrutable and undiscoverable ESSENCE of GOD and the RELATIONS between Divine Persons in the Godhead. The essence or being of God is not the subject of our present discussion, — what folly that would be in creatures! But to advance the thought that in the Godhead, — where Persons are distinguishable if Scripture means anything, — such wonderful Persons have no relationship the One with the Other; and, further, to deny to such Persons if relationship do exist, the ability to reveal Themselves in that relationship, is unconsciously to assume a knowledge that has placed a limit even upon God Himself. In casting aside as error what we have always believed to be the teaching of Scripture, namely, that in the eternal Godhead we discern Eternal Father, Eternal Son, and Eternal Spirit, they happily leave us God eternal it is true. But it is God without a Father's heart; it is God without a Son's affection, and God without a Spirit's acquaintance with any of the affections that flow between a father and a son. I say they happily leave us God eternal; and the One Whom we now know as our Lord Jesus they acknowledge as Eternally Divine in the Godhead. But even so this glorious Person is in their theology reduced to a nebulosity; for it is part of the teaching that not only as Son, but as the Word, our Lord Jesus became such at His birth at Bethlehem. What He was it is apparently denied

to us to examine; for as our brother puts it above, — at any rate in His speaking of Eternal Sonship, — it is "not a subject of Revelation," and he thinks (while saying it with all reverence) "it could not be." The brother may rightly say that the essence or being of God is not a subject of Revelation; but relationship is a subject different from essence or being. It is probably because he confounds these two things in his letter that he would shut out saints from what we with equal reverence I hope, conceive to be a cardinal truth of Christian revelation and faith. I felt when I first read his letter that he was taking from Christians and from me one of the choicest themes in my communion with my God.

Turning to the Scripture, I enquire, "Is it possible for saints to know that Divine Personalities subsisted in the Eternal Mystery of the Godhead?" Recognizing that the mystery of the eternal essence and being of God is infinitely beyond analysis by mortal mind, I affirm boldly with John 1:1 before me, that the eternal and distinguishable Personality of the One that we now know as Christ the Son is positively and definitely taught. So that it is wrong for any one however gifted to say that nothing can be known of Godhead in His eternal Godhead glory.

Moreover this is confirmed in Proverbs 8:1-36. Here, as in John 1:3, the idea of the eternity of matter is confuted, and our Lord under the figure of Wisdom (see Note 1, page 14) is considered as antecedent to all created beings and all created things. God as God is Creator, but Wisdom is co-existent with Him (see Note 2, page 15), anointed from eternity (v. 23, N. Tr.). This wonderful Scripture repays examination. Christ is viewed objectively as the daily delight of Jehovah. We have presented to our faith in holy Scripture, in language suited or adapted to our spiritual understanding, One Divine Person Who finds delight objectively in Another Divine Person Verse 30. The "then" of that verse covers both the "before" of verses 22 to 26 and the "when" of verses 27 to 29. So that within the Godhead uncreate there are thus revealed to reverent faith Divine Personalities, distinguishable, both the One and the Other, the One being Object to the Other. And if distinguishable, and made so by Divine communication, then revealable if the Godhead so willed it. In passing, I turn to Proverbs 30:1-33. The words of Agur are a prophecy, the utterance of an oracle. There is little doubt that we have therein a broad survey of the generations of mankind, of the developments of good and evil on the earth, and of the incoming of the Ruler Who will subdue all to God. But ere the writer unfolds his theme, and with a humble confession that what he writes is no fruit of earthly scholarship, he asks six questions in v. 4 which refer to the invisible and eternal God. The first embraces the wonders of the heavens above, a region inaccessible to man. The second is concerning the air, invisible and uncontrollable by man. The third relates to the waters no man can manage, the fourth to the earth, the establishment and maintenance of which could only be the work of God. That there must be a God is clear; yet can a man by searching find out the Almighty? If God did not give a revelation, the questions Who? Who? would have to travel round the world unanswered. But two other questions remain. If God does not give Himself a Name who shall discover it? What is His Name? If God be pleased to call Himself EL is it not because He is El before He is so named? If He be revealed as SHADDAI, is it not because He ever was, and is, and is to come, — the Almighty? If He especially disclose Himself to the nation of Israel as JEHOVAH, did He only begin to be Jehovah when and because so named? But there is the sixth question. "What is His Son's name? if thou canst tell? Is this only a stage question, asked for dramatic effect? The very next sentence in our Bibles says, "Every word of God is pure." Are we to decide the matter, and to say that such a disclosure is not a matter of revelation, . . . and

could not be? Should we not humbly renounce with Agur all idea of scholarship or human reasoning, and with him learn that not all that is in the Godhead was at that time revealed; that there existed in the eternal Godhead relationships which had still to be brought to light? The Christian revelation solves these then unrevealed relationships. It is not that the revelation of them made them to exist. God was God before He was revealed to be God. If we say there was no relationship of Son before incarnation, then there was no relationship of Father before incarnation, for whoever denies the Son has not the Father either, 1 John 2:23. This verse which truly was written after incarnation and was said of the risen Son of God applies none the less, and just as truly to relationships within the Godhead eternally. If you have no Son you have no Father. The admission that the Word had His own distinct Personality, predicates the distinct Personality of Father and Spirit, and we know that Scripture does speak of the Eternal Spirit. They say that the term Eternal Son is not found in Scripture, and it is a misnomer. But whether so-named or not, the fact is there; and it is the fact that matters. Have they also dropped the Triune God, the Trinity, because the term is not in our Bibles? These are fair questions; let them answer.

I strongly object to the theory now put out that God becoming Father, and Christ becoming Son, was a sort of accommodation to man having such relationships as fatherhood and sonship. (One is ashamed to put baldly what they teach with more embellishment). It puts things the wrong way round. Has the history of sin added something to the Relationships of Divine Persons that was not there before? That it has been the occasion for the revelation of what God is, is theme for our everlasting praise. But the truth is quite the other way round; the creation of man is after the image and likeness of God. Marvellous indeed that God in infinite wisdom should be able to create a being, — none the less a creature — in whom might be found such counterpart to what is in the Godhead. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Thus when the time came for God to be fully revealed in Christ in Manhood, the Godhead was disclosed to be Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Now what appears sad to me is that the teachers of the "new light" present their teaching as gain. But what gain? All that such teachers have of truth as to the inscrutability of the essence or being of God we have always had. All they press as to the Deity of Christ is not new. All the truth of the Father's counsels, and of the purposes of God is precious, but nothing fresh. All the beauty of Christ, and His offices, the revelation of God, the triumph over sin and death and Satan's power, the blessed subjective work of the Spirit, the calling, and equipment, of the Assembly, the saints' priesthood, the coming kingdom and glory, are from time to time freshly presented, but it is not fresh light. When I read of these things that are true, I enjoy them, and find food. But 'fresh light'! I suppose they thus describe it because they do not happen to know of these things being presented elsewhere. But I think they sometimes unfairly judge their fellow Christians, and in so doing plume themselves with much complacency on superior light. But gain? To have given up the truth of the eternal Sonship of JESUS I look upon as subtraction, and very great loss. The antichrist yet to come will deny the Father and the Son. He will not deny I suppose that there was ever such a Person as Jesus. But he will deny what Christians have always believed concerning Him. He will not credit, but will deny, that underlying the fact of Jesus in Manhood, there was the coming into this world of the One Who was in a certain defined relationship in the Deity. He will not only call in question the Eternal Sonship of Jesus, but will deny it. He will endeavour to blot it out of existence as though it had never been. Every book that refers to it, every hymn that proclaims it,

he will ruthlessly destroy; every ministry that avows it he will discredit and silence. He will inspire his devotees to look upon it as the misty gropings of an unenlightened, credulously "orthodox" age. And accompanying this anti-christian campaign there will be emphasis laid upon man; upon himself in fact, as the centralisation of all new light, the one in whom is focused the best of which man is capable, an acme to satisfy every aspiration of the spirits of men, the summit of all spiritual attainment, before whom all should bow down, his voice the voice of God; yet, — the Antichrist. Of these things we are warned; we are not encouraged to follow them. That the germs of this need not be in some hole-and-corner movement, but in the very citadel of sainthood, and just at the time when saints are loudly proclaiming advance all along the line, is possible. That it should have the garb of spirituality, that it should have as its advocates very angels of light, yea, that ultimately it should have two horns as a lamb, yet speak as a dragon, is also conceivable. All I can say is, may the Lord keep us amid the real dangers that undoubtedly are near their full development.

I will add a note on 1 Timothy 6:15-16. I take it that v. 16 is in apposition to the "Blessed and only Ruler" of v. 15. If that verse had been written before the Creation, or before the Incarnation of Christ, we might have believed it to exclude any revelation of God at all. But seeing that it is written after the full revelation of God in Christ, we must be careful, in our interpretation of it, not to contradict the revelation that Christ has brought to us.

I ask, Is GOD now in the light? (1 John 1:7). I ask, Is GOD now approachable? (Hebrews 7:19). I ask, Are the pure in heart blessed because they shall see GOD? (Matthew 5:8). I know the writer of the letter I have received too well to think for one moment that he would deny these. Then let him be careful lest he give an application to his passage in Timothy, which is destructive of Christianity itself. Be it remembered that the inspired apostle Paul wrote those words in the same epistle as the words of 1 Timothy 3:16. Our brother cannot give a meaning to the sixth chapter which flatly contradicts the meaning of the third chapter: the latter being meanwhile the basis of all true moral rectitude. The unrevealed and unrevealable "essence" of 1 Timothy 6:1-21. cannot mean the revealed "relations" between Divine Persons in which our souls have found such contemplative and formative delight. They have been expressed to us in their manifestation; but what has been manifested was there before it was manifested. I cannot understand how such brethren can bring themselves to believe that Christianity has added anything to God in the sense of creating new relationships between Divine Persons that they never knew before. In the other letter which you have forwarded the writer says, "Now as to the expression we have made use of without the authority of Scripture, — and based no doubt largely, with most of us, on our hymns, — it seems perfectly clear to me that if we accept John 1:1-2, as it doubtless is, an absolute statement of fact, it precludes the idea of emanation of Christ by way of Sonship, which of necessity would have been subsequent to the beginning," etc., etc.

I do not know whom he is combating in thus speaking of 'an emanation of Christ by way of Sonship.' My correspondent in the first letter referred to, does refer to theologians who suggest our Lord becoming Son in some distant era in eternity. But if he contend with that, so do we all. In fact I should have thought that the expression "Eternal Son" would itself have precluded the idea of "emanation of Christ by way of Sonship." But do not these our brethren in one sense go almost further than the theologians? For these last, in their misconception of the word 'only-begotten,' do think of Sonship ages before incarnation ("begotten before all worlds"), but those deny it altogether to pre-incarnation ages, or at any rate exclude it from their belief. Of course the difference lies in

this that these many theologians do not apparently accept what my correspondent does, namely, that Christ is God, and from eternity. But I have yet to meet with the brother amongst us who, having given thought to the matter, imagines that Christ as Son had a beginning in the sense alluded to by your correspondent.

He says further, "I feel sure that it has been spiritually damaging to many of us to attempt to dissect the Person of Christ, — viewing Him in a way as two Persons, Divine and Human, whereas Scripture never does." This also has been the subject of much controversy, but has for the moment no direct bearing on the truth of Eternal Sonship. But here again, I have no personal acquaintance with any who present Christ as two Persons.

He appears to put emphasis on the future tense in Luke 1:35. "That holy thing that shall be born shall be called Son of God." But the angel was speaking to a human being, in relation to a time subject; and an ordinary lapse of time ere an event is to take place requires in English or Greek the future tense in speaking of it. It affirms incidentally and precisely that the title "Son of God" would attach to Him in Humanity, in the condition He would take up in Manhood, — which we have always understood. The angel was not giving a dissertation on the truth of the Person of Christ, for he says nothing about His pre-Existence at all. His omission of this latter does not lead us to call in question His pre-existence. It simply shews that beneath the simple and yet miraculous appearance of Jesus in Manhood there would lie the unfathomable Mystery of Who He is, a fact that always bows the heart in worship. It does not impair the truth of His eternal existence nor of His eternal Sonship.

I may conclude by saying that several paragraphs in your correspondent's letter would call for comment, but I must stop. In warm affection, yours in Christ, Wm. Hy. WESTCOTT.

ADDENDA.

Note 1.

November 1931. In reporting on. the Bristol Conference (1931) one of these well-taught Christian brethren, who took notes at the time, says,

"As to Proverbs 8:1-36, Mr — seemed definite, and was unchallenged in saying, 'Wisdom is not Christ. Wisdom was His nursling. I cannot love Wisdom, it is a quality.'"

"These are my jottings at the time, and thinking it over since, I can see that to limit Christ to one attribute is utterly unwarranted, though we can admire that quality as belonging to Him." And he adds, "Are you suggesting that the great truth of the Incarnation was unfolded in Proverbs 8:1-36?"

Let us remember that the dictum 'I cannot love Wisdom, it is a quality' is in relation to the very chapter in which occurs "I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me."

Here we find not only that we can love Wisdom. but that Wisdom can love us. We do not bring incarnation into Proverbs 8:1-36 : but we remember that when Christ had become incarnate, and had been crucified and raised, He was designated both the Power and Wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:1-31. At the same time one does not at all like the suggestion above thrown out that we or any Christians limit Christ to one attribute, in applying what is said in this chapter to Him.

W.H.W.

Note 2. My dear . . . . .

November 10th. 1930. The passages which have always seemed to us to convey this truth are well-known to you, and it would be invidious in me to pretend to remind you of them. Yet in a family reading recently in a brother's house, considering the personal glory of the One Whom we now know in His Mediatorial position, I was decidedly struck by Hebrews 7:1-28. It is true one does not look for the unfolding of relations between Divine Persons in Eternity in that Epistle, but attention is called to the greatness of the Person — Melchizedek — brought so mysteriously into the narrative in Genesis 14:1-24, as introducing the readers to the surpassing greatness of Christ.

You will note if I comment upon it, that in speaking of the Son as come into the world Incarnate, we have to speak of a time of beginning of days. Further, if we have to speak of the risen One us taking up the place of Mall according to the purpose of God, this too implies a beginning of days. The greatness of Melchizedek consists in his being type of the One Who had no beginning of days, even the Son of God. The idea conveyed by Mr — seems unavoidably to involve the error that the Son of God had a beginning of days. Have you thought of this?

Candidly I felt when I read his remarks as though I was being robbed of one of the choicest joys I had known. To me, the passages he quotes declare that the One Who is ever Son, came forth as the expression of the Father, and the bearer of the Revelation of His Father's Name, and Hand, and Heart. I know that the utterances were made when He was incarnate, but the things uttered lose none of their meaning when one reads them as declaring what subsisted eternally; and the defects of his explanation of them are two-fold: one being that one has to submit to a lengthy line of reasoning ere one can bring himself to comprehend mentally all that is alleged; and the other is that any simple soul learning from the plain words that the Father it was Who sent the Son, has to unlearn what the plain words say and apply his mind to the study of this new theology ere he can consent to their interpretation. As to Revelation and Incarnation, it has appeared simple to faith that the Revelation is the rolling away of a veil from before an existing object. In Christ Incarnate is revealed to us the fact that God is Love. Did not the fact exist before the disclosure of the fact? I speak of what is revealed, not of office or honour acquired, (as for example the Lordship or Christhood of JESUS). So, God is Light; so, God is a Spirit. These things were eternally and essentially true, though for their revelation and demonstration, a certain platform was required; — the revolt of Satan, the fall and subsequent testing of man. But the God revealed as Love and Light, is the One Who in eternal essence is unchanged, from everlasting to everlasting He is God. All that we know now through redemption and the gift of the Spirit was ever true as to the Godhead, though requiring certain processes for the time of their complete revelation, and the coming of the Son as Revealer. His coming did not make them to exist; it was because they existed eternally that He was able to reveal them. Yet though these facts are discernible now it remains true that He is the King, eternal, immortal, invisible, etc. We reverently bow to and our faith subscribes to, this impassable barrier to the irreverent intrusion of man into the secret of Godhead glory; yet to say that God is Love, God is Light, and God is a Spirit, is not speculation, nor irreverence; we know these things because they are conveyed to us in language inspired by the Holy Spirit.

If I say, with my Bible in my hand, that the Father sent the Son, and affirm that He was the Father Who sent, and that He Who was sent was Son when sent, is this in keeping with the words used by the Holy Ghost?

If I on the other hand, affirm that He had to become the Son before He was sent or could be sent, then am I not assigning to Him a "beginning of days" both in purpose and in fact? In affirming that (Christ is eternal Son, I am at once bowed in reverent admission of the inscrutability of Divine and Godhead glory; just because in the things of a man I am limited to what the spirit of a man can comprehend. In the things of a man sonship implies derivation and inception. In the things of God, the Mystery of eternal Sonship and eternal Fatherhood is inscrutable; no one knows the Son but the Father.

You suggest that Divine wisdom planned His becoming Son, because it was a relationship which men could comprehend. I would rather say that because the Father and the Son subsisted eternally in those relationships, it was Divine wisdom that created man (within the limits of a created being) to understand what such relationships meant; else how could the terms Father and Son be understood at all? In all affection, Your brother in Christ,

W.H.W.

Note 3.

August 30th. 1931.

It seemed evident to me that if we, who by searching cannot find out the Almighty, can learn in Scripture the three Personalities in their Godhead glory, — when subsisting in the Form of God — it is very wrong to quote 1 Timothy 6:1-21 as forbidding any apprehensions of Their relations One with the Other when in that Form. That it is only by revelation we can learn the Three Persons in One God, and through the volume of inspiration is self-evident; but for any person to write or say that not even the Godhead call reveal Itself, — that there can only be for us the revelation of the Revelation, — to say in effect that what is revealed had no existence before it was revealed, is to make of Christianity not a revelation but a creation. The God that is, is not then the God that was; we have a 'post hoc' God in Christianity, whenever the 'hoc' began.

It is the egregious assumption that this negation of truth is the last phase of "new light" (that needed to be added as they say to the faith of the saints to pave the way for the rapture,) that so amazingly captures the imagination of the saints. Otherwise one cannot understand how it can be so readily received as a phase of truth hitherto overlooked. It adds nothing; for all that is still held of truth with regard to Christ in Manhood, and the counsels of God in Man, is held in common with us. It is subtraction, not addition, to take from saints that which is to most of us one of the most glorious of our Lord's glories, and is to us abundantly substantiated for faith in the scriptures of truth. That reason cannot account for any such relationship as Father and Son without conceiving of the Father as preceding, and antecedent to, the Son, is simply to create for ourselves a conception of GOD, to which reason can subscribe; to make in effect a God of our own reason to which even the true and living God must conform.

W.H.W.

Note 4.

Aug. 30th, 1931. With reference to "brought forth" in Proverbs 8:1-36; Proverbs 24:1-34; Proverbs 26:1-28, before which expression one has at times mentally shrunk, I recommend to your spiritual judgment the study of Young's Analytical Concordance in relation to that expression, and other related expressions. The Hebrew word 'chul' which is the verb employed in those passages may be contrasted with the Hebrew word 'yalad.' This last is the word used in varied forms for the bearing of children, or offspring, man or beast, and occurs round about five hundred times. It covers the actual giving of birth, and sometimes refers to the pain of so doing. But 'chul' is used under fifty times, and in its meaning is used of any deep suffering or exercise which is to result in something to come into manifestation. In relation to the birth of children, it is the word used in Psalms 51:6 'shapen.' The Revisers of 1881 in translating Isaiah 45:10 altered the words, "hast thou brought forth", to "travailest"; (I suppose) because the verb does not mean so much the bringing forth as the pains of bearing preceding. In its fifty uses it is variously translated fear (of God), grief, anguish, pain, sorrow, wounding, (Saul wounded of archers), travail, tremble (at God's presence), dance, shake, etc. It is not so much the thought of bearing of offspring, as of various forms of suffering, or as we say, exercise, that accompany a certain action or event.

It is very remarkable that when the Holy Spirit had choice of a word that signified birth or inception of being, if He had intended that idea, He deliberately avoided its use in Proverbs 8:1-36, and used 'chul' instead. It is our English translation which creates difficulty for us by putting "brought forth" twice, where the idea was that of deepest exercise.\* All the operation of God (through Christ the Son, the Word. John 1:1-51; Hebrews 1:1-14) in the Creation, brought into evidence thoughtful and wise exercise; everything created was to be in one direction or another an expression of its Creator. It involved emotion, and solicitude, it expressed wisdom in forms unseen before, calculations of space, and force, designs of life and matter, depths of knowledge which were to be the wonder, and to form the study of generations of yet unborn beings. It was not the birth of wisdom, but wisdom came into movement and expression through what we may call — for want of a better word deepest exercise.

{\*In fact in Psalms 90:2 "when the mountains were brought forth" — where He required a word which would imply a beginning of existence, he uses "yalad" and not "chul".} A note on the eternal Deity of Christ clearing away what presents a difficulty in the reading of Proverbs 8:1-36 in the English Authorised Version, might contribute to the help of souls. Where eternal Sonship is called in question, a mistranslation, or rather an imperfect translation, may possibly appear to support the non-eternity of Sonship.

W.H.W.

## 38. The Light of Grace and Truth

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The Light of Grace and Truth Extracts from notes on John 1:1-51.

W. H. Westcott.

(Extracted from Scripture Truth Vol. 39, 1956-8, page 104.)

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe" (John 1:6-7). A Divine Person, eternal in His being, separate in His personality, God in His essence, the Creator of all things great and small — mind and matter, and force — has been down in this world, in our form of manhood. He became flesh, bringing every Divine excellency into His humanity, untainted by our evil, moving in the orbit of God's will, the contrast to, the antithesis of, wilful man, unique in holiness, full of grace and truth. In Him was life, really and truly life, lived according to God. Purity and good were there in unlimited perfection, light and love, which in a man are seen in the form of truth and grace. And this life was the light of men. Whatever benefits accrue to the rest of creation (and all creation will be affected by it), it was intended to be light to men. The true light coming into the world is light shining for every man. The life He lived, as well as the message He brought, was for man's good; just as the rays of the sun are for all nations and tongues, for men of every colour. Apart from the sun what should we be? Owing to its service we have light, and warmth, and life; apart from it would be darkness and death. Yet herein is a marvellous thing; natural light dispels darkness; this light — the life of Jesus — shone in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. The state of man was darkness, and remained so though the light shone. There were no eyes to take in the impression; the sunshine showed them up, but being blind, they saw not its light or brightness; it was lost upon them. The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not. Israel with its peculiar privileges was as irresponsive as the world at large.

There was a man sent from God, his name John, to bear witness of the light. What an extraordinary mission! As though when men rose in the morning, and were surrounded by the charm of the day, it were necessary to take a message to every one to assure him that light had come. It is necessary for the blind. Does not the very mission of John demonstrate to us that, in God's account, men are blind, without the capacity for understanding Christ? Yet such was God's mercy to men that He sent this messenger to point Him out, that all men might believe through him. John's message, where received, prepared individuals at least to receive this Divine Saviour. How important then to repent that we may believe the Gospel. So further we read, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John 1:12). A narrow gate, and a narrow way, lead to life. The reception of one Person leads to the blest relationship of sons unto God. Who would have thought that such hopeless conditions as men presented in this world could have been met by so simple a solution? Who would have supposed that such a solution to men's needs should be attended by so stupendous an issue? A blind man does not per-ceive, but he can re-ceive. We don't all have the chance of

receiving money, and garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants and maidservants (see 2 Kings 5:26). But to each hearer of the good news of the Saviour, Son of God, comes the opportunity of receiving Christ. The world knew Him not in His lowliness, His own people of Israel received Him not; but some submitted to Him, opened their hearts to Him, welcomed Him within by placing their faith in His name; and so proved themselves to be born of God.

God uses illustrations of men receiving Him. At least four of the senses are employed to represent this. We look to Him and are saved. We hear His voice and live. We touch the hem of His garment, and are made whole. We taste that the Lord is gracious. To receive Him is to trust Him, it is to believe in His Name. It may be compared to eating and drinking, in which we appropriate a commodity outside of ourselves, take it within, and so assimilate it that it becomes life to us.

We hear of Christ the Son, His incarnation, His holy life, His goodness, His death as a sacrifice for sin, His resurrection and ascension, and we appropriate this as of eternal concern to ourselves. Not content to say, "He died for all," our deep need constrains us to cry "It was for me." It is no longer an external history merely; it is a vital fact to my own soul that He has told out God's love to me, and His death is God's intervention on my behalf for my blessing. This makes Christ a personal Saviour to me, and a precious Saviour; while at the same time it has secured for me the privilege of Sonship; the blessedness of knowing that God is my Father, and that I am His child. And thus all has reached us in Christ, since, "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" (John 1:14). The Word "became" flesh; grace and truth "became" by Jesus Christ. The language used is the same both in verse 14 and verse 17. When God was pleased to express Himself fully in relation to man, and in a Man, the One by whom He did so was seen to be full of grace and truth. In the proclamation of the Lord in Exodus 34:6-7, graciousness and truth are seen to be among His attributes; but though He showed great favour to Moses, as in Exodus 33:1-23, yet out of consistency with His truth it was necessary to forbid his entrance into Canaan, (Numbers 20:10-13).

Grace is God's gracious manner even with a creature that is fallen. Truth represents things as they are. Truth tells me what God is, what I am, what sin is. To us it would seem impossible to maintain at its full height all that God is in absolute holiness, to expose all that the sinner is in sin, and yet show grace. The two things are seen together in Jesus Christ. Even in His life and service both were expressed.

Never was a person so accessible, such a Minister of good, and at the same time so holy, so absolutely apart from sin. Even to His enemies He could say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" While almost in the same breath saying to the convicted sinner, "Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more" (John 8:11; John 8:46). Notwithstanding all the emptiness of the religion of the Jews as represented by the Pharisees in Matthew 15:1-39, He maintained right relations between the Jew and the Gentile, as seen in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman; yet met her need fully and richly in grace. She bowed to the truth and secured the grace (verse 27).

Nothing cuts so deeply as the truth; nothing heals so thoroughly as grace. What a comfort it is that we can go to God and welcome all the searching light of His presence, all its exposure of us down to the bottom of our nature, and over all the story of our sin and wretchedness, assured that He

only probes for our own good, that the resources of His grace may be brought out in all their comprehensive fulness. Light and warmth reach us from one Sun in the heavens; grace and truth subsist by Jesus Christ. They shine if we may so say in one Face, it is the One who has come from the purity of God's heaven that is the Healer of man's disease. It is the Hand that was once pierced for our sin that now removes its guilt and defilement from us, it is the heart that bled for our transgressions that interprets to us the heart of God.

## 39. The Lord's Work in Heathen Lands.

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The Lord's Work in Heathen Lands.

Copy of an Old Letter.

W. H. Westcott.

Inkongo, Nov. 15, 1913.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 12, 1920, page 233. My dear -,

It is a rather difficult thing to answer a question such as you ask. In case the form in which you put it is not retained in your memory, and also in order that question and answer may be in juxtaposition, I quote it as you gave it.

You enquire, "Has your experience as a missionary at all modified the thoughts which, as a mere "at home" Christian, you might have had with regard to Church organization? For example, the necessity of oversight, advice, and authority, on the part of the missionary in relation to the native converts, the connection of out-stations with the central mission, etc. These things have suggested to me how Church organization sprang up, and may have been justified by circumstances. I should be glad to hear if you have any clear vision upon the subject as the fruit of your missionary labours."

If you had asked the simple question whether or not Church organization as we see it around us is according to God and His Word, I think I should have asked you to enquire from others far more facile with the pen than I. But since you put it in the way you do, inviting me to state whether — as the result of missionary experience — one may not be disposed to excuse now what we speak of as Church organization, or even to regard it as a necessary development of Church history, I feel a sort of obligation to reply.

What you will read will not be a dogmatic setting forth of a position or a creed, but more of the nature of a contribution to your own exercise in and enjoyment of the Word, and of the Lord who is the Centre and Theme of all Scripture. For I think that some phases of Christian life can be realized only in certain circumstances. Others not situated as you are may be unable to see from your point of view; and if not lowly and sympathetic, may deliberately oppose any point of view other than their own. You remember what the grand old translators of the Authorized Version had to deplore; the being "maligned by self-conceited Brethren, who run their own ways, and give liking unto nothing but what is framed by themselves, and hammered on their own anvil" (Preface to the Authorized Version).

What is the "Church Organization" about which as mere "at home" Christians we used to have certain "thoughts"? Is it not the organization which demands the submission of the Christian to a central authority which in the case of the Romanist is vested in the Pope, in the case of the Anglican in his Archbishop, and in the case of the Nonconformist, in some Assembly, or Synod, or

Conference? More lately we have had to add such a scheme as that of the Salvation Army, which, however, (though professing to appeal to Scripture in matters doctrinal) does not, I think, profess to be a Church organization, but simply and absolutely a military society for the salvation of souls; in which you have to surrender every exercise of your own conscience which may diverge from the will of the General. The one thing which may be premised about the varied organizations is that they all originate in a revolt from something or other. The Romanist system is a clear revolt from the authority of Scripture. The Anglican movement is a clear revolt from the authority of Rome; and while it involved at first the closer study of the Word of God, it has resulted in the adoption of much on the Roman lines of procedure, and is trending more and more into the things from which it revolted. The Nonconformist movements have all been on the same lines more or less, revolting — either from the Established Church because of some matter of conscience in which they felt that the doctrine or practice thereof differed from the Scripture; or else from each other as they differed in questions of administration and practice, or doctrine.

Amidst all the strife of tongues, the Holy Ghost has been pleased to preserve to us the Scriptures of which the text is definable with almost absolute certainty, and which forms a pure and indivisible whole of which every atom is consistent with every other atom; and any version of which can be tested in the first place by the simple question, "Is it in every part consistent with itself?" If for party purposes a version is tampered with in some parts, it betrays itself; for it immediately dislocates some other part. And the great final test is whether, being consistent in every part with itself, it is in its entirety consistent with Christ. For He is the living Word; and of necessity the written Word must coincide with Him even as two equal circles having one centre must coincide with each other, or as two straight lines starting from one point and terminating in another point must of necessity lie in one and the same plane.

I refer to this because nothing could guide us in the perplexing questions of the day but the sure Word of God. Take the question of salvation in any aspect you please. "Neither is there salvation in any other" is a straight line. Placing salvation in Mary (blessed though she be among women), or the Pope, or sacraments, or in good works, or in the assembly, is a deviation from God's straight line. Either it does not begin with God's point, or it does not end with God's point. The straight line is Christ, and salvation in Him alone: to place our thought of salvation anywhere else is a deviation from God's straight line as anyone can see. So also — and here please discover some answer to your query — as to the matter of authority. "All power (exousia, authority) is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and disciple all nations." Where then is God's centre of authority from Whom the entire circumference of our service for Him is drawn? It is in the risen Christ; the Jehovah-Saviour (Jesus) come up out of death, and prepared to fulfil every part of God's will in all the universe. If you put any other point as your centre of authority, your whole circle is wrong. If you deviate a hair's breadth from the true Centre your whole circle is eccentric. Further, if your central point be anywhere within the so-called Christian circle — be it Byzantium, Rome, Canterbury, London; or any place, company, or person, other than Christ — not only is your circle eccentric, but you cut God's circle somewhere, and schism is the result.

I feel, therefore, that it will not do to lose sight of Christ in any circumstances whatever. Our living in the 20th century does not alter Him, nor the powers and glories invested in Him. Our being in the "missionary field" does not require the least change in the letter of God's Holy Word. In no part of the Holy Scripture are we instructed to look for a transfer of His authority from Himself to some

other, so that He should cease to be it, and the secondary point or person become it. Delegated authority there was, but not such as to turn the eye from Christ. Apostolic? Yes: but for what?" Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:5). Evidently the apostle's delegated authority was not to hide or pervert the knowledge of God; but — in addition to the communication of this knowledge, first by the oral teaching of the apostles, and then by their writings — it was also designed to bring every soul into contact with, and into unfeigned allegiance to, the Person of the Christ. This is the sure corrective of all mere independence, and of the idea of every man becoming a pope in himself. Sometimes I fear we betray our little knowledge of God, and our little subjection to Christ, by a manner altogether at variance with the mellowing influence of His company.

There are tens of thousands of the Lord's people who cannot articulate a matter for themselves, who yet can see it the moment it is articulated for them. What then is the business of anyone ministering in the Church, be he apostle or prophet, pastor and teacher, or evangelist, or elder, or anything else? Is it not to articulate what is true in Christ? You first of all learn for yourself what is true in Him, — in your own case, of course, from the Scriptures, and in dependence upon God the Holy Ghost; — then you prove it in your own soul's experience, and then finally you pass it on for the guidance and help of all whom God, by His providence, has placed within your reach. So that authority in the Church in its true sense is not the "ex cathedra" utterance of an ecclesiastic, but the education of Christ's people, their guidance in difficulties, their help in pressure, by the application of a deep knowledge of Christ to a shallow or defective one. This is a hundred times over confirmed in the New Testament. I can quite understand that when as yet there were no Scriptures in circulation, the Holy Ghost was pleased to use apostles and prophets to utter the mind of God, and the truth of Christ for the guidance and edification of the Church. But on their passing off the scene their teachings were preserved by the wisdom and power of the Spirit of God in the form of the Scriptures. "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace" (Acts 20:1-38). To come more particularly to your question, I do not think that years of missionary experience have in the slightest degree diverted the force of the Word of God; nor have they shown me that there is any better way of solving the missionary difficulties, or for carrying on missionary labour, than by perpetual reference to headquarters. Happily we have not the difficulty that many devoted missionaries have, of acting under orders from a society at home. Our access to Christ is therefore simple and undistracted, and our absolute dependence upon Him for financial support helps to keep our faith in exercise. When the work was small we had to look to Him day by day, and He sufficed. Now the work has expanded and is expanding, will His resources fail? Are we justified in "making other arrangements" now that He is blessing His word? Are we to substitute some other authority for His immediate guidance? If the converts multiply, and the working area becomes vast, and too great for us, shall we sink our privilege of asking wisdom of God, and turn to committees and organizations after the manner of men? Is the area too vast, are the numbers too great, for Him? We have only to think of the whole Church, and of Christ's untiring love, and incessant care for it, to have our answer. Our happy privilege, then, is to teach the converts their right of way to Him. We seek in every way to unfold His sufficiency to them, so that if we should be removed tomorrow, they should not be as orphans bereft of all help, but should look still to One well-known already to the affection of their hearts as their unfailing Resource. We encourage their learning to read, and above all to read the Word; we show them from the Scriptures that the

bearing of fruit is the proof of discipleship, that obedience and love Godward, and service manward, are everywhere enjoined in the New Testament.

Accordingly the developments around us have been almost entirely voluntary and spontaneous. I cannot recall the slightest suggestion having been made to the evangelists already supported by Christians as to where they should locate themselves. They have been into certain neighbourhoods, ascertained the possibility or otherwise of a place for work, and the first we have heard of them has been that they have gone. Constrained as we hope by the love of Christ and the thrill of service, they have been willing to isolate themselves and to work on month after month until souls have yielded, and God in grace has given seals to their ministry. There is a loving interest in the white missionaries who have been at Inkongo, and a certain looking up to them, but I do not think that one of them regards himself as being under the authority of Inkongo. They turn to us as teachers who will show them from the Scriptures what course is right, but I hope that every one of them does so because of his subjection to the Word of God, and not because he regards himself as the employee of a master. They receive help from the assembly funds, but the amount sent is not regulated by the white man, nor is it paid by the white man. There are men who do regular deacons' work, in the way of receiving the collections and of distributing to the poor and to the Lord's native servants; but beyond asking advice now and then and receiving it from the infallible Word, they are as free as though we were not there.

There are opportunities now and then for men to journey to see their brethren in the more distant places, or perhaps to evangelize districts seldom visited. In these cases they often go entirely at their own charges; but occasionally, if the deacons opine that the Christians ought to help them to buy their food, they do so on their own initiative. In this way, as it seems to me, the place and work of the Holy Ghost in the Assembly is unbarred and unfettered; each has a holy liberty to act as he is impressed by the Spirit. Mistakes may be made, and are made; but Peter made mistakes, and I am sure we white folks do. But mistakes are corrected not by sheer force of authority, but by prayerful and humble consideration of what the Scripture says. Paul did not correct Peter by the weight of authority, but by showing him what was consistent with the truth in Jesus.

I daresay that if anyone saw these sentences who has hitherto relied on the organized ways of the churches in general, he might think this a very loosely constructed building. Perhaps so. But since you asked me the result of my missionary experience, now nearly seventeen years here, I give only that which we prove.

I will add two things. The first, — that in all meetings of what you would call the Christian assembly (I do not speak of Gospel meetings), we have no leader as men speak. The white man is there on the same footing at his black brother and very very often the whole meeting, including the breaking of the bread, is conducted in a happy, orderly way and with unction by the black brothers, and without any audible part taken by the white. The second, — that we make a distinction between educational work pure and simple, and the preaching of the Gospel. So that in certain instances we feel at liberty to pay a youth or a man whose ability marks him out as a school teacher, to teach letters, syllables, words, and sentences. This enables men, women, and children to read; and so far is preparatory to that reading of the Scriptures which we hope will turn to blessing afterwards. But this payment of school teachers is not made if one of the Christians combines evangelization with teaching in some distant part; for if he be an evangelist he is the Lord's servant and not ours.

In that case it is a subject for consideration that he be helped by his brethren.

## 40. Lordship, Fulness and Resource.

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Lordship, Fulness and Resource. From Some Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:9-31.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1948, page 69.

We have been called by God into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. This fellowship is not an organization. In the affairs of men it is the practice to have certain officers trained to do all the official part of the work, usually consisting of grades of offices, from lowest to highest; promotion being according to efficiency. This is seen in various Christian systems, where the laity are required to keep quiet and unexercised, save to do as they are told. But in the Church of God, properly speaking as constituted by God, and comprised in the fellowship, this is not so. On the contrary, it is a living organism, the body of the living Head in Heaven and each member of the Body has its place and function. It is the intention of God that in saints there should be seen all the harmonies and character of Christ produced, not in one saint only, in the way of pious and heavenly character, but worked out collectively in many, in the way of united corporate holiness and love. There is no part without its function and adaptability to serve the will of God. It is maintained, not by rules nor by the appointment of ritual, but by every member being operative, subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christ Himself being the Leader in the assemblies. The leadership is just as real as though He could be seen, though this is true only to the eye of faith and to the affection that owns Him Lord. Its health and prosperity depend upon the state and conduct of each individual in it, to the refusal of the flesh and the entire subjection of the heart to Christ.

Hence the comfort of knowing that God is faithful. He will never fail to exercise the heart, though we live amid the unfaithfulness of man. He never abandons His purpose and never cancels His call. He never deflects for a moment from His principles which He has established in Christ. Three things are established in Him; Lordship, Fulness and Resource. These three things are challenged in the history of failing saints. Other leaders are set before men's minds, some part of the truth is made a rallying centre, or men insist on wisdom of words, i.e., a proper standard of education and training before one can be an instrument for God in the assembly. In Corinth there was the effort to establish parties on the names of Paul, Apollos, Cephas and Christ. We can understand the first three being named; Paul with his unique heavenly ministry of the Body; Apollos eloquent, fervent in spirit in the Old Testament expositions; Cephas, the leader of the Twelve, the Apostle of the circumcision, the pillar of the Church, impulsive and much used of God. But Christ!! What misuse of Him and His Name in endeavouring to make out that He is connected only with a few! What a mistake it is to give the impression that He is not accessible to all and that He is specially identified with our number. The truth is that grace has taught us the ground where all may be on earth and where all will be in Heaven, every earthly distinction done away with in the Cross of Christ and we brought into association with Christ risen; the new man. Members of His body and equally indwelt by one Spirit.

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

There is no name named upon us but that of Christ and all Christians are thus named; He is the fulness of God and all else is confusion. The whole truth is set forth in Him and we cannot make any one part of the truth a rallying centre, we need the whole truth of Christ. The name sets out the glory of the Person. It is by that Name that we are called to refuse division and even contention. In Him, and Him alone, is all wisdom and He is therefore the resource of His people. No matter what the difficulty, there is in Him wisdom to guide and overcome the difficulty. It is not necessary to turn to anyone on earth, but if we refer everything to Him, He will never fail His dependent servant or children. Thus, in the midst of all the present confusion we can encourage ourselves in the Lord knowing that God is faithful and our confidence and hope is in Him.

## 41. The Male in the Offerings.

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The Male in the Offerings.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 15, 1923, pages 66. In the beginning the male was put in responsibility over the sphere allotted to him; and the female was given to him as a helpmeet, his like, to be of him and for him (Genesis 2:1-25). Eve was brought to Adam, an individual upon whom he could set his affection and who could share his pleasures and privileges; yet not accorded the same responsibility.

It seems that in the institution of the offerings, this principle is recognizable; for where Christ is typified as answering the wide glory of God, as in the burnt-offering, or where He is typified as sin-offering for a whole community, or for a priest or ruler whose whole sphere of responsibility was affected by his sin, it is a male victim that is presented (Leviticus 1:1-17 and Leviticus 4:1-35).

It should affect us that a leader erring is evidently a more serious matter among saints and before God than the erring of a simple soul who is led. How softly should "ministering brothers" who travel about, or "local leaders" who are more fixed, or "missionaries" walk; and how careful should they be in the example set before the people of God.

Moreover, when we find that in some detail or practice we have erred, and have soiled our whole sphere of responsibility and service, how much more deep and searching should be our self-judgment, and the sense of our indebtedness to the death of Christ which alone makes atonement for our wrong. Our want of instruction, our ignorance, is no excuse for the error. As in British law courts no one may plead ignorance of the law to cover transgression of it, so is the saint of God responsible to know the truth of Christ and to walk according to it in life, service, and worship. Sinning through ignorance required atonement.

Christ suffered for our individual sins, but He also became representative of man in every sphere of responsibility in which man has failed; bringing sweet savour by virtue of His atonement into the very place where had been the ill-savour of man's sin. His death was one and indivisible; yet the diversities of its application are many, and require our reverent exercise and study.

## 42. Man Dwelling in God and God in Man.

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Man Dwelling in God and God in Man.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth Volume 5, 1913, page 162. The simplicity of scripture is part of its greatness. Though we be christians, years upon years of our lives may be deprived of pleasure and joy in God's things because we fail to take God's Word as it stands.

There is, some say, one unique feature about the English language which makes it shine above all languages known on earth. It possesses the word "Home". Nothing compares with it in any other tongue. All that it spells to us of affection and interest must be told in other countries in explanations and circumlocutions galore. The one word is enough for an Anglo-Saxon. The Epistle of John speaks again and again of our dwelling in God, and of God dwelling in us. In speaking of either of these great verities we have to confess how wonderful they are.

Romans 5:1-21 tells us about boasting in God (the "boast" in God, verse 11 is the same word in verses 2 and 3, see New Trans.). That was full of blessing when first we realized it. But dwelling in God is the finding of a home in Him. It is not merely the discovery of, and our delight in, all that He is and has done for us in Christ. But may we find home in God? And may God find home in us?

We ask these questions. We are made in the asking to feel how stupendous they are. Is there any light on their meaning? Is there any possibility or their realization?

First, as to their meaning, there can be no doubt that their glorious realization is seen in Christ. Even in His life on earth God was in Him, and He in God.

All the history of Adam and his race proved that there was no correspondence, no compatibility, between God and man. The divergence became more and more manifest as time rolled on, till it culminated in the rejection of God's Son, the disclosure of the state of fallen man's heart and nature. How, then, could God dwell in men, or they in Him? In Christ, in incarnation, there was a new beginning. The mysterious birth of our Lord was required, (we guard, with all awe, the deep mystery of Christ's Eternal Being as the Son. But we speak above of His coming into the world as Man) and was given as a sign that God was setting aside the old and customary order, and was commencing a new order, in which everyone derived birth immediately from Him; not by the intermediate agency of man. Until Christ died and rose again He remained alone (John 12:24); now others have come to be associated with Him, He is the Firstborn among many brethren, though, be it noted ever peerless in this new order; for He inaugurated it in virtue of what He is in Himself, in His own Person and right. We come into what He inaugurated by the gift of grace alone, and by the power of God acting in grace. But we are the children of God, born of God; not born in successive generations from one another as in our natural life, but each one born immediately and directly of God.

Now in Christ there was perfect compatibility, absolute correspondence, between God and Man. God dwelt in Him; who can gainsay it? He dwelt in God; who can deny it? The ever-blessed God found in that Holy Person a temple, a residence, a home, in which every part was congenial to His nature, and corresponded with His will. There was not a single element which could cause friction or produce disparity. The motives of His life, the "reins", the "inwards" were of a sweet savour to Him His ways were ever pleasing in His sight. At no point was there ever the turning even of the eyes in another direction. The garden of Gethsemane, which showed how real were the sorrows He was facing, only brought out the sweetest and most holy correspondence to the 'Father's will. We say it reverently: God found His home there in Him. But He dwelt in God. Is this a little more difficult to understand? Do we not more readily comprehend what comes down to us (though all is wonderful), than what rises up to God? How perfect was the Lord Jesus! Holy from His birth, intrinsically so, He had nothing in common with the pursuits of this sinful world. There was no home for Jesus here. His affections and all the activities of His holy Being were trained on what suited God. His meat was to do His will. As Man, He fixed His heart Godward, and found in God all that man could desire. In Him the devil was given the lie. The enemy of our race had subtly infused into the first man's mind that he could do better for himself if he shook off allegiance to the Deity, and acted contrary to God. In Jesus we see the new order of Man, the woman's seed, destroying the works of the devil. His heart with all its affections so infinitely pure; His mind — all steadfast and true, found unceasing delight in God. He reposed there He retired there, His communion lay there, in God. The storm raged about Him; earth and hell were all let loose upon Him; and the wrath of God against sin was borne by Him at Golgotha for our sakes; but when all was finished, this Holy One said. "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit". He retired even in the hour of dying into His dwelling place with God. We say, and we say rightly, that His body was laid in the grave, and that His spirit entered Hades: but in the language of our present theme He went "home". He commended His spirit into the Father's hands. It is not His divesting Himself of humanity and retiring into simple Deity (as some wrongly assert) at the time of His death — for He is servant forever. (see Exodus 21:1-36) — but of the spot which He esteemed "home" when His work was done.

He is risen now. The temple was raised again in three days, as He said. In heaven seated and crowned the heart of God reposes in Him, finds complacency in Him. Forever and forever does the fulness of the Godhead dwell in Him bodily. Moreover, as Man He is sufficient to fill out every wish of the heart of God. All of loveliness is there, all perfection, all grace, all faithfulness, all stability and durability of God. In Him the nature of God finds its counterpart for complacency. as well as its display for blessing to the creature. On His part, too, Jesus, the ever blessed Man. lives unto God. His Holy nature as Man finds its untold, unmeasured bliss in God He knows God infinitely, perfectly, with all the powers of the One risen from the dead. He is in the condition and the place where God has designed to put man in the closest relationship and privilege, and in the full light of all that God is. From that nearest and dearest place — may we not reverently say — the heart of Jesus rises up in ever happy and holy delight in God. "Thou shalt make me full of joy with Thy countenance" (Acts 2:28.) "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Hebrews 2:12).

How unrestrained must be the intercourse of Jesus with God! How perfectly intelligent is our risen Lord in all the ways of God! He proved them in the depth. when He went into death; He knows them in the heights where He is in the glory. He knows all the nature of God, and all His attributes;

and is there in the deepest enjoyment of them all. To every part of God's glory there is the response in the nature of the Man Christ Jesus; so that our blessed Lord, looking as Man Godward, finds everything in Him to yield complacency and delight, and the most intimate worship. We tremblingly touch a chord on this great Organ, and our hearts are thrilled by the heavenly harmony that springs out at the touch. And now as to the realization of this ourselves. The Epistle of John presents God dwelling in us, and our dwelling in God, not as the attainment of the few, but as the ordinary (some people call it "normal") state of the child of God. We are horn of God, and are God's children. We can approach God in the filial confidence and affection of those whom grace has given the right to be in His presence. We have been given His Spirit also, who trains us in obedience and love, and who conducts our souls in perfect liberty into the holy scenes where God is. By His power there is conferred upon us the capacity to understand God, even as in Christ we have a life which is able to enjoy Him. We are qualified in the way of nature, life, relationship, intelligence, to find our home in God.

Then again, we are not left to speculate as to the Deity, according to all the surmises and reasonings of the human mind. God is fully revealed, and is in the light, that is, He has been so adequately displayed in Jesus that nothing remains concealed of His nature or attributes. At the same time, and in the very circumstances in which He was fully revealed, all my sins have been covered, never to rise against me any more; my sinful life has been ended under condemnation in the death of Jesus for me; and by God's gift and God's grace I live through Him. My guilty history is so dealt with — my state — my sins that my coming into God's presence is not to be reminded of anything which could make me uneasy or ill at ease there. Forever no! The heart draws near to God in happy and holy freedom; we have access by one Spirit to the Father; and there are set at ease — made at home in God. All that the renewed heart sees in God makes it feel more and more at home. Holiness — my home. Righteousness my home. Light — my home. All that He is — my home, my joy, my boast, my ecstasy. I dwell in God. Do not ask me to change this home for another. Do not tell me I shall be better off if I make more of this present world. I have found in God my treasure, my fame, my life, my recreation, my repose, my all. What a God He is! Do not direct me to a crucifix. Do not assure me that the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, or the cinematograph pictures are necessary to make religion palatable, or the faith of God effectual. Oh, tell me more of God — my God; already well-known in the love of Jesus. But still there remains the other wonder. It does not require a great stretch of imagination to see that God must be the Fountain of true delight; and that the redeemed one is put where he may find delight in Him. But it is almost incredible, almost beyond belief; that God should so speak of dwelling in us? It is not merely that He has saved us, and put His power into us, transforming our lives, and that He then uses us in His service. But it is His feeling at home in us; finding nought to prevent it, but everything congenial to Him in the children He has begotten, in the saints He has saved and delivered and blessed. If we on our side can, and do, commit ourselves unreservedly to Him in the sense of being at home with the One we know He on His side has qualified us through His Son to be subjects of His complacent delight. He is able to view our inbred sin as though it were not, through the death of Jesus: and our sins though numberless, are all blotted out, gone, by the blood. Our life in Adam, in which God found no complacency, is judged and gone for faith in Christ's death: we are not what we once were, but are new creatures in Christ by grace, children of God. Our tastes are according to God; we love what He loves: we hate what He hates. Above all we have unbounded confidence in Jesus our Lord and love to think of Him, speak of Him, worship

Him, serve Him. The Holy Spirit finds it His congenial task to set more and more of His glories and love before us.

I have no doubt there would be greater results from this if it were uninterruptedly enjoyed. We should bear witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. We should love because He first loved us. We should meet our brother's need: we should not be misled by the many false prophets in the world. We should have confidence towards God in praying, and should have the petitions which we ask of Him. Many results there would be but it is the thing itself one would like to know more of. The words of Scripture are simple. The privilege they set before us is most precious and profound. May we know more of dwelling in God, and of God dwelling in us.

## 43. A Missionary Hymn

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A Missionary Hymn William Henry Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine Volume 1, 1909, page 70.

Tune — 723 Bristol Tune Book.

Father, in days gone by Thy people sought Thy face  
Longing that souls might be Reached by Thy  
saving grace.

Thou gav'st the answer then In blessing far and near;

Saving the souls of men From sin and guilt and fear.

Father, save!

Bowing together here,- Thy people of to-day,- Thou dost, in Jesu's name  
Drive unbelief away.

Faith's holy confidence Is resting now on Thee O Thou that hearest prayer  
We would Thy blessing see.

Father, save!

Think of those distant lands Where lived Thy saints of old  
Let Naaman's leprous home Again of grace be told.

Let Israel's captive souls Hear of Thy gospel free  
And Zion's hills resound With songs of liberty.

Father, save!

Let Egypt's ebbing grace, As tidal waters turn  
Nor let her rulers now Thy gracious dealing spurn:

Let Pharaoh's starving land Again her Joseph see,  
In Jesus Who has died, And risen again to Thee.

Father, save!

Down Eden's valleys Lord, Let living waters flow:  
And Adam's fallen race Thy full salvation know  
And 'midst the thorny woes, Euphrates knows so well  
May those who know its balm The Saviour's mercy tell.

Father, save!

And, oh! not there alone But far across the wave  
How China's plaint awakes The prayer that Thou wilt save!  
Her millions passing on Approach a fearful end  
O God! stretch forth Thine hands And mighty blessing send!

Father, save! But how the heart grows faint,  
And then o'erflows in grief Thinking of India's sons  
So long without relief While Africa's weary hosts  
Down-trodden and oppressed Seem silently to stand

Yearning for heavenly rest.

Father, save!

Let all our hearts arise Alive with heavenly glow Moved by Thy Spirit, Lord, With love's deep  
stream to flow And if in foreign lands Or this, Thou bid'st us roam, Oh! for Thy mighty power, To  
call Thy wanderers home.

Father, save!

## 44. Nearness to the Lord

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Nearness to the Lord

W. H. Westcott.

Some Correspondence.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 13, 1921, pages 139.

July 21, 1906. My dear -,

Very welcome is your letter of inquiry this day. It is so evident that no one but the Lord Himself can answer it. Yet He may guide one's thoughts and pen to some helpful considerations. Being a so-called "missionary to the heathen" is in itself no solution to your inquiry as to how to realize the Lord's presence constantly. I think I used to view such a career with awe, and try to picture to myself how holy a man would be who spent his time for the Lord among distant tribes and idolatrous peoples. But I have found that we have the same trials abroad (only varied in form) of faith and patience as at home; and alas! even there the same tendencies to failure and sin. No thought is there of defilement and impurity, but could find its entrance into our hearts; no malice, no envy, but might secure footing, and mar the work of God; no form of pride but can intrude even into results which He has wrought in conversions. So that, knowing one's self as I do, it is not from any idea of superiority, but rather as one learner may put himself alongside another learner, that I venture to write.

You speak, as a seven-year-old Christian, of the hunger you have for the presence of the Lord. Who gave you that almost overwhelming desire do you think? What is it that has made the prospective joy of it to eclipse (in your heart) every earthly thing? Is it not that the Son of God Himself has begun to answer your earnest prayers: that He has at least given you a ray of His glory and a touch of His infinite love, that have withered up other things for you.

"I have seen the face of Jesus Tell me not of aught beside." This is the language of a soul that has had wafted to it some message of His unsearchable love.

Courage, therefore; as surely as the desire is formed by Himself for His company, and you are longing for it, does He intend to gratify it. "HE SATISFIETH the longing soul, and FILLETH THE HUNGRY soul with goodness." Let nothing divert you from the quest; set His presence before you as a goal more to be desired than gold or crystal, than pearls or rubies. But as surely as you seek this most intimate place of His friendship will you have to reach it through His cup and His baptism. I know no other way. It is not the hearing of truth but the living of it that qualifies us for His company. If in John the Lord says at the time of the Last Supper — "Ye are My friends" — "I have called you friends" — He also says in Luke on the same occasion, "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations". That was it. They had esteemed His company more than the necessaries of life. They were puzzled when He spoke to them of leaven, but it served as a reminder of what they had forgotten: in the joy of having Him and thinking about Him they had

forgotten to take bread. Do you think the Lord did not value that? To whom was it then that He gave the disclosure of His glorious Person as the Christ, the Son of the living God — of the church secret — of the kingdom-glory — in Matthew 16:1-28; Matthew 17:1-27?

I think, however, that it would be like building on an insecure foundation if I did not point out that Christ is no longer here on earth: and that since He has passed into heaven and the Father's presence, it is only possible to enjoy His company under the conditions which His death has imposed and necessitated. Before He went there as Man the sin question was settled root and branch for God, and on behalf of believers. Before we can intelligently and fully appreciate Himself and enjoy His society, we must see for ourselves that this sin question has been settled root and branch. In other words, both peace and deliverance — peace, so that I come to God in the glorious sense that every question of my standing before Him is for ever settled in Christ; and deliverance, in that I know how to account for, and to be free from the power of the sin that dwelleth in me still — are necessary. Moreover, the Lord being in the heavens, we can easily see that it is only in proportion as we are enabled to withdraw from the influence of visible earthly associations that we can enjoy His presence in the sense in which you are hungering for it. For the purpose of this withdrawal and for power to retire in the solitude of the Lord's company, the Holy Ghost has been given you. So that you have been judicially freed from sin, its thralldom and its judgments — you have had your heart attracted by the love and glory of Christ in His resurrection position — and you have the Holy Spirit bestowed upon you to empower you for the enjoyment of that sacred Presence which is more to you than life. Have we learned so much from God? Sometimes (though I think not in your case) this sense of a lack to which your letter referred, is owing to the groaning of a soul occupied with itself under the overwhelming discovery of its indwelling sin. Am I right in thinking that in your case it is not so much this as it is a craving to know the Lord Himself in an intimacy which will make intercourse with Him more refreshing than a holiday, and service for Him more restful than sleep? My love in the Lord,

W. H. Westcott.

August 13, 1906 My dear -, The very asking for help, as you did in your first, has made me realize more fully than ever how little one is capacitated for showing the way into nearness to the Lord. When I touched the 'missionary question' in my answer, it was in reply to your sentence, "I am sure nothing else but the presence of the Lord would keep you away out in Africa". My idea was to indicate to you that I could not answer your wish on the ground that I had been to Inkongo in the Lord's service, though we have had much of His presence vouchsafed to us there, and it has sustained us as nothing else could. But in every country where we may go our hearts are the same, and temptations surround us, and busy details serve to crowd out the Object Whom you are longing to reach. So that as a learner I was prepared to seek Him with you, but not as a missionary to teach.

I have longed to know Him! Times have been when the sense of His love and glory have been overwhelming, and one has had to pause for breath — this when alone, at home in England. Other days have been, and especially in the meetings for remembering the Lord, alone with my brother at Inkongo, when one has been loath to return to the duties that must be faced. But one has to regretfully own that these seasons have been more like the Jewish visits to the sanctuary; a very precious privilege and a holy memory, but occasional: enough, nevertheless, to lead one to say

with David, "Early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land where no water is; to see Thy power and Thy glory so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary". I think God permits us these moments of unearthly joy in beholding Jesus that they may ever afterwards stimulate us to seek His face and His company, and that we may never be content with what is alas! ordinary Christianity. But after all, how is this intercourse to be obtained and this intimacy to be cultivated to which the way is opened in grace as I tried to show in my last?

How may these occasional seasons become more constant, if not absolutely continuous?

Sept. 25. — A long time has elapsed since I wrote the above. Now, as we near Tenerife and are once more on our way to the place appointed for us, I may be able to add a word.

I am convinced that nearness to the Lord involves a sacred path of devoted attachment which may mean isolation from many dear ones who are not prepared to yield all to Him. It is not that the path itself is or ought to be an extraordinary one for a Christian, but that most who profess Christianity do not pursue what ought to be quite ordinary for every one of us.

Hence I think that the best and most direct reply to your inquiry is, "Lay yourself out to realize all that Christ is, in the light of the whole Christian position won for you by Him". But this involves such a tremendous scope of exercise that if you were as well taught as the apostle Paul himself, and as faithful, you would still be hungering and thirsting to know Him more (Php 3:1-21). This is the best of intercourse with Him, that, far from palling on your taste as do the pleasures of the world, the love and preciousness and the fullness of Christ only expand while they satisfy the spiritual craving that turns to Him. You will never reach a point where you want no more, though you may even by this time have reached a point where, in knowing Him, you want no more of the world than you are obliged to meet from day to day.

I look at the various Christian epistles as having been written along the lines of Psalms 107:9. There is satisfaction in the Christian's Saviour and Lord for all the longings created in his breast by the new birth, and directed by the Spirit: while there is His goodness beyond telling, the very goodness of God in Him, which in blessing us puts aught like hunger for ever at a distance. If you, therefore, read to learn Him, praying God to enlighten you, and seeking the mind of the Spirit in inditing the holy Scriptures, you will find that these are the willing disclosures of His beauty to such as love Him. He will withhold nothing that will qualify you to hold sacred intercourse with Him. It was for this He gave Himself — even for you: that He might have you for Himself peculiarly and zealously (Titus 2:1-15), that you might stand by while the deepest springs of His heart are laid open unto His Father (as in John 17:1-26), and His desires for you are uttered to the only One Who can fully take them all in. So great His love for you. The Gospels were written to present His Person and His ways beyond all compare, while the Epistles were written to unfold to us the way to enjoy Him now, and the priceless blessings which fit us to share His love and glory; also those hindrances which we must avoid in following after Him. For your soul to get its full answer you must go the way to learn all that Christ is, and the way to realize all that He has won to make yours for eternity. Did time permit, and were we allowed to write or speak further, it would be a joyful service to try to indicate some outline of His glory from each Gospel or Epistle. But you have an unction from the Holy One, and what you learn by the Spirit is the truth and is no lie. Only seek to learn everything on your knees — spiritually if not actually. My father greatly recommends the reading of their Bibles to young Christians on their knees — a practice he followed himself in

private reading. To which I would add, make every passage as you read it an occasion of prayer to Him and talk with Him. I have often marvelled to find how He talked with me when thus engaged, and the words which are usually mere printed matter to the careless reader almost walk with spiritual life and power as He opens them out to one's heart by the Spirit. Then, whatever you learn — practice. Let nothing induce you to be a hearer of the word without your being a doer of the work (James 1:1-27).

I must conclude this letter with a verse from Hosea 6:1-11. The first verse shows the remnant of the Jews in search of the right Person. The second verse suggests to us that the right way to enjoy life is to follow Him into resurrection: while the third verse shows that being thus associated with Him in life, there is a quiet, progressive discovery of all that He is, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared — everything is ready on His side — for this manifestation to you — as the morning: a little light and the scattering of darkness: then more and more light unto the perfect day. The Lord Himself shine upon you, warm you, reveal Himself to you, more and more.

Affectionately in Him.

Wm. Hy. WESTCOTT.

## 45. A Letter on New Birth and Eternal Life.

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A Letter on New Birth and Eternal Life.

Written May 23rd, 1923.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 16, 1924, pages 17.

Having been asked to jot down a few considerations as to the difference between New Birth and Eternal Life, may I say that it is of the utmost importance that we should all be saved from looking to man. In the things of God, neither can we accept untruth that a good man says because it is he that says it, nor can we reject a true thing because we think he is a bad man that says it. A good man like Job has to confess in self-judgment that he had spoken things that he understood not, and a bad man like Balaam was forced to say true things in spite of himself, by the power of God.

You to whom I am writing are not of those who believe that there is any good in the natural man as born of Adam fallen, either in his heart or his brain or his hand, that can commend him to God. From the moment that he was fallen Adam was incapable of producing by natural generation an unfallen being. In Adam, all die. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? So that from the outset, any soul really accepted of God was the work of God and not the work of man. And in this connection we are forced to own that — the natural birth not qualifying a man to receive the things of God — the new birth has always been a necessity. But while man in the flesh was under probation the time had not come to state this. You will find several things which have always been true, not presented as doctrine in the Old Testament. Take, for example, the natural relationship of marriage and the inviolability of the marriage tie. "Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives." Christ adds, "I say unto you," etc. (Matthew 19:1-30). Take the question of how a man is to be justified and accounted righteous (Romans 4:1-25). While man — Israel — was under probation, he was told to keep the law, observe the rite of circumcision, etc. But Abraham and David were reckoned righteous by faith without works. Take faith as the principle by which saints have always walked (Hebrews 11:1-40). Hebrews were always brought up surrounded by promises which related to the earth, and things that were seen; yet faith was the principle according to which they lived. And so as to new birth. It would have nullified man's testing in the flesh to be told from the outset, "Ye must be born again." And I may add that even when — in the first three Gospels — Christ is presented in the light of the great Test for man, new birth is not spoken of. But in John's Gospel, where from the outset Christ's rejection is assumed (John 1:10-11), you find at once the statement that those who received Him had to be born of God to do so. Hence it is brought in with tremendous emphasis in the case of Nicodemus, who, although born of Adam, through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, on the natural line as a Jew, was told, "Marvel not that I say unto thee, ye [emphatic] must be born again." There is no seeing nor entering into the kingdom of God without it. And what was said to the ye of verse 7, is stated universally of man in verses 3 and 5. So that there has always been the new birth, although the doctrine of it is

unfolded only in the New Testament. Afterwards Peter, James, and John all speak of it, each in his own line; and all these, men of whom Paul said, they seemed to be pillars. Paul himself does not exactly formulate the doctrine, though he teaches in searching detail that in me — that is, in my flesh — good does not dwell, and that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and is neither subject to the law of God, nor can be, so that those in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 7:1-25; Romans 8:1-39). In his teaching he brings in the Spirit, and life in the Spirit, for liberty, relationship, and support while we are on earth.

Further, we may say surely that God has always had eternal life in view, as Psalms 133:1-3 and Daniel 12:1-13 clearly show, for Israel and millennial blessing; and as Romans 6:1-23 and Titus 1:1-16 show in a general way. The latter passage has importance as showing that eternal life is connected with the purpose of God; but that as to the preaching of it, this was only manifested later, in apostolic ministry. To sum up thus far, we can see then that new birth has always been a necessity, and that in producing by His own sovereign power the new birth, God has always had eternal life in view for those who are subjects of the new birth. And hence we are safe in saying that in the fulness of times, all who have been the subjects of God's purpose will possess eternal life, whatever the form may be that God has determined for each family in blessing. This I may refer to in a moment.

Let us now distinguish between new birth and that which, to our poor human judgment, may sometimes appear to be new birth. As to new birth, the nature which goes along with the being is determined by its moral parentage. God is the Author of it, and the Word and the Spirit the Seed and the Agency used (John 1:13; John 3:6; 1 Peter 1:23). It is therefore spiritual, morally of God, and so Divine and incorruptible. It is instinct with the love of holiness, with the fear of God, the hatred of sin for its own sake, and it clings to God. One is not here speaking of these things being intelligently grasped or understood by a new-born soul, but of the nature in itself. Further, wherever it is found it is imperishable, and incorruptible. It may be obscured or hindered in a man by bad teaching, and want of the Gospel; and there may be great delays in his entrance upon the blessing which God wishes and purposes that he shall fully enjoy, owing to his frequent allowance of the carnal Adam nature which God has judicially set aside for him in the death of Christ; but if born again at all he is sure of being in his place in God's counsel as though every thing were already fulfilled (Romans 11:29). But we speak above of one truly born again. God is God, and we are men. God never makes mistakes; we often, too often, do. "The Lord knoweth them that are His" — this is Scripture. We sometimes think that people are His — but our thinking is not Scripture. I may see tears, I may hear groans and cries, I may even see a fairly long-continued profession of acceptance of Christ, and think that a man is born again. But my thoughts are — let me repeat — not Scripture. The Word of God itself teaches me that good seed may drop into stony ground, and gives as its own explanation that some may hear the Word and anon with joy receive it. We may be deceived into counting these promising "cases of blessing," only to discover with bitterness the "afterward" of Mark 4:16-17, and that they had no root in themselves. A sailor in a storm, a soldier on a battlefield, a civilian in sudden peril, may all cry and appear in earnest; and one may add, an impressionable nature in a "revival," or under the influence of a touching or thrilling song, may appear to us to be converted to God, yet be a mere flash in the pan. The reality of new birth is proved by its continuance (Hebrews 3:1-19; Hebrews 6:1-20; Hebrews 10:1-39; Colossians 1:23; Jude 1:4; Jude 1:12-13). We may be deceived by appearances; God never is.

New birth is God's own work, and will eventuate in the accomplishment of God's purpose.

Now, when an ordinary human child is born, the nature is in any and every case the same, i.e., it is the Adam nature. As to its environment or development, you may have Jew, Gentile, barbarian, Scythian, bond or free — these form the environment into which the nature grows. Also you may have the sailor life, the soldier life, the civilian life; you may have city life, and country life, and so on — all as the event may work out. We can see then even in everyday happenings that while the birth is everywhere the same, and we can say of every person born in the ordinary way, He is alive; yet we can rightly speak of different spheres of life into which the birth is the introduction. It is in this sense that we can rightly speak of distinguishing between new birth and eternal life. That every new-born soul has life goes without saying. But that every new-born soul has life in exactly the same sense of the word, and with identical features of life, is not true; for eternal life for Old Testament saints, or for Israel in the millennium, is widely different from eternal life for the Christian. The latter is a saint united to a rejected and heavenly Christ in this present dispensation. Israel in the millennium (and even such Gentiles as will be blessed through Israel) will be associated with Christ accepted here, Christ identified with earth though manifested from heaven. Hence our blessings are heavenly, theirs are to be earthly. Our conversation is in heaven, and our life is hid with Christ in God; Christ in heaven is our life. Their centre will be on earth, even the Lord in connection with Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Our life as Christians will develop along the lines of sonship with the Father and heavenly associations; their life will be connected with earthly associations with the Messiahship of the Son of God. We have access within the veil in the company of our great High Priest; they will be blessed outside when the Priest comes out. Many and great are the divergences between eternal life as they will know it and as Christians are to know it; this cannot be gainsaid. Hence to speak of new birth and eternal life as mere phrases always intended to convey the same thing is very misleading.

Further, the more we examine the Word of God, the more we are led to see and understand that new birth is the sovereign act of God in the history of a soul, sovereign as the wind which comes we know not whence, and goes we know not whither. Some sovereign communication from God is applied by the Holy Ghost in sovereign power, and the subject finds himself possessed of new-born interest he knows not how nor why. He finds sin distasteful where it was tasty before. He discovers a strange drawing after God and a longing for holiness hitherto unknown. He finds a new instinct for prayer, and inquiry after truth, unaccountably real. He may not be able to analyse for himself the aspirations and affections begotten in his soul. He may as yet know nothing of redemption, or justification, or forgiveness of his sins. But the instincts of a new life are asserting themselves, the product of this sovereign act of God. These desires, these movements, can find their only solution in Christ; but as yet it is possible he knows little or nothing of Christ. Like Old Testament believers who in places are seen with cravings and longings unfulfilled, our new-born soul may not yet have met with Christ, in whom every question is answered and every fear removed. He is as yet the seeker, and his seeking — bound as it is to be answered by the grace of God — is not yet ended in rest in Christ. But in the same Word of God we discover that the known possession of eternal life is the accompaniment of receiving testimony as to Christ. New birth is God's sovereign act, and nowhere does Scripture say, He that believeth shall be born again. To say this would be to take the new birth out of the place in which God has set it, and to make faith in the Gospel antecedent to the new birth. The new birth is an operation in which God is first; for no

one can be a co-operator in his own birth. The old Adam does not produce faith, or else those that are in the flesh could please God. It is when sovereign power has broken into our dark night and implanted a new principle of being never there before, that our awakenings and longings, our grief over sin, our breathings after God, can be met, and met only, in Christ. Hence in John 3:1-36, where this subject is treated, the Lord Himself when speaking of new birth speaks not of faith. It is only when He presents Himself as lifted up, the Subject of testimony, that He speaks of faith in Himself and eternal life. Nothing of this was presented in the Old Testament as a present blessing. For the Old Testament saint, born again as he undoubtedly was, eternal life was only a promise, and a promise connected with blessing on earth. This blessing, and even the full forgiveness of sins, was to be connected with the fulfilment of the promise of the Messiah. The fear of death was still there, no one was in a position at that time to say that he had eternal life. It is the coming of Christ that has brought life and incorruptibility to light through the Gospel.

It is in the Gospel of John that the present possession of eternal life is so much referred to. And Christ's rejection on earth being anticipatively considered from the very first chapter, eternal life is presented as being secured for God and for the believer in the person of the Son. Hence the oft-repeated statement, "He that believeth . . . hath everlasting life;" and, "He that seeth the Son and believeth upon Him hath everlasting life." The Son was here as the gift of God's love, and in order that the purpose of God for man might be brought to pass. But in order that the love of God might be fully revealed and the whole sentence of death on the first and guilty order of man be carried out and thus annulled for men, He laid down His life as Man after the flesh; then rose again after a new order to which death can never attach, in which He can share with His brethren both His position as a Man before God, and as a Son with His Father (John 20:1-31). Let it be remembered that according to the Gospel itself, its own testimony, "these are written that ye may believe that JESUS is the Christ, the Son of God, and, that believing ye may have life in His name." The possession of life (and the known possession of it) flows from faith in testimony.

We may often see signs of new birth, and in our minds be confident that the person or persons are subjects of the working of the grace of God; but neither we nor they could rightly assert that they have eternal life apart from definite faith in the Son. But the rejection of Christ, and our peculiar lot as believers upon Him in the time of His rejection, gives for us a remarkable and unique character to life, eternal life. Actually we are associated with Him where He is, and the Spirit is given from Him as ascended to the Father, in order to lead Christians into the joy of present knowledge of the Father; severing us from the world, delivering us from sin, and the power of the devil, in order that we may take up the privilege of present communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. This is unfolded in John's epistle. Moreover, where eternal life is possessed, there are certain features delineated in the epistle by which it may be known. Possessors of eternal life keep His commandments (1 John 2:3-4), they love their brother (verses 9-11), they practise righteousness (verse 29). Obedience, love, righteousness are evidences on the subjective side of the possession of eternal life. If these things be not there, no credit can be given to a man's profession of possessing eternal life. We do not see the heart certainly; we can only see the life. But inasmuch as these are accompaniments of the life, we cannot be assured of the life if we see not the accompaniments. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life."

Eternal life is, however, not only a life which yields certain evident features among men. It is a life which has its own sphere of enjoyments and relationships; and for us has its home — not in Zion, nor in national or social pleasures on earth, but — in the scenes where JESUS now is, and in the nearness of a known and loved relationship with the Father. It, therefore, accepts separation from the world as deliverance from a scene wholly contrary to both Father and Son, and finds more pleasure in Their society than in the midst of earth's fairest attractions or delights. It is "eternal life in order that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou has sent." In our case, then, new birth is followed by faith in Christ and the knowledge of eternal life is ours in the Son — not in Adam; it is evidenced by obedience, love, and righteousness down here on earth, along with deliverance from the world and sin (or lawlessness); it finds its home above where the Son as Man has gone; it cultivates heavenly affections and intercourse, and discovers by the Spirit given to us, quite a new world of blessing outside of what is visible to the natural man, most wondrously attractive because we are even now made conversant with God's purposes as to Christ, all to be fulfilled in the age to come. In the case of the Old Testament believers, new birth was followed by faith in the one True God, and promises as to earthly blessing and eternal life in its earthly form. They knew not the plenary and eternal forgiveness of sins, they had not access to the Father of glory in the manner we have, they knew not the full love of God now revealed by the subsequent coming of the Son. In the case of millennial saints, new birth will be followed by faith in God, and in Jesus as Messiah; they will see Him revealed in glory and will believe on Him because they see Him. They will enjoy His Kingdom rule, and the blessings of earth which His Kingdom will bring in. Enemies on earth will be subdued; peace and plenty will be enjoyed; righteousness, peace, and joy which are always the result of the establishment of the Kingdom of God (and which are now ours by the Holy Ghost) will be the blessed atmosphere around them in the world, as well as the internal product by God's work in their own hearts. Yet even there and then they will not have the access to God which we have; priests and Levites will again represent them as of old in Temple service. Outward inducements to evil will be absent; Satan will be bound; and what was in a measure true in Solomon's day, "neither adversary nor evil occurrent," will be much more truly said of the millennial reign of our Lord. So that while in every case new birth is a necessity, the eternal life which will be, or is, enjoyed varies in its character and form according to the dispensation in which the believer is found — Old Testament, Church dispensation (of Christ's rejection), or millennium. Hence it seems of great importance for us to distinguish in our minds between that new birth, which is the beginning of all God's work in the redemption circles, and the various forms of eternal life into which the subjects of the new birth in the various dispensations are to be introduced.

Eternal life for the Old Testament believers, and eternal life for the millennial saints, is to be distinguished and to be most urgently distinguished from eternal life in its present features for the Christian. It has been truly remarked that there will not be two Adams in heaven. All who are blessed on the ground of redemption will have life in Christ, and in Christ the last Adam alone; yet the earthly blessing which will constitute eternal life for earthly saints is one thing; and the heavenly blessing which will constitute eternal life for us is another. We must distinguish things that differ.

I hope this will help you.

## 46. No Promotion Needed.

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No Promotion Needed.

W. H. Westcott. From Some Notes on Judges.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1948, page 56. At the time of the incident related in Judges 9:1-21 Israel had been delivered out of Egypt; carried through the wilderness and were established in the land. God had brought them there, as Joshua had reminded them and he had exhorted them to "fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and in truth" (Joshua 24:14).

Joshua and the leaders had passed away and failure follows. The people did not continue in the fear and service of the Lord. Consequently they are beset by enemies from without and within, being "mightily oppressed," "greatly impoverished," and "sore distressed." Yet they seem to learn no lesson from all this or to seek a reason why they are in such trouble. They forgot the resource of true saints, to whom there is one God, one Judge or Deliverer. From the sixth chapter of Judges we learn that, following the evil which Israel did in the sight of the Lord, He delivered them into the hands of the Midianites seven years, and the Midianites reaped what Israel had sowed, so that Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; they cried unto the Lord because of them. In reply to their cry to Him, God sent a prophet to tell them that they were suffering because they had not obeyed His voice. At the same time He raised up Gideon to deliver them out of the hand of the Midianites and the land was recovered and the foe expelled; "the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon." Alas, Gideon failed, in that he set up in Ophrah an ephod as a memento of the victory which the Lord had given him for Israel. This became a snare unto Gideon and his house and turned the people's heart to it and not to the Lord. Anything in the nature of a memento, set up on earth, to the Lord's victory is not of Him; He abides, the eternal witness to Himself and all that He has done!

Gideon's successor, Abimelech, is characterised by ambition which leads to the constitution of a central authority on earth with the determination to get rid of all that stands in the way, as seen in the most ruthless means taken to cut off the seventy sons of Gideon, all of whom were destroyed except the youngest, Jotham, who was not there, having hidden himself. At this point we have the testimony of Jotham from Mount Gerizim, and in his parable we find much that is instructive for us today. The trees wanted a King. But why? Had not God made all; why alter God's order?

They ask the Olive Tree, but the Olive Tree is content with God's order. It represented Israel in its place of privilege. "Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man." The fatness of the olive tree is the oil pressed from its fruits. The Spirit of God would produce, and work out in God's people in daily details, a character in line with the promise and purpose of God at any given time. His call was individual in Patriarchs, national in Israel, and is corporate in the Church age. The fatness of it in man, honours God and means power for worship Godward and for service manward. Saints who apprehend this highest, of all privileges want no promotion. It is enough to be what God has made them.

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

They ask the Vine. The vine is a lowly plant, dependent and clinging. It is contented with God's order. "Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?" It yields wine and has its place in giving gladness to God and man. Christ, the lowly man of God's pleasure, the true vine, yielding fruit for the Father, always doing the things that please Him. Saints also, abiding in Christ, living of His life, fed by His love, quietly expressing that life in fruit; love to one another and testimony to the world. A wondrous position affording contentment with our happy lot and desiring nothing of promotion from the world where Christ was, and is, hated.

They ask the Bramble. Being determined in their perverseness and in spite of these rebuffs, to have a king, they find that God in anger may give them one and take him away in His wrath. Their choice may turn out to be one of the basest of men. Only by debasing themselves could the trees acknowledge the bramble as having authority over them, and such is its demand in the parable. It is too insignificant and paltry to stand up with its own strength and dignity but is quite content to lift up itself if others will put themselves down under it. The devil himself will one day lift up a man the political antichrist — as the puppet of his own ambition, giving him his power and throne and great authority and yet he is, in the Divine picture (Revelation 13:1-18) but a beast. But with what result? Only the destruction of the puppet and of all who trust in him and the final confusion and overthrow of Satan himself. The Shechemites of our chapter find out in the long run that their choice becomes their affliction and punishment. The lesson for us in all this is that neither saint nor people going on with God require promotion. His life and character and service as he moves quietly in the sphere to which God has appointed him, commend themselves; and ambition - save to honour God — leaves them cold. But one who is graceless and self-centred will gladly accept the adulation of foolish men and climb over them to a tyrannical position, comparable only to the pride that goes before destruction. Christ, on the contrary humbled Himself. God highly exalted Him.

## 47. Outward Bound!

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Outward Bound!

W. H. Westcott, Inkongo, Congo Free State).

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Vol. 1, 1909, p. 97.

Romans 15:1-33

18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23 But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24 Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company, In translating the Epistle to the Romans for the benefit of natives converted to God from heathenism, its beauty and largeness have been more impressed upon me than ever. Not to speak now of the early chapters with all their importance for our souls' establishment in grace, there are some excellent considerations at the end, which show the spirit and faith of the great vessel, whom God chose to be His servant to minister Jesus Christ to the Gentiles. I refer to the Apostle Paul, and to his communications by the Spirit in the fifteenth chapter.

It is a peculiar feature of the present dispensation that God has set aside all national or hereditary religion, as exemplified in His chosen nation of Israel (and no other nation is ever spoken of in Scripture as His chosen), in favour of the testimony which embraces all the Gentiles, that is, every nation and tribe under the sun.

Accordingly the Apostle, in fellowship with the heart and with the purpose of God, took first the whole region from Jerusalem to Illyricum as his parish, and fully preached the gospel of Christ. To our Lilliputian minds it seems almost incredible (see the map of Paul's travels and the area involved); but in all his labours the power of the Spirit of God was with him. Hence souls were everywhere brought to the knowledge of God revealed in Christ Jesus the Lord assemblies were

planted and watered, the mystery of the gospel was communicated. The measure of saints' intelligence and faith everywhere varied, and we might suppose that this great vessel would now surrender the evangelistic side of his work to younger men, and devote himself to pastoral and teaching labours in the meetings already formed. Such might have been the human expedient, but it was not the Divine mode, in regard of his service. As long as there remained any part in that district in which Christ had not been named, he felt that there was not only a justification for his working in it, but a call to take the gospel there; yet at the time of writing he felt that the ways of God took him onward. "Having no more place in these parts" was, for him, the loosening of the tether that bound him to them.

Now Rome and Italy were next in order as his thoughts went westward. But since at Rome was a large and prosperous assembly at the time, he did not regard that place as a terminus by any means; on the contrary, his thoughts went on to regions beyond them. He would spend time with them truly, and would impart some spiritual gift that they might be established; but a deep yearning possessed him to launch out into the deep. Spain lay beyond; Spain in the grip of the enemy of the Lord whom he served; Spain where might be found other trophies of the saving grace of God, and other members of that body, of the truth as to which he was constituted minister. But do notice the words, "For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you" (v. 22). For what cause? Because there still remained, up to the time just previous to the writing of the epistle, some towns where they had not heard of Christ. But once these were evangelised, Paul had no hesitation about leaving the assemblies with their local helpers in the care of the Lord and of His ever present Spirit, nor about plunging afresh into heathendom. Does it not encourage and widen our hearts to read, "It is written, To whom He was not spoken of, THEY SHALL SEE; and they that have not heard SHALL UNDERSTAND? If we wish to be certain of converts to God, men who will both see and understand Him of whom the gospel speaks, we may look for them confidently among men who have not heard before, and to whom He was not spoken of before. It seems to me that the normal movement of a saint's heart must be forward. A steamer is built for forward movement. It is capable of navigating to the rear, for there may be some poor fellow, who falls overboard, to be picked up; or there may be occasional short-sightedness that nearly produces collision — and it is better to go astern a bit than to send one's fellow-navigators to the bottom; or it may be necessary to go backwards to get out of dock, or to get clear of other craft in harbour. But all this is abnormal, and the owners of the steamer would be very dissatisfied with their investment if she were not usually going full steam ahead on their business.

I understand this to have been the spirit of the Apostle. He could put into Ephesus, and stay there a long time at the Lord's will; he could linger over Galatians, who seemed like subjects for the lifebelt or the lifeboat rather than sturdy mariners for God; but his evident business from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and again from Illyricum to Spain, was "full steam ahead" to regions where Christ was NOT NAMED. This was the port of destination. Here is one of the notes in his log-book: "We are come as far as to you also in the gospel of Christ, . . . having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you, according to our rule abundantly, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you" (2 Corinthians 10:14-16). If he went to Rome as he planned, it is thus he speaks: "I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you" (Romans 15:24). Thitherward! thitherward!! THITHERWARD!!!

We are not apostles now; in fact, we are very poor witnesses of our Lord at best, and the state of the assembly calls for constant care and prayer; but I judge we shall very greatly help saints by cultivating the Apostle's spirit of active testimony to the Lord. Nine hundred and ninety in every thousand may be fixtures in their own localities by business ties and other lawful claims; but let our hearts go out thitherward, thitherward. Whither? To where Christ is not named.

I am convinced that largeness of heart in such lawful directions would preserve from much introspection, and from much striving about words to no profit. A sound, active frame, healthful and vigorous, throws off microbes, where a frame enfeebled by inactivity absorbs and assimilates them. May the Lord enlarge our hearts.

## 48. Paul's Two-fold Ministry

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Paul's Two-fold Ministry Colossians 1:21-29.

Address given at a conference in Aberdeen on Thursday Evening, Sept. 14th, 1922.

W. H. Westcott.

If we consider that Epaphras (Colossians 1:7) was the servant of God whom God used for the blessing of the Colossians, we might be tempted to ask, "Was Paul, in addressing this epistle to them, interfering with somebody else's work?"

It would be helpful for us all to remember that service as wrought of God in Christianity, is not the private property of a servant. Souls are reached by the gospel to give them a living link with the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory. He uses one or another, but His object is to form this link with Himself. In pursuance of this, it pleased Him to select the Apostle Paul to be the great sample for men of what the gospel can do, the great exponent of the ministry of the gospel, the great object-lesson of what the gospel is intended to produce. He was personally the pattern or delineation of how the gospel goes out, reaches the heart, and works marvellously in an individual for the very Christ against Whom he once fought. In keeping with this object, it pleased the Lord to choose the same Paul to be also the great exponent of God's thoughts in connection with the assembly. You will notice how he is spoken of in the 23rd verse as "minister of the gospel," and then in the 25th as "minister of the assembly." It is not merely "a minister," but "minister."

We can then understand why he should address this epistle to the Colossians, even though he apparently had not been the instrument immediately used for their conversion. He tells them how great conflict he had for them.

We should study this. With regard to the great outstanding facts of the gospel, it was remarked last evening that "the gospel" must bring in the thought of Christ's resurrection. But I would go further. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 Paul himself lays down for us the five great cardinal facts of the gospel — How Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; (2) was buried; (3) rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; (4) was seen upon earth by a number of witnesses after His resurrection; (5) and last of all, says he, "was seen by me also." This "last of all" concerns Christ as seen in exaltation and heavenly glory.

Let us suppose then that we have a company of people really trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ, who have in some small measure apprehended these great cardinal facts. They have believed upon Him; with the result that they are now received and pardoned, and they belong to Him. I think you can understand how this chosen vessel, this servant of God, would be exercised about presenting to them a full exposition of what the gospel is and what it had done for them.

Such a company was found in Rome. The Holy Spirit therefore used Paul and inspired him to write the Epistle to the Romans (to which I would like to refer for a few moments), to set forth the blessing brought about by the gospel. In Romans 1:1, he speaks of his peculiar separation to the

"gospel of God," to bring it out in its true and complete character. Then he affirms it to be "Concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (read verses 3, 4). The first thing to which he calls our attention in this wonderful introduction is the fact that it is the gospel or glad tidings of GOD. That is, God has glad tidings for men. The second thing is that its subject and theme is HIS SON, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. The recipient of the glad tidings has his attention riveted by what God has to say about Him. As we read on through the epistle we shall notice how the Spirit of God presses these two thoughts upon us.

Quickened by the Holy Spirit and eager to learn, we are conducted in Romans 1:1-32, Romans 2:1-29, and Romans 3:1-31, over the whole ground of man's sin and guilt. The position and guilt of men is purposely and ruthlessly exposed, whether in the most naked and blatant forms, or covered by the veneer of philosophy and outward carnal religion. History, natural conscience, law, the Scriptures, all witness to the utterly hopeless condition, which had to be faced. But where fear and shame, and the consciousness of the just condemnation of God, might reasonably overwhelm us, we are met by the glad tidings that the very One whose wrath we deserve to the last degree, is He who — with all our sin before Him — meets us with His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. How gladly did we listen last night in the open air to some instances of the grace of God to (humanly) hopeless men. Thank God for the way He works. He Himself is the source of the glad tidings. In order to reach and bless us, He gave forth His Son, Jesus Christ our lord. On the cross, and long before we came on the scene, there took place that transaction between God and His Son, which we find is to our advantage. There, every question was taken up affecting the glory of God and the state of ruined man; taken up between God and Christ. When all had been wrought out for God's glory, God set His seal on the value of what He had done by raising Jesus, and giving Him the highest place of exaltation at His right hand. May we fix our attention upon the Lord Jesus Christ with the understanding that GOD has done great things for us, whereof we are glad. With regard to our entrance into, and our progressive understanding of these "great things," may it not be illustrated by Columbus starting out from Spain with a new world before him. He only dreamed of it in his imagination at first, but it was there for him to discover and explore. When a soul gets his first assurance that God has blessing for him through Christ, he starts out to explore the extent of it, and soon finds something of the immensity of that New World, infinitely more wonderful than the one which Columbus discovered: and the centre of which is Jesus Christ the Lord. In Romans 4:24, we see that this transaction of nearly two thousand years ago between God and Christ has a very great import for us. "But for us also, to whom it [righteousness] shall be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead."

Now, you notice, we believe on Him. On whom? Surely GOD, of whom it is said that He raised up JESUS OUR LORD from the dead. We now understand that by means of that transaction on Calvary He has dealt with the whole question of our guilt. Hence, just as Christ was delivered in view of our offences, so He was raised again in view of our justification. God announces, by Christ's resurrection, His clearance from all those sins with which He charged Himself for us. Further, in Him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Thus we see and understand for ourselves the import of what took place between God and Christ in this work of redemption.

Look at Romans 5:1 "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD through OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." We are brought into the presence of this God, to find that each matter that once stood against us, with all its resultant fear, shame, and judgment, has been dealt with in righteousness through the Lord Jesus Christ; so that we have peace with God. All unrest and disquiet is gone, and the conscience, though enlightened as to the sin, is at rest because it has been dealt with by God Himself. So also in Romans 5:11, the crowning point to which the believer is led in that section, "Not only so, but we also joy in GOD, through OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." All that we learn — of our standing in grace, our hope of God's glory, our place in God's ways, our enjoyment by the Spirit of His love, our assured benefit from Christ's risen life as well as from His death — leads up to the conclusion that this wondrous God is very blessed in Himself, a fact which we are now fitted to enjoy because through Christ we have received the reconciliation needed. But not only has God settled the question of guilt; He has also taken up that of race.

There is a popular idea that if you can only improve the conditions of the human race — eliminate war, conquer disease, settle disputes by arbitration, provide a living wage, and secure better housing, etc. — the race will turn out all right. When, however, we learn the depth and extent of our sin as before God, we find that that kind of talk will not do. The race is away from God. It is radically wrong, from fallen Adam, its head, downward. If there is to be any true blessing according to God, there must be a new race, and another Head. To this new Head and this new race we are introduced in the latter part of Chap. 5. We have in Romans 5:15 : "For if through the offence of [the] one many be dead, much more the grace of GOD and the gift by grace, which is by ONE MAN, JESUS CHRIST, hath abounded unto many." God has disconnected our link with Adam by the death of Jesus as representing us, and now in His own mind connects us with Christ risen as the new Head, who secures all His race in grace, righteousness, and life.

Let us look at Romans 6:1-23. This takes account of us as having been under the domination of sin. We were under it as surely as the Israelites were under the domination of Pharaoh in Egypt. But by this great transaction the whole state to which sin had brought us, the whole order of life in which sin was our master, has been removed in the death of Jesus, before God. To us also who believe in Him, sin's domination is over. We are set free from sin's masterful control (Romans 6:18-22), and are become servants to God. The wages of sin is death truly, and we have so learnt it; but we have equally learnt that the gift of GOD is eternal life in CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD (v. 21).

There is much help for us in thus seeing how God has wrought for our advantage in His Son. At this point we might be tempted to think that now all will be plain sailing, and that now we shall always be all that we ought to be and do all that we ought to do. Surely if set free from sin's jurisdiction (we might argue), and brought under the influence and love of Christ (Romans 7:1-4), we should never do wrong and nevermore have a wrong thought.

Alas! what honest Christian is there, who does not find that the very opposite is the case? Oh! what a heart-rending discovery it is to realise the workings of evil within. If in the distress occasioned by it we think that perhaps more earnest striving after holiness or power will alter it, a little more reading of the Bible early or late, a deeper earnestness in prayer, our every effort disappoints us. With every good intention, we yet find that we have no power to improve the flesh. It becomes in this way a veritable misery to us. It is not that we fear judgment for our sin; that

matter is settled once for all. But we long for experimental freedom from the working of sin within, that we may pursue without distraction the will of God; yet here is this sinful propensity within. The renewed mind is toward God and God's will; the flesh, the carnal nature within me, if ever it moves, moves only for sin. Is it not here that the deeply exercised believer may be heard to cry, in effect, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?" (Romans 7:24). And what then do you find? Look at v. 25: "I thank GOD through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD." We need not despairingly set about to improve the flesh, but thankfully see God's judgment upon it; owning that by our own trying experience with it we have been brought to the point where we see that nothing but ending it under God's judgment would meet the case (Romans 8:3). Then, freed from the vain effort to improve self, and thankful to see it ended under judgment, we turn evermore to be occupied with Christ who is God's delight. Here our hearts get that enjoyment of liberty and relationship and support which we never could get by looking within.

Finally (as to the gospel), look at the end of Romans 8:1-39. We have necessities, weakness, suffering and opposition. But through all we have the support of the Spirit within, and the intercession of Christ on high, and the blessing and enjoyment of God's love. In verses 38, 39, we read: "I am persuaded that . . . [nothing] shall be able to separate us from the love of GOD which is in CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD." Oh! the pleasure and affection with which God regards Christ Jesus our Lord! Yet in all that affection I stand associated with Him as one who has believed His glad tidings concerning Jesus Christ our Lord.

\* \* \* \* But now in the Epistle to the Colossians Paul is found to be minister not of the gospel only, but also of the assembly. The first fourteen verses seem to be preliminary, so that hearts may be set perfectly in rest before the Father, with every question settled, and all pressure provided for. We are seen to be brought out from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of His love. We find ourselves put under the sway of the One who as Son dwells in His Father's love, object of the Father's affection, in whom He finds ineffable delight. This is a kingdom where love is supreme. Are we not thus prepared to find something of the dignity and glory of His Person? Notice how the apostle is inspired to go on.

We read: "Who is the Image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of every creature. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him."

Greek students tell us that in that verse there are three prepositions bearing upon this creating of all things. The last one is "for Him." That we can perhaps understand a little. We, and indeed the whole creation, are not made as a man might turn out something by machinery, but really to serve the purpose of glorifying Him who made us. Then also "by Him" in the end of the verse, we can somewhat grasp. He was the active agent in the work of creation. But the first line seems to me to be deeply mysterious. It was not merely that He was agent in their creation (it may perhaps be rendered "in Him;") but it implies that "He was the One whose intrinsic power characterised the creation." The creation, all creation, the all things, including thrones, etc., were so created as to bear — each detail in its measure — some impress of His glory. If we knew the language of the heavens above our heads, or of the earth beneath our feet as He created them, every form of life, every atom, every colour, every shape, every sound, and every authority, would utter some impress of the wisdom and glory of Christ. He created it in such a fashion that there is no part of it

but interprets, and brings into evidence, something of His majesty, His wisdom, His power. "From the world's creation the invisible things of Him are perceived, being apprehended by the mind through the things that are made, both His eternal power and divinity" (Romans 1:20, N.T.).

Then: "He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." By study of this little planet we are supposed to know something of the law of gravitation, by which it, and the other planets, are held in relation to the central sun; orbits within orbits, wheels within wheels. So also our sun, and other suns (possibly with attendant systems of their own), may all revolve around some great central point which astronomers have tried in vain to discover. But the simple Christian is after all wiser than the astronomers, for he can say, "By Him all things hang together." He is the central Pivot, the glorious Person in whom every part of the universe is concentrated, and He holds everything for God. He is also the central authority, and He has put the stamp of His glory upon every subordinate authority.

Further, as with every atom of the material creation, so also has He put the impress of His glory upon the whole resurrection world. He is the Firstborn from the dead. He carries, and supports the whole of the resurrection system, and from Him everything emanates.

Now may God help us to understand a little at least, as to the ministry of the assembly. The assembly is formed for a very peculiar purpose in connection with this risen and glorified Man. It is formed to be a transcript down here, and, at the present time, of all that Christ is up yonder in glory. The day is coming when God will bring into evidence all that Christ is, and then everything will be subordinated to Him. But He is absent for the time being, hid in God; and we saints of the interval, who form the assembly, are left on earth to be the counterpart here of all that He is there. This seems to be the teaching of the Colossian epistle. The chosen apostle Paul indicates to us, not only his own deep exercise and conflict of spirit as to it, but likewise the great desire of God that it should be known — "to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Time will not permit of the development of Colossians; but we seem to have preliminary teaching from the same Apostle in the Epistles to the Corinthians as to the assembly, which prepares us for the understanding of the later epistle. Studying Corinthians with all humility and in dependence on the Spirit of God, it will be noticed that it is addressed to the assembly of God, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints. They are assured in 1 Corinthians 1:9, that "God is faithful, by whom ye were called to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." The saints in Corinth had certain instructions given to them regarding their constitution as in the assembly, and their practical conduct, so that they might be found in every detail of life, service, and testimony, consistent with the fellowship into which they had been called. This fellowship, into which God in His sovereignty has called every true Christian, is in 1 Corinthians 10:1-33 of the epistle called "the Lord's Table." It is the name given to the partnership to which by grace we belong; and there is no other partnership or membership or fellowship to which we can rightly belong. We find it to be based upon Christ's death, the teaching as to which is developed in 1 Corinthians 1:1-31; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16; 1 Corinthians 3:1-23; 1 Corinthians 4:1-21; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Corinthians 6:1-20; 1 Corinthians 7:1-40; 1 Corinthians 8:1-13; 1 Corinthians 9:1-27; 1 Corinthians 10:1-33; 1 Corinthians 11:1-34. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" That

partnership is first of all connected with the death of Christ; and consistency with the import of that death is enjoined upon us in every circle in these chapters referred to. But as the Apostle proceeds with his unfolding of the truth of the assembly he indicates our further privilege of being consistent with the resurrection of Christ, and all that God has established in connection with Christ risen, and in the power of the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-40; 1 Corinthians 15:1-58; 1 Corinthians 16:1-24); and in the second epistle carries on the saints in Corinth to value their privilege of knowing Christ in glory that they might also see their responsibility to be consistent with all that He is there too.

Reverting to the 1st epistle, the concern of the Apostle was that they should be consistent with the fellowship into which as God's assembly in Corinth they were called. The Lord's Table is not merely a gathering. There is nothing about the assembly meeting in 1 Corinthians 10:1-33, or about the saints' conduct in a meeting It is a continuing thing. The true Christian is in that partnership called the Lord's Table every day of the week; and wherever he is, at home, at business, on holiday, he is responsible to be loyal to the fellowship or partnership into which he has been called. We are, to use the human figure, all brought as partners into the business, and are to see that in no way do we bring injury to the business or dishonour to the Name. If a man is not a Christian he is not in the partnership set forth in this term, the Lord's Table. If we become consistent with the truth of the Lord's Table, what a clearing there is of everything that is inconsistent.

Then let me emphasize what we have in 1 Corinthians 1:2 "With all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." The Scriptures never contemplated the idea of the assembly in one place being independent of the assembly in another place. The instruction of the epistle is not addressed to one locality only, but to every place where saints are found. Hence the man who had to be put away in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 would be recognised as put away, not in Corinth only, but also in Cenchrea, and Philippi, and Jerusalem. The fellowship of the Lord's Table may be locally expressed, but the principles which obtain in it apply equally to every locality where it is found. All else is disorder and confusion, and is inconsistent with the terms of the partnership.

Finally, I have to say that the ministry of the gospel and the ministry of the assembly proceed from the One Head, Christ in glory. We can see the wisdom of God in selecting the Apostle Paul as the one single vessel in which both ministries were to be exhibited and worked out into result. Had Paul been the minister of assembly truth, and Peter the minister of evangelical truth, we might have followed the one to the neglect of the other. Divine wisdom set both ministries in one vessel that we might learn never to pursue the one line to the detriment of the other. In the teaching of Christ's interests in the assembly, and in urging Christians everywhere to be consistent with the truth of it, let us not fail to exercise our hearts in full fellowship with the outgoings of the heart of God in the gospel. And in presenting the truth, let us do so in the spirit of holy affection. If we associate bitterness of spirit with the truth we teach, we prejudice the truth itself in the soul of each one of our hearers. And the truth is too valuable for us to lose or let slip. May God exercise every soul here to properly value the truth of Christ with every faculty of his soul.

Then, as to preaching the gospel, let us not forget that we have fallen upon very difficult days. May God make every one of us careful that we preach the gospel under clean conditions. If we preach

a clean gospel, free from every association which would mar the testimony, or that would be inconsistent with the terms of that fellowship to which we are called, we should doubtless find the exercised saints of God in harmony with this testimony almost to a man.

## 49. The Person of the Son

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### The Person of the Son

W. H. Westcott.

"NO ONE KNOWS THE SON BUT THE FATHER." Matthew 11:27.

"NO ONE KNOWS WHO THE SON IS BUT THE FATHER." Luke 10:22.

These two statements, in which slightly differing words are used for "knows," imply that however much has been shown to be true of Him in the Scripture, there is depth unrevealed and glory inscrutable to man in the Person of CHRIST. Where Christian theologians have for nearly two thousand years been exploring His holy beauty, it may appear almost like presumption to venture a few words on such a theme; yet it may prove opportune to briefly and reverently examine some of the Divine communications made to His saints.

It is necessary, in order to clear the ground a little, to call the reader's attention to a great marvel; namely, that God should be pleased to address men in human language at all. The spirit of a man knows the things of a man (1 Corinthians 2:11); but here we are in communication with GOD, and in connection with that which is confessedly inscrutable. How incomprehensibly great is God! Our curiosity may lead us to wonder in what language He speaks to the angels, or what language we shall ourselves speak in the eternal state. But we can gather that God's desire is to speak to us in ordinary language in this world. It was for this reason on the day of Pentecost, when many languages were represented in Jerusalem, that the gift of tongues was bestowed, to allow people to hear in their own dialects the wonderful works of God (Acts 2:8). Actually the Bible as first given, was in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. These tongues were used of God, not because they were the study of any priestly class or religious order, but because they were the common languages current at the time the Scriptures were given, and among the people to whom they were given. This is important. I would say even to any Roman Catholic Christian that these languages are to anyone difficult now, because they are dead languages. But through grace, translations have been made. When Latin was used, a Latin version was needed. But Latin was not one of the languages in which the word was first given. To translate out of one tongue that is not generally understood into another that is just as difficult for the ordinary reader is no help; it only hides the communications of God instead of passing them on into the ordinary speech\* of the common people (Romans 10:8). The validity of a translation is measured by its fidelity to the original word, and the value of it is commensurate with its use of words understood by ordinary people.

{\*The horrid travesty of "the Tongues movement" is exposed, in that that gift was given to explain to certain hearers what they might not have understood in the current tongue of the country. It was to help foreigners.} For those who will read this paper there was needed an English translation, true to the original word, and in language such as simple English people can understand. For God has given His word to us not to conceal His meaning, nor to becloud our minds, nor to nauseate the heart with controversies, but to convey to His people His own blessed thoughts; thoughts of

which Christ — the true Christ — is the ever blessed Centre. The Bible then, in the holy simplicity of its grand unfoldings, and in the sweet language of our own mother tongue, becomes God's own language to us. Any alleged interpretation which does violence (Matthew 15:1-6) to the plain and unequivocal speech in which He addresses us, will surely mislead us. Let us humbly bear this in mind as we proceed.

Now while the truth of Christ can only be taught by the Spirit of God, i.e., the Holy Ghost (1 Corinthians 2:9-11), it is likewise true that it can only be apprehended by new-born souls in the capacity of a Spirit-formed nature (1 Corinthians 2:12-16). Immensities of glory may often appear to be difficulties; but immensities only really become difficulties to Christians when we attempt to solve them by some process of human reasoning. Let us humbly weigh what is taught in the Word of God as to the Son of God, looking that the Spirit may Himself guide us into the truth. We will do so with the earnest desire to profit by what has been revealed, without going beyond what is written. The Son of God may be seen in four positions, viz.:- His Eternal Sonship; His Sonship in Time; as Son in Resurrection; and as Son in Ascension and Glory.

1. HIS ETERNAL SONSHIP. To have any sense of the greatness of Christ, we must bow in the conviction of this glory — He is Son of God from all eternity. That is, He from all eternity has been the Son (Hebrews 1:2) in the Triune Godhead (Matthew 28:19).

Hebrews 1:2, shows us that He was before all the ages by which time is measured or can be measured, since He is the One by Whom they were all made. This carries us back into eternity. The full glory of the Triune God is stated in Matthew 28:19 — Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, — and is circumstantially illustrated in Matthew 3:16-17, and parallel passages.

We are met at the outset by a seeming difficulty. There are five passages which in our English Bible speak of the Eternal Son as "only-begotten," namely, John 1:14 and John 1:18; John 3:16 and John 3:18; and 1 John 4:9. As the words "only begotten," taken in their literal etymological meaning, might suggest to English readers the idea of Birth, and the beginning of Being, it is of transcendent importance to ascertain with what meaning the word is used in Scripture. For the true explanation of a word employed in inspired writings is determined by its use rather than by its derivation. The passages in which the Greek word so translated is found are all cited below, proving that the sense in which it is used is very different from that which such a translation might lead a careless reader to imagine.

MONOGENES is the Greek word in the New Testament which is translated "only-begotten" in the five references to the Son mentioned above. It is used nine times in all in the Greek text.

Greek Monogenes. English rendering.

Luke 7:12 Only.

Luke 8:42 Only.

Luke 9:38 Only.

John 1:14 Only-begotten.

John 1:18 Only-begotten.

John 3:16 Only-begotten.

John 3:18 Only-begotten.

Hebrews 11:17 Only-begotten.

1 John 4:9 Only-begotten.

Thus it is three times translated by the single word "only," and six times by the compound word "only-begotten."

Let us observe the instances -

(a) Those in Luke are simple. Evidently the pathos of the situation met by the Lord was in each case enhanced by the fact that these were only children.

(b) The passage in Hebrews refers to Abraham, and the expression "only-begotten" is evidently not used to state how many sons he begat; that is, not to emphasize the begetting. For he begat other children. Rather does it intimate that Isaac, as the child of promise, held a UNIQUE place; that he was the one who ALONE was recognised of God, and by Abraham's faith, as the heir of the promises. Do we not realise as we read it what strain there was on Abraham's affection when this trial of his faith touched the very one, and the only one, on whom all his God-given hopes rested?

(c) This brings us up against the fact that it is only in John's writings that the English translation 'only begotten' is applied to the Son of God.

Now this very John is the one who, in language more explicit than that of any other inspired writers, shows in his first and most prominent verses (John 1:1-2) that HE NEVER HAD A BEGINNING.

It is therefore more than obvious that when he used the word MONOGENES, it was never intended that we should understand it in the sense that the Son had a birth or beginning in Eternity past.

(d) A fourth observation may be made at this point. The Greek word for "to beget" is often used in the New Testament, especially in Matthew's first chapter; where too we are distinctly told that JESUS, Who is called CHRIST, was born of Mary. Again in the second chapter. it is said JESUS having been born. But such refer evidently and unquestionably to His birth as Babe on earth at Bethlehem.

There are, however, three passages which we require to humbly touch upon; Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; Hebrews 5:5; each of these being quotations from Psalms 2:7. "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." The term day is a time term. The context of the Psalm itself, and each of the citations thereof in the New Testament by the Holy Spirit through His servants, shew clearly that David in the first instance, and Paul, and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in quoting David's Psalm, were referring to His time history, and not at all to His eternal relationship in Deity.

Thus Acts 13:23; Acts 13:32-33, show that it is applied by Paul to the subject of God fulfilling His promise in raising up a Saviour to Israel. In Hebrews 1:5, the glory of angels is said to be inferior to

the glory of the One Who, though Son, had made purification for sins, and in Manhood has taken a place at the right hand of the Majesty on high. So Hebrews 5:5, links Christ's priesthood with His relationship as Son; and the quotation from the Psalm is brought in to show that He did not glorify Himself into the position of Priest, but was appointed thereto in resurrection by the One that had said unto Him, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. It refers to His place as Man.

Neither in Psalms 2:7, nor anywhere else does it refer to, never is it applied to, His eternal Personality.

Now with regard to the Old Testament, be it noted that in that Greek Version of the Hebrew original which is called the Septuagint, and from which our Lord Himself so often quoted, the same Greek word MONOGENES is found as translation of the Hebrew word YACHID. If we briefly consider the instances in which this word occurs in the Old Testament, it will further elucidate its meaning. It is found eleven times, as follows: —

Hebrew Yachid. English Rendering.

Genesis 22:2 Only.

Genesis 22:16 Only.

Judges 11:34 Only.

Proverbs 4:3 Only.

Jeremiah 6:26 Only.

Amos 8:10 Only.

Zechariah 12:10 Only.

Psalms 22:20 Darling.

Psalms 35:17 Darling.

Psalms 25:16 Desolate.

Psalms 68:6 Solitary.

All of these passages confirm our conclusions from the New Testament. Wherever the word YACHID is used in the Hebrew, and translated into MONOGENES in the Septuagint Greek, it conveys the idea of an object before the mind in a single or solitary way, whether it be an only son or daughter; a son distinguished in affection and honour in a human household, or one especially signified in the purpose and ways of God, though in reality there were others in that human family; or an object placed in a unique position of loneliness, of aloneness, of being by one's self.

It is of interest to note that French translations give "unique" as the equivalent of MONOGENES. To sum up, the words YACHID in the Old Testament, and MONOGENES in the New, both seem to join the meanings of "only," "solitary," and "dear." In regard of the eternal Son, He is distinguished in affection, as an only child would be with a fond human parent. (See John 1:14, New Tr.).

Thus in every part does our God, in the Holy writings, guard us from any false conception of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13); setting Him before us as having no beginning (John 1:1); as having created all things (Colossians 1:15-16); who subsisted in the form of God and hence esteemed it not an object to be grasped after to be equal with God (Php 2:6), seeing that that was the essential nature and character of His own Being. In the Triune Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, He was the Eternal Son. Father and Son are correlative terms; the truth of the One is bound up with the truth of the Other. He is the antichrist who denies the Father and the Son (1 John 2:23). Whosoever denies the Son has not the Father, He that confesses the Son hath the Father also. As to all that this wondrous and eternal glory means, in its joy of relationship, the mutuality of affection it tells us of, the dignity it implies, the reverential awe it bespeaks, the community of mind and will and purpose it more than hints to us — of these we cannot speak particularly now. But we get glimpses of glory which lead us humbly to endorse, in the faith and the adoring affection of our souls, the fact that, No one knows the Son but the Father. The Son of God may further be considered in connection with 2. HIS SONSHIP IN TIME. The Eternal Son, in accordance with His Eternal Father's will (John 8:42), came in due time into the world, and was born a Babe in Bethlehem (Luke 1:26-33), supernaturally born of the virgin Mary, conceived in her womb of the Holy Ghost (v. 35). The Form of His Being was altered, so that He Who was, in the completeness of His eternal Personality, in the Form of God (Php 2:6-7) — so that the Form was the Person — was seen on earth, in the completeness of His Personality, in the Form of a Servant; the Whole Person was the Son . . . "In likeness of men," says Holy Scripture; "as a Man," says Scripture. While we rightly speak of Christ AS SON OF GOD, we also rightly speak of Him AS A MAN. He is the same Person, the same one Person, whether we view Him from the standpoint of His Deity or of His Humanity. Complete in His eternal Sonship, complete in His Humanity, the Son is the Man Christ Jesus, the Man Christ Jesus is the Son. There are not two Sons in His Person as early heretics would have forced Christians to believe; one being as Scripture (Luke 1:35) affirms "the Holy Thing" which was born of Mary, the other as they so erroneously affirmed, the Spirit that tabernacled inside the Man, a separate entity within Him, Who, as they alleged, constituted the real Personality to which the form of a man was attached. Perhaps the transfiguration is an example of how conditions may be changed and the person be the same; one moment in lowly appearance conversing with His disciples, the next moment glorious beyond compare, not with an external illumination making Him so, but the same Person in two distinguishable fashions, each absolutely true of the same Whole Person throughout. Are we baffled in every attempt to explain this? Then let us afresh own that, No one knows the Son but the Father.

There was only one Son, and the Man was He. Ten thousand eyes saw Him as to His Personal appearance (John 6:40), yet saw Him not in the truth of His Person. He was in the world and the world knew Him not (John 1:10). A hundred Scriptures had foretold His coming and His ways and glories, and those Scriptures were in the hands of His earthly people in His own earthly land of Israel; yet it is said "He came to His own (things) but His own (people) received Him not" (John 1:11). Nay, in their ignorance of His glory, they fulfilled those very Scriptures in condemning Him (Acts 13:27). They could not have been condemned for not seeing His spirit, had His Sonship been limited to His spirit. It was He, Himself, His whole Person, Whom they rejected — He was the Son. In this connection let us ponder the deep meaning of the following Scriptures: —

John 6:42. — "Is not this JESUS? . . . How then does He say, I am come down out of heaven?"

John 8:19. — They said to Him therefore, "Where is Thy Father?" Jesus answered, "Ye know neither Me nor My Father. If ye had known Me ye would have known My Father also."

John 8:42. — Jesus said unto them, "If God were your Father ye would have loved Me, for I came forth from God and am come [from Him]; for neither am I come of Myself, but He has sent Me."

John 8:53, etc. — "Art Thou greater than our father Abraham . . . Whom makest Thou Thyself?" JESUS answered ". . . It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of Whom ye say that He is your God . . . Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day . . ." The Jews therefore said unto Him, "THOU art not yet fifty years old, and hast THOU seen Abraham?" JESUS said unto them, "Before Abraham was, I am." They took up stones . . . but JESUS hid HIMSELF and went out of the temple.

If human language is to be used at all as a vehicle for Divine communications, these portions, and many another, show that Jesus, the Jesus Whose footsteps we follow in the gospel story, is the Son of God. He Himself speaks, and we hear Him; He moves, we watch Him; He thirsts, is weary, weeps, works, warns, suffers, dies, is buried; and we say, "The Son of God loved Me and gave Himself for Me." We have not to analyse His Person, and differentiate between His body and His spirit, before we find Him to be the Son of God.

— - - - - Further we do well to give full weight to the following passages from the same Gospel of John:- John 9:11. — The Man that is called JESUS.

John 9:17. — He is a Prophet.

John 9:33. — If this Man were not of God, He could do nothing.

John 9:35-38. — JESUS . . . Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He . . . said . . . Who is He, Lord? JESUS said unto him, THOU HAST BOTH SEEN HIM, AND HE IT IS THAT SPEAKETH WITH THEE.

We may not turn away from the evident meaning of these words. There was a Person there Whom all might see, but on Whom not all did believe who saw Him. But those in whom there was faith, IN SEEING JESUS SAW THE SON OF GOD. He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him.

Again we read:-

John 10:32. — JESUS answered them, Many good works have I showed you from MY FATHER. . . . The Jews . . . for blasphemy, and because that THOU, BEING A MAN, MAKEST THYSELF GOD. JESUS answered them . . . say ye of Him Whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am Son of God? . . . The Father is in Me, and I in Him. They sought again to take Him.

"I said, I am the Son of God." Who is the One Who said this? The One Who said this is the One Who walked in the temple in Solomon's porch (v. 23), and (in v. 39) the One Whom they sought to take, but He went forth out of their hand. The sin of the Jews was that though the Son was Man, and that Man was Son, they hated both Him and His Father (John 15:24), and their charge against Him in the day when they crucified Him was this, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God (John 19:7). All this would become meaningless if His Sonship and His Manhood were distinct entities.

All is plain until the inborn rationalism of fallen and carnal man gets to work on this unfathomable mystery. May it not be said that error as to the Person of Christ often proceeds from the audacity that tries to dissect TWO NATURES in the One Person, and thence to define which is the Divine and which is the Human? JESUS IS GOD, and JESUS IS MAN. The inscrutable mystery to which reference was made at the beginning of this paper, lies in this, that both these glories are true, but inseparable, in the One Person. He may be viewed, now in the light of the one glory, now in the light of the other, but He is the same Christ throughout, body, soul, and spirit. His Godhead was not a distinct entity from His Manhood. He was not two persons. but One. It would be totally wrong to limit the Sonship of Christ, the glory of the Son, to any one part of His glorious Being. He is One, and indivisible. If any difficulties are alleged, let them remain difficulties, for how else can it be when "No one knows the Son but the Father."

Seeing that Christ is Man, we find that in each and every particular the Scripture speaks of Him in language such as, would be used of man, while ever apart from sin and with holiness innate. It speaks of Him as to His body, Matthew 26:12; Luke 23:52; John 20:12; Hebrews 10:5. It speaks of His soul, Matthew 26:38; Mark 14:34; John 12:27; Acts 2:27; Acts 2:31; In the Old Testament also, as in Psalms 16:10; Psalms 22:20; Isaiah 53:10-12; etc., etc. It speaks of His spirit also, Mark 2:8; Mark 8:12; Luke 10:21; Luke 23:46; John 11:33; John 13:21. All these speak of Him in Manhood, the Son having become Man; even as we in the constitution of our manhood are said to have spirit, soul and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23). The same words are used in His case as are used in our case. Yet how every heart that knows Him, while adoring the absolute identity of our Lord in nature with man, sin apart, yet feels the holy mystery, the infinite glory, indissolubly true, that He is the Son incarnate.

Thus His trials were similar to ours, and affected Him in spirit, soul and body; in fact in every way. He was. made like unto His brethren in all things (Hebrews 2:17); and hath been in all points tempted like as we are. Let any one take a concordance and see how the saints of God from Job onward have been afflicted in (1) body, (2) soul, and (3) spirit,, and it will astonish him to see how fully it is proved that the trials of all three are necessary to complete the experience of true manhood, and how necessary it was that Christ should be Man in every detail. One need not use adjectives; lest it should appear that in any way one was limiting the truth of Christ's Person to Humanity as we know it in ourselves; but the Son of God in Manhood was Man, body, soul, and spirit. Either this is so, or the language of Scripture is meaningless and misleading; (I speak as a fool). The MAN, in all the completeness of His Manhood here, was SON, and always SON, in life and in death.

3. SON IN RESURRECTION. In speaking of our Lord in relation to His eternal Sonship, the further extension of His Personal glory into resurrection and ascension has to be considered. For in the ways of God in grace and counsel, the Son as Man was to open up a new world, "where sin, nor want, nor woe, nor death, can come." The love of God sent Him, the Son, the unique, "darling" Son, to bring in life, and be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:9-10). For sin had ruined the first order of man, and had brought in death and judgment. He died the death, He bore the judgment, for our sakes, making atonement for us in the very work and way that have revealed the love of God. But to end up the old order alone would have lent an appearance of defeat in God's ways, as though His purpose in creating man had been defeated. The love of God had planned that after the unfoldings of His ways and character in the history of the first man (with all the marvels of

redemption, grace, holiness and love brought to light in the cross), there should be a new race of men, with Christ, the Son, for its living Head. Past all the disclosure of what sin is — its miseries and results for ever unmasked and hated (Romans 7:13-15), the heart won by the true knowledge of God (Romans 8:31-39), life and incorruptibility brought to light by the Gospel (2 Timothy 1:10), blessing secured in One (2 Corinthians 1:19; 2 Corinthians 1:22) Who is the unchanging and infinite Object of God's delight and love — we find ourselves in the presence of the risen Son of God. For Jesus is risen. Death in our case shows sin's triumph over us, and our weakness in the presence of Satan's power. Resurrection in His case shows His triumph over both sin and Satan. He Who went into the grave came out of it. Let it be distinctly averred that the Son of God, Jesus, Who was dead, now lives again — in resurrection estate surely — but with His own Person complete. It would be just as false to deny His bodily presence on the first glad resurrection day of which we read in John 20:1-31, or in Luke 24:1-53, as it would be false to deny His bodily presence on the cross or in the grave. Death is an enemy in God's creation as far as man is concerned, and if death for ever secured the body as its prey, then would God's enemy have triumphed. The triumph of God is set forth in Christ's real resurrection, the full result of which will be in the resurrection of the just in its time, and in the resurrection of the unjust in its time (1 Corinthians 15:1-58; John 5:1-47; Revelation 20:1-15). The Son of God has emerged from the grave, victorious, alive again, complete in Manhood after as before, not a spirit (as though His Person were limited to His Spirit) (Luke 24:36-43), never to die again (Romans 6:9), for death has no more dominion over Him. He lives after the power of an endless life, an indissoluble life (Hebrews 7:17). In the risen Son of God, Jesus, we see God's thought for man, ever living, ever beyond sin's power and Satan's reach, for ever living to God, for God's pleasure and will. He is Head, and Pattern, of the new type or order of man on which sin and Satan and death have no power, and in connection with a new scene where everything ministers eternally to the joy of the heart of God. The new position is opened up to us of glory, honour, and incorruptibility. There is opened up to view an era, a resurrection vista, in which the Son of God is the fulfiller of all God's counsels. His Son was marked out Son of God with power, not only by the raising of other dead ones, but by His own resurrection on that first Lord's day. And as risen, in all the vigour and power of eternal life, He is the Model to which His redeemed ones are to be conformed (Romans 8:29; Php 3:21).

We gladly see that He will be the First-born among His many brethren; for He Who won the position is ever distinguishable in the blessedness of His Personal glory and His victory from those who are sharers of that position and victory. But how blessed when the Lord Himself declared to them, "I ascend to My Father, and to your Father, to My God, and your God."

Thus nothing of His Person is lost. He Who is Son of God, and yet Man, is alive in the beauty and power of His resurrection, in the whole truth and unity of His Person.

4. SON IN ASCENSION AND GLORY. The new order of life and position of victory were declared by the Lord in resurrection, but it remained for the Son to take the predestined place as Man in glory, where on the one hand we might see the setting forth of God's infinite pleasure in Him, and on the other it might be possible to bring the purpose of God to fruition in heaven and in earth. (Ephesians 1:9, and Ephesians 1:20-23). We behold the completeness of His redemptive work, the triumph of good over evil, the glory of God revealed in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:1-18; 2 Corinthians 4:1-18), in such fashion that the very Presence that once was our dread has become

the home of our affection (Acts 9:5; Php 3:7-14) and the lure of our minds. We see the spot from which the Church on earth is supplied, and the servants and Saints are sustained (Colossians 2:9-19; Ephesians 4:8-16), the Resource from which all fulness is ministered, the One Who alone will master Satan, put down all hostility to God, and bring in the millennium, and the eternal state.

Moreover, we see in the present session of The Son of God in Manhood in the throne of God, that this holy Person has contracted no impurity by touching sin and death, which would disqualify Him as Son from sitting there; and that there has been no surrender of His Divine glory by becoming Man. It shows us the exquisite and infinite delight of the heart of God in the whole story of His incarnation, humiliation, and death as nothing else can. And — we may add — by transferring our thoughts to heaven and the presence of God, and the riveting of our affections on a Person so glorious and fair up there (Colossians 3:1-4), we who are His are detached from the sordid world around us with all its glitter and noisy boast, to await with souls already satisfied in His love, the coming of GOD'S SON from heaven, even JESUS (1 Thessalonians 1:9-10).

W. H. WESTCOTT.

## 50. His Priesthood.

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His Priesthood.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 13, 1921, page 48.

O Son of God Eternal, - Jesus — in glory now, Before Thy throne of mercy Behold a sufferer bow.

Thine eyes of tenderest pity, Thy heart of strongest love, Thy pierced hands of power, All move for me above.

Upon Thy face, Lord Jesus, My soul would fix its gaze, Such love as Thine inviting Its rest in Thy blest ways.

These marks of earthly trials, Of loneliness and pain, Oft touched Thy holy Person, And touch Thy heart again.

Yes, there in brightest glory, One Person lives for me; Who tasted all this sorrow, And — Death — upon the tree. From out this house of weakness In spirit, I'll away;

Affection's mighty pinions Cleaving their heavenward way. The body in its suffering Shall not enchain the heart;

Love finds its happy solace Where Thou, Lord Jesus, art. And at Thy feet adoring, High Priest of God's own choice, I'll fold my wings untiring, And in my heart rejoice. For here in deep communion With God revealed in Son, And saints who also love Him, We bow before His throne.

Thou, Lord, dost lead our singing, (Thy sufferings all behind), And we in spirit with Thee, Repose in worship find.

## 51. "I thirst"

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"I thirst"

John 19:28.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 13, 1921, page 28. A thousand memories linger round the tree, Where Jesus died for sin, at Calvary;

Galatians 6:14 The sinner's refuge, and the saint's true boast, Romans 5:8 Where shone the love that seeks and saves the lost.

\* \* \* \* \* Luke 23:33 On either side there hung a dying thief, Luke 23:39 Of whom, one spurned, the other sought, relief Luke 23:40 From endless shame. He found it; at his side Romans 5:6 Was Jesus, who for guilty sinners died 2 Corinthians 5:15 That they might live; suffered, that they might have 1 Thessalonians 5:10 His place in glory, conquerors o'er the grave.

1 Kings 10:7 No mind can e'er conceive, no language tell Titus 2:14 All He has done to save our souls from hell.

\* \* \* \* \* Matthew 27:1-66 Long hours of suffering at the hands of foes, Matthew 26:1-75 Sickening desertion, on the part of those John 15:15 Whom He had called His friends, both told their tale Lamentations 1:12 Upon His frame. All other hearts would fail Beneath such sorrows. He, devoted, stood, Isaiah 52:14 His visage marred, His form besmeared with blood.

Mark 15:24 At length He hangs, in boundless love for me, Luke 23:44 Aching and lonely on the accursed tree.

Psalms 69:20 Lonely? Ah, yes! though all around Him stand Mark 15:29; Mark 15:32 Lawyers, and priests, and elders of the land;

Luke 23:48 Though throngs of people see Him there impaled, Isaiah 53:4 Lonely He hangs, by every woe assailed.

Matthew 27:25 They thirsted, — for His blood! He too is heard, John 19:28 "I THIRST!" \* \* \* \* \*  
Psalms 102:20 \* \* \* \* \* Did not a myriad Angels gird Psalms 102:21 For service at their Maker's word, and fly John 1:51 With lightning speed adown the darkening sky?

2 Samuel 23:15 Were there not found three mighty men to break Through hosts of foes, from Bethlehem's well to slake The thirst of David's Son, and David's Lord? Not men, nor angels, can relief afford.

\* \* \* 2 Kings 3:17 Was there no miracle? He gave the stream Exodus 17:6 In answer to His people's cry, whose gleam Spoke life from out the stricken rock. He wrought Judges 15:18 A gushing fount in Lehi when besought By Samson in his need. But for His own, Psalms 22:4;

Psalms 22:6 No miracle appeared. No ringing tone  
Isaiah 41:17-18 Of cheery succour reached His  
ear; no rain Fell from the brazen heavens; unmeasured pain  
Was unrelieved. \* \* \* \* \* Psalms  
104:10-11 \* \* \* \* \* Where are the flashing rills  
Leaping and splashing from a thousand hills, Fed by  
eternal snows? Where are the springs  
Sparkling from depths profound, whence water brings  
Welcome refreshment, to remove all thirst? Did not some rushing torrent, awe struck, burst  
Forth from its rocky chains, and gently lave  
The Master's lips with its submissive wave?

\* \* \* \* \* Psalms 22:11; Psalms 22:15 He thirsted: and no human means availed  
T'assuage His great desire. His words unveiled  
2 Corinthians 8:9 The sorrow of His heart. He panted there  
Revelation 1:5 For love of sinners, who in glory fair, Revelation 5:9 Might own His love, and owe  
eternal praise Revelation 22:4 To His death-sorrows. Yes, their raptured gaze  
1 Peter 3:18 Will rest on Jesus who thus died to save  
1 Timothy 1:15 Rebels from hell, and sinners from the grave  
1 John 4:19 He thirsted: and adoring saints proclaim  
Galatians 1:4 'Twas for the love of rebel hearts,  
whose shame Ephesians 2:3 Deserved eternal woe, where thirst shall reign  
Luke 16:24 Supreme.  
\* \* \* \* \* John 6:40 \* \* \* \* \* O needy one  
Canst thou not trust God's blest, eternal Son?

John 4:14 He thirsted: but for thee, there ever flow  
John 7:37 Streams of salvation. DOST THOU  
JESUS KNOW?

## 52. Prayer

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### Prayer

It is not always more praying that is wanted, but more prayer. Praying may be vociferous, it may be long, logical, or oft-repeated, and effect nothing. Prayer may come to little more than the lying down in the hollow of God's hand, in the sense — I had nearly said agony — of utter helplessness and powerlessness; but the quiet confidence flows over the soul that God is, that God knows His ways, that God will fulfil the uttermost thought of His heart of love. But prayer, the soul's holy reverent contact with its God, its grasp of His promises, its confidence in His character, its free access to Him with the pressing need, the urgent request — this is the frame almost invariably connected with deep and widespread blessing.

W.H. Westcott S.T. 1916, p. 309.

## 53. The house of the Rechabites

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The house of the Rechabites Jeremiah 35:1-19.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 7, 1915, page 291.

There are some lessons, I think, behind the story of the Rechabites. Their manly refusal of wine has, of course, been emphasized by Temperance Reformers, and their history been bent, to serve the teetotal cause. This seems to me to miss the whole end of the chapter. The test which God permitted Jeremiah to apply to them was not, as some might think, a temptation to drink. God, who knew their principles and their faithfulness to them, wished to bring out their obedience to their father's word in contrast to the disobedience of Israel to His laws.

It was not a temptation to evil, but a test of principle, and it found them staunch and true. You train a horse to jump, and when he has practised and you know his mettle you take him to the five-barred gate. Your object is not to break his leg nor to throw him, but simply to show that the training and discipline have done their work. But why did Jonadab the son of Rechab issue such strange commands to his sons? "Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever: neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any: but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; that ye may live many days in the land where ye be strangers." In the first place, it is obvious that you cannot make this a teetotal question. The whole instruction is one; it relates as much to house-building, and seed-growing, and fruit-growing, as it does to wine. You cannot do what Jehoiakim did in the next chapter, excise with your penknife what you do not wish to hear. The knife and the fire serve the self-will of the man who hates God's thoughts, but not the broken spirit of the one who longs to be suitable to God. Who then was Jonadab? What led him to the conclusion to which he came, and induced him to pass so stringent a rule, and to urge so strange a life on his posterity? His short story, as given in the inspired record, is found in 2 Kings 10:15-28. His ride with Jehu, and his presence with that king when he destroyed the Baal-worship — that is all. But when you study things, perhaps you begin to understand. What were the times in which Jonadab, or Jehonadab, lived? His name means "The Lord (Jah) is liberal." Evidently his father Rechab had known something of the true God, and had desired his son to bear the testimony throughout the whole of his natural life that God is good. Else why give him such a name? It is when we have tasted that the Lord is gracious we become anxious to transmit the knowledge and conviction of His liberality and grace to our offspring. Yet think of the times in which that testimony was to be borne. Ahab king most of the time, with Jezebel — the most wicked woman of all ages — inciting him to evil. His death did not end the evil, for Azariah, his successor, followed on the same lines. Finally Joram came to the throne. Against him God, through Elisha, sent Jehu. The people were sunk in idolatry, they had turned to Jehovah the back and not the face; the prophets of Baal swarmed over the country; even the removal of 450 of them by Elijah had made little impression; and the sins of Jeroboam wherewith he made Israel to sin were raging among the Israelites. So common and so dreadful was this departure from holiness and truth, that it became a

formula to describe the state of kings and people: "He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused the children of Israel to sin." It was at this time that Elisha said to Gehazi, "Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?" Elisha had wished to teach Naaman that "Jah is liberal," but Gehazi, by his wish to get a settlement on himself, had frustrated his intention. "The leprosy therefore of Naaman," said the prophet, "shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever." Do we perceive these lessons? Do we discern the times? Do we understand the state of things around us?

Now it is possible, if not probable, that Jonadab knew Elisha; at any rate, he seemed to have formed the same estimate of his environment that Elisha did. Both appear to have stood morally apart from their generation, Elisha in his service, and Jonadab in his testimony. The days were evil, and he was not at home in them. He was surrounded, it is true, by the favoured nation of God; but they had sunk, as God said they would, to the level of the nations among whom they dwelt (Exodus 34:11, etc. etc.). When Jehu appeared, like a great revivalist in the midst of the evil, commissioned by God to punish Israel for their sin, he may have thought: "Here comes the change I have longed for; now the worship of Jehovah will prosper; now the people will learn God's righteous ways." And, on Jehu's invitation to ride in his chariot (evidently being known as one who would rejoice to see God's glory manifested), he gave him both heart and hand, to see his zeal for Jehovah. Surely he must have thought the tide had turned when the huge congregation of Baal-worshippers was exterminated.

Alas! how soon must he have been disillusioned. Twice is it immediately stated that Jehu departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin. He went wrong himself, and led others wrong too. Was it the sense of the hopelessness of things in an outward way that led Jonadab to be a stranger and a pilgrim in the midst of his own people? Was it the feeling that if, like Abraham, he was on the Divine ground, he was, equally, with Abraham, apart from all that surrounded him? Did he realize that where Jehovah was rejected and His word despised was no settling place for him? Of the father of the faithful it is written: "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country; dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." For him and his children, the life of strangers; for him, no building of houses, no planting of vineyards, — nothing to tie him to this earth, nothing to even seem like a portion here. He awaited the time when an order of things would be established on earth, wholly of God. Till then he took the pilgrim's garb, and walked the pilgrim's path, and, above all, showed the pilgrim spirit. God was his portion, and he would take nothing in gift from the world, whether from the king of Sodom (Genesis 14:17 et seq.), or from the sons of Heth (Genesis 23:3 et seq.). He held to this principle equally in the day of his prosperity and in the day of his adversity. None but those who have trodden this path a little will know what I mean. Not to let the appetite for gain be whetted when the air rings with the shouts of success, nor to hanker after the getting of things for nothing when the atmosphere is heavy with the pressure of untoward circumstances. Such was Abraham's life; a life of magnificent nearness to God and of corresponding moral distance from those who surrounded him. His heart was attracted by things Divine, he lived in them and fed on them; he had his estimate of his environment formed in God's presence; there was nothing to attract his spirit in what attracted Lot, and certainly nothing to attract in the ways of the Canaanite and the Perizzite

who were then in the land. So he went from place to place, and trained his son and grandson to do the same, a dweller in tabernacles. Is Jonadab's spirit not the same? Was it for him a question of partial abstinence or of teetotalism? No, surely not. His refusal to take part in the pleasures of those around, and indeed to have any portion whatever in the land in the condition which then characterised it, was his protest against that condition. If Jehovah was rejected, and like a stranger in His own land and among His own professed people, so would Jonadab be.

Thus far Jonadab and his sons. But what about ourselves and the times in which we live? Theoretically the hope of the Christian is laid up for him in heaven (Colossians 1:5). It is when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, that we shall appear with Him in glory (Colossians 3:4). The order of things purposed by God will be ushered in at that time, and our part will be a heavenly part with Christ in glory. But somehow the truth has fallen in the street, the professing church suffers "that woman Jezebel" to exercise her baneful influence (Revelation 2:3, and the majority of professing Christians seek a portion, and influence, pleasure and position, here where Christ was rejected, and where even now few regard His word. The wine of human recreation or enjoyment or indulgence exhilarates even Christians; the thousand and one hobbies and recreations, and entertainments of the world, seduce most from their loyalty to Christ, and hinder their spending and being spent for Him. Nay, I will go further. And I will say that the strongest and most successful testimony for Christ is not found usually with those who "buy houses, and plant vineyards" here; with those who join their building societies and possess their own property on this earth. The loosening influence of whole-hearted devotedness to Christ is plainly seen in Acts 4:34, where "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them." We can easily see that encumbrances are best got rid of. But in our day it is even more needed, if our testimony is to have a true ring. For we are surrounded by the Ahabs and the Jezebels in the Christian profession; all seek their own also, and not the things which are Jesus Christ's. The earth-dwellers are in our midst, they mind earthly things. I do not speak alone of worldly things, but earthly. The numbers of those who speak of a heavenly calling are great; the souls who are true to it, — can we say they are many? But the worldliness of the Christian profession as a whole, the unmistakable revolt against the authority of God's Word, the consequent disobedience to the simplest requirements of holiness and truth, the love of pleasures distancing the love of God, the settling down into things and affairs here — all these call loudly for a seed of Jonadab.

It is a joy to learn from Jeremiah 35:19 that, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever." So pleased was Jehovah with their obedience to their father, and their fidelity to their pilgrim principles, that He pledged His own Name to secure a succession of "sons of Jonadab" down to the end of time. The question for us is, are we among them? Do we seek after the intoxicating pleasures of this world which wine symbolises? Do we build houses, as though we were fixtures here? Are our hopes detained here by things we should gladly bundle to one side, if we thought the Lord were coming tomorrow? Oh, what need there is for intenseness in our spiritual life, to be constrained by the love of Christ! Do you know, I used to think it said "the love of Christ constrains us to live to Him"? That is not it. The love of Christ constrains us, constrains us, **CONSTRAINS US!** It holds us, sets the forces of Christian life in motion, never relaxes its hold, always exercises its gentle, happy pressure. It is this that leads us to choose the Abraham path and not the path of Lot. It is this that makes Jonadabs of us, makes association with the sickly and wicked condition of things around us

impossible, and induces the simple pilgrim life in which the heart aims to be free from entanglement here, that it may be yet more willingly and more fully under the constraint of His love.

## 54. Resurrection

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### Resurrection

John 5:19-29.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1949, page 151. When Jesus was here He raised dead people to life. But His business when here was not to work miracles purely for the sake of showing that He could do so; but in order to make the Father known and to reveal God. He never did any work except with the object of manifesting the willingness of God to meet men in their every need, and to carry out God's love purpose.

It would have been possible for Him to utter one call and all the dead would have risen, and all the sick would have been cured. But the time for that had not come. There were other works to do.

He came to give eternal life with its knowledge of God. Mere power in raising dead people and in curing sickness would not give the knowledge of God nor confer eternal life. The tree of life is inaccessible on earth; the way back to Eden is closed. To open the way to eternal life for men, He must die; life and the knowledge of God became accessible there. When that work was done, life was in Him, even in Him raised from the dead, as God's gift to men.

Men are in death until reached by God and by the voice of the Son. His voice is not, at this time, uttered to touch bodies but souls. Quickening out of death means a new order of life for men, in which sinning and doing our own will are hated, and doing God's will is loved. It is not a life merely to live continuously on earth, but of knowing God in Christ, so that here, in the midst of evil, we may live unto Him by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. But all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. That time will also come. The earnest of it was when He was here: the fulfilment, both as to just and unjust, will be presently.

## 55. Righteousness ■ (Correspondence)

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Righteousness — (Correspondence)

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine Volume 3, 1911, page 152.

Q. It is often stated, in evangelical circles, that while the believers sins are put away by the blood of Christ, what constitutes his positive righteousness before God is the perfect life of the Lord Jesus, as described for us in the four Gospels. It is further stated that this is not a mere legal righteousness, in that the perfection of the Lord's earthly life far transcended a bare obedience to the letter of the law. Perfection was found in Him, and this, it is said, and not merely His obedience to the law, constitutes the believer's righteousness. Would you kindly help with this? In reply to the query of your correspondent it is surely important to first avow one's glad accord with much that is held by those who appear to have this difficulty, e.g. their apprehension of the perfection of our Lord's obedience, of the necessity of a righteousness other than our own, and of that necessity being met in Christ alone — whatever defect there may be in apprehending the manner in which it is met. When we come to deal directly with the matter of our being before God in righteousness in harmony with His holy nature and attributes, we are absolutely shut up to Christ. For the Jew who is under the law, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Romans 10:4). For the Gentile who calls on Christ for salvation and blessing, He "of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). Both of these chapters are written of Christ in His resurrection state. The Apostle, describing the righteousness which is of faith, i.e. the righteousness in which the Christian is seen before God, says that it is not necessary to ascend up into heaven to bring Christ down, nor yet is it necessary to descend into the deep to bring Christ up again from the dead, these being accomplished facts subsisting in all their blessed value before God for the good of men. But when a man believes in his heart that God raised Christ — our Saviour and Deliverer — from the dead, this is an introduction for him into a position in which God reckons him to be righteous before Him (Romans 10:6-10). Confession with the mouth accompanies this, and the believer is thus recognizable as a saved person.

Everywhere in the New Testament where the doctrine of justification before God is expounded, and our standing in righteousness, the resurrection of Christ is implied and taught. He was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification (Romans 4:25). Adam was the federal head of a race who inherited from him death and condemnation, Christ having completed one righteousness in contrast to Adam's one offence, becomes in resurrection the federal Head of a new race who participate with Him in life and justification of life (Romans 5:14-21). The grace that reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, subsists in Jesus Christ our Lord, and is administered by Him (ver. 21). It pleases God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. and of such it is written, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . righteousness . . ." (1 Corinthians 1:21-30). What Christ is made to us, and what we are made in

Him, is stated alone of Him risen from the dead, and now ascended on high. Though we have known Christ after the flesh," says the Apostle Paul, "yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is new creation; old things are passed away behold all things are become new. And all things are of God.... For He hath made Him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God IN HIM." Whatever may be the meaning of these wonderful utterances, it is clear that the one who believes in Christ receives most wonderful blessings in Him where He now is and one element in that blessing is that, in Him, God now views the believer with unclouded satisfaction, and invests him with favour which is measured only by what Christ is to Him. It is in Christ, risen and glorified, that he is now seen, and his blessing is not in Adam, nor in himself, nor does it lie in the flesh, nor in the sphere where flesh finds its home.

It is, I judge, in regard to this that your correspondent finds that some Christians while evangelical in their testimony, do not reach the scriptural truth. Beholding the unassailable perfection of Christ as He was after the flesh (I use the Apostle's term), they say that this perfection is transferred to the believer's account, and constitutes his righteousness before the face of God. Now is it not incomprehensible, if such be indeed the case, that the Apostle says "we know Him henceforth no more" in that character? If he owed his standing to what Christ was, in His blessed perfection as a Man on earth how could he pen such a sweeping exclusion of what formed his only hope?

We do not lose by having our misconceptions corrected, and I think we all have to learn that what Christ was in His life on earth, and the official glories comprised in His person, have all been carried forward into resurrection. Had it not been so, all that He is would have been unavailable for us. He would still have been nothing less than Himself, but He would have remained without associates in His glory and in whatever character we view Him it was necessary for Him to go down into death that He might remove our every disqualification, and then put us on the same platform with Himself in resurrection before His God and Father. In the four Gospels Christ is presented in various characters. The records there given are our only means of discovering the excellences that were resident in Him, and His perfect suitability for the offices He is to fill. But in each of the four records He is rejected in these several offices and characters and goes into death. What He was after the flesh has GONE. It is true that the remembrance of His humiliation can never pass away. A pot of manna was ever kept in the holiest in the tabernacle of old, and God will never, never forget how lovely Christ was in the days of His lowliness, though He was slighted and rejected and slain. We also are reminded every time we break the bread and drink the cup of Christian fellowship, of the perfection of the One who loved us and gave Himself for us. Yet all that He was here was presented in death to God; and everything went in death. The old footing on which things were proposed to man was destroyed for ever in the judgment of the cross: "one shall burn the heifer in his sight, her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn: and the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer" (Numbers 19:5-6). Everything went. The cedar wood in its glory, and the hyssop in its lowliness, Christ in His human greatness and Christ in His humiliation, Christ in His characters, and Christ in His offices, all went into death. Nothing shows so much as this the purpose of God to set flesh utterly aside. What Christ was after the flesh has passed into the burning; and there exists no such righteousness any more of that order that can be applied to us. Everything moved forward into resurrection. What Jesus was charms and attracts us, but it draws us to where He has gone, and that is into resurrection and glory.

Hence, in each of the four Gospels, the character which Christ presented in His earthly life is closed in death, but reopened in resurrection. This is a tempting theme, but I must not try the patience of the reader. Nothing is missing of all that Christ is, and nothing will fail of all that Christ was to be but all subsists for God and for us in resurrection now.

It is therefore Christ risen, and seated at the right hand of God, who forms our all. It is not Christ in glory for our Object, and Christ on earth for our righteousness; Christ in glory is ALL as well as in all. To get any adequate idea of the favour in which we are set, or of the righteousness according to which we stand before God, it is necessary to study Christ where He is. To begin with, just as it was a righteous thing with God to consume everything in "the burning" when Christ stood as our proxy at the cross, so has it been a righteous thing with God to raise our Representative from the dead and to give Him glory, The height to which He is raised corresponds to the depth to which He went for the securing of God's glory and our blessing. But He has taken that place for us, for His redeemed ones. It is true that we are still down here in our bodies, and are marked by weakness and frequent failure; but nothing of this enters into our standing before God. For a time we tread the desert sand, but our destiny is to be conformed to Christ in glory. By and by there will be no weakness to mourn over, and no failure to confess. The nature within, and the body itself in its resurrection condition, and all the environment without, will be in accordance with God's nature and attributes; there will be no thought or movement divergent from His will. This is what the Apostle Paul calls "the hope of righteousness," i.e. full conformity to Christ in glory. In the meantime, our position before God being assured, and our destiny secured, it is ours to cherish Christ as our present Object, and to yield our members servants to righteousness, that practical holiness may characterize us in this unholy world.

Others are far more competent than the writer to open out the position and excellence of the glorified Man who constitutes our righteousness at the right hand of God; but perhaps some of those of whom your correspondent speaks may be led to prayerfully consider and to heartily accept from God as much as has been said.

## 56. Satan's Moves and God's Countermoves.

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Satan's Moves and God's Countermoves.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1950, page 106.

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

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

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

God is not defeated and it has pleased Him to reveal to us His countermoves. Resurrection shows that God is above all the power of evil; goodness has been vindicated and is now enthroned at God's right hand. God had a plan in all that He has permitted, and in this His Son is to have the central place.

Although He was never seen again by men generally, there are abundant evidences to the Lord's resurrection, as detailed in 1 Corinthians 15:4-8; John 20:1-31 and John 21:1-25; also, Acts 1:1-11. He has further been raised from earth to heaven and is seated at the Father's right hand. Then the Father's promise, intimated through the Son, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit, has been fulfilled by His coming and taking up His abode in the waiting company on the day of Pentecost. He came to each and all were filled. The promised kingdom on the earth is not dropped but postponed and in the meantime witness is being borne and sustained in Satan's world by a power he cannot crucify and in men who were to be here in Christ's life all over the earth. A unity is formed which is not national and not international but is composed of those drawn out of every class — priest or people, Jew or Gentile — once sinners in Satan's kingdom but transferred into the kingdom of the Son of His love; kept, fed, taught and formed till Christ's return. For this is the service of the Holy Spirit, qualifying each one to be a witness for Christ, capable of multiplication. Satan's hatred is no longer concentrated on one Person, but having to do with 120, 3,000, 5,000, and ever growing numbers, and eventually in all lands.

Then finally the Rapture when all those indwelt by the Holy Spirit will be translated in a moment; no power of evil availing to delay by one fraction of time or to prevent any single one being raised or changed.

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

## 57. Extracts from Letters

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### Extracts from Letters

W. H. Westcott.

Extracts from Letter dated Jan. 30th, 1932.

Many things are to be borne within the area of outward fellowship, from which one shrinks in the way of personal contact. I remember being asked if I were breaking bread with a person, did I not commit myself to all that he did? My reply was "Certainly not," and the ground of my reply is the whole teaching of the Pauline Epistles, for without touching on the question of church fellowship, and still less insisting on expulsion from it, the apostle shows up instance after instance where saints are to be rebuked sharply, corrected from error, even withdrawn from as disorderly — yet not counted for enemies, but admonished as brothers. Unruly ones are to be warned, and so on. You do not commit yourselves to these features of flesh seen in saints, yet the teaching of scripture does not point to the putting outside the pale by excommunication.

. . . In days of brokenness we may not alter God's standards, nor may we depart from God's ways.

Wm. Hy. Westcott.

November 3rd, 1925. My Dear Brother,

Thank you for your letter. The spirit of exercise which it evinces is always a feature which turns one's heart in thankfulness to God: Once we are separated to the true Christ, the Christ of God, we are in a position to avail ourselves of all His wisdom power, grace and love for the various troubles we are called upon to face.

It is a fallacy to suppose that any ground can be discovered or reached whereon we may avoid all difficulty, escape all trouble and exercise, or find every brother and sister intelligently and fully in accord with that position. Assembly history starts in the New Testament with the apostles; but how far from perfect were those assemblies which were gathered even under their ministry.

It would seem that at first the passage on to true Christian ground was gradual. The Jewish remnant and proselytes who were blessed at Pentecost still held public gatherings in the temple precincts; and what enraged the priests was that public teaching by the apostles went on in the very stronghold of the legal, but now effete, Jewish system. The Christians, however, were by the descent of the Holy Ghost baptised into one body, and in the confession of the Lord Jesus, bore testimony to Israel's rejection of Him, and of His exaltation BY and TO the right hand of God. And through Peter's ministry there was for a time still the offer of grace to Israel if repentant.

Even after the call of Paul, and I may say his first missionary journey with the gospel, there was still a close link with the law, and circumcision, and the temple, as Acts 15:1-41 reminds us; and as late as Acts 21:1-40 we learn how many thousands there were that believed, in Jerusalem, who were all zealous of the law, etc., etc. But while much was borne with, and many links at first

existed with the synagogue, it seems that assembly truth as Paul administered it, first had a pure place after he had testified to the synagogue in Corinth, and then departed thence Acts 18:7. Not but what he still presented the Gospel to the Jew first, as, for example, in verse 19, and Acts 19:8, but at that point, IN CORINTH, he breaks with the synagogue, and IN THAT CITY, where true separation from the judged religious system of Judaism was first marked, HE LAID THE FOUNDATION OF TRUE ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY: 1 Corinthians 3:10-11. For in that passage in Corinthians it is not merely a question of a sinner receiving the gospel. Paul did not lay the gospel foundation, for souls were blessed through Christ and received the Holy Spirit before Paul was converted. But by his ministry he did in Corinth lay down the grand foundation truth of the assembly in testimony here. And, be it noted again, it was when the rejection of Christ by the Jewish religious opponents led to the step of separation from the religious system which refused Christ His place, that the truth could be both taught and practised in separation. I do not see how you could have had it otherwise. How could you have seen a local assembly in function in the synagogue? I mean according to what you get taught in the Corinthians. THERE everyone was to be subject to the leadership of Christ, and ANY brother, if led of Him and by the Holy Ghost, might so far take part. This would not have been possible, nor would it have been tolerated, in the synagogue. So that not until you have the truth as taught in separation in Corinth could you have the assembly in function. And in his ministry there Paul laid the foundation of all true ASSEMBLY testimony. No doubt the topstone is reached in the epistle to those at Ephesus, which looks on to the completion of the counsel of God as to the whole church. But there again we may say it was only learned in separation, for he separated the disciples, and they henceforth met in the school of one Tyrannus.

Now these things may help us to see that in so far as we mix with a religious system which is marked for the judgment of God, we put ourselves in a position where it is impossible to keep in the full truth of the assembly now revealed. How anyone who has once tasted the liberty and preciousness of a circle where Christ alone is acknowledged, and His fulness has been tasted and enjoyed, can afterwards go to and settle in "the establishment" or any of the so-called "nonconformist bodies" one does not understand. Yet evidently the epistle to the Hebrews was written because there was danger that those who had been drawn out of the old and decaying system should be tempted back to it. But even when separated to Christ there is every danger that saints should be tempted to admit and shelter in their midst the principles and practices of the world out of which grace has brought them, or of the religious system from which truth has delivered them. Of the former, Corinthians itself gives us a clear example; where instead of living under the sway of the holy Lord, using the resources they had in Christ, and walking according to the truth of the House of God, the Body of Christ, and liberty of the Spirit, and — we may add — of man in Christ, they allowed the use of man after the flesh with his resources, and alas, his luxuries and pleasures, his looseness, and his ready allowance of the first man. Even SIN seemed to be allowed, gross and almost unnameable sin, under the plea of liberty. but liberty for the first man whom God has condemned should rather be called licentiousness. Of the latter, Colossians and Hebrews are evident examples. Here it is not the bad side of man after the flesh which saints were in danger of allowing With the Colossians it seems to have been largely the mentality of the first man, his philosophy, his mental training, his reasoning powers, and especially in religious forms. It is a particularly subtle form of weakness, and in truth the denial of Christianity, to suppose that a man who is highly educated and trained in the world's schools, and has examined all the various

systems of thought, ancient and modern, and has been theologically trained, and who has studied logic, mathematics, and science of all kinds, whether physical or metaphysical, will necessarily be the most useful or the most reliable of Christians. On the contrary, HE is likely to be the most useful, who having had all these "advantages" as the world calls them, renounces faith in all the subtle reasonings and conclusions of men, and in the-spirit of a little child, receives with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls. Saul of Tarsus, the great helper of the saints in the Gentile world, says "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, he had done with man after the flesh, and was not only content to be in contact with the fulness in Christ, but learned that that fulness was so complete that there WAS no fulness elsewhere. No one can describe the magnificence of the position into which the feeblest Christian is introduced, where — in Christ — he has every resource, and is independent of the whole system of operation, the whole "modus operandi" of the world, and of the man whose world it is. That world, that man, wants his music, his sentimentality, his eloquence, his religious atmosphere, his architecture to aid "the religious sense," his organisation, his rubrics, his fasts, his feasts, his rules, his ordinances, and a hundred and one accessories, which, even in the case of a Christian, would smother his faith and quench the Spirit. How amazing the deliverance, how fascinating the liberty, where a poor once-imprisoned Christian emerges out of such an \*Aruwimi forest of religiousness into God's light of day, where Christ is all in all.

\*\* An African river, tributary to the Congo. The forests in this region are very dense. With the Hebrews, it was more the allurements of a past religious system, which had had its place in God's ways while Israel was being tested. It had an antiquity of some 1500 years' duration; it had a thrilling history, was headed up in an earthly centre, and in its high priest always had an earthly head. It could boast of its central temple, of its grand ritual, of its law, its great festivals; and while its roots lay in the fact of its Divine inauguration, truly commanded the reverence and homage of every Hebrew all over the world. But it was not finality, for by its means, so imposing and material, God was foreshadowing all that was in his heart — to be established in Christ. And now Christ HAS COME in Whom is finality. Hence, though of divine inauguration, the best religious system that the world has ever known, AND THE ONLY DIVINE ONE, has gone down, and is by God Himself set aside in favour of Christ alone.

Where, then, is the religious system, be it old or new, Catholic or Protestant, national or sectarian, where is the religious system that God can acknowledge now that CHRIST has come? The saint who goes down to any system acknowledges what God does not acknowledge.

What shall I say more? We find that God in mercy, and our Lord Jesus Christ as having the key of David, has set before us an open door in these closing days. We find that through grace any Christian who is exercised about these things can get out to Christ from all the entanglements of man's systems, and find in true separation to Christ every fulness and resource. There is for him there the possibility of learning (without human trammels), the love of the Father's heart, the counsels of God, the glories, grace and love of Christ, and the whole range of God's good pleasure in the Man of His right hand, the second Man, and last Adam, the Son of His love. There, too, he may find in company with other Christians set free, the blessed liberty of the Spirit, and ministry from the Head in heaven for the members on earth, and enjoy the inestimable privilege of identification with the rejection of Christ, while in spirit he can be led into the holiest of all in the

sense of the blessedness of the God to whom Christ has brought him, and in the enjoyment of the Father's love who is the source of it all. Moreover, in the power of the Spirit he can come out face to face with men, to be here descriptive of Christ, in witness for Him in His absence, waiting for His return, and competent to face all the power of Satan, and the opposition of the world, and even all the storms and troubles of earth, in the grace of Christ.

We may say that about a century has passed since the exodus began from human and national systems that saints might meet on the ground of the Assembly of God alone, according to the Scriptures, under the Headship and Lordship of Christ, and the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit. It is a marvellous conception, and it showed a path which instructed, exercised, devoted Christians felt and do feel to be of God. It seemed to be the realization of the Lord's own word, "I have set before thee an open door?" But it is so pre-eminently a spiritual thing, stripped of all vestige of man's methods of co-ordination and co-operation, so entirely dependent upon the giving Christ His place, and walking in the Spirit, that it could the more easily be damaged the moment any individual allowed the flesh and his own will to act. But all the true power of Christianity is seen only when saints are separated to Christ, and are loyal to that separation. Bring in the ways of the world, admit the thoughts and methods of man, and you have weakened everything. Israel, who had Jehovah for their King, wanted to be like the nations and to have a king of their own. Saints who are nominally separated to Christ ask for an organ for their work, a leader in their prayer meetings, a chairman for their conventions, a banner for their parades, the advertisement of their services, magic lanterns or lantern processions, and a dozen other things, which are truly only "like the nations." And even the young people's meetings may easily degenerate into "socials" where hymn singing and jocular remarks and recitations are the fare on which they are nourished, to sustain them, forsooth, in a hostile world, where all of Christ is to be inwrought and expressed, and where the whole power of the devil is to be encountered. How the devil must at times "laugh in his sleeve." The more we see of the true power and glory of Christianity, the more sensitive we become to anything that contravenes it, the more trivial do things appear which constitute the stock-in-trade of some. But — may one say it humbly — if they only knew the truth as God has shown it to us, the more readily would they drop these defiling substitutes for the power of the Holy Ghost and the glories of Christ.

One has truly said, "The principles of God may be deserted by easy gradations. They may first be RELAXED), then FORGOTTEN, then DESPISED. They may pass from a FIRM hand into an EASY one, from thence to an INDIFFERENT one, and find themselves at last flung away be a REBELLIOUS one. Many have at first stood for God's principles in face of difficulties — then merely grieved over the loss of them — then been careless about their loss or maintainance — and at last, with a high hand, broken." (J. G. Bellett.) But you ask how far can we go, and give the right hand of fellowship in such things. I say, NOT AT ALL. "have no company with him" in 2 Thessalonians 3:14 is not ecclesiastical; it is moral. But it places within our reach a refusal to company with a man who, though outwardly in the Christian company is behaving in a way inconsistent with the truth of Christ. It has long been clear to me that I cannot associate in service with one whose modes of service are prejudicial to the truth of God. Whether it is in open air work, Sunday School work, gospel work at home, or missionary work abroad, whether speaking or writing, one finds that one cannot company with a man whose course is "disorderly and not according to the tradition which" says Paul "ye received of us." And further, even as a great

servant like Paul or Apollos might have difficulty and objection about going to Corinth at a given time when looseness was so shamefully practised (see 1 Corinthians 16:1-24; 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 2 Corinthians 1:23), so may a little and insignificant servant refuse to visit a gathering which is characterised by looseness, at a given time. But I humbly submit that he should, as Paul did, GIVE HIS REASON FOR SO DOING. If servants were only faithful, much more exercise might be produced than is produced. Usually if one knows of hearts that are grieving over the laxity, one goes to encourage- them; but always making it clear that the laxity allowed by some is in one's judgment utterly contrary to the Word of God and the truth of Christ.

I know that some say you are identified with everything that occurs in the assembly. This I utterly repudiate, when once saints are on Divine ground. Paul was NOT identified with the man in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. He was NOT identified with the disorderly ones at Thessalonica. On the contrary he ministered and prayed and pleaded, and used the resources that he knew to be in the Lord, to correct the errors. And if there were faithful servants who would do this thing, and seek by ministry and pastoral care to correct (while refusing to identify themselves with) the blunders we see to-day, there would be less of division and less of secession than we have seen. Where a meeting becomes thoroughly and entirely identified with an inconsistency, one could not commend to nor receive from it, for in such case it seems clear that "a little leaven" has "leavened the whole lump." It has degenerated from the true ground of the assembly to that of "a house public," if I may use the term. It is a place where liberty is allowed for the will of man, and that the assembly is not. Wherever "a little leaven" is at work we have to look and look and look again to the Lord to check its action; to pray, and minister, and present the truth of Christ so that consciences may be exercised and if possible the brothers or sisters who have tended to lead saints away may themselves be recovered. At times, I believe, the Lord may permit prolonged waiting upon Him, when relief from the exercise and pressure does not come at once; and He may even permit that an individual or some individuals who have been wilful may go to a length where they finally quit the meetings they cannot carry with them. Just how the Lord will intervene for the deliverance of the exercised saints who can upon Him one cannot say; but He cannot be untrue to Himself. I am deeply delighted, and take comfort in the thought, that we can call upon the Lord in every difficulty of this kind. Of course, if a trouble takes on a character which plainly requires excommunication, there can be no question whatever, and there ought to be no delay, for the Lord's glory. But in these things that so distress us, the presence and ways of those who are inconsistent with the truth of the assembly and Christ's place in it, and who bring in man's ways to the church of God, the same Lord who is over all is rich to all that call upon Him; and whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved. It was so in salvation at the first; it is so in assembly history all along. (1 Corinthians 1:1-31; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16).

Then also there is great encouragement in the thought that where things tend surely to departure God greatly honours the faith of an individual. As in the days of the judges, so to-day; a single man of faith and faithfulness may be used to steady things for his day and generation. We do happily find in many of the meetings men who have learned something of the truth, and stand in it. There has to be withstanding in times of attack, and standing when our own forces seem to be melting away. Of the two perhaps the latter is the more difficult. As to a gathering receiving the ministry of a brother who is not on assembly ground, I would, I think, first ascertain if it were inadvertently, supposing him to be all right. But if wilfully, in defiance of the obligations of fellowship in the truth, it

would close that door for me. I should not feel free to go to them until they came to own that that kind of independency savours not of brokenness of spirit, nor of the faithfulness which suits the Holy One and the True, in these days of confusion. Independency and free-lanceism suits an unbroken will. No — we are called by God to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. All diverse from that is out of court. May God graciously be with us, and support our feeble faith, and even yet give us to see His hand in great deliverance. "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." (Zephaniah 3:12). The conies are a feeble folk yet they make their houses in the ROCK.

Warm love, dear brother, The Lord cheer you, and indeed may you encourage YOURSELF in the Lord your God.

Affy. in Him, Wm. Hy. Westcott.

## 58. Fellowship

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Fellowship A Letter by, Wm. Hy. Westcott. May 3rd, 1922.

Beloved Mr

Yours of the 1st is before me, with its record of exercise before God. Would that I could help you more fully than I really am able. Our fellowship as Christians is not what educated men can draw up, nor what a few saints agree upon, nor, certainly, is it a heterogeneous mixture of everything that may like to present itself for incorporation. It is expressed for us in the language of Holy Scripture.

"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3.

"God is faithful by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son." 1 Corinthians 1:9.

Fellowship with God must, as to its definition, be a fellowship at God's own level. The fellowship of saints is often lowered to what saints, certain saints, are agreed upon, or what they see, in their feebleness, of the meaning of Scripture. But in that case, and whilst we can usually give every credit for sincerity, the fellowship of saints is short, very short, of fellowship with God.

God has recovered much for us in the last three or four generations of what Christianity is, set forth in all its richness and fulness in the Risen Man Christ Jesus, the Son of the Father in truth and love.

Men have been permitted to see how great the privilege is of the Christian family and of the Christian Assembly, the liberty of the Father's presence, of the presence of God, the power which the Holy Spirit exercises when the restrictions of man's mind and hand are withdrawn, the unfoldings of the resources which are in Christ, and of His love and care for His Assembly with all the great designs which are to be effectuated in and by means of that Assembly

Fellowship, to be in the truth, must allow for the full expression of the truth. You cannot say that every saint must be at the full height of the Christian calling before he enters upon fellowship, because that would be exclusivism with a vengeance: and neither you nor I nor any saint living could be in it. But no saint, nor company of saints, can devise, construct or propose a fellowship which is SYSTEMATICALLY and AVOWEDLY committed to doctrines and practices short of the truth without becoming in principle a sect. And while this is done by every so-called sect, or denomination, it becomes more subtle and subversive of truth in proportion as it is nearer in its outward form to those forms which truth produces.

We have been shown by God's mercy, a path outside of what we call "system," a path where we can be in consonance with the Headship and Lordship of Christ, and where we can set before our hearts and minds the twin objectives of Holiness and Truth answering to Him who is THE HOLY and THE TRUE. Revelation 3:7. You will remark that when you progress in the prophetic outline of the churches from Philadelphia to Laodicea, the One who is certainly Holy and True speaks of

Himself as the Faithful and True. This does not mean that He ceases to be holy, or that our practical holiness in correspondence with Him can be waived. But it implies that in closing days just preceding the rapture of the whole Church there will be need for emphatic faithfulness to answer to Christ, who never surrenders His witness for God. Revelation 3:14.

If we were in denominations that had sunk below their own recognised standard, we should, I suppose, be exercised to get back to those primitive methods with which our denominations started. But God has called us into the full light of Christ, and the only fellowship we can now take account of is that divine fellowship to which I referred in the beginning of this letter. As to its nature, and character and intimacies, it is fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. As to its expression whether in one locality or in every place alike (1 Corinthians 1:2), it is by God's calling, the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. There is to be, (in the way of material, function, ways, administration, and spiritual aim), a counterpart in local assemblies — and that the same everywhere — of all that His Son Jesus Christ our Lord is in His exalted but hidden position.

It is a uniformity of exercise produced, not because we belong to a "circle of meetings," but, by our being uniformly consistent with the truth of Christ. The same Christ presents Himself everywhere, and while giving room for variety in the different members of His body, and in the differing gifts, He will never become the author of inconsistencies with Himself.

If, then, you find an individual saint who habitually acts in disregard of the Lord's will; if you find a company of saints adopting and avowing a principle of action which you see, according to Scripture, and which you know, in communion with Christ by the Holy Spirit, is neither holiness nor truth if you find a collection or circle of meetings where the acknowledged and defended ways are not those which you learn to be Christ's ways in the Assembly, you cannot recognise either the individual or the circle as answering to Him. You do not unchristianise them, you do not abuse them, but in faithfulness and in truth you find your course to be clear of them; while, no doubt, the Lord who loves them will rebuke and chasten them as seems good to Him. Your path is, however, to hear His voice, and to open the door to Him, and He will sup with you, and you with Him. The principles of "Open Brethren" are very fairly dealt with by Mr (Hamilton Smith?) in his recent booklet. Their fellowship, as such, is not Christian fellowship according to faithfulness and truth, though the outward form of it approximates to the truth. They have baptism and the Lord's Supper, prayer meetings, Bible readings, Gospel preaching, and missionary work. Many who seek piety and earnestness are attracted by these features, and well they may be, so far as they go, but for all that (and all the more alluring and seductive because of it), they offer a substitute for the truth in that they leave out faithfulness to the truth. The avowed principles of the "Open" Communion of the independency of each gathering of every other one is, we know, contrary to the One Lordship, of Christ — to the truth that He is Head, to the fact that there is one SPIRIT, to the consideration that the instructions given in the Word of God to one gathering are in view of and for the guidance of all gatherings in Christian fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 7:17; 1 Corinthians 14:33. Revelation 2:1-29; Revelation 7:1-17; Revelation 2:17; Revelation 2:29; Revelation 3:6; Revelation 3:22).

It is inconsistent with the "partnership" (fellowship) to which all Christians in every place are called (1 Corinthians 1:9), and with the Truth that there is one body, energized by the one, "Ego," Christ.

These truths recovered to us by the grace of God, are distinctly challenged in these days by the principles of independency affirmed by "Open" brethren as such, and are rendered more alluring and deceptive to the ordinary Christian by the undeniably evangelical activities of those who profess them.

We would acknowledge that which is of God in any Christian, and thankfully do so; yet if Christians justify principles destructive of the Testimony of the Lord; we cannot accept this as the true way of the Church according to scripture.

Apart from the historical origin of Open Brethren, their refusal, at that time, to concede the Divine principle of defilement by association with evil, has given birth to the whole method on which most of their meetings are based; for anyone claiming to be a Christian may demand to be received, and, in general, would be invited to break bread; and each meeting is independent of each other meeting, since no corporate responsibility is owned. It is an easy come and go method of congregationalism; and those with them fail altogether of giving any expression to the truth of the One Body, and indeed, of the Headship and Lordship of JESUS, the Christ, in a collective sense. For obviously, if the latter be held in any practical sense, the judgment to which He leads in one locality, would be confirmed and upheld wherever He is so acknowledged. But our present difficulty goes further than that. There is in your neighbourhood a meeting which has a peculiar history, and which, while it professes to disavow Open Brethren as such, yet adopts a hyphenated method of come and go with them. One or two able brothers among them put their defence in an exceedingly plausible form, as I know from correspondence with them; but while their arguments are specious, and very likely difficult to meet by simple souls, the upshot of the whole matter is that brethren in that meeting do come and go at will amongst Open Brethren, and are in principle and in fact — in spite of specious argument — on open ground.

Further, so weak have we become, so little versed in the true character of Christian fellowship at its full height, that many amongst us have candidly demanded that we lower the standard of fellowship so as to allow of these hyphenated associations, to admit of them as a recognised principle of action; so that though we know of men who do go to Open Meetings (and who esteem it a right and proper thing, defending their actions in various degrees), yet we have little or no power to discipline them in the Lord's Name. My grief is that the whole standard of truth has been so lowered amongst us, as the Laodicean spirit asserts itself. that there is disappearing the priestly power to discriminate between clean and unclean in relation to the testimony of the Lord. This is not confined to one company of brethren alone. You might find one kind very particular about exclusion, who are exclusive as the Papacy, where the fear of men, and of one another, is a very large if not dominant feature. This, while it may be like in outward form to what truth produces, lacks the sweetness of grace. The system as such stands self-condemned, for the One to whose fellowship we are called was full of grace and truth. There is separation of a kind, but it is produced by decrees, so that as I have known personally among them, souls are held in bondage because they know their fellowship is maintained by the dread of man, and shuts out many without cause. But our own danger is largely the other way. Laodicea is that state of the assembly in which position is claimed, accompanied by a laxity and self-sufficiency wholly foreign to the position; an entire rejection of exercise before the Lord as to what suits Him as the Faithful and the True Witness, the Amen, the beginning of the creation of God. There is failure to recognise finality in Christ, and there is the tolerance of that unsubdued will which was the ruin of the old creation.

Along with the spirit of amalgamation which is abroad in the world there is a kindred movement in the professing churches, the effort to discover some formula which will result in all being able to meet on a common platform. In the world it is heading up in the idea of unity, or association, or federation, of which, alas! Christ is not the Head. In the churches it is not proposed on the ground of the Headship of Christ so much as upon common agreement among professed believers. It amounts to this that as long as we are all Christians nothing matters. The call of God back from the captivity, the revival of the House, the re-discovery of the Divine Centre, these things are nothing to those who would have us break down all barriers. If you come back to Jerusalem to the House, you must respect the laws of the House, and what is due to the name and glory of Jehovah. If one had hitherto — though an Israelite — been dwelling in Babylon, and had acquired the ways of Babylon, he may desire to go up to Jerusalem and worship in the Lord's House, but to do so according to God he must abandon his Babylonish ways, and associations, and purify himself according to the purification of the Sanctuary. The conflict in Ezra's and Nehemiah's days was incessant. Oh! how the enemy sought by every sort of artifice to break down the spirituality of the movement. What letter-writing there was. What alliances were formed. What influences had to be countered, in order to preserve that which God restored. You will not fail to notice that Ezra is followed by Nehemiah, and that once you have the House in order the City follows. A decree was issued for the one by Cyrus, but a second decree was issued for the other by Darius, equally important in its place. The House is the first thing, of course; the wall is the second. Many seem to want the House and its forms, but without the wall. This is a large subject, but I conceive it to be at the bottom of the local trouble I have referred to There is no wail of separation between the ground that God has recovered for us and that which is more decidedly and distinctly under the enemy's hand. In the rebuilt city there are gates, but gates are to admit those who are to be admitted IN THE ORDERED WAY. All is to be according to Divine order. There is no laxity, no playing fast and loose. Every one who comes into the circle where Jehovah is owned must submit to the responsibilities of that position. There was no compulsion to come into Jerusalem, but the idea that those who did so were to have no regard to that administration which was recognised there and appointed of God would be treachery and infidelity to Jehovah.

I feel that no one but the Lord Himself can guide us in our exercises just now, but my whole soul revolts from the thought of those hyphenated associations. They will work evil; of that I am certain. Those who practise them will discover any plausible excuse possible, but of the effect on meetings and on the testimony of the Lord generally I have not the slightest doubt. The good Lord deliver us.

Always affectionately your brother, Wm. Hy. Westcott.

## 59. Extracts from letters dated 1923 and 1928.

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Extracts from letters dated 1923 and 1928. Your letter of the 8th is before me with all its reminder of the difficulties of today. Fain would we give ourselves undistractedly to the pursuit of Christ in God's presence — His joy, and the Man of His pleasure. fain would we study without cessation all that the Spirit brings before us in the Word, of God's thoughts in connection with Him, and be in all the liberty, the beauty, the power of the new order of man of which He is the Head. We can appreciate the position of Jude when he says, "I have been obliged to write to you, exhorting you to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints." In the pursuit of ministry, it is at times necessary to face evil, as well as to teach or learn the good.

There is nothing so heart-breaking as facing the state of things in the Church to-day. We humbly bear our share in the failure in its widest aspect; the corruption and ever-accelerating apostacy, the trend Rome-ward (in principle) of pious minds, and the leaning to Modern Thought in its great variety of forms, on the part of nearly all the rest. But particularly, one could spend his time sighing and crying in the spirit of Jeremiah, over the terrible collapse of those who have claimed to be delivered from these palpable and general failures, and have contented themselves with the name of "brethren," so plainly God's name for all Christians (John 20:1-31, Acts 12:1-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28).

Here, where human machinery no longer exists to maintain outward unity (though that outward unity be ecclesiastical agreement and not the unity of the Spirit), nothing could have kept us together but the faith of the Son of God and walking in the Spirit (Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:16). The first keeps us right objectively, the second right subjectively. This is primarily individual; but — we can never — be prepared for collective exercise, unless right individually. All the practical use of the truth unfolded in Ephesians, Colossians, or Corinthians; in Timothy, Peter, or Jude; requires that the individual be in the light of Christ in glory, the risen Son of God, and that he be by the Spirit, responsive to that light.

Referring to your postscript of a week ago in which you ask as to The possibility of quoting scripture to justify our refusal of doubtful associations, it seems to me that ignorance of Scripture on the one hand, and lack of consistency with what Scripture brings before us on the other, accounts for much of present failures.

Apparently you find that in quoting J. N. D. you are met by the sort of slogan cry "tradition," and you ask "how far do you consider OUR judgment permissible?" As a simple answer I should say "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Romans 1:14; Romans 1:23, and "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," ver. 5. In the light of scripture; I can only pity the Christian who instead of getting to God and His Word, only cries, — parrot-like — Tradition.

It may be pointed out that an exercised conscience responds to the Word of God even as clay to the seal. Consequently the moral exercise of one brother may be comparatively scanty if he knows little. of God and His Word, while the moral exercise of another who knows more of God and His

Word may be very acute.

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It is not a question of what J. N. D. says, nor of what Spurgeon did, nor of what St. Augustine wrote, but of our being formed in moral exercise by the Word of God bringing all before us that is true in Christ, 1 John 2:8. If I find that in a certain matter Augustine or Spurgeon followed the Lord it is joy to me to think of it, and I imitate their faith, but not because they did it. Faith led them to do a certain thing which is according to Christ and Christianity, and I do it because I see it to be of Christ. The apostle says, "be ye followers (imitators) of me, EVEN AS I AM ALSO OF CHRIST." That is our rule. If we think of those later than the apostles we have "Remember them that have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you THE WORD OF GOD), whose faith follow," Hebrews 13:7. In so far as they spoke THE WORD OF GOD to you remember them; in so far as they themselves obeyed that word in faith, imitate them. It is not a blind attachment to a leader, not doing things because a leader does them or says them, but only so far as they had the Word of God in all its undiluted purity as the basis of their life and ways.

..... Your exercise is to learn all you can of Christ and the present purpose of God as to Christ and the Church. With your whole heart, and in true affection for Him and His interests, you concentrate on that which you believe and know to be God's mind for the moment in the light of His Word, no more committing yourself to any support of man's RELIGIOUS systems than you would to his POLITICAL and SOCIAL aims. It is unfortunate that saints whom you love are entangled, but you know that you will not help them by getting entangled yourself: The more separate you are, and the more you are consistently and continually separate, with meekness and firmness, the more power you will have to really help them. Naturally if they see that you can on occasion go into the system, so as outwardly to appear as part of it, they feel that you are not wholly sincere in your objection to it. Nor could you do so if you deeply realised Christ's place in the Church, or the Holy Spirit's condemnation of all man's institutions for its regulation and control. Clerisy and lawlessness are equally foreign to the constitution of the assembly of God, and inimical to the true prosperity of those who glory in the Lord, 1 Corinthians 1:31. It is only by the Spirit that the things of God are known or made effective. To profess to be separated to Christ — and this is the only consistent cause of our being where we are — and yet dabble on every occasion possible in every or any system from which TRUTH demands separation, is not RIGHTEOUSNESS. And further, as another has said — to seek to escape reproach by taking a wider path, with its numbers and popularity, and the approval of the religious world, is not FAITH. To take a path that only brings sorrow and confusion among those in the outside place, and bolsters up our fellow-believers in false systems that do not give Christ His place as the "One Lord" nor the Holy Spirit His place in the Assembly, is surely a heartless disregard of LOVE. To deliberately pursue a course that ignores the consciences of the Lord's people, and leads to further scattering and division, cannot be the way of PEACE. To sum up then, I see that to mix with denominations, missions, and the principles that have given "Open" Brethren their birth and history, is disloyalty to Christ, damaging to my own soul, and tends to scatter the faithful ones instead of strengthening the things that remain I see that to follow saints who idolise certain gifts, and chase after certain lines of ministry, so as to make their fellowship sectarian in principle, is to adopt a course which makes ourselves sectarian, and takes us off the ground of the assembly of God, leading us to despise others who do not concentrate on our particular line. I see also that

there are many dear brethren who are now separated from us by historical division, who never ought to have separated or have been driven to separate, and with whom one can have the fullest individual sympathy and prayerful intercourse, and while admitting the difficulties that surround the question of coming together in unrestrained communion — and refusing to go BEFORE the Lord — can look to Him that He may dispose our hearts one and all to listen for His voice. To ignore His hand upon us in permitting these breaks would be fatal to sacrifice any part of the truth for the sake of being together would be fatal, and would deny the true Christ and the full Christ, who is the Centre of gathering. But where He leads to our mutual humbling before Him, and unmistakably leads the way so as to command the recognition and confidence of those who "fear the Lord and think upon His Name," it would be wrong to refuse His leading. Only where there is this humbling would one even consider the matter of "association" of which you have spoken.

Underlying much of the looseness which has been our bane at all times (I remember nearly 50 years of the tendency), there is often much of secret pride and self-importance. "MY gift" "an open door for me". often leads a man astray from Christ. To go to ready made audiences in chapels and missions is an easier road than the rugged path of door to door work, and the feeling of the shame and reproach attaching to those who are utterly separated to Christ. If the Lord calls a man out to His Name who is distinctly gifted for service He will use the gift He has given in ways consistent with His Name, and not lead, surely, into compromise. I see no reason why a separated soul should not be a missionary, or an open-air preacher, a tract distributor or a doer of good works, while refusing every association other than the assembly which He has formed, and in the truth of which we seek to walk. Where the use of the gift is pleaded to take us into circles where the truth of Christ and His assembly is perverted, it unquestionably appears to me to be a perversion of the gift, and I do not think the Lord ever intended it to be so. With warm love in the Lord, Affectionately yours in the truth, Wm. Hy. WESTCOTT.

## 60. The Son Unchanged (Heb\_1:1-14)

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The Son Unchanged (Hebrews 1:1-14)

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth magazine, Volume 4, 1912, page 186.

There is none to compare with the holy Person in whom God has spoken. He supersedes all that had place before His coming into the world; and in Him we reach finality, for none will supersede Him. But can we speak of finality in One whose glories are infinite?

Finality is reached in the sense that no other Person will ever appear, to be the revelation of God; in Christ there is the complete, absolute, and eternal setting forth of all that God is. But the glories of God are both infinite and eternal. All created magnitudes, however great they may appear when we place them in relation to each other, are small indeed when viewed in reference to Him. All the changes which may occur in the circumstances of responsible creatures, or in the ways and dispensations of time, or in the physical constitution of things, do not produce change in Him.

Here, then, is a fresh field in which we may discover and ponder the glories of Christ. He is the complete revelation of God. In Him God has spoken. The "sundry times" and "divers manners" of the former partial communications have given place to that which is neither circumscribed by the locality or time of its occurrence, nor limited to any manner or way of God's revealing Himself, it is absolute. God hath in these last days spoken to us in (the) Son. Future developments in the history of the world and of creation will produce alterations of administration and changes of form; but the Son will remain unchanged and glorious, the complete unfolding of all that God is. Nothing will or can be added to Him to make God better known.

Finality is truly reached; our hearts are conducted in this marvellous Epistle to the Person who is the adequate revelation of God for the whole vast universe, for all its varied orders of created beings, for all its ages of ages, and for the solution of every question of good and evil. How vast is the range of glory opened up to our awed and adoring hearts as we contemplate the blessedness of the SON. The first four verses of the chapter under consideration give us a comprehensive survey of His person, and lead us up to the point where He had made purgation of sins, and had taken His position in Manhood at the right hand of the Majesty on high. I say, in Manhood, for this is the great wonder of wonders in God's ways. The glory of God has shone out, the essential being of God is exactly expressed in the Son become Man. The framework of the universe is held up by One now in human form. Purgation for sins, for the moral disaster that has come in by the creature's revolt from God, has been made by the eternal Son in Manhood, Himself sinless, and the revelation of God. In the fourth verse, after the purgation of sins, He passes beyond the highest orders of created beings, into the place that is native to Him. As the risen Man, entitled so to do by the glory of His person, He sets Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is the Personality in the Godhead to whom in Manhood is committed the administration of all the rights and purposes of God. The government of angels and of men, the ordering and control of

dispensations the final triumph of good over evil, are all in His hands.

Now it is in this connection, I submit, that the rest of the chapter is written; and I think it will be found that the quotations (seven in number) which follow not only involve, each and all, the consideration of our adorable Lord — who is ever the eternal Son — from the point of view of His Manhood in resurrection, but they also present a vista of His unchanged and unchangeable glory from the day when He stepped on to the resurrection platform to the eternal day when time shall be no more. That is, that every passage quoted, read and taken in its own context, brings Christ — who is Son from and to eternity — into view on the ground of resurrection; and they are placed in such an order that they begin with the suggestion (and, as I believe, the statement) of His undiminished glory on the morning when He rose from the dead, continue through the present time to the appearing and kingdom, and forecast His unchanged glory and final triumph at the end. They not only cover His past and present offices, but bring into view "the world to come" so that the writer having brought it into view and having spoken of Christ's position in relation to it, justly describes it in Hebrews 2:1-18 as "the world to come, whereof we speak." The speaking of it is antecedent to the second chapter, or at any rate to the fifth verse of it, and casts us back upon what has been previously stated. This, as I trust the reader will see, more than suggests that the first chapter brings before us, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, those glories of Christ which will cover all the exigencies of "the coming age."

We will take the quoted passages in their order. Viewing Christ in His place higher than the angels, the writer — inspired by the Holy Ghost — inquires, "For unto which of the angels said He at any time, THOU ART MY SON; THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE?"

All of us know that this quotation is from the second psalm. It is referred to in Paul's address in Antioch (Acts 13:33). Possibly from our frequent indifference to the context of a passage we have not noticed as we should how the Apostle sums up the story of the Saviour, Jesus, in verses 23-31. In the twenty-third verse he says in introducing Christ to the notice of his hearers, "Of this man's [David's] seed hath God ... raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" — and does not quote the second psalm. Briefly summarizing Christ's rejection in Jerusalem and proclaiming the fact of His death, he states that God raised Him from the dead, and in the thirty-second and thirty-third verses, with that complete story of the dead and risen Saviour before his hearer's minds, he uses the same expression that God has raised up Jesus (not "again," as in the Authorized Version), and quotes the psalm to illustrate the situation. Then, in further proof that resurrection from the dead was required to secure everything for God and man, nothing being sure to man that had death in front of it, he quotes the "sure mercies of David." and other passages. But let us examine the psalm itself. In verse 2 there is a concerted movement of the authorities against the Lord and against His Christ. Doubtless this federation will be a second time fulfilled in a fast-approaching day; but in Acts 4:25 this combination is definitely applied in the inspired Scriptures to the rejection of the "holy servant Jesus," by Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the nations, and peoples of Israel. There was therefore a first and partial fulfilment, to say the least, when Christ was rejected and crucified. The sixth verse shows that notwithstanding all this apparent resistance to God's purpose, He goes quietly and resistlessly forward with His plans; for His purposes are to be fulfilled in resurrection and the king is anointed on Zion in full accordance with the holiness of God. But in verses 7 to 9 the Messiah Himself (and I think it is clear that it is from His position as the once rejected but now raised One) declares the decree, and quotes the Lord as saying to Him,

"Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee," etc. I do not think you can apply that to the question of the eternal Sonship of Christ, though He is the eternal Son, and Christianity stands or falls by that truth; nor do I think that the incarnation and birth in Bethlehem are in view there, though He who was born there is the eternal Son, and is called the "Son of the Highest," to whom the throne of David shall be given (Luke 1:32), and the "Son of God" (ver. 35). But the context of the passage demands that we view it as dating from the moment when all that man had done against Christ was quietly reversed. In resurrection, God salutes the risen Man, and says, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me," etc., etc. Did He say to Christ in the days of His lowly humiliation, and before His death, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel?" Yet this is all part of what Jehovah said to Him, which was introduced by the greeting "Thou art My Son." It is consistent with what Christ is and will do in resurrection, but we cannot, I think, connect that process of judgment with Christ in the days of His flesh. The first quotation, then in Hebrews brings us face to face with the Son risen from the dead, unchanged still, greeted as Son in resurrection by God, and emphasizing "this day" as a day of great joy and triumph for God. The second quotation is:

"I WILL BE TO HIM A FATHER, AND HE SHALL BE TO ME A SON." This is from 2 Samuel 7:14. It is a wonderful passage. David is assured by God of the continuation of his kingdom in his "seed" (cf. Acts 13:23; Romans 1:3, etc.). God would establish his kingdom, and he would build God's house. In David's mind (see 1 Chronicles 22:7-10) this was to have its fulfilment in Solomon; but what was in the mind of God?

Christ is the One who fulfils in His own person all that was typically set forth in David and all that was typically set forth in Solomon. As David, He met and meets all the power of the enemy. As Solomon, He is to sit on David's throne, and rule in peace and equity. The first verse of Psalms 72:1-20 combines these two characters of Christ in one. David thrice encountered hostile power. In his private life and capacity he overthrew the lion and the bear. As the representative of his people and for the glory of God he met Goliath. In connection with his throne and kingdom he overthrew seven nations (2 Samuel 8:1-18). Thus also Christ. Privately He overcame Satan in the wilderness; on behalf of His people and for God's glory He overcame Satan at the cross, He will subdue the world to His feet in the day of His appearing to take His throne and kingdom. Then, in His Solomon character, with neither adversary nor evil occurrent, will He rule over all Israel and over all the earth. In passing we may notice the inquiry that would naturally occur to the reader as to the words: "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men," etc. Under this clause Solomon, who was the type of Christ, broke down; but Christ, who is the Antitype, never will. The kingdom will remain intact in His hands. But what does the passage itself imply? Does it not teach us that David's seed would be the object of God's solicitude and interest and delight, and that the Father would be the One for whom David's seed would live and labour when in the throne of His supremacy and rest? No angel could fulfil this high behest. To which of the angels said He at any time, "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?" This, then, lets us into the secret of all the activities of His resurrection life and of His position on the throne. The Father's delight is in Him, and He is working for the glory of the Son. The Son's delight is in God, and He is working for His Father's interest and satisfaction. It was the principle upon which He lived in the days of His flesh (see John 14:31); but in our passage in Hebrews it is stated of Him in His Solomon character, with the throne and the kingdom in view. As

regards this moment in which we are found, Christ is unseen by the world. It is the faith period, during which we are introduced to Christ in the heavens. We have been led to discover Him there in resurrection, Centre of the Father's delight and affection, even as He is there for the fulfilment of the good pleasure of God. The third quotation is introduced: "Again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith, AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM" This is taken possibly from Deuteronomy 32:43 (the "Seventy" version of it), and if so, it is associated, not with the Incarnation and Birth of Luke 2:1-52, but with the avenging of His servants' blood, the rendering of vengeance to His adversaries, the showing of mercy to Palestine and the Jews. But more possibly it is taken from Psalms 97:7, where those beings that are higher than men are spoken of as gods. Both Psalms 96:1-13 and Psalms 87:1-7 are written as the expression of the earthly people's delight in seeing Jehovah coming in and reigning over the earth. It is the glory that is in view, not the humiliation of Christ. It is the inauguration of His kingdom. The angels are summoned to worship Him. The fourth quotation is from Psalms 104:1-35 :

"WHO MAKETH HIS ANGELS SPIRITS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE."

This, again, is a psalm of Jehovah's majesty and glory. The circumstances of humiliation through which the Saviour passed in the days of His flesh are not in contemplation, but rather the glad day when His rule will extend over all the earth. Then will the mighty angels do His bidding, and gladly serve His will. As the cherubim stood at Eden's gate to forbid the return of sinful man to paradise, so will His ministers exclude from His kingdom all that offend and do iniquity; the sinners will be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked be no more. How glorious the Master, whose servants are so great! The fifth quotation is:

"THY THRONE, O GOD, IS FOR EVER AND EVER: A SCEPTRE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SCEPTRE OF THY KINGDOM. THOU HAST LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HATED INIQUITY THEREFORE GOD EVEN THY GOD, HATH ANOINTED THEE WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE THY FELLOWS " This is from Psalms 45:1-17, a great millennial psalm. The verses quoted open up to us a world of interest as we ponder their meaning. A divine Person in the throne, companions associated with Him in His reign, His kingdom characterized by righteousness and the suppression of iniquity; and gladness from God filling His heart and the hearts of His companions in a scene that is never to be superseded by any alien power as long as time shall last.

It is remarkable as addressing the future Messiah definitely as God: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The burden and administration of the kingdom does not diminish or tarnish His glory, any more than did the bearing of our sin or the contact with death in the day of His humiliation. The sixth is:

"THOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING HAST LAID THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH; AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THINE HANDS: THEY SHALL PERISH; BUT THOU REMAINEST AND THEY ALL SHALL WAX OLD AS DOTH A GARMENT; AND AS A VESTURE SHALT THOU FOLD THEM UP, AND THEY SHALL BE CHANGED: BUT THOU ART THE SAME, AND THY YEARS SHALL NOT FAIL." This is from Psalms 102:1-28. It is Jehovah's response to the One who was destitute and weak, and whose days were shortened here. He took up the sorrows of His earthly people, and for their sake bore indignation and wrath at Jehovah's hands. Enemies reproached Him, and He sounded the lowest depths of trouble, weakness, isolation, and

grief. He prays: "I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days;" and then, instead of responding with a mercy which added fifteen years (as in Hezekiah's case) to the threatened life, Jehovah replies with this marvellous statement of the Sufferer's glory. The earth's foundation was laid by the One who is crying out of all this distress; the heavens that then darkened over Him were the work of His hands. But the material creation, in the form known to us, will perish, while He stands and endures; its days will be numbered, and the signs of decay and age be found in heaven and earth; but He will be the same, and His years shall have no end. It is noticeable how that He speaks in His humiliation of His "days" four times over (vers. 3, 11, 23, 24); while in Jehovah's reply to Him He speaks of "Thy years." They are throughout all generations, and they shall have no end. So that the outlook over Christ's glory is enlarged to the end of the millennial kingdom, when the present heavens and earth will be folded up and changed; and as to their present form, at any rate, they shall perish, having served their purpose. All that is material shall undergo its change; but Christ shall undergo none. Never will there be any diminution of His glories, or change in His person. Overwhelmed as we are in the presence of His greatness, charmed as we are by the blessedness of our Object, we have the heart-rest and satisfaction of knowing that our holy Lord, the Son of God will never lose the lustre of His brightness, the fine gold will never become dimmed — He is eternally "the Same." The seventh, and last, quotation is:

"SIT ON MY RIGHT HAND, UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL."

This, of course, is Psalms 110:1-7. There is no need to emphasize the fact that this is a resurrection psalm. Christ, who is David's Son, is David's Lord (Matthew 22:41-46). Seen here in flesh the Spirit who indited David's Psalm indicates His removal to Jehovah's right hand for a time, to be seated there until the period when His enemies should be subdued. I say period for, while it is certain from the psalm that He will strike through kings in the day of His wrath and will judge among the heathen, it is plain from 1 Corinthians 15:24-26 that it looks on to time when there will not be an enemy left to destroy. His kingdom will endure, and no rule or authority or power will succeed against Him. Even the final breakdown of man when Satan shall be loosed and shall deceive the nations for the last time (Revelation 20:7-10), bringing them up against the people of God, will result in the utter confusion and final overthrow of revolt in man and devil; and the kingdom will remain intact in the hands of the Lamb. Then will occur the removal of heavens and earth, the judgment of the great white throne, and the casting of the unsaved into their final destination of the lake of fire for eternity. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. So complete is Christ's triumph, so absolute is Christ's glory, that in no part of the universe will it be possible to say that death has removed one human soul from Christ's sway, either as Saviour for blessing or as Judge for punishment. This leads us to the bound of what is spoken of in Hebrews as "the world to come." To sum up briefly, then, no alteration of dispensation, no lapse of time, no changes in the material creation, can effect the least change in our blessed Lord.

1. On the day of His resurrection He was found "the Same," untainted by all He had passed through.
2. In the throne, "the Same" in His affection for the Father, and the Father's for Him; and in the blessedness of that relationship in which He is so wholly devoted to His Father's will.
3. "The Same" on His return to the world for the inauguration of His millennial kingdom.

4. "The Same" in His right and power to control the whole administration of the kingdom, on its heavenly side as well as on its earthly side; angels and authorities and powers being subject unto Him.

5. "The Same" in the excellence of His moral character in the throne, uncorrupted by the splendour of His kingdom, as He was undaunted by the sufferings that led to it.

6. "The Same" when creation grows old and is changed, preserving intact every glory that He had when He laid its foundations and built it in its highest parts.

7. "The Same" when all opposition to God is silenced for eternity, when all taint of sin shall have been removed and all evil shall have been done away; every question of good and evil settled, and God shall be all in all.

We used to sing in the first days of our conversion:

"Oh, what a Saviour is Jesus our Lord, Well might His Name by His Saints be adored."

We sing the same now; but even yet we wonder and wonder on as we see wider and deeper glories ever unfolding before our hearts. Praise takes on a richer tone as we understand more fully how worthy He is.

## 61. The Spirit's Work.

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The Spirit's Work.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Vol. 11, 1919, p. 19. Our present enjoyment of divine things depends upon the measure in which we keep from things and ways which would grieve the heavenly Seal, the Holy Spirit. He is sensitive to all that offends holiness, in conduct, speech, or disposition of heart as detailed from Ephesians 4:20 and onwards. He will never withdraw Himself from the one sealed; that would be to falsify the whole truth of redemption. But He does, when grieved, withdraw joy and power from the Christian's life until the fault is confessed, and the frame of mind which allowed the old man to act again is judged. The reason that a Christian out of communion is inwardly wretched (even if he be outwardly placid) is not that the Spirit has abandoned him, but that He will not abandon him; necessarily depriving him of happiness until he has returned to his Lord in broken confession. The Holy Spirit who indwells the Christian secures him for God, on the one hand, on the ground of the blood of Christ in which he has trusted, and by which he has consciously been redeemed; and gives him, on the other hand, the continuous enjoyment of the fact that he belongs to God, that enjoyment being only interrupted when some working of the flesh has grieved the One by whom he is sealed.

## 62. The Springing Fountain and the Spreading Rivers.

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The Springing Fountain and the Spreading Rivers.

W. H. Westcott. In John 4:1-54, the Lord spoke of supplying the one who asked of Him with living water, which should be in him a fountain (N.Tr.) of water springing up into everlasting life. I believe that all will understand this to refer to the Holy Spirit, especially when we come to read John 7:38-39. But it is evident that the Lord presents a new phase of the Holy Spirit's service different from the new birth spoken of in John 3:1-36. Birth lies at the commencement of life; but this is the living itself.

(1) It is descriptive of a joy based upon the knowledge of God as a Giver of blessing, not a demander of righteousness as under the law. It speaks thus of God as known in Christ, not as at Sinai; of the gospel in its great essential of grace (John 4:10).

(2) It offers the satisfaction of every want, and the charging of the soul with such a pressure of blessing that, far from casting the soul downward, depressed and defeated and miserable, it urges it upward to boundless enjoyment, in freedom from every earthly drag, satisfied and happy in the knowledge of God (verse 14). It is the "whosoever" that drinks for whom it is all available.

(3) It fits the renewed soul, blessed in its relations with God, and with Christ, and with the Holy Spirit, to become a worshipper. Not indeed "in this mountain", nor yet "at Jerusalem", for the whole order of material things was to give place to worship "in spirit and in truth". But the new kind of blessing puts the renewed soul in such a position that it would hear the Father's Name; and learn the mode of the Father's grace, God revealed now as Father, and seeking such to worship Him (verse 23). The Holy Ghost leads to this worship, not according to the rubrics of man, nor even according to the ritual imposed so wisely and graciously in the Old Testament as typical of what was to come (but destined to disappear in Christ); but according to the holy liberty designed for all "true worshippers". It is a new kind in which the externals of religion are eclipsed and displaced by what is deeply inwrought by the Spirit, and is produced by the enjoyment and realisation of the truth (verse 24). It puts the worshipper, moreover, into present touch with the Christ of God as God's new Centre, through whom the whole of God's wondrous revelation of Himself is made, and in whom all the perplexities as well as the needs of the awakened soul are for ever resolved (verses 25, 26). Compare 2 Chronicles 9:1-12. The Spreading Rivers

Finally, in John 7:37-39, the Lord makes a statement which seems designed to arrest people by its magnificence. The occasion of its utterance enhances its grandeur. It was not spoken at a time when everyone was reminded of conspicuous failure, or convinced of the weariness of a hollow show. It was the Feast of Tabernacles (verses 2, 14), the period above all periods in the Jewish Calendar when the nation was called upon to rejoice. It was the great Harvest Thanksgiving, when every heart was supposed to be brimful of joy and of gratitude to the great Giver of earthly good. It was the time when the fruits of the land had been gathered in, and when all Israel dwelt at Jerusalem in booths, in the national confession of God's great favour to them; of the deliverance

from Egypt effected for them; and of the bounties His hand had lavished on them in the Holy Land (Leviticus 23:33-43). It was earth's most favoured nation in earth's most favoured day; and the hour when, for once, had they but known Him, Jehovah Himself was there in their midst, healing, teaching, blessing. Where every day was great this was the greatest, when man might be presumed to have reached the acme of human happiness. Was it possible that there, and at that time, one could have an unsatisfied heart, and long for a deeper communion than that best of festivals could afford? The murmurs among the Jews, their marvel at the words of Jesus, their cavil over His works, their speculations as to who He was, the presence of officers from the Pharisees and chief priests sent to arrest Him, the strange and awful language used of the Lord as to His disappearance from their midst, and their hopeless search for Him subsequently when it would be impossible to find Him — all of which are referred to in the chapter — had made this mysterious Visitor the centre of the vast throng, the theme of every tongue.

It was when thus in their midst that Jesus looked over the people whom the best of earthly blessings had left ignorant of the Blesser who was amongst them; and knowing how unsatisfying it is to have the grandest religious celebration without a heart-knowledge of Himself, said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

Oh, how many there are amid cathedral splendours and gorgeous religious festivals, weary and sick at heart, to whom one moment's contact with the Holy Son of God would mean ten thousand times more than all the song and vestments, the ornate building and the fragrant incense, and the crowd of so-called worshippers. But Jesus offers the most wonderful thing to crown any and every personal blessing. We can truly say that in coming to Him our thirst is quenched, or personal need met. This He pledges indeed (verse 37). But He does more. He propounds a fulness of blessing from Himself of such sort that, instead of depending on plentiful harvests, and congenial circumstances, and one hundred wondrous earthly providences, the believer, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, would be a perpetual marvel of happiness and blessing; a man with every personal craving at rest, every affection satisfied in Christ, and perennial contributor to the scene around him; not indeed of drops of blessing few and far between, but of rivers, yea, rivers of living water. Not of mere philanthropic good, to benefit merely the bodies or the circumstances of men; but of spiritual good, living water, good for this life and for that which is to come. Rivers too which — however much may be taken from them — flow on generously for all sorts and conditions of men, night and day, in summer warmth and winter cold; the supply kept up in untiring fulness because its source is Jesus glorified. Blessing for saint, blessing for sinner, blessing for the widow, blessing for the fatherless, blessing for the poor, blessing for the needy. Always accessible, always flowing, no effort to supply the living water; for the Holy Ghost is the power that never wearies in filling the heart to overflowing with the love and glory of Christ, and in reproducing His character in us; teaching us to do good because God is good; and because we have learnt this goodness in Jesus.

They are living waters which get deeper as you go further, as in Ezekiel 47:1-23; that avail for the blossoming of a desert, or for the healing of a Dead Sea, that bring life where they go, and yield food and drink and medicine for all. This is not for some special class, or some advanced Christian but "he that believeth on Me" is the subject of this wondrous grace. Does the reader take it in that God intends his life — our lives — to be thus under the control of the Holy Ghost that He may fill us to infinite and abiding satisfaction of heart, overflowing upwards in worship to the Father, and outwards to the need around? Is it not lawful for us, nay, incumbent upon us, to search out what

hinders?

## 63. The Supreme Authority

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### The Supreme Authority

W. H. Westcott.

All authority as far as God is concerned is vested in the risen Saviour — all authority both in heaven and in earth. He said it before He went to heaven, for Matthew's Gospel does not carry us beyond resurrection, but it is no less true now that He has gone into heaven. He will infallibly secure all that God had purposed and promised for heaven and for earth.

There is no part of this universe that is not, by the will of God, put under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may go among all nations and claim people for Christ. The commission, as He gave it, is, "Go . . . to all nations." You may go into a monarchical country, civilised or savage, and while you seek to walk in subjection to the powers that be, you recognise that the Lord has sent you there to make disciples. What does it mean in a practical way? You might find that the authorities in either town or country may be inclined to resist the gospel. Our business is certainly not to be Socialists, or to defy the powers that be, but simple christians, the servants of the Lord, we should have this fact written will fire in our souls, that wherever we are He can make room for His own word. Whatever may be the difficulties that the christians are exposed to, there is always the appeal to the highest authority in the universe.

It so happens that for some years we have been working in and the authority we had to recognize was that of a well known State. We went as unknown individuals, known only to the Lord of Glory. As soon as we got there we found that the Roman Catholics claimed religious jurisdiction over all that section of the State where we proposed to settle, and they demanded our expulsion. Then it was rumoured that we were English spies, the consequence being that in addition to the religious influence of the Roman Catholics, we had the political powers of the State against us. The local commissaire said we must go out and find some other place. This was confirmed by the Vice-Governor in the capital. Eventually we had letters from the Governor himself to the effect that we should leave there. A Royal Commissioner came from the Sovereign. He investigated the correspondence and said, "I cannot find any reason why you should stay here; you must go."

Then, in order to gain by intrigue what they wanted for their own purpose, the Roman Catholics secured the passing of a decree by the King, the object of which was to oust us from the country. So, from the local official to the Government staff. then to the central authority itself, there was this authority of the earth demanding us to leave. By the grace of God we have continued our work there to this day. (1913 Ed.) God blew upon every intrigue. At the time when we were in this state, crying to God to open the way the British Consul wrote us to say, "I write to you as a private individual, that if you will appeal to me as Consul I will see your case through." As much as to say, if you will only cast yourselves into the arms of the British Consul, he will use all the influences of Britain to gain your point. I replied, "It has been the habit of our souls to look to the Lord alone, but — while declining it — we thank you for your kind offer." Do you think God failed us?

Whatever may be the wall that is in front of you, yet, if you go forward in simple confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, all authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth. What He decrees all kingdoms have no power to resist. We can reckon upon the Lord. Whatever difficulties we have, threatening worse and worse, let us lay this to heart, that our resource is in Christ Jesus the Lord. "All authority is given to Him in heaven and on earth." Then we need not go outside of Christ to gain authority to go into any place or to work in any service, but we may appeal to Him immediately and directly, and we may do this among all nations.

If you are here in these christianised lands, which are fast apostatising from the truth, with increasing difficulties for preaching the gospel, you need not look to worldly authorities, nor seek any earthly patronage or influence, but look simply and directly to the Lord. Every simple and true-hearted christian worker has immediate access to supreme authority. There is no need to conceal our christianity for the sake of diplomacy. You have got the authority of Christ, the Supreme Power in heaven and earth, to insist upon the performance of every part of His will.

He says, "I am with you always." The bright days, the dark days, until the end of the age. There is no diminishing of His authority. W.H.W.

## 64. This Unction of the Holy Spirit.

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This Unction of the Holy Spirit.

W. H. Westcott.

There are two Scriptures which refer to the Holy Spirit as the Unction or Anointing: 2 Corinthians 1:21 shows that it is God who has anointed Christians in connection with their new position in Christ, and 1 John 2:18-27 indicates that the youngest Christians have all the advantages which the anointing confers. The Holy Spirit came to the company of the redeemed on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and attached Himself to each of them individually, filling them by His power, and qualifying every one of them to be here intelligently and zealously in the testimony for Christ. To that company so wonderfully started in Divine power has God been adding by the work of His grace from that day to this, saving men through faith in the risen Christ, and giving to those saved ones the Holy Spirit to indwell them and to empower them to be here for Christ. The outward failure of the Christian community to walk in the truth as we see it today, does not alter the grace of God to the saved individual; the believer is as truly a child of God, and is as truly indwelt and anointed by the Holy Spirit, as in the days when all was outwardly so bright. But this produces at once the great privilege, and with it the grave responsibility, of being here in spite of the general failure, maintaining the whole truth of Christ.

Seeing now that even the youngest Christians have this unction or anointing from the Holy One, we may read two or three Old Testament passages which afford help as to what is meant by the "anointing".

1. Leviticus 8:1-12 gives us the anointing of Aaron as priest.
2. 1 Samuel 16:1-13 gives us the anointing of David as King.
3. 1 Kings 14:13-16 gives us the anointing of Elisha a Prophet.

1. No one can read Exodus 18:1 in conjunction with Leviticus 8:1-12, without seeing that God by the anointing of Aaron sanctified him or set him apart for the office and service of priest. The whole congregation of Israel was summoned, and in a most conspicuous way Aaron was designated for the exercise of the priestly functions.

2. This is equally the case in Samuel 16: 1-13, where David superseded Saul, by the choice of the Lord, as King. The failure of the people's choice and his rejection by Jehovah cleared the way for the introduction of God's man. So Adam set in authority at first has broken down and failed, and God has introduced the second Man, Christ, who must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. But in David's anointing and designation as King, there follows in verse 13 the remarkable addition that "the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward". How could he who had been hitherto a simple shepherd comport himself and be in behaviour as was suitable to a king? The anointing not only marked him out for the position, but conferred upon him the necessary power and fitness to be and to walk in every way worthy of the position for which he

was designated.

3. In confirmation of what has been said as to the marking out for position by the anointing, we have 1 Kings 13:13-16. Elijah was to anoint Hazael for the kingdom of Syria, Jehu for Israel, and Elisha as prophet as a successor to himself. But the words "in thy room" at the end of verse 16 are very suggestive. Elijah had seemingly laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought and in vain, as was said later of the Messiah in Isaiah 49:1-26. But God had appreciated his faithful service, and would shortly bestow upon him the unique and splendid honour of taking him up into heaven. Yet in grace He purposed that Elijah's faithful testimony should be continued in Elisha. We have then Elijah taken to heaven, and Elisha left on earth in the same position to represent him, "in his room", as it says. For this the anointing was to qualify and equip him; that he might be the representative of the man who was taken into heaven.

Now Christ is the One who fulfils all these types, whether of Priest, King, or Prophet. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. We may not pretend to bottom the deep glory of His Person, but while He is in His eternal and essential glory the Son, He has become in being and nature Man; as such has died and risen again, and is officially designated as Christ, i.e. the Anointed One, Priest, King and Prophet. Moreover, in the perfection of His Manhood — though ever Son — He will fulfil all the duties and responsibilities of His glorious offices by the power of the Holy Ghost. Without controversy, great is the mystery. In 2 Corinthians 1:21, the new position in which every believer is established, and for which he is designated is "in Christ". Once we have believed the gospel truly and have received the Holy Spirit, it is God's delight to indicate to us our new position, and to establish us in it: to settle our souls into the happy realisation by the Spirit's power of what that new position involves. But He has anointed us also. By the gift of the Spirit He has definitely set us apart and designated us for the position; by the same anointing

He has given us power to be in every respect consistent with the whole of that position and all that it involves, and in result, and in so far as we use the power given to us, we should become descriptive here on earth of the Man that has gone into heaven.

## 65. The Unity of the Spirit.

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The Unity of the Spirit.

W. H. Westcott. From a Meditation on Ephesians 4:1-6 Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 35, 1945, page 247.

It is evident from the exhortation in verses 1 to 3 of this passage that the spirit in which we consider our subject of "the unity of the Spirit" is an urgent qualification. May God grant that we may first judge ourselves in respect of any tendency to harshness or ungraciousness; and also in regard to placing our earlier conceptions of that unity above anything that the Spirit would teach us through the Scripture. The words in italics at the commencement of verse 4 (i.e., "There is") are better omitted. The seven details which follow are not a statement of dogma or doctrine, but rather give us a complete picture of that unity of the Spirit which we are to endeavour to keep. The unity of the Spirit is a unity formed by the Spirit of God, and maintained by the Spirit's power alone. It certainly includes all true believers on our Lord Jesus Christ in this Christian dispensation. But here they are not viewed as a mere aggregate of individuals who are forgiven sinners, but as a vast number of souls in whom there is distinguishable the work of the Spirit of God. There is still the flesh in every one of them; but in the unity of the Spirit no flesh is included. They are seen therefore, from the point of view of what the Spirit has wrought in them — "the Spirit is life" (Romans 8:10). There is a new life and nature wrought in them, distinct from what they were as born of Adam. What they were in Adam has been entirely set aside in the death of Christ, and what they are in Christ Jesus is wholly new and there is nothing of Adam or of the flesh carried into it. They are the same individuals, but viewed as men of a new race in Christ, and as having a new life in the Spirit. It is when viewed in this life and nature that the Scripture speaks of them as brought into the unity of the Spirit, which unity we are to use diligence to keep. No thought or word or deed that emanates from the flesh or from man in Adam has any part or lot in that. In the new creation "all things are of God" (2 Corinthians 5:16-18).

ONE BODY In considering the unity of the Spirit, its features or elements, this is the first thing; that Christians all the world over are one body (Romans 12:4-5). A number, or multiplicity of bodies, is unknown in, and is foreign to, the unity of the Spirit. To form Christians into parties or organizations of any kind whatsoever may be done in ignorance or wilfulness; or with evident zeal in promoting a cause, or furthering a service or upholding a doctrine; but whatever the motive, it is dividing them into sections and is contrary to keeping the unity of the Spirit. A "national church" for example is necessarily an organization affecting one nationality as distinct from other nations. A church, carrying the name as identified with a person or place or system of worship, in its very essence is contrary to the unity of the Spirit. That Christians are in it may be true, and that their being in does not invalidate them as Christians is also true; but to be in it or to join it is not using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This unity is not on a national basis, as though comprising only those of one nation, nor is it on an international basis as though arriving at some common and international agreement among Christians. It is a unity of the Spirit, but the

grace that saves them constitutes them members by the reception of the Spirit. They have not to join one Body, they have not to agree to become one Body; but they are one Body. It is not thus a voluntary association, but an organic formation by the work of the Spirit. To be consistent with the fact is our business; not to form one Body but to be consistent with it.

It is by one Spirit that we are all baptised into one Body; and together we all form the Body of CHRIST. The body of any creature is formed for the outward expression of the life within. Christ in Heaven is our life; and the one Body is His Body, composed of all its members the world wide, and is a vessel in which He expresses Himself in His life and ways here on earth.

#### ONE SPIRIT

Indwelling the one Body there is one Spirit, He of whom the Lord spoke in John 14:16-17. He is a Divine Person, equal with the Father and the Son, who can be in every saint, and also indwell the whole Church of God on the earth. The conviction of our sin has been His work; we are born again of the Spirit. By Him we have our knowledge and enjoyment of the love of God; our experience of deliverance; our enlightenment; the formation of our nature and character in Divine life; our acquaintance with Christ and of all the truth concerning the Father and the Son, and also our place in the Assembly. All is His work in us and there is but ONE SPIRIT whose operations are ONE and the same in all saints everywhere all the world over. He glorifies CHRIST in Christ's body.

ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING Our calling is one. It is the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus (Php 3:14). It is a holy calling (2 Timothy 1:9). It is a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3:1). It is a calling which takes us out of earthly associations, for it is not of earth but entirely of that which relates to heaven. At the same time, while it gives us a new citizenship in heaven, we are instructed to be subject to the powers that be on earth. In our calling we have new bonds and relationships so that, whether Jews or Gentiles, we are now joint heirs of a joint body and joint partakers of God's promise in Christ by the Gospel. It produces a common bond, stronger than any other bond and binds us into one common interest, giving us one common object, however diverse we have been naturally in rank, attainment, privilege or colour. It is not yet perfected fully in accomplishment, for we are to be with CHRIST where He is and like Him, but the HOPE of its complete fulfilment is a hope common to us all.

ONE LORD The unity of the Spirit gives us to be under one Lord. This forbids us, in Divine things, to own any other Lord and certainly not to call any man such. Ecclesiastical dignitaries in some bodies are addressed as "My Lord." Wherever this is done, it is losing sight of and setting aside, the unity of the Spirit which knows only one Lord. His is the title as risen and exalted by God (Acts 2:36). By Divine decree every knee must bow to Him; every tongue confess Him, Lord (Php 2:11). We who believe in Him now are brought to confess Him (Romans 10:9) to our eternal salvation. We prove His power and authority in all details of our life. He, as such, is our present Saviour. To us there is one Lord (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Assembly is under His administration in each and every place (1 Corinthians 12:5). His authority exercised in one locality is binding in all places, for the unity of the Spirit recognises but one Lord in all localities. His will commands obedience, but it is the obedience of love, for who amongst His own does not love the Lord and, if loved, no less honoured. There are many voices in the world, but our ears are open to one supreme voice. His protection is sufficient: His word is authoritative.

**ONE FAITH** The unity of the Spirit maintains all saints in one faith. It is "the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" (James 2:1). It is not a blend of the faiths of the world at which some professing Christians aim. It is unique. It is not a development of religious science, an outcome of philosophic thought.

It is based upon miracles: The intervention of Divine power in the midst of a world of sin, The incarnation of the Son of God, The revelation of God in Man, The cross and death of Jesus, The resurrection, are all Miracles. The glorification of the Man Christ Jesus; the coming of the Holy Spirit from Heaven, forming believers on the ascended Christ into one Body; the Gospel concerning Him, so adapted in its perfection to any and every child of Adam in every land; these are all unique. The calling of the Church, its equipment, its resources, its functions are incomparably blessed as set out in the Christian faith. The return of the Lord Jesus in power — so imminent — whether in the first instance to fetch the Church out of the world, or in the second instance to institute His Kingdom over the world as prophesied ages ago, is clearly included in the one faith. The blessedness of the knowledge of God, revealed as Father and all His counsels too with regard to Christ His Son, may well impress our hearts and minds with the magnificence and comprehensiveness of the One Faith, outside and independent of all the "faiths" of the world. It is utterly exclusive of any assimilation to any other faiths or co-operation with them. It is the TRUTH and stands alone, impregnable as God Himself.

**ONE BAPTISM** The one baptism is necessarily Christian baptism and is our committal to all that is involved in the truth of Christ Jesus (Romans 6:3). It announces our identification. with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ in all its bearings and implies our obligation to walk in newness of life. The water under which we are passed is an emblem of death and an understanding of our identification with Christ dead and risen again, teaches us that we are no more at liberty to be under sin's dominion, no more available for sin's control. He — Christ — lives unto God; every pulsation, every movement of His risen manhood is Godward; for the accomplishment of God's will and pleasure.

We likewise esteem ourselves to be alive in Christ Jesus to GOD. Living under new control, only for the will of God (Romans 6:11). He, in His death, has died out of this world system, working out the eternal purpose of God. Deliverance from the time system, this world's system, is also our privilege, though for a period still having relationships, business, privileges here and responsibilities to fulfil — being permitted to be FOR GOD in them, but with our minds set on things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1).

**ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL** The unity of the Spirit, in which we have our place and privilege even now, is in view of the completion of the whole scheme of God which He has designed for His eternal pleasure and complacency.

We are saved and blessed in Christ — not alone as a matter of mercy and philanthropy, but with a view to the setting out before all worlds and for eternity the ineffable blessedness of God's character; of the delight it is to Him to bless and of His purpose to surround Himself with a universe where everything will exhibit His attributes and with creatures redeemed and blessed, made capable of intelligent response to His love, wisdom and power and glory. He will be known as GOD indeed by all, supreme, purposeful, irresistible, triumphant, blessed beyond words, the vast creation rejoicing in the light of all that God is. But in the unity of the Spirit He is known to us, not as God only, but also as FATHER, over all as God supreme, through all, over-ruling all conditions

incidental to our time state, to the furtherance of His own designs, and in us all, whom He has given to Christ, sharers of His risen life, acceptance, relationship and inheritance.

We know Him who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever.  
Amen.

## 66. "When he is come"

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"When he is come" From Notes on John 14:1-31, John 15:1-27, John 16:1-33.

W. H. Westcott.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1950, page 214. In the fourteenth chapter of this Gospel, we have recorded for us the beginning of the Lord's last discourse with His own, before He went to the Cross. So soon as He refers to His returning to the Father, He announces the coming of the Holy Ghost — the Spirit of Truth — in His office of a Comforter who will abide with His own forever. Throughout the discourse given to us in chapters 14, 15 and 16, the Lord opens up the various activities of the Holy Spirit amongst His own, when He is come.

He, the Holy Spirit, is one with the Father and the Son. He is God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, and He has come to:- "Teach you all things."

"Bring all things to your remembrance."

"Testify of Me." "Guide you into all Truth." "Show you things to come." "He shall glorify Me." And He adds that He will not speak of or from Himself. In John 16:12, the Lord says, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." Because of the limitations of the understanding of His disciples, the Lord was shut up, in His teaching, to making known that which was really only partial, but — in contrast — when the Spirit is come there would be full revelation; no longer partial teaching, but unreserved communications from the Father and the Son, through the Spirit and hence, unlimited fulness for us. As the Lord said, He does not come to speak of Himself, but as He receives from the Father and the Son, that which He hears, He will speak and guide us into all truth. He has indited the Holy Scriptures, and He remains to guide us into an understanding of that which is therein recorded.

He will show us things to come, opening up to us that which is coming on this earth, and that which will be established in the heavens. These things we have particularly unfolded to us in the Book of Revelation, as also the Epistles. The reading of the Revelation, prayerfully and carefully, would liberate our hearts from the ensnaring effect of present things, for we should see all in the light of God's judgment of them. From John 16:14, we learn that He will show us the things of Christ. "He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you." He comes from a living Man in the glory of God and delights to bring Him and all He has, before our hearts, thus delivering us from the allurements of man's glory and the men of the earth. The bosom of the natural man swells as he hears of the prowess of his fellows here. The bosom of the Christian swells as he learns of Christ's incomparable virtues and glories, which have been opened up for us in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. What a joy it is to the heart and how stabilising to our souls, when we read Scripture as bringing before us, by the Spirit, the glories of Christ Jesus our Lord, the Father's beloved Son, rather than merely dwelling on our own blessings. Much as we have to praise and give thanks for, we lose so much, if we fail to see the things of Christ and His glory. In verse 15 of the same chapter, the Lord states "all things the Father hath are Mine," indicating that

the whole sphere in which He lives and moves embraces the plans for the Father's glory. We know that in those plans the Son has the central place by His — the Father's — will. The Holy Spirit delights to take us back in spirit into that beginning, before anything was that has been made, and to open to our wondering and worshipping hearts the counsels and plans of the Godhead, in which the Son does all for the glory of the Father and the Father does all for the glory of the Son. When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come He will guide you into all truth. He IS come, and He ever delights to open up to us the truth as it is in the Father and the Son, and if we follow where He leads our hearts will go out in praise and worship to the Father and the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

He will also enable us to read in all the Old Testament Scriptures; in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets and in the Psalms, the things concerning our Lord Jesus Christ — the Son of God — for this is included in the truth.

It is to be noted, He will not speak of Himself. He will not primarily occupy our minds and thoughts with Himself, but with that which comes from and concerns the Father and the Son. May our hearts ever be open to receive His blessed communications, so that there might be with us that true worship "in Spirit and in truth" so precious to the Father and His beloved Son.

## 67. "Ye are the temple of God"

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"Ye are the temple of God"

W. H. Westcott.

1 Corinthians 3:16.

Extracted from Scripture Truth, Volume 36, 1949, page 120.

Taking an Old Testament Scripture for our guide, we see from 2 Chronicles 3:4; 2 Chronicles 3:8, also 2 Chronicles 4:1 that the Porch, Oracle and Altar were all of the same dimensions: 20 cubits from the threshold inwards, never to be wider and never to be narrower. It is therefore necessary to know something of what is typified in the Oracle and Altar — in other words, the glory of Christ as the revelation of God and His sacrificial death.

Amongst men, the soldier's cry is "death or glory," but the Christians may say it is "Christ's death and glory." We are God's temple today, and should be consistent with Christ's death on the one hand and Christ's glory on the other.

It may be asked, what is the use of speaking thus? If all is broken up in the church externally, why trouble? The word to the Church of Ephesus in Revelation 2:1-29 is, "Remember . . . from whence thou art fallen, and repent." Unless we know what God's thought is, we become satisfied with less proud of our shame. Of old the temple was where God's glory was seen, and where God's Name was set. All nations were to be welcomed, and from it was to go out the testimony of the true and living God, whose house it was, and whose mind was made known therein.

What is God's testimony now? Briefly, the bringing in of Christ and those associated with Him, to the exclusion of man after the flesh. Two things are predicated of man after the flesh. He demands wisdom and he demands power. Wisdom is to know how to accomplish the end in view; power is ability to do it. The Greeks sought wisdom, and with the Romans was power, but the Jews were contemptuous of both, maintaining their outward connection religiously with God, and yet leading both Greeks and Romans to get rid of Christ.

Now, to us who are called, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God; the knowing how and the power of being able. So Christians are equipped in Him for everything. Perhaps some think that our circumstances today are unique in their difficulties. There has never been any other kind of circumstances, as all have proved until they turned to Christ. Every sinner saved, probably thought he was too bad to be saved, that his case was unique and required a special salvation. So, too, for us who are saved. Circumstances are sure to be against us, but the thing is not to give up, but to use the resources that are in Christ.

There are hindrances which obscure Christ and mar unity in the testimony of God. But God is one, and those who bear the testimony of God, who are His temple and in whom His light is to shine, should be one also. Human leaders, special doctrines and human means, all militate against the

setting forth of what God is in Christ.

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