

The Honor of His Name

by Robert Anderson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of honoring the Lord's name with reverence and respect, and warns against the dangers of irreverent language and actions.

Scripture: Romans 8:18, 2 Corinthians 1:5, Colossians 1:24, 1 Peter 4:13, 1 Peter 5:9

Topics: "Suffering In Christ", "Perseverance Of Faith"

Description

Greek Word Studies for aid_number 35905 delves into the concept of 'pathema,' which refers to the actual suffering experienced by believers, particularly for their faith in Christ and to be conformed to His image. The sufferings of this life, as highlighted by Paul and Peter, are not comparable to the glory that will be revealed to believers. Believers are encouraged to rejoice in sufferings, knowing that they are not alone in their experiences and that such trials unite them with other Christians worldwide. Understanding the principles of the Word helps believers handle any suffering and resist Satan's schemes to discourage them.

Transcript

THE HONOUR OF HIS NAME

Preface and First Chapter.

THE title of this book - a quotation from the sixty-sixth Psalm - indicates not only its subject, but its aim and purpose.

I have to thank my friend Miss A. R. Habershon for permitting me to use her Concordance of the Lord's names and titles as an Appendix. While Bible students will greatly value this Appendix, I fear it will be neglected by the ordinary reader. And these pages need never have been written were it not that the New Testament is commonly treated in a similar fashion, the Book of the Revelation being regarded as a negligible Appendix to the Gospels and Epistles. But the Patmos visions are divinely given to enable us by faith to behold what the beloved disciple saw when "in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

That some among them had "no knowledge of God," was the reproach the Apostle cast upon the Christians of Corinth. And were he with us today, might he not charge us with having no knowledge of the Lord of glory? For the Christian who accepts the opening vision of the Apocalypse as being a divine revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ as now enthroned in heaven, will need neither warning nor appeal to

avoid all irreverent freedom in naming Him - to shun even the appearance of forgetting "the honour of His name." R.A.

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"THE HONOUR OF HIS NAME"

CHAPTER I

IN the course of a country-house visit, some years ago, I was asked for the names of men whom my friends might not only welcome to their home as guests, but invite to conduct a Sunday evening service in their private chapel. Great was my surprise at the reception given to the first name I put before them. It was that of a clergyman who, I supposed, would be a persona grata in both respects. But my friends informed me that he had already been their guest; and though they themselves esteemed and liked him, he had given offence to their young people by beginning to call them by their Christian names the very first day of his visit.

Happening, soon afterwards, to take up a book recently issued by him, I found that throughout its pages the Lord of Glory was habitually mentioned by the name of His humiliation. Knowing the man personally, I felt greatly surprised at his lapse in the social sphere, but vastly more surprised that in this higher sphere, a Christian so devout, and so reverent withal, could be betrayed into a habit that would have grieved and shocked the disciples of early times. I say this advisedly; for in New Testament days the disciple always declared himself by the manner in which he named his Master.

As we all know, the name of "Jesus" occurs many hundreds of times in the Gospels; but this fact lends great emphasis to the further fact that whenever the narrative introduces words spoken by the disciples, whether addressed to the Lord Himself, or to others about Him, He is invariably named with a title of reverence. In all the four Gospels only one exception to this rule can be found; and it is an exception of peculiar import. I refer to the language of the disciples on the Emmaus road, when questioned by the stranger who joined them on their way.

"Concerning Jesus of Nazareth" was the manner in which they designated Him.¹ "Jesus of Nazareth." The phrase as yet contained no element of contempt. It was intended merely to distinguish Him from other men who bore the not uncommon name of Jesus. But its use by these disciples had a most ominous significance. Not even Peter's denials in the court of Caiaphas gave clearer proof that the stern and terrible tragedy of the Passion had stamped out faith in His Messiahship. "We hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel" was their sad lament.

They had hailed Him as the Christ, and had learned to worship Him as the Son of God. But all was over, now. For they had seen Him crucified as a common criminal; and three days had passed "since these things were done." In these liberal-minded days of ours, cultured Jews regard Him as one of the greatest of their Rabbis; and so these disciples still cherished His memory as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people." But yet He was no more than man - He was only Jesus of Nazareth!

It was not in this fashion that they spoke of Him while He was alive and present with them. The significance of the narrative becomes intense if we realise that the writer was himself the companion of

Cleopas. And if questions of this kind were settled upon grounds of evidence, this would be assumed. Put it this way. Suppose the events recorded in the chapter had involved some violation of Roman law, would not the Evangelist's accurate knowledge of its incidents have been deemed proof of his guilt?

The Christian, no doubt, might say with truth that the Divine Spirit could inspire the record, even if the writer had no personal knowledge of the facts. But the Christian recognises also that in this, as in other spheres, God is wont "to make use of means." And in the absence of everything to suggest a different conclusion, we may assume with confidence that the writer was one who "had perfect understanding of the things" of which he wrote. And this explains a seeming difficulty.

We would gladly barter many a page of Holy Writ in exchange for the briefest epitome of the wonderful teaching of the Emmaus road, when, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, the Lord expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And can we suppose that this was "wasted," as men would say, upon two disciples, of whom the one, as we know, was of little note, and the other was, ex hypothesi, so insignificant that not even his name is recorded? But if the second disciple was the Evangelist, the suppression of the name needs no explanation; and what is of vastly greater moment, we can understand the deep import of the narrative.

All its wonderful incidents stand out in clear relief as a part of his training for the work he was destined to perform. For was he not divinely chosen, not only to share with the great Apostle of the Gentiles the authorship of almost half of the New Testament Scriptures, but also to become that Apostle's chief helper and companion in his many-sided ministry? This digression has been suggested by the mode in which these disciples named their Lord. Members of the royal household do not speak of the Sovereign by his Christian name; but we all speak in this way of kings who are dead and gone.

And if we analyse our thoughts we shall find, perhaps, that when we speak of "Jesus" we are not thinking of our living Lord who hears our words, and before whom we shall soon appear, but of the great Teacher who lived and died nineteen centuries ago. How far will this account for the extraordinary fact that although in the days of His humiliation Christians never named Him without some title of reverence, yet in this time of His exaltation and glory they do so habitually? It will fully account for it in the case of merely nominal Christians, including the whole tribe of Christianised Rationalists who contribute so largely to our "Christian" literature.

But some further explanation must be sought for the fact that among devout Christians a practice prevails which has no Scriptural warrant, and which, I repeat, would have shocked the disciples of New Testament times. The Rationalists may object, perhaps, that as a Jewish Rabbi was never called by his personal name, and as the Greek word for "Lord" sometimes meant little more than our English "Sir," it was a matter of course that Christ should be called Master and Lord. But no Christian will tolerate the figment that in the mouth of His disciples the use of these titles of reverence expressed merely the conventional courtesy accorded to Him even by unbelieving Jews.

That would be indeed a trivial foundation for the teaching which, amid the solemnities of the Last Supper, He based upon them.² Nor would it account for the words of warm approval with which He commended His disciples for using them. True it is that, owing to the Jewish superstition which vetoed the use of the sacred name "Jehovah," the Greek language has no distinctive equivalent for our English word "Lord" as a title of deity. But there can be no doubt what Kyrios meant with those who acclaimed Him as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God"³ - a confession which distinguished the disciple from the unbeliever.

And as we study the writings of the Apostles we must remember that throughout the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, upon which the language of the New Testament is formed, this same word (Kyrios) is used in every instance as the Greek equivalent of "Jehovah" in the Hebrew Bible.

Chapter Two

A RAILWAY-CARRIAGE conversation, in a trip to Scotland many years ago, turned my attention in a very special way to the subject of these pages. I shared a compartment with a gentleman and his wife, both of whom were strangers to me; and, after our English ways, not a word passed between us for several hours. But when nearing the end of my journey, a chance incident not only drew us into conversation, but led my companion to give me his name; and I was interested to find that he was a well-known publisher.

When we had disposed of the matter which led him to address me, our conversation took a special turn, and in the course of it he said some unpleasant things about Christians. He was particularly bitter against them for their habit of using sacred names to make their book-titles attractive. He cited a number of instances of this; and when I pleaded that a title was meant to indicate the character and contents of a book, he replied that from a bookseller's point of view it was a trade label, for use across the counter.

And he illustrated his words by telling me how, when visiting the store-room of a certain London publishing firm, he heard one of the lads calling out to another of the staff, who was sorting books on an upper shelf, "Chuck me down a Blood of Jesus." The words cut me as with a knife. The author of the book in question was well known to me as a devout and reverent Christian minister, and I had never realised the gross profanity of such a title. But since that day all titles of the kind have been abhorrent to me.

"My people doth not consider," was the divine lament in days of apostasy in Israel. And if Christians would only "consider" they would avoid a practice which would have shocked the disciples of early times. Most true it is that some with whom the use of the sacred name of "Jesus" is habitual, are wholly free from any suspicion of an irreverent intention, "But evil is wrought by want of Thought, As well as want of Heart!" The Rev. Dr. A. T. Pierson was one of the most intensely reverent of men.

When at the close of a lecture in old Exeter Hall he turned to greet me, I thanked him heartily for the help his words had been to me, but I added, "There was one fly in the pot of ointment: why do you name the Lord after the fashion of the 'vagabond Jews' of Acts xix.?" "It is all the fault of my evil theological training," he replied, "but keep on reminding me!" Indeed theological training is much to blame for this deplorable habit. For not only is the entire theology of Christendom influenced by the writings of the Fathers, but very many of our modern theological works are leavened by German scepticism.

In fact our recent Bible "Dictionaries" and "Encyclopedias" are essentially rationalistic, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is rarely found in their pages. It is always "Jesus" or "Jesus Christ." And this even with writers who are punctiliously careful to prefix the name of an Apostle with the title of "Saint." If the Apostles could revisit the earth, they would not appreciate an "honour" conferred upon them by the Church of the butcher Popes who blessed the tortures of the Inquisition and massacres such as that of St.

Bartholomew; an "honour," moreover, which they share with these miscreants, but which is denied to the holy martyrs of the Reformation. As the profanely familiar use of the Lord's name is so common, it seems scarcely fair to single out any particular offender; but to illustrate the evil, I venture to quote the following extract from a recent "Publisher's Circular." The book to which it refers is not the work of an infidel, but of an English clergyman, who is Examining Chaplain to an English Bishop, and a Fellow of his College.

The circular says "It endeavours to answer the question, What kind of person did St. Mark, or his informant, St. Peter, think Jesus to be? Under the heads of 'Jesus' family and friends,' 'Jesus' way of life,' 'Jesus' mind,' 'Jesus' social outlook,' 'Jesus' morality,' and 'Jesus' religion,' it approaches the final subject of 'Jesus Himself.' "Saint Mark" and "Saint Peter," but always "Jesus"! Is it not evident that this "Jesus" is the dead Buddha of the Rationalist? No one could write thus about our great God and Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, before whose judgment-seat we all must stand.

Surely the prevalence of rationalistic literature, falsely claiming to be Christian, is a definite reason why a Christian writer should declare his faith by the way he names the Lord. A glance through the pages of a book would then enable the least instructed reader to judge whether its author be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, or a follower of the "Jesus" of the Critics. For the "Jesus" of the Critics is not the Christ of God. The Lord so "emptied Himself" that He gave up His liberty even as man, and never spoke except in God-given words.

"Whatsoever I speak," He declared, "even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak." Therefore was it that He disclaimed knowledge of that whereof the Father had not spoken to Him. Therefore was it that the words He did speak were eternal. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" such was His solemn declaration. And all who refuse His words shall be judged by them, whether they be sinners of the market-place or the street, or sinners of the pulpit or the Critic's chair.

Such was the Christ of God. But what of the Christ of the Critics? Here are their own words: "Both Christ and the Apostles and writers of the New Testament held the current Jewish notions respecting the divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament." In a word, the "Jesus" of this cult was an ignorant enthusiast, the dupe of Jewish errors which he mistook for divine truth, and which he forced upon the acceptance of his deluded followers in language of awful solemnity.

What is true of criminals is no less true of heretics; they are apt, through some oversight or other, to give themselves away. And the kenosis theory of the Critics reminds us of the artifices by which law-breakers try to deceive the police! For these rationalistic Professors and pundits ignore what even a Sunday-school child ought to know, that after the Resurrection, when the Lord stood free from all the limitations of His humiliation, He adopted and repeated His previous teaching about the Old Testament.

And the record adds, "Then opened He their mind that they should understand the Scriptures." And in the New Testament that teaching is unfolded under the guidance of the Divine Spirit. But the Critics have detected and exposed its falseness! No wonder then that the Buddha of their cult is only "Jesus" the Rabbi, who, though admittedly far above them both morally and spiritually, was neither as intelligent nor as well informed! Note - This is not the only point on which the Critics display their ignorance.

Even a child might be expected to notice that in Mark xiii. 32 (the text to which they appeal in support of their kenosis theory) it is not as man that the Lord disclaims knowledge of the time of His great public Advent, but as Son of God. The contrast is not between man and God, but between the Son and the Father.

Chapter Three

ARE we then to maintain, as the preceding chapters would suggest, that a Christian is one who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ? A most startling conclusion this, for it outrages "the spirit of the age"; and at a single stroke it puts outside the pale, not only the mass of those "who profess and call themselves

Christians," but also a very large and daily increasing minority of the occupants of professedly Christian pulpits. For mark the words, "who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ": not "the historic Jesus," the Buddha of nineteen centuries ago, but our living Lord, who died for our sins, and now reigns in heaven, and is coming again in glory.

It is important, Professor Harnack writes in one of his best-known works, to "remind mankind that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst." But this is an anachronism. For the blind and stupid infidelity which refused belief in "the historic Jesus" belonged to a less enlightened age than ours. Today, the infidel appeals, quite as confidently as the Christian, to the lesson of that matchless life. The Lord Jesus declared with great solemnity that all who believed in Him had everlasting life.

When He spoke these words, standing as a man in the midst of men, He was not trying to convince His hearers that He was not a phantom or a "ghost"! His purpose was to teach that lie was the Son of God, the Messiah, "of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." Among those who participated in the awful crime of Calvary, there were some who, like Nicodemus, believed in Him as "a teacher come from God." But they crucified Him for blasphemy because, being a man, He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God.

And His disciples' acceptance of this claim betokened a God-given faith. Therefore it was that Peter's confession drew from Him the words, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." And this explains the statements of the Apostle John: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God." "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" But all this, I repeat, offends "the spirit of the age."

To say that divine grace is needed to enable us to believe, is an insult to the dignity of human nature! And are we not all the Sons of God? Folly characterises every heresy. Poetic license warrants our describing ourselves as children of Adam, for we are his remote descendants. But, save in a purely figurative acceptance of the word, not even Adam was God's son. He was his creature. And the race has sprung, not from the Adam of Eden innocence, but from Adam the fallen outcast.

What sense is there, then, in pretending that this constitutes us children of God? But did not the Apostle tell the pagans of Athens that they were children of God? No, most certainly not. To wean them from their idolatry, he quoted the words of their own poets in hymns written in praise of Jupiter, "For we are his offspring" his *genos*. And the question is not what a biased mind can read into this, but what the speaker meant, and the hearers understood by it. Did any one of them imagine that he was Jupiter's child?

And if the Apostle's object was to teach them that they were children of the God who made heaven and earth, would he have based the teaching on a pagan hymn to a heathen deity? His appeal to their own classic literature was in order to shame them into acknowledging that God had nothing in common with their lifeless idols, "graven by art and man's device." His argument would have been as valid had he pointed them to the lower creation. The God whose creatures have life must be a living God.

Each one of us is the child of the parent who begat him, and he cannot be the child of any one else. And the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a child of God because he has been begotten of God, "For as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God." Who were begotten of God, the verse which follows adds. The Christian is a twice-born being. He is born of the flesh as a child of his natural father, and he is born of the Spirit as a child of God.

And Scripture is explicit and emphatic that these births are altogether distinct. As the Lord Himself declared, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Ye are of your father the devil" were His awful words to the Jews who were compassing His death. And if any one pretends that even this is not conclusive, we may point him to the statement that "they who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God." Could language more definitely veto the delusion that men are children of God by nature?

The bearing of this upon the main subject of these pages will be apparent to the thoughtful. We begin by so lowering the relationship of "child of God" that it ceases to have any meaning. And then by taking "sons of God" as merely a synonym for "children of God," we are betrayed into accepting the "brotherhood of Jesus" cult. And thus we supply the infidel with a colourable pretext for dragging down the Lord of Glory to the level of our common humanity - a blasphemy that reaches its climax in the statement, - "Jesus was God, but so are we."

In infinite grace the Son of God is "not ashamed" to call us brethren. But the "us" is not the race of Adam, but "they who are sanctified" - and the response of every heart that grace has won is to call Him Lord. We have the same Father and the same God; but in the very words by which He teaches the nearness of the relationship, He forbids the inference which the unspiritual would draw from it. "Go" - He said - "to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend (not "unto our Father and God," but) unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God."

In English the word "son" means no more than "male child": and of course it is sometimes used in this sense in the New Testament; as for example when we read that James and John were sons of Zebedee. But in Scripture, as with orientals generally, it has a far deeper significance; as for example when the Lord surnamed James and John "the sons of thunder." So again Josiah was renamed "a son of consolation," and the unconverted are called "sons of disobedience." In these and numberless other passages the word connotes character and nature, without any thought whatever of "begetting."

But our translators have ignored the distinction between "son" and "child," and in the various passages where these words occur a reference to the Greek, or even to our Revised Version, will prove both interesting and instructive. It will lead, for example, to the somewhat startling discovery that, in Scripture, Christians as such are never called sons of God. "To as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become children of God;" but "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

But, as every Christian knows, the Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ is altogether unique, being essential and eternal. The rendering of John iii. 16 and kindred passages, in both our English Versions, suggests a double error. It implicitly denies the truth that every believer is begotten of God; and it implicitly asserts the error that the Sonship of Christ depends upon an act of "begetting." If that were so the Son must have had a beginning in time; and therefore, not being eternal, He could have no claim to Deity.

This was the argument of Anus, and the logic of it is inexorable. But while the Greek word here employed (monogenes) has its etymological counterpart in "only-begotten," that is not its meaning. In five of its nine occurrences in the New Testament it is used of Christ. In three it means an only child (Luke vii. 12; viii. 42; ix. 38). And in the ninth (Heb. xi. 17) it is used of Isaac. Isaac was not an only-begotten son, but he was his father's darling. And it is noteworthy that this word "darling" is used of Christ by our translators in Psalms xxii. 20 and xxxv. 17, where in the Greek Bible monogenes represents a Hebrew term of endearment.

In six of the twelve occurrences of that word in the Hebrew Bible, the Greek Version reads "Beloved" - the very word by which the Lord Jesus was hailed from heaven at His baptism, and again on the Holy Mount. And in these passages, "only" is our translators' rendering of it. It is a fact of vital moment that the word "begotten" is never used of the Lord save in relation to the Resurrection. Neither His title of Son of God, nor yet His title of Son of Man, depends upon the Virgin birth.

Just as by "Son of Man" He claimed to be man in the highest and most absolute sense, so by "Son of God" He laid claim to Deity. This was the meaning given to it by those who heard His teaching. His disciples understood it thus, and they worshipped Him as Divine. And those who refused to believe in Him understood it thus, and they crucified Him as a blasphemer. Note - The above paragraphs are based upon the chapter of The Lord from Heaven (Nisbet) in which this whole subject is discussed in its various aspects, and the Scriptures relating to it are cited and considered, including the passages in which the word "firstborn" is used of Christ.

Chapter Four

IT is the peculiar circumstances of our own times that give both point and urgency to the appeal and protest of the present volume. And this consideration may weigh with any who might well resent our seeming to cast a slur upon the writings of devout and spiritual men in days when infidelity stood far apart from the Christian camp. An infidel paper lately boasted that everything for which Tom Paine was persecuted is openly preached today in Christian pulpits by the descendants of the men who persecuted him.

It is all too true. And the coarse profanity of the "New Theology" is not so dangerous as the promulgation of its blasphemies by men of culture and gentlemanly feeling. To illustrate my words I give the following extracts from a sermon preached on Christmas Day in one of the most prominent of our London churches. And I do so, not to pillory a particular ecclesiastic, but to indicate what is now being taught in some of our theological colleges, and preached from numberless pulpits throughout the land.

'The birth narratives, which were included in the First and Third of the Synoptic Gospels, did not appear to belong to the oldest tradition about our Saviour. . . . The gospel which the Apostles preached did not include any story of the birth of Jesus. These birth narratives stood apart with no clearly perceptible relation to the rest of the New Testament. . . . The Christians of the second century were not capable of applying to the mingled traditions which they had received from the Apostolic age those laws of evidence which had now received the adhesion of historical students the divineness of Jesus did not at the first, and need not now, consist of a dogma as to His miraculous birth.'

This will suffice to indicate the import of the sermon, namely the denial of 'the virgin birth.' The objection that the Apostles' preaching did not include that truth is extraordinary. The Resurrection was a public fact to which the Apostles could appeal, and of which they were the accredited witnesses. But to most of us the suggestion that they should in the same way have given their personal testimony to the virginity of Mary is grotesquely absurd. If, as is implicitly asserted in the sermon, that basal fact—a fact from which the truth of the Incarnation is inseparable—be not fact at all, but fiction, the Nazarene may still claim our homage as the best and noblest of men, but to worship him as divine is to brand ourselves as idolaters and fools.

In support of his heresy the preacher appealed to "the laws of evidence." The laws of evidence had better be left to those who have practical experience of them. Unless the Gospel narratives be utterly unreliable and worthless even as human records, it is as certain as human testimony can make it that Mary's

firstborn was not her husband's child. And that this was a matter of common knowledge with the Jews, witness the taunt by which they met the Lord's refusal to acknowledge them as being true children of Abraham.

If therefore the Nazarene was not the Son of God in the sense which the Christian faith maintains, he was an outcast of that wretched class to whom the divine law denied the right of citizenship in the Commonwealth of Israel. And if the story of the "virgin birth" be fiction, the infidel may reasonably hold that it was invented to screen the shameful circumstances of his origin. And if the Nazarene was not the Son of God, the Lord of Glory, what becomes of the Atonement? Well may we exclaim-

"The tree of knowledge now

Yields its last ripest fruit!

The blind now lead the blind,

Man has become as God!

The Cross is growing old,

And the great Sepulchre

Is but a Hebrew tomb!

The Christ has died in vain!

The Christ of ages past

Is now the Christ no more!

Altar and fire are gone,

The Victim but a dream!"

"The Lord of Glory"- it is one of His divinely given titles. As the inspired Apostle writes, the world leaders, being ignorant of the hidden wisdom of God, "crucified the Lord of Glory." But if the Christianised sceptic be right, the man they crucified was the son of a Jew, who profanely claimed Divine honour. And in putting him to death they were obeying one of the plainest commands of the Divine law.

What then, I repeat, becomes of the Atonement? The thorough-going infidel faces the question boldly, and demands, "What has the death of Jesus effected in the unseen, so as to make it possible for God to forgive us?" And here is his answer: "Nothing whatever, and nothing was ever needed." For "Jesus was the child of Joseph and Mary;" and "there is no such thing as punishment, no far-off Judgment Day, no great white throne, and no Judge external to ourselves."

This is both consistent and intelligible. For no one whose mind is not blinded and warped by religious superstitions would tolerate the figment that the death of a Jewish mechanic's son could influence in any way our present relations with God, or our future destiny. The infidel stands by human reason. The Christian's faith rests upon a divine revelation. The one position is effectually as unassailable as the other. But

"With too much knowledge for the sceptic's side, With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,"

the Christianised sceptic "hangs between."

In quoting this Christmas sermon I have no wish to attack an individual. The preacher is an exceptionally distinguished representative of a large and daily growing class of accredited religious teachers who are using Christian pulpits to spread infidelity broadcast throughout the land. And therefore it is that I have cited him, my object being to strengthen the appeal I make to all spiritual Christians that, in face of the rapidly developing apostasy of the day, it behoves them to shun the prevailing habit of speaking of the Lord of Glory with a familiarity unwarranted by Scripture, and thus in their every mention of Him to give proof that they are of the number of those who own Him as LORD, and who "think upon His Name."

Having regard to the solemn declaration of unfeigned belief in Holy Scripture, required of every candidate for ordination, to the language of the Creed which a clergyman repeats continually, and to the doctrinal standards to which he publicly assents when entering on a benefice, sermons such as that above quoted seem to indicate that clerical morality is different from that which governs the conduct of honourable men in the City and the Clubs. Half a century ago such a sermon would have raised a wild storm of indignation; today it passes without notice.

CHAPTER FIVE EARLY in my Christian life I enjoyed the friendship of an eminent theologian of the time, and I once appealed to him to explain on what ground we could draw a clear line of demarcation between the Epistles of the New Testament and the writings of the Fathers. He was usually patient in dealing with my difficulties, and I expected an elaborate reply. But after a pause he asked me abruptly whether I had ever studied Patristic theology; and on my replying in the negative, he added, "If you will read some of the best of their works, I will then discuss the matter with you" I took up the task he set me, and as the result I had no need to trouble him further in the matter.

"The best of their works" are indeed a priceless heritage, but a gulf separates them from the inspired Scriptures. Bearing in mind that within two years of the Exodus "the Jewish Church" apostatised from God, we need not wonder that "the Christian Church" had seriously lapsed from the faith within two centuries of Pentecost. And when the hard discipline of persecution ceased, the downward lapse became more marked. Indeed the errors we deplore in the fully developed apostasy of Christendom are the fruit of seed that is scattered freely throughout the Patristic writings.

And when we read "The Fathers" in the light of the Epistles we cannot fail to see to what an extent the "Jesus" of "the Christian religion" was already supplanting the living Lord of the pristine faith.' And the "Christian religionist" who regards the Patristic Church as a Court of Appeal in all questions of faith and practice, will find sufficient warrant for naming the Lord Jesus Christ in the fashion common with Christians today. But Christians whose only standard is the Holy Scriptures will all welcome a warning and a protest against a practice which was unknown in New Testament times. (Note - An illustrative instance will explain my meaning.

The Gospels record that at the Last Supper "Jesus took bread"; but in 1 Cor. xi. it is "The Lord Jesus took bread." And mark the Apostle's statement that he received this formula from the Lord Himself (1 Cor. xi. 23.) "The modern familiar use of the simple name 'Jesus' has little authority in Apostolic usage." If we substitute no for "little" in this sentence, it will accurately express the truth. For an examination of the various passages where "the simple name" occurs in the Epistles will make it plain that the "modern use" has no Apostolic authority whatever.

And a glance at the Concordance will indicate that the task is by no means a laborious one. For though in the Gospels the occurrences of "the simple name" are to be reckoned by hundreds, the passages where it is used in the Epistles scarcely exceed a score. And here another striking fact claims notice. In the Gospels the narrational mention of Christ is always by the name of His humiliation, but never in the Epistles. How is this to be accounted for? If the chronological order of the New Testament writings were different, and a gap of many years separated the Epistles from the Gospels, an obvious explanation of it would suggest itself; but in view of the known facts, we must seek a solution of another kind.

And if the following solution be rejected, the enigma must remain inexplicable. With all who worship the Man of Bethlehem and Nazareth as being the Son of God, it must surely seem incredible that God should not have made provision for our possessing an accurate record of the Lord's earthly mission and ministry. And the sort of guidance we attribute to what is called "Providence " would be wholly inadequate to account for the Gospels. Full proof of this would need a lengthy treatise, but even a few sentences may be sufficient here.

Let us, for example, compare the First and Fourth Gospels. Their authors had shared the same teaching; and their close companionship throughout the years of the Ministry had continued after the Resurrection. How then can we account for the extraordinary differences which characterise their Gospels - differences to which the Rationalist points in proof that they are hopelessly conflicting. Matthew opens with the Lord's pedigree as son of Abraham and son of David - the recipients of Israel's great covenants of blessing and of earthly sovereignty - and then proceeds to give particulars respecting His birth and infancy.

And in keeping with this opening, the burden of the Book from first to last is the presentation of Christ as Israel's Messiah. In the strongest possible contrast with this, the Fourth Gospel opens by declaring that "In the beginning the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And instead of an account of the Saviour's birth, we read, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." And the only express reference to the Lord's special mission to Israel is found in the words, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

It was not that the Apostle John lacked knowledge of the details given us in the first two chapters of Matthew - on the contrary, he must have had far fuller knowledge of them than any of the other Evangelists. For with him it was that after the Crucifixion the mother of our Lord found a home. From her lips he must have heard, again and again repeated, all that a mother's heart would remember of the sacred birth in Bethlehem, and the no less sacred life at Nazareth. But not a single word of it all does this Gospel give us.

Yet again: though he was the only one of the Evangelists who witnessed the Transfiguration, his is the only Gospel that contains no record of it. Nor are these the only instances of a silence that is so extraordinary, but these will suffice for our present purpose. What explanation can be given of them? "Put yourself in his place" is a challenge we may fairly offer to those who scoff at inspiration. Could any man possessed of such special knowledge on a subject of such overwhelming interest, write a treatise relating to it without the slightest mention of extremely important details peculiarly his own?

An inspiration so limited that it means no more than human reason working under providential guidance, is here of no avail. Unless the Gospels are "God-breathed" in the fullest sense, they present psychological phenomena that have no parallel in all the literature of the world, whether modern or ancient. To the intelligent and thoughtful Christian the divine authorship of Scripture is as plainly manifest as is that human

authorship which all men recognise. Therefore it is that each of the Four Gospels gives us a portrait of Christ so distinctively characteristic.

Therefore is it that, as the beloved disciple was commissioned to write of Him as the Son of God, the Divine Spirit held him strictly to that golden path, and checked all his natural craving to tell of the Lord's human birth in Bethlehem, and of the vision of the Holy Mount, which manifested His glory as the Son of Man. Here then is the solution of the problem. It is God Himself who has given us the records of that "Coming" which was the burden of all the Scriptures, from the Eden promise of the woman's seed down to the latest word of the last of the Hebrew prophets.

And therefore it is that throughout the Gospels the Son of God is always "Jesus," for it is His Father who has given us the story of His life. To foretell His coming, He had used the lips of prophets to utter God-breathed words, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And He guided the pens of Apostles and Evangelists to frame, in words as God-breathed, the records of His Advent. But some one will exclaim, Are not the Epistles also inspired of God? Most assuredly they are. But their purpose is wholly different; and in no respect does this appear more plainly than by the way the several writers of them name the Lord.

Not that the change is due to the idiosyncrasies of the human authors. Indeed it is nowhere so noticeable as in the writings of the Apostle John. For though in his Gospel "the simple name" is used narratively more than two hundred times, never once does he use it thus in his Epistles. In each of its four occurrences it is used with a doctrinal meaning, and in conjunction with a title connoting Deity. No one can fail to see that there is something here of exceptional interest, and worthy of our closest attention.

And the more we investigate it, the plainer will the proof appear, that while throughout the Gospels the Lord is habitually called "Jesus," "the simple name" is never used in the Epistles, save with some peculiar significance either of doctrine or of emphasis. The Apostle Peter never uses it even once. And in no single instance does "James the Lord's brother" ever name the Lord without some title of Deity. And in the passages already quoted from the First Epistle of John, "the simple name" is used with an obvious significance.

To speak of believing that Christ is the Christ, or that the Son of God is Son of God, would be quite unmeaning. But to believe that Jesus - the Man of Nazareth, "the crucified Jew," is the Christ, the Son of God - this is a faith that overcomes the world, for it betokens a new birth by the Spirit of God.'

Chapter Six

IN considering the use of the simple name in the Acts of the Apostles, the place and purpose of that book in the sacred Canon claims attention. And this is a matter of far-reaching importance. For no one who understands the ground-plan of the Bible can miss what Pusey calls its "hidden harmony." And knowledge of this will give complete immunity from the attacks of the sham Higher Criticism. The Bible has both an outward and a spiritual aspect. Christ is the burden of its esoteric teaching, while on its outward side it relates mainly to the covenant people.

A brief preface of eleven chapters contains all that it gives us about the world's history for thousands of years before the call of Abraham; and the story of Abraham's descendants monopolises the rest of the Old Testament. For it is only in relation to Israel that Gentile Powers ever come upon the scene. To Abraham was given the promise of earthly blessing, and to David the promise of earthly sovereignty; the Mosaic revelation being the unfolding and the complement of the Abrahamic covenant.

And the New Testament opens with the birth of Christ as son of David and Son of Abraham - of Him with whom rests the fulfilment of all the Old Testament promises and covenants. The Gospels tell the story of His life and death - His Ministry, and His rejection by the favoured people. And the Acts gives the records of a dispensation during which that people, notwithstanding their apostasy and guilt, received the offer of Divine pardon on the ground of grace. We are apt to misread the book if we fail to recognise the special mission and ministry to the children of Israel, which were committed to the Apostle Paul.

And because of that commission it was that he gave his testimony first to the Jews, in every place he visited, not excepting Rome, although a Christian Church had already been gathered there. And this explains why it is that the Book of Acts ends abruptly by recording the rejection of the gospel by the Jews of Rome, the last two verses containing all that is told us of his two years' ministry in the Imperial city. It explains also why not a word is added about his ministry after his release from his first imprisonment.

For the book is not the early history of Christianity, but the history, divinely given, of the Pentecostal dispensation, during which Israel enjoyed a priority in the proclamation of the gospel. And when we recognise both the purpose and the historical character of Acts, we are prepared to find that here, as in the Gospels, the Lord is named in the narrative by His personal name. And yet such occurrences are limited to seven. The first is in the opening sentence of the book.

The second is in verse 14, and the third is found in the concluding words of verse 16, which clearly belong to the parenthesis that ends with the 19th verse. The supposition is grotesque, that when the Apostle Peter mentioned Judas, in addressing his brethren a few days after the Crucifixion, he needed to explain that the Judas to whom he referred was the traitor of that name! The other passages in Acts where the Lord is narratively named as "Jesus" will be found in chapters vii. 55; viii. 35; xviii. 18; and xxviii. 23.

Chapter ix. 27 should perhaps be included in the list. And if we follow the Revisers, we shall add the 20th verse of that chapter, and also chapter xviii. 25. It is noteworthy that the Lord was thus named by the heavenly messengers who appeared to the disciples after the Ascension (i. 11). Far more noteworthy is it, that in every instance where the record contains words spoken by unbelievers, the Lord is only "Jesus." The narrative of Stephen's martyrdom has a unique interest.

"Being full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Here only is the title "Son of Man" used of the Lord by human lips. "And why here?" Dean Alford asks; and the following is the answer he gives: "Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, and speaking not of himself at all, but entirely by the utterance of the Spirit, repeats the very words in which (the Lord) Jesus Himself, before this same Council, had foretold His glorification" (Matt. xxvi. 64).

Christians are apt to treat this phrase as merely an orientalism for "man." But, as the Book of Daniel teaches us, it was a Divine title. And that the Jews so regarded it is clear; for the Lord's assumption of it when before the Council led - them all to exclaim, "Art thou then the Son of God?" (Luke xxii. 69, 70). It is never used in Scripture in connection with the Incarnation. As man He was born in Bethlehem; but as Son of Man He "descended out of heaven." One word more: that Stephen saw "Jesus" at the right hand of God, the divine narrative records.

But "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" was his dying prayer. "O Jesus" would presumably be the language of not a few of our hymn writers. Chapter Seven In considering the use of "the simple name" in the passages in Acts where the Apostles Peter and Paul are reported to have used it, admits of the same explanation as

its use in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Their purpose was to emphasise the Lord's humiliation and rejection. Very clearly does this appear in chapter xiii. 33 - the only occasion when the Lord was thus named by the Apostle Paul.

The intelligent reader can see that if, in addressing Jews, he had used any other name or title, his words would have lost all their special force. And this is equally clear in Peter's use of it, as recorded in chapter ii. 32, 36, and v. 30. Following the R.V. reading, we exclude four texts which in the A.V. seem to fall within the same category, namely, chapters iii. 13, 26; and iv. 27, 30. For the holy Servant of Jehovah is one of the Lord's Old Testament titles, connoting Deity.

And it is a striking fact that this aspect of the ministry of Christ characterises the Gospel of Mark, with which the Apostle Peter is believed to have been in a special way associated. Though the use of the name by the Lord Himself has no bearing on the subject here in view, we must not pass it by unnoticed. The name of "Jesus the Crucified" it was that fired the hate of Paul the persecutor, and that was the name he heard from the blinding glory of the heavenly vision by which he was arrested on his evil mission to Damascus: "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

And from that hour the truth was burned into his soul that they had "crucified the Lord of Glory! IN the thirteen Epistles which are acknowledged to be the writings of the Apostle of the Gentiles, there are but eight passages in which "the simple name" occurs; and eight times he uses it in the Epistle to the Hebrews. This branch of our inquiry is of exceptional interest, for the Apostle Paul's use of the name is pregnant with doctrinal teaching. Hebrews is written in the language of Old Testament typology; and to appreciate the significance of "the simple name" in that Epistle we need to understand this.

But to introduce a treatise on that great subject here would be impracticable ' and the following sentence from the passage already quoted from Ellicott's Commentary must suffice: "In the Epistle to the Hebrews, where, in accordance with one main purpose of the Epistle, this usage is least rare (see chaps. ii. 9; vi. 20; vii. 22; xii. 2, 24; xiii. 12), it will be found that in all cases either special stress is laid on the lowly and suffering humanity of the Lord, or the historic facts of His Ministry on earth are referred to."

What has been already said of the use of the name in the First Epistle of John¹ applies equally to such passages as Romans iii. 26. And in chapter viii. 11, the only other passage in Romans where "the simple name" occurs, its significance is equally plain. "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up (the) Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies." To quote Ellicott's Commentary again, "the 'raising up of Jesus is the historical resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth: the 'raising up of the Christ' points to the mysterious effect of that resurrection on those for whom He is the Mediator."

A similar explanation suggests itself in regard to the use of the name in the fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians. The intelligent reader will not fail to mark the emphatic contrast between "Jesus" and "the Lord Jesus" in the passage. "The life of Jesus" would mean the life which the Lord lived on earth, whereas the vital principle which He shares with His people would, in Scriptural language, be "the life of Christ." The Revisers' reading of Galatians vi. 17 exemplifies the interest and importance of the present inquiry.

Their devotion to the three oldest MSS. - the layman's usual blunder of giving undue weight to "direct" evidence - has led them to destroy the meaning of the text. "The stigmata of Jesus" would mean that (as in the case of the fabled miracle of St. Francis of Assisi) the Apostle's body was marked by wound-prints identical with those which the Lord bore after His crucifixion. Is it credible that the Apostle could have

made such a statement? The meaning of the words he actually used is not doubtful.

It was a practice with slave-owners to brand their slaves, and the scars of his wounds received in his ministry for Christ were to him "the stigmata of the Lord Jesus "-the landmarks by which his divine Master claimed him as His devoted slave. In the Apostle Paul's six later Epistles, written during his Roman imprisonments, the name occurs but twice; and apart altogether from our present purpose the passages are full of interest. I refer to Ephesians iv. 21 and Philippians ii. 10.

To the Ephesians he wrote, "Ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard Him and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus." "The truth as it is in Jesus" is a popular but unscriptural synonym for "Evangelical truth." In Scriptural language that would be called "the truth of Christ." But the exhortation here relates not to doctrine but to practice. It is that the Christian life should be the reflex of the truth as manifested by the life of our divine Lord in the days of His humiliation.

Hence the words "as truth is in Jesus." Some would tell us that in Phiippians ii. 10, "Jesus" is the name of the Lord's exaltation. And in proof of this they appeal to the Angel's words in announcing it as the divinely chosen name of His humiliation. But this is quite untenable, and it destroys not only the force, but the meaning, of the passage. "Jesus" was His birth name; for even in His humiliation He was the Saviour. But here we have the name which was given to Him in His glory, and because of His death upon the Cross.

And it is not in relation to His work as the Saviour of sinners that the Cross is mentioned here; but, incidentally as the crowning display of the world's contemptuous rejection of Him, and chiefly and emphatically as the climax of His humiliation. And it is because of His self-surrender, His self-abasement, if we may venture to use the word, that God has highly exalted Him and given Him "the name that is above every name." And what can that name be but "the awful name" Jehovah.'

But it is in the name of Jesus that every knee shall bow. It is a matter of course that all shall fall prostrate in the presence of that glory before which even the beloved disciple fell as dead. But, as this passage tells us, their homage shall be rendered with the realisation that the God whom they are worshipping is the "Jesus" whose deity the unbeliever now denies, or acknowledges only with feigned words in the recital of a creed. It is not, as the Christianised rationalists profanely teach, that He has supplanted Israel's "cruel Jehovah," but that He is the manifestation of the God of the Old Testament.

And being "the effulgence of His glory and the express image of His substance," He is the only God the world shall ever know. And every tongue shall then confess that He is Lord, a confession by which the disciple declared himself in the days of His humiliation, and which ought to characterise the Christian in this time of His absence. Hence we read in the tenth chapter of Romans that, in contrast with "the righteousness of the law," which consisted in doing, "the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

And this again reminds us of yet another striking passage of similar import. In 1 Corinthians xii. 3 the Apostle "gives us to understand "-how few there are who do understand it !-" that no one can say 'Lord Jesus' save by the Holy Spirit." Any one, of course, can pronounce the words-a parrot could be taught to do so-but do we ever hear them from the lips of the unconverted? With them He is "Jesus" or "the Saviour" or "Jesus Christ" (for that is too often used as merely "a double name") but never "the Lord Jesus," or "the Lord Jesus Christ."

The fourth chapter of 1 Thessalonians claims special notice in this connection. "Words are the index of thoughts," Dean Alford writes, "and where an unusual construction is found, it points to some special reason in the mind of the writer for using it." But in the closing verses of this chapter our translators give us what they suppose the Apostle meant, and not what he actually wrote. And thus they make the words of verse 14, translated "those which sleep in Jesus," to be merely a poetical equivalent for "the dead in Christ" of the 16th verse.

The phrase "sleeping in Jesus" is so enshrined in Christian thought that to call it unscriptural seems almost to savour of sacrilege. And yet it robs us of the deep and important teaching of this wonderful passage. A strictly accurate rendering of the Apostle's words would be, "those who have been put to sleep by (or through) Jesus will God bring with Him." And the explanation of this seemingly strange statement is to be found in the circumstances which led the Apostle to write this letter.

Who are these sleeping ones? And what was it that caused their death? In the answer to these questions will be found the explanation of the passage; and that answer may be gleaned from the middle chapters of the Epistle. We learn from Acts xvii. that very shortly after the Apostle reached Berea from Thessalonica, the persecuting Jews drove him out, and he fled to Athens. His stay in Athens was still more brief than in Berea; and yet before leaving for Corinth he received tidings which raised fears lest his labour in Thessalonica had been in vain (ch. iii. 5).

Thereupon he commissioned Timothy to return at once to Thessalonica, and Timothy's report, which reached him in Corinth, led him to write the present Epistle. That in the few months since the Apostle had been with them, there should have been a number of deaths in such a small community as the Thessalonian converts, would have been strange; but it is incredible that any deaths from natural causes should have shaken the faith of Christians of the type described in chapter i. It is clear that what tried their faith was not the fact of these deaths, but the manner of them, and the circumstances in which they occurred.

And the Epistle plainly indicates that they were the result of a storm of persecution that had burst upon them. In a word, some of their leaders had been martyred. But had they not been told that the Lord had "all power in heaven and on earth," and would never forsake His people? How was it then that they were left a prey to their enemies? Either the teaching was erroneous, or else their lost ones had fallen under divine displeasure. And so they were sorrowing "even as others that have no hope."

Accordingly they are reminded that the Lord Jesus had Himself been killed by their common enemy (ch. ii. 15), and that the Apostle, when with them, had warned them to expect tribulations such as they were then suffering (ch. iii. 4). And finally he gives them a definite message of hope, received directly from the Lord for their comfort. This, he declares, "we are saying to you in the word of the Lord." It is one of those specially definite revelations (like 1 Cor. xi. 23 and xv. 3) which the Apostle received in some peculiarly distinctive manner.

"The dead in Christ" of the 16th verse are the holy dead in general; but "the sleeping ones" of verses 13 and 14 are the particular individuals whose death they were mourning. And as it was for His name's sake that they had suffered, the Lord speaks of them as having been put to sleep by Himself. It is as though He said, "True, I was the cause of their death, but yet I have not failed them. Was not I Myself put to death? And as surely as I died and rose again they too shall rise, and God will bring them with Me at My Coming."

And the infinite tenderness and grace of this are intensified by the fact that the message of comfort and hope is given in the name of His humiliation - the name under which He Himself was crucified and slain! It is His first recorded message to His suffering saints on earth, after His Ascension. And in that same name He gave His final message - we have it on the closing page of Holy Scripture:- "I JESUS am the bright and morning star. . . . Surely I am coming quickly." And let us make the response which the Divine Spirit puts into our lips, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." He addresses His people in the name of His humiliation, but He expects them to respond by according Him the name of His glory.

Chapter Eight

CHAPTER VIII To complete this brief review of Scripture passages, it remains to notice the closing book of the sacred Canon. The Gospels are linked so closely with the Hebrew Scriptures and the people of the Covenant, that if the Book of Acts had been lost, the transition to Epistles to Gentile communities would have seemed a strange enigma. And if the Book of Revelation had disappeared, that enigma would have been insoluble. Indeed a mutilated Bible such as that would have supplied some justification for the infidel's profane sneer, that God has been thwarted in His attempts to realise His declared purposes for earth, and so He now intends to trans-plant His people to heaven, and to wind up the affairs of earth by a bonfire!

But the Revelation is the great stock-taking book of all the outstanding promises of God; and in its pages all the dropped threads of history and type and prophecy and promise, that lie scattered through-out the earlier Scriptures, are gathered up and traced to their appointed consummation. And having regard to the nature and solemnity of the book, the appearance of the "simple name" in every chapter of it would afford no excuse for the familiar use of that name so habitual to-day.

As a matter of fact, however, its occurrences are few, being limited to its use by the Lord Himself, and to certain passages where it is employed in the following phrases "The kingdom and patience of Jesus" (ch. i. 9, R.V.). "The testimony of Jesus" (chaps. i. 9, RX. ; xii. 1~ xix. 10; and xx. 4. "The faith of Jesus" (ch. xiv. 12). "The martyrs of Jesus" (ch. xvii. 6). No Christian will attribute these striking phrases to the caprice of the Apostolic writer, albeit they are found nowhere else in Scripture.

The character and purpose of the Apocalypse will perhaps supply a clue to their significance. That the present "Christian dispensation" is the climax and fulfilment of all divine purposes of blessing to earth, is a heresy by which the Latin Fathers prepared the way for the Romish apostasy that calls itself the "Holy Catholic Church." This heresy has so permeated the theology of Christendom that in the editorially added headlines to the latter portion of Isaiah, in our English Bible, all the judgments and woes are assigned to the ~Jews, and the visions of earthly blessing are treated as rhapsodies about the spiritual triumphs of "the Church."

So far from the present dispensation being the fulfilment of the prophecies of earthly blessing, it marks in the most definite way the postponement of their fulfilment. God's revealed purposes for earth are connected with His earthly people, and their realisation awaits the close of "the times of the Gentiles," during which earthly power, transferred from Jerusalem to Babylon twenty-five centuries ago, remains in Gentile hands. Not until "the times of the Gentiles" have run their course will the Kingdom be established upon earth.

The Pente-costal dispensation would have led up to that great event. But owing to Israel's obdurate apostasy, that dispensation was interrupted. The murder of Stephen was the answer given by their

accredited leaders-the ecclesiastical Jewish government-to the inspired Apostle's proclamation of a divine amnesty.¹ Stephen was the messenger sent after the king to say, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Then the Apostle of the Gentiles received his commission, and through him were revealed the great "mystery" truths of the present dispensation.

Truths, that is, which till then had remained secret; for nothing of them was disclosed in the Old Testament Scriptures. They are the "mystery" of the reign of Grace, which is obviously incompatible with divine government in righteousness openly declared; the "mystery" of the Church, the body of Christ- a heavenly relationship with a heavenly glory; and the "mystery" of that special phase of the Lord's "Coming" which will bring the present dispensation to a close. And at its close the interrupted Pentecostal dispensation will be resumed.

Its initial stage will include the fulfilment of Joel's prophecy to which the Apostle referred in Acts ii. 16 ff., and its course will be marked by persecutions more terrible than the people of God on earth have ever known. The sacre

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