

Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

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CONTENTS

Faith before Sight	1
Atonement II	4
Three Perpetual Institutions under the Law	9
Variety of Gift in Service					Inside back cover	

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Concluded from inside back cover)

offering does not affect the Kohathites.

The Kohathites carry the vessels entrusted to them upon their own shoulders. For the Levitical service, the sons of Merari and the sons of Gershon are presented with oxen and chariots; but the Kohathites receive none.

There is no such principle in divine service as that of God balancing matters, and keeping men in good temper by giving all the same portion. If it were, there would be an end of practical grace among His servants. On the contrary, what puts our faith and love to the test is that God arranges every one of us in a different place according to His wise and sovereign will. There is no such thing as two servants alike.

The consequence is that this variety, which becomes an awful danger for flesh, is the sweetest exercise of grace where we are looking to the Lord. What gracious man would feel sore with another because he was unlike himself? On the contrary, he would take an honest and hearty joy in that which he saw of Christ in another, but which he did not himself possess.

Now this spirit of unselfishness seems to have been called into exercise by the provision for the carrying out of the service of the Levites. The least of them had the most oxen and the most chariots. At the same time, those who had the highest and the most precious charge of all had to bear the vessels of the sanctuary on their shoulders. This service had much less noise and appearance among men, but the best place gave rise to the highest exercises of faith.

The Lord make us rejoice, not only in what He has given to us, but in what He has withheld from us and entrusted to others!

W. KELLY

FAITH BEFORE SIGHT

(Read: John iv.46-53)

The author of this Gospel declares (chapter xx.31) that the purpose of his writing was "that ye might **believe** that Jesus is the Christ; and that **believing** ye might have life through His name." It is not surprising therefore to find that the word "believe" in its various forms occurs frequently throughout the book. Indeed, a reference to Cruden's Concordance will show that John uses the term nearly three times as often as the other three evangelists put together. And it is in harmony with this emphasis on "believing" that we have this record of the healing of the nobleman's son.

The exact status of the nobleman — whether he had royal blood in his veins, as some have thought, or was merely attached to the Court by reason of his employment or otherwise — seems uncertain. What is beyond doubt is that he was a man of standing and importance in the community, one who would be regarded in our day as a "V.I.P." But however exalted his position, his need, and dependence upon the tender compassion of the Saviour to meet it, reduced him to the common level of mankind in general.

It will be found helpful to compare, and contrast, this incident with the healing of the centurion's servant recorded in Luke vii.1-10. Although there are certain similarities in the manner in which the Lord cured the two victims of disease, the occasions were entirely different, and must not be confused. One outstanding difference is that the centurion exercised a degree of faith which earned the Lord's commendation that He had not found "so great faith, no, not in Israel." The nobleman, who was of Israel's race, had at best a poor degree of faith — at least, to begin with, until at length our Lord, in wonderful grace, led him patiently along the path of instruction and experience until John is able to say that the man "himself believed, and his whole house."

Let us consider the stages by which his "belief" was brought to maturity.

The nobleman's plea to Jesus was that He would *come down* (from Cana to Capernaum — a distance of some 25 miles) to heal his son. The notion that Jesus must needs "come down" in order to perform the cure persisted, because in his second appeal he still says "*come down ere my child die.*"

It may have been sheer desperation that drove him in the first place to approach Jesus. If local physicians were unable to heal, and the boy was at the point of death, why not, as a last resort, appeal to One to whom miraculous powers were being attributed! Even so, giving him credit for a small measure of faith, it is clear the nobleman was not aware of the greatness of the Person to whom he came, for he did not believe that Jesus could heal from a distance; still less that He could do anything to help once the child had died. His faith, if faith it really was, could only be described as weak.

There is nothing whatever in the record to suggest that the nobleman was arrogant or demanding in his approach to Jesus. Nevertheless the effect of the Lord's reply was to humble him to the common level of a faithless nation. "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe," is in the plural — an indictment therefore of the whole generation of Israel, of which the nobleman was merely a sample.

The Lord's words were a condemnation of the popular fallacy that SIGHT must *precede* FAITH. How often the Lord had to voice this reproof — see chapters ii.23; vi.26; xi.40; xx.29. It is a worldly maxim that "seeing is believing." Apart from an obvious conflict inherent in the terms themselves, may we not enquire: Did not the people of Israel *see* the mighty works which Jesus did? And did they believe? On the contrary, they rejected and crucified the Lord of life and glory!

The Jews jealously maintained their privilege of descent from Abraham (see chapter viii.33,39), and would have been highly indignant at any suggestion that they should be

classed with the rest of mankind. However, such pride of heart was fatal to their blessing, whether as individuals or nationally. So it is promising to observe that the nobleman pocketed whatever resentment he may have felt and, accepting the rebuke implicit in the Lord's stricture, threw himself upon the mercy of the One of Whose help he grows increasingly confident. He is soon to find indeed that *grace* as well as truth came by Jesus Christ (John i.14,17).

Thereupon the Lord designs a test to draw out and strengthen his faith. When the nobleman first came he put *sight* before *faith*, as much as to say, "If you will come down to where my son is and will let me see you heal him, I will believe." Jesus reverses this order: **faith first**, then *sight*. "Go thy way; thy son liveth," He says. So the test is — will the man *believe* and go, not having *seen* any miracle, or will he continue to insist that the Lord must come down?

It is delightful to watch the nobleman's faith responding to the challenge with such ready obedience. Without more ado, he "believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him, and *he went his way*." Nor did he depart with undue haste, as if to indicate that, should the assurance Jesus had given him prove false, he would certainly be back forthwith to seek explanation. It would appear that he wended his way home without undue anxiety.

Bearing in mind that the mention of hours in the gospel of John must be understood according to the Roman reckoning of time, it was 7 o'clock in the evening when the Lord instructed the nobleman to go his way. Was there not time to return the same night if the man felt urgent necessity to check the truth of what Jesus had said to him, before it was too late? Without being dogmatic as to this, the writer likes to think the man was so confident the Lord would be as good as His word that, without anxiety of any kind, he could safely await daylight the following day before taking the road back. Calm, indeed, he might well be if such was his confident trust!

Be that as it may, it was definitely on the following day

that the servants came to meet their master with the good news "Thy son liveth!" We are not told whether the boy had in fact died after the father left for Cana. But something took place within the house, so sudden and spectacular, that all present noted the exact hour at which it took place.

The father, with faith that even yet had not risen to its full height, enquired the hour when the boy "began to amend." Gradual recovery would appear to be as much as he expected. But the servants had a more thrilling tale to tell — "Yesterday at the seventh hour **the fever left him**"! That was final and unmistakable healing — no question of slow improvement and lengthy convalescence. How like the Lord to reward the believing suppliant with something better than he had either asked or thought possible! (See Ephesians iii.20).

How gratifying, too, the final outcome — the nobleman himself believed, *and his whole house*, for all had witnessed the operation of divine power, the power of the Son of God on earth. What was distance — even 25 miles — to Him!

So the lesson, taught by the Saviour and learned by the nobleman, that **BELIEF comes before SIGHT**, is handed down by the apostle John for the benefit of all those with ears to hear. May every father, indeed, may we all, learn the truth of it, and with the same happy result!

E. A. PETTMAN

ATONEMENT

II

In the former article we spoke of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus on the cross, and began to survey the blessed results of those sufferings. We noted how the present day meaning of "atonement" i.e. expiation, tells of what He accomplished there, while the old meaning of at-one-ment declares the immediately following result, in that the righteousness of the divine throne was now on the side of the believing sinner, and not against him.

Nevertheless it is important to stress that this does *not*

mean that there was any change in God's attitude towards man when Jesus died. He is love, and He is light; but the glory of the cross is that it has displayed how perfectly these two unite — how really they are one — and their unity now results in the blessing of the poor sinner who believes in Jesus.

Because this blessing depends upon the very nature of God Himself, it is eternal, and so gives an unassailable ground to the believer's confidence. And because He Who died under the judgment of God is now risen from the dead, there is positive proof that God has accepted His offering, that there is no more sin to be judged save of those who refuse the Saviour, so that all who believe in Him are justified. "He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom.iv.25). And Peter says "Who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God" (I Pet.i.21).

The Hebrews epistle likewise argues this from the place the Lord Jesus now occupies — risen and ascended to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high, "having by Himself made purification for sins" (Heb.i.3). It is not exactly (as in the A.V.) "having purged *our* sins," for no man's sins can be purged till by faith he accepts what Christ has done. But the work on which everything hangs is finished — to speak figuratively, the blood is on the mercy seat.

Again in chapter ix. the Ascension is referred to: "Christ . . . by His own blood entered once for all into the holy place, having obtained an eternal redemption." Note the words "having obtained." He went in to sit down, as one whose work was finished. It was not the fulfilment of the type which we have in the high priest's entry on Israel's Day of At-one-ment, for that had been more than fulfilled when He died. The words "by His own blood" imply that He went in, the Risen Man, to reap the fruits of His own sacrifice, in the sanctifying of all who come to God through Him. (Heb.x.12,14). The redemption He has obtained is eternal — those who receive it are forever freed from the

bondage of sin and the fear of its judgment. Likewise those who are sanctified by His one offering are sanctified in perpetuity (verse 14).

THE RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS

The forgiveness and cleansing of believers is by no means all the blessing which results from the death of Christ. For by our very baptism we confess that *we* have died with Him; our standing in Adam is a thing of the past; being risen with Him (that is, partaking of His risen life, though at present only in our souls), we are introduced into that new creation of which He is the Beginning and Head (Col.i.18). In that new creation everything will be according to God's mind: "All things are of God" (2 Cor.v.18).

The marvellous unity of scripture teaching is to be seen yet again in that what we derived from Leviticus xvi. and Romans iii. and iv. is told us again but more fully in Colossians i. "For all the Fulness (of the Godhead) was pleased to dwell in Him (that is, Christ), and, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself" (verses 19,20). God is of necessity at war with sin. Here we are told of the activity of the entire Godhead (if these terms, due to the frailty of our language, may be pardoned, in the peace making or at-one-ment, on the ground of the blood shed at Calvary. And the ultimate purpose is stated "by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." All things in heaven and on earth, that is. **Infernal** beings will not partake in this reconciliation, though as we see in Philippians ii., they too must bow the knee to the Lord Jesus. The full accomplishment of this awaits the coming of the New Heaven and the New Earth, but believers now are already brought within its scope, already reconciled, though once enemies in our mind by wicked works.

Let us note again that this is entirely God's work — men, as in 2 Cor.v.20, are exhorted, no, *entreated* is God's gracious word — to be reconciled to God — to receive by

faith that reconciliation which the blood of the cross has secured. Not as a hymn puts it, that "God is in Christ reconciled." The enmity is in man's heart: God is the Reconciler.

ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

God has not forgotten His earthly people, though they have forgotten Him. At the present time, and till the church is taken to glory, Jewish believers form part of the Church. But afterwards, God will resume His dealings with them as a nation. In the vision which he records in his ninth chapter, Daniel was told that seventy weeks would pass before his people received their final blessing. In those seventy sevens of years, as they doubtless must be interpreted, the church age, as belonging to heaven rather than to earth, is not counted. It seems that one week remains. This full blessing the angel spoke of thus: "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy". Without going into the whole prophecy, we may note the clause "to make reconciliation for iniquity" as being the application to Israel of the benefits of the blood shed at Calvary so long before. Indeed, the whole ritual of Leviticus xvi. and its application to them will then be seen, no longer in type, but in fulfilment.

While we are speaking about Israel we may perhaps refer to that somewhat mysterious "atonement money" mentioned in Ex.xxx., to be paid by every Israelite of twenty years old and over (except the Levites) whenever the people were numbered, "that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them" (Ex.xxx.12).

Whether poor or rich, the required offering was to be neither more nor less than a half-shekel. "And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children

of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls." (verse 16).

This offering, which was mainly used to make the hundred silver sockets for the boards of the tabernacle (Ex.xxxviii. 25-27), is often confused with the redemption money for the firstborn (which was given, as were the tithes, to the priests, Num.iii.51) — see article on Redemption, *Words of Help* September 1971. This is quite distinct, both as to its object, and as to those who paid it: every adult male Israelite except the Levites.

Two questions arise, first, how could money constitute a valid "atonement for your souls", and second, why, in the absence of this payment, should a census bring a plague upon the people? We recall that a plague followed David's census, where there was apparently no collection of atonement money (2 Sam.xxiv).

As to the plague, is it perhaps that the numbering, one by one of the people, emphasized their *individual* responsibility? "As each man crosses over to those already counted he shall give a half shekel . . . as a contribution to the Lord" (Ex.xxx.12, N.E.B.). All were sinners, as the Lord had said to Moses, "Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee" (Ex.xxxiii.5).

To this state of things, God's system of ordinances based on the tabernacle was the answer for the time then present (Heb.ix.9). Hence every Israelite was led to realize his individual part in the tabernacle and all that it stood for. If the tabernacle was constructed from voluntary gifts, its foundations (the silver sockets) rested on this at-one-ment money. In this, rich and poor stood on exactly the same footing, and ultimately, everything depended upon the blood shed on the Day of At-one-ment.

David, in his pride of kingship, overlooked these things, and perhaps thought of the people as his own. His numbering brought a plague upon them, which doubtless was also

God's chastisement upon their own condition.

CONCLUSION

The doctrine of the Atonement is the very core of the Bible, the very core of Christianity, the foundation of the Christian hope. It is also the very core of Christian worship. The love of the Father, Who gave His only begotten Son for us; the love of the Saviour Who gave Himself for us — what themes can compare with these? The last request of the Lord Jesus to His own: "This do in remembrance of Me", what word of His can outweigh this? Serving Him in the gospel, serving Him in ministering to the saints or to the needy of this world, are activities never to be neglected. But the Saviour Himself comes before His work, as He Himself showed in His defence of Mary of Bethany (Mk.xiv. 6-8). Has the remembrance of Him in His death the first place with each of us?

(Note. The writer would welcome any helpful suggestions from readers in connection with the subject of the atonement money.)

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

THREE PERPETUAL INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE LAW

The Lamb, The Incense, The Light

Among the many kinds of sacrifices and institutions connected with the law of Israel, there are three which clearly are especially precious to Jehovah, for He commanded that each of them was to be "perpetual", or continual, "throughout all generations". They were (1) the daily lamb; (2) the incense; and (3) the light. They were not prescribed merely to mark a certain time or occasion, but God's jealous heart and eye, looking onwards to His Son, ordered that these should be constantly offered to Him. They rose acceptable to Jehovah hour after hour, year after year, and generation after generation, because of Him they foreshadowed.

(1) The Perpetual Daily Sacrifice

A lamb was to be offered night and morning as "a continual burnt offering throughout your generations" (Exodus

xxix.38-42). Perhaps the important character of the burnt offering was that it was to be **wholly** offered to God; no part of the lamb was to be retained as a portion for the priests, nor any part discarded at the place of the ashes, as in the case of some offerings on the brazen altar (Leviticus i.16). Everything in this burnt sacrifice was for God's acceptance and glory.

How often have we been able to ponder this Godward aspect of the death of Christ! His was a devotion to God in obedience unto death, by which, it is true, we are unspeakably blessed, but, primarily, He "offered Himself without spot to **God.**"

The scripture suggests that the Lord Jesus was the only one who could fully read the heart of God and discern what gave, and also what failed to give, Him pleasure. As an intimate friend may read our desires and wishes though not actually expressed, so this devoted One marked that in the continuous round of "sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin" God found "no pleasure". "Then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy Will, O God" (Hebrews x.9). Christ willingly and gladly comes into the world to give to the heart of God the pleasure till then denied Him.

Well might the obedient Son say, "**Therefore** doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life"! And this Godward aspect of the death of Christ was to be (and, we may say, is) "a perpetual offering throughout all generations".

(2) The Perpetual Incense

As Christ's devotion to death is in continual remembrance before God, so also are the perfections of His holy life, as the brazen altar had its perpetual offering, so also had the golden altar. "And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning . . . and . . . at even, he shall burn incense upon it, **a perpetual incense** before the Lord throughout your generations" (Exodus xxx.7,8).

The ingredients of the holy incense were four in number, stacte, onycha, galbanum and pure frankincense; and

although separately named, they are perfectly blended into one to make the perfume (verses 34,35). If these four ingredients speak of the varied graces of our Lord's perfect life, what a subject opens here for our meditation and worship as we think on those many occasions in the Gospels when the graces were distinctly seen and yet perfectly blended.

Another has remarked, "It is the combination of virtues which forms moral glory"; and the pages of the four evangelists pour out their ample record of Christ and His ways. The reader of the Gospels will have no difficulty in gleaning for himself examples of the moral glory of the Lord Jesus; for the field is so fruitful and the harvest so abundant.

To one's mind there comes, for instance, the incident at the gate of Nain. The Lord's touch of authority arrested the funeral cortège, and His word of power raised the young man to life. Blended with these acts was the tenderness that took account of the weeping widow, now "a widow indeed". He "saw her"; He "had compassion on her"; He gave her His word of personal comfort, "Weep not". Then He restored the young man and "delivered him to his mother" (Luke vii.11-15).

Again, amid the thronging of the press when the Lord healed the woman who touched his garment, He heard the despairing message intended only for Jairus' ear, and He revived the father's hopes by His own word of cheer, "Fear not, believe only". Further, His power that raised up the ruler's dead child was blended with His tender concern that she should be given something to eat (Luke viii.). Heavenly beauty was mingled with His miracles of might. Surely the incense was ever burning!

Another point may be noted arising out of the composition of the incense. Our God, in His wisdom, has given us in the Gospels a four-fold (and thus a complete) record of our Lord's life here, and each is written from a separate viewpoint.

This fact is suggested by the manner in which the four

spices are named in Exodus xxx.34. Three of them, "stacte, onycha, and galbanam", are mentioned apart from the fourth, "pure frankincense," and yet it is laid down that "of each shall there be a like weight." We have often been reminded of the distinct character of the Fourth Gospel; but though it is so far removed from the other three by the lofty character of its portrait, it is yet "of like weight" with them in the "perpetual incense."

Indeed, in whatever way we meditate upon this wonderful incense, each component of which is "sweet" in itself, we shall appreciate something of the pleasure God finds as the whole ascends to Him, a sweet and **perpetual** savour of the walk and ways of His Holy One.

(3) **The Perpetual Light**

A third perpetual offering is closely linked with the other two, especially with that of the incense. This was **the light of the sanctuary** which may be classed as an "offering". (Note the marginal rendering in J.N.D.'s New Trans.). "And thou shalt make a lampstand of pure gold . . . and they shall light (or 'cause to ascend') the lamps thereof that they may shine out before it" (Exodus xxv.31-37).

Scholars tell us this word, "cause to ascend", is the one used habitually for the "offering" of the burnt offering (Exodus xxiv.5); and this fact surely brings the light into the category of the offerings ascending to God. Like those previously mentioned, the light was to be caused to ascend "**always**" or **continually**. Aaron and his sons were required to dress the lamps from evening to morning before Jehovah. This again was "**a statute for ever unto their generations**" (Exodus xxvii.20,21).

Not only was it God's delight to have the remembrance of His Son's devotion in death and of His perfect life constantly before Him, but also His pure and unwavering testimony to the truth brought Him pleasure.

Our Lord Jesus solemnly declared at the judgment seat of Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John xviii.37). The records in the Gospels give ample

proof how fully He fulfilled His commission. From the day of His first testimony in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv.16-32), through the years of continual opposition and "contradiction of sinners against Himself," to His last cry of public witness, "I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John xii.49), the light clearly shone out before the Father.

The threats of men likewise failed to cause the obedient Son to hide the light, but rather gave the occasion for the revelation of even greater truth. Discomfited, they had to confess that never man spake like this Man (John vii.46). And so, unmoved by Satan's "wiles, or suffering, shame and loss," His testimony in person was faithfully completed, and with joy He could say to His Father, "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me I have declared unto them Thy name" (John xvii.8,26). Well could He also say to Him of both His work and His words, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii.4).

The symbols considered are of simple and finite form in themselves, but they are used by God our Father (with Whom we now have fellowship) to teach our hearts a measure of the infinite truths which are His greatest delight, because they all continually speak "concerning His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord." J.R.G.

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*, December 1940)

VARIETY OF GIFT IN SERVICE

"Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability"
(Matthew xxv.15).

We have in Numbers vii. the gifts of love and freewill, of hearty devotedness, which the chiefs of the people offer for the service of the sanctuary. The point to which attention is now drawn is that they included an *offering* particularly for the service of the Levites; but remarkably enough their

(Continued inside front cover)

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CONTENTS

The Divine Workers XXXIII	13
Calling on the Name of the Lord	16
The One Body I	22

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“The body is one and all the members of that body being many are one body.” It is the body in its unity with its Head that is presented to us in this verse (12). And so we read “So also is (the) Christ”. If we were writing this, we should probably say “So also is the church”, but that would not be correct. It is “So also is (the) Christ”. I wonder how many of us have really seen this thing of exquisite beauty, that which is entirely apart from everything around us. Christ the Head, and the church His body, viewed in its completeness.

We need in our day to be church-minded, to be body-minded, so that we do the right thing, have the right instincts, and know that which is comely and proper to us on every occasion. We need to renew in our day our hold on this very precious truth that we do form with all saints the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The distinctiveness of the body, let me add, for it is important, is not due in any way to the constituents, so often poor exponents even of the grace that has reached them, but due to its all-glorious Head.

J. P. BULL

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v.17)

Luke xiii.29: "And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God."

Continuing the work which His Father had given Him to do, the Lord Jesus is shown journeying toward Jerusalem. He is confronted by prejudice and ignorance, by unbelief as to His teaching and by a growing opposition which would gather force until, in that City, where prophets had perished, He, too, would hear the murder cry of the multitude.

Their conception of "the kingdom" was one that brought about their own self-aggrandizement. There, in the vain purpose of their hearts, they could have importance and fleshly display. But it was not the Kingdom of God. Narrow was the gate into His Kingdom, which excluded all pretensions of sufficiency in man whether in ordinances or obligations, publicized piety or protection of Sabbaths. The exposure of their abject inadequacy renewed hatred in their hearts. They treat Him as one unable to withstand death at the hands of Herod, with whom they were in concert for that very purpose. Yet, fearlessly, He told them of the coming of others from the four points of the compass, who would be seen to be at rest and in enjoyment of soul peace with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, while they, who boasted in national relationship with them, were themselves "thrust out".

When we are affected by animosity from world sources it is well to "consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself". At the cost of more sorrow than we can know, Jesus gives them a faithful warning for their own advantage. His was not a threat. It was a revealing of the outcome of their refusal of Himself as the very Grace and Truth of God. There would be weeping, and the anger of disillusionment for those who, being first as subjects of God's invitation, found themselves last as to

the reality of the rest and joy of it. The far reaching invitation would be heard by repentant peoples drawn from the distance of being last in suitability for the company of faith to being first in affectionate appreciation of the mercy and grace of God.

“Behold, I cast out demons, and accomplish cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I am perfected. But I must needs walk today and tomorrow, and the day following, for it must not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem” (verses 32-33).

The Lord Jesus moved on to the completion of His work—the manifestation of the power of God, among a people all too unresponsive to it. Let us think upon His sensitive awareness of the spirit of opposition continuously confronting Him: Herod Antipas, the immoral hypocrite—tetrarch of Galilee — the Pharisees and leaders of the people combining to protect their selfish worldly interests against any possible rival leadership. Let us also see His steadfast courage — His indomitable purpose as a Man dependent upon God and drawing from Him alone that strength and direction which so disquieted the Satanic kingdom. Well, indeed, may John write, “We beheld His glory”. The shining facets of that glory had their origin in the uninterrupted communion of “the Only Begotten with the Father”.

“Behold, I cast out demons and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected” — it was His answer to Herod the fox — His declaration in the presence of all opposition. Amid, and because of, the world of imperfections, Jesus moved onward to perfection through death to resurrection, for the will of God synchronized with His holy submission to it — “to do the will of God — to finish His work”.

How puny and ineffectual were the attempts of all who would seek to thwart Him. “I must needs walk today and tomorrow and the day following.” He would walk on till death. The omission of any reference to the third day is significant. The close of His appointed time here drew near. His course is set for Jerusalem, and He will complete

it. Prophets perish there—man had changed the significance of the name of the city.

If we consider — as we should — the character of our own day we shall find a sad similarity to that in which Christ was rejected. In that day there was a drawing near in words only. The city of God's favour, where the glory of God had filled the temple, had become a centre of religious formality to uphold a nation conquered, fragmented and scattered. In Christendom today God is professedly honoured, but the Lord Jesus is, in reality, rejected. As, with Jerusalem, the Lord Jesus rehearsed their reactions to His protecting love for them, so, in our day, we see Him before a closed Laodicean door, seeking an entry denied to Him. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you" — His last words to them. They pronounce the outcome of their refusal of their Messiah. Long fore-known was the worst act of their history by which they would demand His ignominious death. *Their house* would be empty indeed. *Their city* — most favoured in all the world — now without Christ, and beyond all, most guilty.

Yet we may see His unconquerable love. He speaks of it though centuries of sorrow lie between. The time will yet come when they will say "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord". They will see Him then — but through tears of repentance. He will come suddenly when, but for their heavenly Deliverer, all would be lost. Besieged, surrounded by enemies, the prophetic word of Zechariah will be fulfilled, "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication: and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son" (Zechariah xii.10). The outcome of that refining tribulation is also foretold by the prophet, "They shall call upon My name and I will hear them: I will say, It is My People: and they shall say, The

LORD is my God" (Zechariah xiii.9).

The closing words of the Lord Jesus in this part of Luke's record are most affecting to all who have experienced His grace. He does not finally pass judgment upon a people whose history of murder and rebellious self-confidence had been so great a grief to Him. Knowing their character — both of the past and of the future — He does not disown and renounce them utterly, but associates in His lament a warning of their loss and a foretelling of their seeing Him again when the word on their lips will be "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord". EDWARD T. WOOD

CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

"Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved."

Romans x.13.

The force of the expression "call upon the name of" is vividly illustrated by the way it is used (in the original) for Paul's well known appeal to Caesar. Paul was, as we say, "up aganst it". He had defended himself successfully against the Jews' accusations before two successive Roman governors, who nevertheless would not release him because they desired to please the Jews. So he appealed to the Emperor for justice: **he called upon the highest name** in the Roman Empire to help him.

The above quotation is from the prophet Joel, speaking of Israel's deliverance in the last days; but Paul shows that the "whosoever" makes it right to apply the promise in the widest sense to both Jew and Gentile, for "the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him".

Salvation, then, is promised to any and everyone who appeals to the Lord Jesus. It is a completely unconditional promise. It stipulates no merit of any kind in the one that calls. Faith in Him is of course implied, for "how shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed?" (verse 14). Faith does *not* imply merit, but it does imply need.

Another thing Paul stresses is the name of the **Lord**. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord," he says. To call upon the name of the Lord is not merely to appeal to Him, but it is also to acknowledge Him as Lord, and thus to become His follower. Salvation is more than being delivered from the fear of judgment: only as we allow Him to have His way with us in our lives shall we gain the power to be victorious in all our conflicts with sin.

This call also excludes all other lords, as Peter declared, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv.12).

"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, . . . unto the church of God which is at Corinth . . . **with all that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.**" (I Cor. i.1,2).

These words establish that the directions given in this epistle for the conduct of the people of God are of application to all believers. And we may surely add, believers in all the centuries till the Lord comes. There is no hint that the Holy Spirit would lead to a gradual abandonment of these directions as things progressed, in favour of what men might think more suitable. If we recall the words of the Lord Jesus in Mathew xxviii. "Make disciples of *all* nations, teaching them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded you," we shall get the force of Paul's words in I Cor. xiv.37, "the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord".

If this be so, why is it that Christendom today presents so different a picture from what we find in this epistle, or in other parts of the New Testament? Is it not a very serious matter for all who call on the name of the Lord? For neither pope nor cardinal, bishop (of a diocese) nor priest, altar nor vestment, pastor of a church nor any party nor sect nor distinctive name can be found in the pages of the New Testament. This is to mention only the more obvious departures from scriptural order.

"Let everyone that nameth the Name of the Lord depart

from iniquity.” (2 Tim. ii.19, A.V. corrected).

Why is it that here we have “nameth the Name” instead of “calleth upon the Name”? The answer perhaps is that in the future days to which this verse looks on many would consider themselves Christians with no sense of their need as sinners, no sense of needing to appeal to the Lord for salvation. Yet the act of naming His name as the one they seek to follow lays upon them the responsibility of departing from iniquity.

The context here is the overthrow of the faith of some people because of false teachings such as that of Hymenaeus and Alexander concerning the resurrection. Such teachings, Paul says, will spread like a gangrene. Their effect is to produce more and more ungodliness. Moreover they at once raise the question whether such teachers or their followers can be true believers. How is one to know? Can a man, however exalted his status in the professing church, be a believer if he denies the sinlessness of Christ, or questions the reality of His resurrection? Is he to be acknowledged as a Christian, however diligent his service, if he refuses to own the deity of our Lord?

Paul’s answer is “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His”, and, as if on the reverse side, “Let everyone that names the Name of the Lord depart from iniquity”.

It is clear then from this that *we* do *not* know with certainty whether such men are the Lord’s, but He does not call upon us to decide the question. He does demand that all who name His Name must do it in holiness, abstaining from iniquity of every kind. “Depart” is not here to be understood literally, though a literal departure or separation from those who tolerate iniquity may also be called for. It is not enough to be correct in doctrine, and it is significant that holding or spreading false doctrine is not mentioned in this verse, but it is iniquity of any kind that must not be associated with His Name. Of course this was always so, but it is apparent that it is the absence of evil—only this can be within our power to discern — which is

now to mark off those who are to be *acknowledged* as the Lord's.

Now this epistle is addressed to an individual servant of the Lord, not to an assembly, and this explains what follows. Paul uses the illustration of a mansion in which vessels of many kinds are in use, not only of gold and silver, but also of wood or earthenware, and he adds "some to honour and some to dishonour".

The thought of *moral* baseness implied in the term "dishonour" is obviously out of place as applied to a vessel, so that a translation such as J. B. Phillips' "Some are used for the highest purposes and some for the lowest" is more appropriate. The master of the house indeed owns them all, but not all are suitable for his use — not all will be used at his table.

If this is a picture of Christendom, then Paul's illustration makes the point that vessels for the Master's use are *reserved wholly for Him*, and must be *clean*. To be filled with the corrupting teachings of men makes a man useless to the Master.

A man must therefore purge (literally, clean out, as one cleans a dirty vessel) himself from these things, rejecting whatsoever is contrary to God's holy word, that he may be "a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work" — privileged and honoured by being entrusted with His holy work of saving and blessing.

"Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (verse 22).

This is an exhortation to an individual, certainly; but it makes clear that, even in a day of confusion, believers are not to walk in isolation. But no longer is it fellowship with "all that call on the Name of the Lord". It is not fellowship with all Christians, or rather, all professing Christians, but only with those "that call on the Lord out of a pure heart".

This phrase speaks of *reality*, not just profession, but a calling on the Lord from a heart that has known its need

of Him, and has rejoiced in His salvation. Then, going on to call on Him as Lord, the pure-hearted desire to please Him above all. Moreover it is in the diligent pursuance of righteousness, faith, love and peace that they may be recognised. We may note that Paul puts these aims first, and the companions second. For it is sadly true that the pure-hearted may be, and often are, enmeshed in many wrong things — the traditions of men, which involve setting aside God's commands (Matt. xv.9) — and the man of God ought not to follow them in these things. But in aiming at righteousness, faith, love, peace, he may justly expect to find others pursuing the same road.

Righteousness

This is the positive side of refusing iniquity, and necessarily it must come first, for everything is founded upon it. In a world of increasing wickedness, Christians are to be **marked out** as righteous men, "blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. ii.15).

Then, it is not only a question of the individual, but Christians must maintain a **collective testimony** of righteousness. And it surely follows from what we have already considered, that righteousness in a company of God's people, gathered as His church, includes **obedience to His word**, and a **faithful holding and teaching of the truth**.

Yet this is where the main difficulty often arises, because all believers have not the same degree of light, either as to practical walk, or doctrine. Hence it is most important to insist on vital, fundamental things, and to be ready to bear with one another in all else. God's word is the only criterion, not men's thoughts, our own or those of others.

One aspect of the truth which is easily lost sight of in the present confusion in the church is that a Christian is a member of *the* Church, not of *a* church — a member of Christ's body, not of any other body whatever (I Cor. xii. 18-27). It follows that our collective testimony to holiness

cannot be confined to the local gathering. **Wherever** saints call on the Lord out of a pure heart, there we are called to fellowship; **wherever** righteousness is let go, the true hearted must turn away.

Faith

Faith that looks at the unseen, in a world ever more occupied with objects visible and tangible. We are to encourage one another to persevere in the race towards our heavenly goal, and keep steadily before us the unseen realities of eternity, both for ourselves and for lost sinners around us.

The professing church has largely lost sight of this, and is occupied with present things. Even in helping others, it is so often content with meeting material needs.

Take the question of *giving*. No one would imagine, from the devices that many churches employ to raise money, that it was a question of giving to the Lord Who reads the heart.

Love

Christians alone are able to preserve the real meaning of this oft debased word. It is love after the divine pattern, as in I Cor. xiii., love which alone can bind together people who are different from one another in all else but their faith in the Saviour.

It is well, too, to note that love comes third in order in the apostle's list, not first. For as John reminds us in his 2nd epistle, love is walking after His commandments (2 John 6), and to follow Christians in disobedience and unfaithfulness is not love. Yet it is incumbent upon us to remember that true love seeks to win the erring, it does not just put them away, or separate from them and forget them. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. ii.24,25). How often has this been forgotten when separation is in question! This is why divisions have endured, long after

the evils which gave rise to them have disappeared.

Peace

This is the corollary of love. It is put last, because the others must be sought first; but it is equally necessary for us to aim at, and God values it highly — He is the God of peace. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” — that is, they are morally like Him.

If this be so, why must we have perpetual war with many of God’s people who *are* calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, walking in the same ways that we are seeking to walk in, merely because their fathers went astray?

The scripture we are studying tells us what we are to look for in those whose fellowship we seek. But it also tells us, if we consider the matter, what *not* to look for. Names of systems, of denominations, names of men — these are foreign to God’s word. There is **NONE OTHER NAME** for salvation, and **NONE OTHER NAME** for discipleship, or for fellowship, than the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is it not time we began to put this into practice?

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

THE ONE BODY

(Read: I Corinthians xii.)

In the Ephesian epistle we have the church presented to us on the heavenly side — what the church is in Christ’s affections: He loved the church and gave Himself for it.

The epistles to the Corinthians give us the same church, but in her passage on earth, making her way through the world. Here she waits for Him and the moment when she will stand not only in the presence of His grace, but also of His glory. She presses on through light and darkness, through favour and disfavour, treading very largely the same pathway that her Lord trod before her. Her portion is in the main His, certainly in character if not in degree, as she wends her way on to her eternal home through the hatred of a hostile world. The world does not want her; it has no place for her any more than it had for the One

to Whom she belongs. Onward she goes, seeking ever to keep her garments unspotted and her heart reserved for the One Who loves her.

I have read the scripture in the Corinthians (I Cor. xii. 12-31) because of the help this aspect of the church is calculated to give us today. We are all upon earth tonight while waiting for the Lord, and what makes these two epistles to the Corinthians so exceedingly valuable is that they show the church functioning here. She is not left here for nothing. The Lord has a gracious purpose in her being here, and we shall see for what purpose it is.

It is here in this world she is called for the present to be for Him amidst all the difficulties of our day, and possibly of a still darker day than our own. One thing, however, is certain — there can never come a moment in the church's history for which the Lord in the fulness of His grace has not provided.

BAPTISM INTO ONE BODY

The figure which is used by the apostle to bring before us the church functioning upon earth is that of the **body**; and that body was formed by God Himself on the day of Pentecost. Such had never existed before, and shall surely never exist again: it is altogether special to this day of grace. On the day of Pentecost something happened which had never happened before, and will never happen again. The 120 gathered together, not then much more than Jewish believers, were waiting the fulfilment of the promise of the Father. The Lord Jesus, having gone back to heaven, received the Holy Spirit, not now for Himself, as when here, but for those whom He had left behind Him, the object of His love in this world. He had spoken of the sorrow which would fill their hearts, but He also told them clearly what He would do for them when He went away. The Holy Spirit of God is sent down by our risen Lord, and those lowly people, gathered together in the upper room in Jerusalem, were baptized into one body, made one, indissolubly one, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They were formed into one body, no longer disconnected, no longer isolated

units, but bound together in the indissoluble bonds of God's Holy Spirit.

It was an action done by God once for all, by which they were incorporated. This is what we read here: "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (verses 12,13).

Day after day since that day there have been additions to the body, but its formation was done once and for all on the day of Pentecost. They were formed into a society such as the world had never known, and you and I in the great mercy of God are forming part tonight — humble people as we may be in the world's estimation — of that society, which is immeasurably greater than any other on earth.

There are very special societies in all countries of the world, and people do anything in order to gain an entrance to, or become a member of, a distinguished society. But God has made us, in His grace — not by an act of our own, nor by a long process of toil or work on our part but — out of the goodness and love of His own heart, and for the glory of the Lord Jesus, members of this unique body.

BODY-MINDEDNESS

Consequently, it is most important that we should be body-minded. Satan is working today to break up anything that has the semblance of a holy unity. He is, therefore, bent upon breaking up the unity I have described only in order, alas! to introduce a unity of his own, a unity of evil. So long as the church is on earth, Satan will work by all means possible to draw us away from this truth, and the very divisions and heart-breaks we have may, unless we are careful, bring us to the point when we may say, "It is a very attractive ideal, but it is unattainable". Once this is admitted, we fall to the master-stroke of the enemy.

But more, we must recognize this not only as a beautiful ideal, but one that is attainable, to be worked out practically in our corporate life. That is why these epistles are so helpful to us. It is the church, not seen in Christ's affec-

tions, but *functioning on earth* — quite a different thing.

We have *all* been baptized into this distinguished body. Do not, therefore, think of yourselves as just dragging along as nobodies in this world. Christians are not a company of stragglers, much as we may look like it at times. Do not allow the thought of this into your hearts. God it is Who in His grace has made us members of Christ's body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles. The Jewish people were a most exclusive people: ordinarily you could not get among them. Very few exceptions were made. The Gentiles outside were another society altogether: they were in darkness. But this society, this association, to which God has called us is exclusive of every other; so that whether we be Jew or Gentile, we have now lost that status before God. That has gone for ever, and now I am a member of Christ's body in virtue of His indwelling Spirit.

By consequence, the church is an unpolitical body. I know it is hard to go through the world just non-political, but that is what we are really called for; to wend our way in faithfulness to Him to Whom we belong. We do need to be careful not to become politically-minded, for that is to lose all spiritual mindedness. The Lord is heavenly, and His people are heavenly by birth, by destiny and present character.

We do not become members of the body of Christ by an act of our own. It is God, and He alone, Who gives us a part in the body. There is no such thing as applying for membership. None becomes a member but by an act of God Himself. It is God's own blessed will concerning us, and this is emphasized throughout the chapter.

The body of Christ into which we have all been baptized is a distinctive body; and since it has privileges, it has also responsibilities. If we enjoy the former — and we do so gratefully — let us seek grace to answer to the latter, which never exceed the privileges, but are invariably commensurate with them.

(Continued inside front cover)

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CONTENTS

Christian Fellowship according to Scripture	25
The One Body II	30
Room in the Many Mansions	36
Intercession of the Holy Spirit	Inside front cover

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

“In My Father’s house there are many mansions.” He was going thither. Observe the statement, there “are many mansions,” signifying that there is room for you as well as for Him; room enough and to spare, room for all the faithful. “If it were not so, I would have told you.” I would not implant in you a desire that could not be realised. “I go to prepare a place for you.”

W. KELLY

INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Note on Romans viii.26)

We must, in reading this passage, remember what the apostle has stated in the preceding verses respecting the misery and physical corruption abundant around us, as to which our inward groans witness that we ourselves are not exempt, though we are the children of God. The day of our deliverance has not yet come; hence we are in a state of weakness, not in a state of power yet.

But we now learn that the Holy Spirit joins help to these infirmities of ours. This weakness is shown in our partial knowledge of the deplorably mixed condition of things around us, where evil exalts itself and truth is trodden down. Hence, the apostle says, we know not what to pray for as we ought; God alone knows what is right and wise amongst the mass of confusion. Here is added the comforting assurance, “The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us”. When, because of our ignorance, we are silent, not knowing what suitable petition to make for relief when pain and sorrow seem triumphant, the Spirit is pleading for us with “groanings that cannot be uttered.” Compare the apostle’s inability to choose between life and death (Philippians i.21-24). W. J. HOCKING

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE

Last month under the title "Calling on the Name of the Lord" we examined the scripture teaching about the pathway of the man of God today, and the fellowship he may expect and ought to seek. Now we desire to examine the practice of Christian fellowship among those who seek to be guided by God's word. We may remark in passing, that the Ecumenical movement is not to be discussed, because that movement does not, in the writer's view, seek to be guided by scripture. It merely looks for a lowest common denominator of belief among various sections of the church, and is willing to let go things once thought to be vital, in the interests of unity.

Before we can usefully examine current practice, we ought to state briefly what Christian fellowship means, and what exclusion from it means. Christian fellowship then is the sharing, in company with other believers, of Christian privileges and Christian testimony — worship, prayer and praise, mutual edification in the ministry of the word, fellowship in gospel work and also Christian friendship. Worship, of course, includes the remembrance of the Lord in the breaking of bread.

Exclusion from this fellowship is required, according to scripture, where either the behaviour of a professed believer is morally such as to disgrace Christ's name (see 1 Cor. v.), or where doctrines are held which are destructive to the Christian faith (see 2 Tim. ii.16-18; 2 John 9-11; Rev. ii. 14,15).

These are what we referred to last month as "vital, fundamental things," and if a believer fails to uphold them, the assembly cannot but repudiate him if it is to maintain its testimony to truth and holiness.

This exclusion is to be *total*, as 1 Cor. v. states, "with such an one no not to eat." In contrast, we have in Matt. xviii.17 a case of trespass against an individual, where the individual (not the assembly) is to refuse Christian friend-

ship to the one at fault — “let him be unto *thee* as an heathen man and a publican.”

Again in 2 Thess. iii.6,14,15 the members of the assembly are called upon to withdraw their companionship from disorderly or disobedient persons, yet to continue to admonish them as brothers. Plainly this is not total exclusion, for the language is very different from 1 Cor. v. Here they are still acknowledged as “brothers”. There, they are called “wicked persons”.

Is a person who has been excommunicated from one assembly free to go and be received at another? Plainly not. Yet the reason given is often the wrong one—it is supposed to be on account of the “unity of the body”. Yet surely the true reason is that righteousness is the same everywhere. But while all intelligent believers are equally capable of judging false teaching, judging moral evil often demands a knowledge of circumstances. It follows that exclusion from fellowship on moral grounds should normally be rescinded (in the case of either repentance, or of a mistake having been made) by or with the consent of the assembly where the evil occurred.

LETTERS OF COMMENDATION

In the early days of the church, fellowship between local churches was maintained by the continual visiting of apostles and others, to encourage, instruct, and if necessary to correct them. These visits also fostered love, as we see by the collection for the poor saints in Judaea (Acts xi.29). Where visitors were unknown to those they visited, it was customary for them to carry “letters of commendation”.

Thus Phebe was commended by letter to the church at Rome (Rom. xvi). Paul writes to Corinth of those who needed letters of commendation to their assembly, or letters from them; and also of himself as needing no commendation because of his work among them (2 Cor. iii.1). See also chapter viii., verses 18, 22-24.

In these modern days of frequent travelling, it is essential to follow this scriptural precedent when visiting an assembly

where one is unknown. Saul of Tarsus, we recall, was not received by the saints at Jerusalem who did not believe that he was a disciple, until Barnabas told them of his conversion on the Damascus road. Today confusion abounds, evil abounds in the church, so it is more than ever important to cleave to the safeguard of commendation before receiving strangers.

GRADES OF FELLOWSHIP — ARE THEY SCRIPTURAL?

If we turn now to the practice of those who profess to be bound by scripture, we find considerable variation.

While seeking to be separate from what involved disobedience to God's word, believers have sought to show that their separation was not from men, but from wrong practices. Hence to avoid forming just another sect, they thought of themselves as met together on a ground where every true believer ought to be, and therefore should be welcomed. Such fellowship was, in principle, as wide as the church of God. This included some who, attracted by the simplicity of the method of meeting, came without having made any severance, as yet, from their normal associations. Others came, if staying temporarily in the district.

Does this differ from the widespread practice of inviting "all the Lord's people to join with us"? Yes, it does, if first, the scriptural practice of commendation is followed, and second, **if the fellowship extended is exactly the same as that which all the assembly enjoys.**

But to insist as some do, that such fellowship cannot be repeated, or cannot be often repeated, without requiring the person to "make up his mind" to leave his normal associations, is to attempt to judge the consciences of others, forgetting how slow we all are to learn God's way, and to forsake man's. Others again, treat such people as not being really in fellowship at all, and would be horrified at the idea of their taking part in assembly discussions! Such a lower grade of fellowship is quite wrong.

Proceeding from the same error is the idea that our title to fellowship grows stronger with the years. Would any of us claim that our title to salvation is stronger now than when we believed? No, there is only one basis of salvation — faith in the blood of Christ, and that is the sole basis of Christian fellowship. A man may forfeit his claim to fellowship through unworthy conduct, but nothing can give him any stronger claim than the blood of Christ gives him. Consequently, **there can be only one grade of fellowship.**

The battle against errors of doctrine has produced divisions which, as we can often now see, might have been avoided but for the frailty of the best of God's servants. But divisions tend to remain when the causes have disappeared. This has produced still another grade of fellowship, of Christians reckoned fit to be received into brethren's houses, welcomed at prayer meetings, Bible readings and even "fellowship meetings", but not allowed to join at the breaking of bread because of their association with other "companies". **This does not correspond to anything found in scripture.** It is neither fellowship, which must include the breaking of bread — the very centre of Christian worship—nor is it exclusion from fellowship, which according to God's word means total exclusion, as of wicked persons. And it has no resemblance to those cases of withdrawal of Christian companionship discussed earlier.

It is sometimes asserted that such Christians are excluded because, though not themselves defiled by false teachings, they remain associated with those who do hold them. To this there is one answer: unfaithfulness to Christ in respect of these vital things (and unless they *are* vital there is no ground of exclusion) unfits a man for Christian fellowship as 2 John 11 teaches, and a man is not a "purged vessel" if he continues in communion with such. Should exclusion be called for then let it be exclusion, not a pretence of it. **But where the original trouble has disappeared, love must rejoice, and seek to heal the breach.** To continue with an unscriptural lower grade of fellowship is not following love or righteousness.

Sometimes the question of an assembly's responsibility as to whom it receives into its fellowship is confused with the individual responsibility of everyone to take the Lord's supper in a worthy manner. See 1 Cor. xi.27,28. These things are entirely distinct. Where, in consequence of this confusion it is maintained that an assembly has no right to determine whether a person should be accepted or not, people are received into a kind of temporary fellowship, to break bread "on their own responsibility", the assembly accepting no responsibility for their presence. This, it will be seen, is at variance with scriptures we have already considered, as well as with the principle of the commendatory letter. It is therefore wrong.

When at the same meeting, persons are received on the basis of a letter, evidencing that they are in regular membership of a similar assembly, alongside those admitted "on their own responsibility", we have again the practice of two different grades of fellowship. Both cannot be right, in fact each condemns the other. The ideas of temporary fellowship and limited fellowship both spring from the notion of **membership of a local church, which is completely foreign to the New Testament.** There membership is always of the Church, *the Church of God.* (See 1 Cor. xii). On this basis only can persons be rightly received.

Quite erroneous as this scheme evidently is, it does not of itself violate any fundamental truth of Christianity. Only, if evil enters, it is hard to see how it can be adequately opposed and eradicated.

The opposite extreme from what we have just been describing (and extremes are almost invariably wrong) is practised in some quarters. Here there is only one grade of fellowship, and what we may call occasional fellowship is not permitted. Other Christians must forsake completely all associations with other bodies before fellowship can be considered. Those in fellowship have to accept complete subjection to rules of behaviour which infringe all Christian liberty; rules which change continually, unlike the scriptures on which they are professedly based.

Here we have no room for the individual conscience, and no distinction between the vital and the non-vital. Refusal to submit to dictation by the brethren brings excommunication even in small matters. In brief, it combines sectarianism (because of its limited fellowship), pharisaism (because of its burdensome rules), and popery (because of its human dictatorship).

THE REMEDY

To follow a path which avoids these mistakes is not easy, though happily many assemblies have found it possible. But resolution is needed, to reject whatever God's word does not sanction, however long custom may have done so. All longsuffering and lowliness, forbearing one another in love, are necessary, and that with *all saints*. Above all, faith: faith which keeps in view the whole Church which the Saviour died to win.

It ought to be the earnest desire of us all to stand shoulder to shoulder with everyone who will keep His word, and not deny His Name.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

THE ONE BODY

(continued)

UNITY AND DIVERSITY (1 Cor. xii)

Those who most of all emphasize the unity of the body, and rightly so, because Scripture emphasizes it, may by the emphasis expose themselves to a very real danger. The apostle, who so clearly speaks of the unity, anticipates for us the danger and adds because of it "The body is not one member but many". In the stress put on the unity we may overlook the diversity of the members. The body is not one member. The unity is one of diversity: the perfect unity is nothing but the lovely and complete harmony of the whole. It is a unity of diversity. God is a God of unity, but not less a God of the widest diversity. Everything in creation proclaims His diversity — and when it comes to

the church, which is His master-piece, it is not otherwise. Not in creation, nor in Israel, but in the church all intelligences see the varied wisdom of God in all its marvellous diversity. The Church is His chief work, and it is there that this feature shines most brightly. He has crowned the works of His hand in those who are formed into one body, who abide in indissoluble union with their Lord in heaven. At the risk of repetition, it is because of this unity that there is the danger that we should forget its diversity. There were those at Corinth who were guilty of pressing unity, forgetful of the diversity. That brings confusion and worse, and the apostle gives a pertinent illustration. Concerning the foot, for example, the apostle says: "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body". That is the practical denial of the body.

Now it is an extraordinary thing that the apostle speaks first of the less prominent members of the body of Christ, not that they are of any less value, but in the body there are clearly different members, and the unity is the unity of the whole, not of a part. The beautiful unity of the human body is in the harmony of the whole.

DEPENDENCE ONE UPON ANOTHER

In these verses (14-17) the apostle speaks of the absurdity of such a statement as this — "Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body". Yet, is not this what very often happens? It comes perhaps from the foot down below, which looks up to the hand and says, "I am not the hand and therefore I am not of the body". How easily discontent can creep in, and discontent with the place the Lord Himself has given us! Oh! what a shame that we should cast back upon Him that which in His grace He has done for us. To be a foot in this body is an inestimable privilege! Oh! do not fret your hearts out desiring to be something you are not; do not allow the spirit of covetousness to empty your hearts. Value the place the Lord has given you and fill it out by His grace and in His strength. Supposing we here tonight were all eyes and could see what needs to

be done and there was not a hand to do it! What an impasse we would come to!

The discontent is on the part of the less prominent member looking up from below to the hand which is above, with thoughts of envy. There are tonight many lives that are being spoiled and rendered unserviceable to the Lord Jesus because they are spent in longing to be something which they are not. What a shame that this should be so!

VARIETY AMONGST MEMBERS

In verses 18-20 the apostle goes on to speak of another thing. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him." It is God Who has set the members: it is not you nor I. God Himself sets the members in the body as it pleases Him, and if they were all one member, where were the body? If you make the body to be all one member, if you rule out diversity, you make it virtually a body with one member, which is completely destructive. Each one has his own particular gift, and place.

It may be safely said, I think, that all of us tend one way or the other. We tend very much either to unity, on the one hand, or to diversity, on the other. It is in the preservation and in the due balance of these two things, that our wisdom lies and our practical salvation is found. Instead of these two things being held co-equally — the one being the counterpart of the other — the tendency is that they are rent asunder and a wide gulf comes about between the two. While we treasure deeply the unity of the body, let us always see that it is a unity which displays itself in the most lovely variety. We cannot possibly, without terribly harmful consequences, try to shape up one another according to a certain model. First of all there would be immense difficulty in deciding to the satisfaction of all what that model should be. But the effort to crush diversity is not of God, and that is a serious matter. There is proper growth and proper development with each one of us and if we honour the unity, let us honour the diversity; if we

honour the diversity let us also honour the unity, and you will find, I think, that one will preserve the other.

There are the two things. On the one hand, it is one body, one perfect whole: on the other, there is the body not of one member, but of many.

CONTENTMENT WITH THE PLACE GOD GIVES US

Coming to verses 21-23, we find that the apostle deals with the opposite view. It is not now the foot looking up to the hand, but the eye looking down, and he says "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee". There may be discontent on the part of the lowly members, but what is even more serious is what the Apostle speaks of here in more scathing terms. You cannot look down disdainfully upon any member of Christ. Oh! how we sin, and how we have grieved and crushed many instead of leading them on sympathetically. We look down upon them and virtually say "I have no need of thee," and deeply displease our ever gracious Lord. He feels such treatment as if done to Himself personally. We must not look down upon any, however lowly, of Christ's members.

If a brother is gifted we may say "He is mine" — we belong to one another and we are co-members of the body of Christ. We cannot do without one another. Certainly, therefore, we ought not to look down from a height either real or imaginary upon a lowlier member. Such an attitude quenches the operation of God's Holy Spirit among His people. It closes effectually all avenues of blessing, and the apostle says it is morally wrong.

However loudly we may profess the truth with our lips, we give the lie to our profession. We cannot treat any member of the body of Christ disdainfully, I will not say, contemptuously. There are many members of the body of Christ about us in whose hearts God is working and who are ready for help given in the spirit of Christ. We need to feel not only that they need us but that we need them. We are all interdependent and mutually contributory. There are many today whom we need, beloved members of

the body of Christ, and if we get near to them and recognize their place in the body, we shall perhaps be able to win their hearts, not to ourselves only, but to the Lord.

EVERY MEMBER NECESSARY

Now those members which appear to be more feeble are more necessary. It needs only for something to go wrong to find out how necessary the member is. You need not lose your finger, but only the quick of the finger-nail, to find how put out you are. Those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary, but the apostle is not satisfied with that. He adds that those members which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow abundant honour, that is, if there is anything that is weak, or that calls for care, we should exercise the more abundant care. The most vital parts of the body are tucked away. Think of the heart, upon which all turns. It is tucked away by God with extreme care, and other organs there are which are encased in fat to withstand vibration, etc. The most vital parts are covered by God. But even the external uncomely parts are to be treated no differently. We do not cover our faces — unless it be with shame — for He says "Let me see thy face," but there are parts which call for cover properly.

If there is one who is weak, uncomely, it is a wonderful outlet for the love of Christ. That is how His love went out. Wherever there were on earth the poor, the wretched, the weak, the sightless, these all had an irresistible attraction for our beloved Lord. I do feel we need more of His spirit: otherwise our Christianity is very poor. And is not such loving, intelligent consideration just that which so pleases the Lord? It is His own blessed spirit itself amongst His own. If there is weakness and special coverings are needed, we should be at hand to give them.

This is what is being put before the Corinthians, where there were all kinds of foreign bodies working disastrously. Their corporate life was very largely a negation of the one body. When a foreign body enters say, the eye, the hand

immediately tries to remove it. That is the spirit which is needed in our gatherings, the spirit of removing all that is alien to the body and of taking away pain, such as we find so beautifully exemplified in the human body.

GOD SETS EACH MEMBER IN HIS PLACE

In verses 24-31 the apostle reaches the climax of what he has been setting forth. He says, "Ye are the body of Christ," even as he says elsewhere "Ye are the epistle of Christ." That is a truly wonderful thing to say of a company of the Lord's people. There they were for the expression of the grace and intelligence of the Head. We should express His mind, not our own. We should have His wisdom, His love, and His care. They should all flow out through His body here, the exponent of Christ in this dark world of sin.

Just one more thought. "God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." I would emphasize that it is God Who does it. People think that we stand for something we have hammered out ourselves on our own anvils, but it is wrong. This is the truth of God --- "God has set". He is the One Who puts all in their places. It is not that it is a good theory. No, the whole thing in this chapter rests entirely upon the will of God. It is what God does. He has set some in the church in these various ways. The Corinthians were guilty of trying to put all the gifts into one person. It is impossible. The apostle says almost indignantly "Are all apostles, are all teachers, have all the gifts of healing?" God has widely distributed the gifts and they call for the recognition in love by one another.

PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT

You say, "Well, it does not appear much of an outlook for me. I am a foot, and I must always remain a foot". This is an entirely unfounded assumption. No, the apostle ends the chapter by saying "Covet earnestly the best gifts".

In order to grow and expand, I have to exercise myself in that which I have, but the whole field is thrown open to me. Look at those seven men who were chosen to serve tables. Think of what heights they reached, at least, two of them. Philip became the great evangelist, and Stephen, that holy man so full of the Holy Ghost, became the first Christian martyr. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. Do not fret because you are not more. Fill your tiny sphere according to God's blessed will in His strength and by His grace, and you will find most assuredly that more will open to you. The word is "Covet," that is, "Desire earnestly". If the gifts the risen Lord has given were faithfully used even by us all here this evening, there would be a revival. There is so much which lacks fruitfulness, being either unstirred-up or neglected.

The apostle says "Covet earnestly the best gifts". All is laid open, not for our own glory, far be the thought, but for the glory of Christ.

And so we have in this chapter God's provision for the church, in her functioning here in this world. She is to be here for the expression of His gracious and lowly mind. It is a dark and difficult day — we all feel it to be so — but there is this precious provision, which is sufficient to see us to the end, and to keep us well pleasing to the Lord in the bright display of His truth and love. J. P. BULL

(Reprinted from *Words of Help*, January/March 1956)

ROOM IN THE MANY MANSIONS

In John xiv. there is a very beautiful setting forth of the blessed hope of the Christian. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me." At first it sounds very peculiar that the Lord should tell believing disciples to believe in Him. I do not think it means that they were merely to increase their former faith.

"Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." I take it that the force is this: You believe in God though you have not seen Him; believe in Me, Who am going to become invisible to you. I, Who have been your visible Master, your Teacher

present in your midst, am going to leave the world. I am going, therefore, to enter a condition of invisibility so far as you are concerned, because I shall no longer be on earth, but in heaven.

This follows most simply and naturally from the words of the next verse: "In My Father's house are many mansions." It is not that the Lord was going to have done with His body; He will never do that to all eternity. In that sense, therefore, it will never be a question of absolute invisibility, but only relative — to those disciples certainly He would be unseen.

And this absence of the Lord is necessary to Christianity. If I were asked to give in very few words one specific difference between Christianity and Judaism, I would say, Judaism was a religion of sight; Christianity is of faith. We walk not by sight, but by faith.

Here, then, to test the truth of this faith the Lord speaks of entering that condition, not by becoming a spirit. The Lord is not a spirit; He has a spiritual body. "A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have." We must not at all allow such a notion as that the Lord Jesus, in His risen condition, has not flesh and bones — of course He has.

He has no longer a life in the blood, because this is a life connected with the earth, a life which lives by food, air, etc. The risen Lord is capable of taking food. He partook of a piece of honeycomb and of fish; but this was not because He required them, but because the disciples required to learn that He was truly risen from the dead.

His, we know, is a spiritual body glorified in heaven. And so shall we be; but the Lord here speaks of our faith meanwhile. "Ye believe in God, believe also in Me." Although He had taken a body, and although He was to take that body after the resurrection, still He would be invisible by going to heaven. To believe in Him thus is the Christian's faith, contrasted with Jewish sight of the Messiah reigning visibly over the earth.

(Continued inside front cover)

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CONTENTS

Lord's Day Reflections

XLV. They made Him a Supper	61
The Divine Workers XXXV	62
Speaking with Tongues (continued)	67

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(Continued from inside back cover)

declared. And these supernatural signs were found with the followers of the crucified Nazarene, and not with the accredited representatives of the Jewish nation. Men were made to see that Israel was no longer the servant of the Lord, but that His testimony was now committed to the confessors of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for widespread distribution. The law was given at Sinai in one tongue, for it was restricted to one people, but the gospel of the glorified Lord and Christ was on the very day of its inauguration set out in many tongues, for, in contrast with the law, it was to be declared to every nation under heaven without restriction or qualification for every man's acceptance.

It is impossible, however, to discover in this second chapter of the Acts any suggestion that there would be a continuance of these miraculous signs in the assembly to the present time. No believer would question that such a thing is possible, for "with God all things are possible". This is a fundamental and unchanging truth. But we must inquire, not what God *can* do, but whether the revelation of His ways warrants us to believe that He *will* do a certain thing. In this case, we find no such evidence, but we do find that tongues with other signs marked the commencement of a new era which was in sharp contrast with its predecessor. Pentecost initiated the period during which Christ is on high and the Spirit on earth, in which grace succeeds law and faith succeeds works, and in which the overtures of mercy and salvation are extended to the ends of the earth. As soon as the body of the disciples of Christ had assumed its cosmopolitan character, and the gospel had secured believers, and consequently fresh witnesses, throughout the world (Colossians i.6), the need for supernatural signs disappeared.

(To be continued, D.V.)

LORD'S DAY REFLECTIONS

XLV THEY MADE HIM A SUPPER

"Then Jesus, six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper, and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment" (John xii.1-3).

Here we have illustrated, in the most striking and forcible manner, the three grand features which ought to characterise every Christian and every christian assembly, namely, calm, intelligent *communion*, as seen in Lazarus seated at the table; holy *worship*, as seen in Mary at the feet of her Lord; and loving *service*, as seen in Martha, in her activities about the house. All three go to make up the christian character, and all three should be exhibited in every christian assembly. We consider it a very great moral mistake to set any one of these features in opposition to the others, inasmuch as each, in its proper place is lovely; and, we may add, each should find its place in all. We should all of us know what it is to sit at table with our blessed Lord, in sweet communion. This will most assuredly lead to profound homage and adoration; and we may rest assured that, where there is the communion and the worship, there will not be lacking the loving activities of true service.

The reader will observe that, in the above beautiful scene, there is no record of any collision between Martha and Mary. Each had her place to fill. There was room for both. "Jesus loved Martha and her sister." Here Martha is put first. In verse I (chapter xi.), we read of "Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha". Looked at from a divine standpoint, there is no need why any one should in the smallest degree collide with another. And further, we may add, there is no necessity whatever for comparing the sphere of one with that of another. If Christ be our one absorbing object, there will be lovely harmony in action, though our line of things may vary.

Thus it was at Bethany. Lazarus was at the table, Mary at the Master's feet, and Martha was about the house. All was in beautiful order, because Christ was the object of each. Lazarus would have been entirely out of his place had he set about preparing the supper; and if Martha had sat at the table, there would have been no supper prepared. But both were in their right places, and we may rest assured that both would rejoice in the odour of Mary's ointment as she poured it on the feet of their ever-loving and beloved Lord.

Is not all this conveyed to us in that one sentence, "There *they* made him a supper"? It was not one more than another. All had part in the precious privilege of making a supper for the one peerless object of their heart's affections; and, having Him in their midst, each fell naturally, simply, and effectively, into his and her proper place. Provided the beloved Master's heart was refreshed, it mattered not who did this, or who did that. Christ was the centre and each moved round Him.

Thus it should be always in the assembly of Christians, and thus it would be, if odious self were judged and set aside, and each heart simply occupied with Christ Himself. C.H.M.

(Reprinted)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v.17)

Luke xiv.25: "And there went great multitudes with Him." As can be seen in the preceding verses, the vivid word picture set out by the Lord Jesus showed the great Gift Supper — the Feast of Grace. The hypocritical refusal of those bidden to this wide-spread reception was exposed, and the consequences clearly foretold. It would seem the crowd had become aware of the plot, the centre of which was the poor dropsical man. They would have seen him healed on that Sabbath day. They would also have heard the parable. Needy outcasts were shown as being brought in to a great supper from which those with other interests

had turned away. The multitude was moved to follow the Author.

“And He turned, and said unto them, If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (verse 26). The Lord makes it clear that to follow Him in discipleship is not to be carried away by crowd impulse. It is entirely an individual response — “if any man” — and one which arises from a deep sense of personal inadequacy. The critical animosity of the guests in the Pharisee’s house may have influenced the demonstration. There were those in large numbers who would show themselves willing to partake of the feast of grace. There may have been a sense of superiority in this. But the supper of grace has no *human* origin. The thought of it is in the Divine Mind alone. It is God Who makes ready—it is God Who bids “COME”. The provision, the purpose, as well as the perfect outcome of partaking is of God — and of God only. It is God providing according to His own thought and for His own satisfaction also.

God’s grace is so utterly apart from *human* thought. Man may forgive — even when the wrong is not acknowledged and forgiveness sought. Grace does not wait to be sought — it is itself the SEEKER. It seeks in the out-places where there is no awareness of the feast, and not one of those who partake can lay claim to do so save by divine impulsion — “Compel them to come in” (verse 23). Thus, only those who are without resource are found at the feast of heavenly grace.

It must have seemed an easy and, indeed, a popular thing to follow One Who spoke of so great a feast in the parable terms they understood. They “went with Him” — but was it into *discipleship*? This would be vastly different from following with the multitude. For discipleship is the outcome of GRACE operating in the energy of the Spirit of God. The principle of grace is wholly unnatural — in its origin and in its operation. It is not natural to hate one’s family. The word Jesus uses is a very strong one. The force of it is to renounce the claim or the influence of any person,

however close the ties of nature, should these influences run counter to discipleship.

There is an incomparable joy in the experience of the way of grace which needs no support, even from the good and beautiful things of nature. Discipleship involves refusal to be diverted from this joy. It has its being from God's satisfaction in Christ. It is the Holy Spirit's supreme object that we, *even we*, should enter into appreciation of that which so satisfies God. It is not a matter of forgiveness of sins alone — wonderful as this is — but a progress into awareness of the thought of the Divine Mind concerning the illimitable perfections of Christ. This progression the Holy Spirit would fain bring about. It is the progression characteristic of discipleship. But there are natural impulses and interests in opposition. These would take the place of our occupation with that in which God wishes us to share. The disciple will renounce them — “yea, and his own life also”. It is to renounce the domination of its *contrary* claims and influences (verse 26).

The “first love” of one who has become aware of the personal love of Christ as his Saviour is very precious to God. It is then that opposing impulses are overthrown. It is then that the love-link with a divine Person is more precious than any contrary attraction, and divine strength envelops our weakness. Can it be there is no note of sorrow in the written word to Ephesus — “thou hast left thy first love”? Labour, patience and, most valued, endurance — all are truly precious and set forth, but that “first love” had been superseded by *energies*, and no longer had its source in personal consciousness of His sacrificial love for them. How shall the energy of our love to *Him* be maintained save by this deep awareness of His own individual love to *us*! He calls them again to take the path of true discipleship. “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works:” — the gathering up of memories of those early days of following in subjection, when all contrary influences in life were renounced, and love to Christ was paramount and unalloyed! There is a

certain self-satisfaction in energetic service — it is far easier than repentance. But to satisfy the heart of Christ there is no substitute for the quality of *first love* which produced *the first works*.

One cannot read these closing verses of Luke xiv. without being arrested by the force of the Lord's exposition of discipleship. He will not have it lowered to the plane of merely following with the religious crowd. It is an individual act — just as there is His individual love, to which the act responds. There is also an *individual cross* — the Lord could use no stronger word. For this was the public sign of a criminal, degraded and exposed, adjudged, under Roman law, to have forfeited any right to live. "And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (verse 27). Thus is the disciple identified with Christ in His death, saying, as did Paul, "I am crucified with Christ" (Galatians ii.20): and again, "far be it from me to boast save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world" (Galatians vi.14: New Tr.).

It would not be unreasonable to wonder whether the multitudes that had followed Jesus were now showing signs of dispersal. He presses, increasingly, the cost of discipleship. The feast of heavenly grace, of which they had heard, was for those *without resource*. It would be costly to discard the possessions upon which they relied and to join the ranks of need and dependence. "Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" A tower was not an unusual sight. It commanded a view of the vineyards, and of the environs of a city. Watchfulness and protection would call for expenditure of energy and the sacrifice of time and of wealth. Foundations of an hasty undertaking would not produce the tower-strength so necessary for safety. The mockery of the world would be the only outcome.

"Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with

ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" (verse 31). There would be warfare also. The disciple is engaged in it. Is he a follower in name only — dependent upon human faculties? If so he is far outnumbered in strength and should "send an ambassage desiring conditions of peace" while the oncoming force is "yet a great way off" (verse 32). So an ambassage of peace was the way out — and *Jesus provides the thought!* He does not end His simile without reference to the remedy for human folly — it is a way of humility — especially for a king! But it brings to His hearers the thought of salvation from disaster! "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans viii.31).

Verses 34-35: "Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill: they cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear". Here, again, is a substance, and also a symbol, well known to His hearers. It was vital to their everyday life. It was also essential under the law, to which they were accustomed. "With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt" (Leviticus ii.13). It was the salt of the covenant.

Salt is the consecrating principle of grace — the preserving influence separating from defilement. There can be no amalgamation — no treaty of toleration with world influences. These are sure to approach — they are corrupting elements. The disciple meets them upon the principle of faithfulness to God, maintained by faith, through grace.

The Lord Jesus presents a solemn conclusion. Departure from the principle of grace, and relying, instead upon self energy in any sense, would be to render the salt of separation from evil without savour. Utterly useless for any purpose whatsoever, "it is cast out". "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

There is a cry from Jeremiah which echoes the lament from the very heart of God. "Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when

thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (Jeremiah ii.2). Freed from the thralldom of Egypt, called out for Himself alone, their path of discipleship had now passed into memory — overrun by world influences which they should have hated and refused. How this discipleship matters to God! In His immeasurable grace He remembers "for" them the kindness of their youth — their new-born bridal love. (They had forgotten!) It is unforgettable to God — a memory-tie which He retains in long-suffering love — though they have submitted to alien influences.

Discipleship is a progress — of humility in learning. The Lord Jesus, as Man in perfection, Himself took this path: "Though He were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (Hebrews v.8). Isaiah writes of Him, "The LORD GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned (instructed), that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary (Isaiah 1.4). The life-path of the Son of God was open to His Father's scrutiny. The word "learned" is better translated "instructed", and is the same word as disciple". Isaiah continues (verse 5), "The LORD GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back." The world of rebellion, pursuing its own paths and purposes was all about Him as He remained in disciple-faithfulness to God.

EDWARD T. WOOD

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

(Continued from page 60)

(II) Tongues in Jerusalem, in Caesarea, and in Ephesus

"And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance"

(Acts ii.4).

Mark records the Lord's promise of the gift of new tongues, and the evangelist associates this gift with His command to the apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi.15-18). Luke in the

Acts records the fulfilment of the promise of tongues, and he there associates that fulfilment with the descent of the Holy Spirit. We find, therefore, from the latter account that, in accordance with the promise of the Father, the Lord Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit upon His followers at Pentecost, and as a consequence, "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts ii.4).

The other signs besides tongues mentioned in Mark xvi.17,18, were no doubt bestowed at the same time, since we read, "Many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts ii.43).

Further, the sign of tongues was granted to others besides the apostles. The Lord's words to the eleven were: "These signs shall follow them that believe . . . they shall speak with new tongues" (Mark xvi.17). Luke in the Acts shows the fulfilment of this promise in Caesarea in the case of those who believed through the preaching of Peter, and in Ephesus in the case of those who believed through the preaching of Paul (Acts x.44-46; xix.6).

(A) IN JERUSALEM (Acts ii.)

The disciples of the Lord were tarrying in Jerusalem, as He had directed them, in order to receive this gift. The Lord had told them, "Ye shall receive power when the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be My witnesses" (Acts i.8). When therefore the Holy Spirit came upon them, they thereby became competent witnesses; and one form of their newly-received competency was displayed when they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. They themselves found that there was a power other than their own with their mouths, enabling them to testify to the truth. The Lord had instructed them beforehand that they need not be anxious in this respect. In an early stage of their training He said, "When they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For

it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you " (Matthew x.19). At Pentecost the apostles experienced for the first time the power of the Spirit acting in a manner which was in accordance with this early promise of Christ, and which would soon be demonstrated before governors and kings, as well as before the general populace in Jerusalem.

OUTWARD TOKENS OF THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT

On the day of Pentecost proofs of an external nature were granted by God to show that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was then an accomplished fact. There were phenomena of sight and sound, which constituted outward evidence to the disciples themselves. There appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire. Also they heard a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, filling the house where they were sitting. In addition to these audible and visible signs, they commenced to speak with other tongues, proving to one another in their own assembly that they were "filled with the Holy Ghost".

But these outward proofs of the presence of the Holy Spirit were not only given to the disciples themselves in the private or semi-private upper room where they were assembled, but supernatural signs were also displayed in the streets and public places in Jerusalem, to its inhabitants, and to the multitude of visitors from various parts of the world. The power of the apostles to speak with other tongues was demonstrated in the hearing of the crowds assembled, probably in the temple-courts or in other places of general resort. Such an exhibition of power was astonishing and inexplicable to the audiences. Not that the words of the disciples were unintelligible to their hearers, nor that they spoke gibberish, for it is stated that the import of their speech was understood by those that heard.

The wonder to the multitude of "devout" persons that came together was that, as they listened to the Galilean

disciples, "every man heard them speak in his own language (dialect)". "How hear we," they exclaimed, "every man in our own tongue (dialect), wherein we were born?" (Acts ii.6-8).

These remarks of the multitude indicate that what the people heard was not, as some have supposed, uttered in the upper room itself, where the disciples were assembled at the descent of the Holy Spirit. We find that at least fifteen districts are named (Parthia, etc.) from which representatives were found in the crowd. As some of the districts mentioned covered wide areas of country (cp., "parts of Libya about Cyrene") it is most likely that more than fifteen dialects were spoken by the disciples and were recognised by the listeners.

Now there is not a word in the record intimating that the multitude of devout persons attracted by the rumour of what had occurred entered the upper room where the disciples gathered for prayer. From the limited character of such accommodation found in those times, it is unlikely that the room would hold many more than the hundred and twenty. The disciples would probably vacate their private meeting place and proceed to the temple-courts for the purpose of public testimony as was customary.

The plain and simple statement of the historian that every man heard in his own dialect the wonderful works of God is proof that there was no confusion arising from several speakers addressing the same audience at once. In the streets on the way to the temple-courts, and in the courts themselves, there would be ample time and opportunity before the third hour of the day (9 a.m.) for the disciples to witness to the wonderful works of God, as indeed we read that they did.

It is important that we should, even at the risk of a charge of repetition, ask our readers to note very carefully the nature of the evidence at this stage. The narrative in Acts ii. clearly indicates that the general public in Jerusalem heard the witnesses of Christ proclaiming their message concerning the "works of God" in a variety of foreign

languages and dialects, which the hearers recognised as those with which they had been familiar from their birth. Moreover, they were able to judge that what they heard was not the speech of fools and knaves, but sane utterances by sensible men. The Spirit by whose aid they spoke was, and is, the Spirit of a sound mind (2 Timothy i.7), and the "devout" persons who listened said, "We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." We can ignore the stupid remarks of some enemies of Christ and partisans of the Pharisees and Sadducees who said, "These men are full of new wine." Its absurdity calls for no serious reply today, since Peter answered the insinuation on the spot.

Clearly, the outstanding fact established by Luke is that a number of persons, assembled in Jerusalem on the occasion of a great Jewish feast from the various quarters of the known world, heard natives of Galilee speaking audibly and intelligibly in diverse languages. Those who heard were mystified by the striking phenomenon, and, while unable to deny the fact of the tongues, they were equally unable to account for it on natural grounds. "What meaneth this?" they said one to another.

PETER'S EXPLANATION OF THE TONGUES

The public explanation of what had taken place that day was made by the apostle Peter, who addressed his remarks specially to the men of Judea and the inhabitants of Jerusalem as those who were directly responsible for the rejection and crucifixion of their Messiah, speaking to his audience, no doubt, in the language commonly used in that city.

Peter showed to them that the gift of tongues might have been anticipated from the Old Testament scriptures. To prove this point, he referred to the prophecy of Joel, which definitely foretold the gift of the Spirit prior to the coming of the day of the Lord. It must be observed, however, that the apostle did not declare that the whole of Joel's prophecy was then fulfilled. Plainly, the wonders in heaven above and the signs in the earth have not even yet come to pass

(Acts ii.19). We read below (verse 43) that "many wonders and signs were done by the apostles"; but these were not the ones foretold as "blood and fire and vapour of smoke, the sun being turned into darkness, and the moon into blood" (verses 19,20); though a promised outpouring of the Spirit did take place in Jerusalem, and the prophecy therefore was to that extent partly fulfilled. This fact the apostle set out to impress upon his listeners. The connection between the apostle's quotation from Joel and the conclusion of his address can be readily traced by the word "poured" which occurs in verses 17, 18 and 33, only it must be noted that in the last instance the word is translated "shed" in the Authorised Version.

The effect of the testimony rendered on the day of Pentecost, by Peter mainly, but possibly by others also, was that many (about three thousand) were brought into the company of believers. But this effect was because the word spoken and received was the incorruptible seed (I Peter i.23-25), not because it was uttered by the preacher in a tongue new to him, and which he had not acquired through the ordinary channels of learning a language.* The living and energetic word of God awakened sleeping consciences, but the fact that the speeches were delivered in other tongues awakened surprise and wonder only in the hearers (ii.7), and without converting, left the great mass in Jerusalem more hardened than ever in their unbelieving hatred of the Messiah whom they crucified but whom God had exalted to His right hand.

Since the confusion of language which Jehovah inflicted upon men in the plain of Shinar shortly after the deluge (Genesis xi.1-9), free intercourse among nations was impeded on that account and to that extent. And the existence of so many diverse tongues in the earth in the time of the apostles constituted a serious hindrance to the easy and speedy execution of their commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel. But at the outset these servants of

*There is no reason to suppose that Peter spoke in a "tongue" the address recorded in Acts ii.14-36. But others earlier in the day had spoken in tongues, as is plainly stated in the preceding verses.

the Lord were shown that this difficulty was as nothing when met by the energy of the Spirit of God. He was able in a moment to endow the disciples with the power of addressing men in their native dialect concerning the "wonderful works of God". Thus in that one Pentecostal day, there was an open demonstration in Jerusalem of the operation of the gospel scheme whereby the news of salvation was to be carried quickly to the ends of the earth. It was shown that He who made man's mouth could tame the tongue, that unruly member which no man can tame, and as its Lord use it to speak to men in their diverse dialects.

Moreover, the fact that the dew of the Spirit fell upon the fleece and not upon the ground was a warning sign to the nation of the Jews. Truly those who were filled with the Holy Spirit were Jews, but they were exclusively those Jews who had believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. The mass of the earthly people who did not believe were excepted. They heard as it were the sound of the blowing wind, but they knew not whence it came nor whither it went. The Holy Spirit was the seal of God put upon those who were Christ's. He passed by the priestly families, the elders and the scribes, and came upon the few believers praying together in the upper room. Their power of supernatural speech was the instant and undeniable evidence rendered in Jerusalem that the Promised One had come upon the Nazarenes.

It must not be lost sight of in this inquiry that the gift of tongues, along with other miraculous signs, was given at the beginning in order to establish the authenticity of the messengers and the message of grace as coming from God, as they professed to do. The "works" of Christ's servants showed that God the Holy Spirit was with them. The Lord Himself said, "The works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me," and again, "Believe Me for the very works' sake" (John v.36; xiv.11).

The various signs wrought by the apostles established the presence of a new thing in the earth, whether men believed it or not. They could not deny the existence of divers tongues, though they refused to accept what the new tongues

(Continued inside front cover)

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CONTENTS

The Day of Grace and The Day of Power I	73
Speaking with Tongues III	78
Correspondence	Inside Back Cover

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

From this it followed, that every believer, known to be sound in the faith and godly in walk, who came desiring fellowship, should be received without question. For scripture knows no other basis for Christian fellowship than this.

Moreover those who met in this spirit of obedience did not learn the true way all at once, and so felt that they must allow others to learn slowly also. Hence believers who were received among them included, not only those determined to reject unscriptural practices, but those who were as yet undecided — who were attracted by the simplicity of the new way, but perhaps hesitated to leave a church where much godliness was mixed with practices definitely contrary to the word of God. Also similarly received were those (such as Christian friends) completely unexercised about such questions. No matter, they were Christ's, already members of *His* church, and to be received as such. To impose any conditions would indeed be to form a sect.

But do not many churches invite "all the Lord's people to join with us" in worship, or to partake of the Lord's Supper? Where is the difference? There are two differences.

First, such general invitations ignore completely the scriptural practice of commendation, and hence make it possible to receive those who have let go a good conscience (I Tim. i.19).

Second, because such invitations do not imply "full membership". People will say "I go there; I take communion there; but I have not taken membership." There is no trace in scripture of this kind of thing.

But where believers meet consciously on the simple ground of the church of God — no more and no less — then every believer has exactly the same title to be there, and enjoys the same privileges.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

THE DAY OF GRACE AND THE DAY OF POWER

While "the Day of Grace" is a familiar expression, its special characteristics are not always understood among Christians, and in consequence some of the promises and commands of the scriptures are misunderstood and misapplied.

Ever since man, at Satan's suggestion, chose to follow his own way rather than God's, this world has been in rebellion against God, apart from a line of faithful witnesses. God's plan for man's redemption, slowly revealed through the ages, began to take shape when His earthly people Israel were established in their land. Their failure to maintain testimony to the true God, their banishment and partial restoration to their land, prepared for the coming of the Redeemer, the incarnate Son of God, as their Messiah.

He would, so the prophets had declared, redeem Israel from their sins and from the power of their enemies, and establish the Kingdom of God in righteousness in this world.

Alas, Israel knew not their Messiah; but rejected and crucified Him, thus effectually postponing the blessing promised to them. Instead of setting up His kingdom here, the Lord Jesus, being raised from the dead, was exalted to sit upon the Father's throne, waiting till the time should come for His enemies to be made His footstool (Psalm cx).

Satan, who led the rulers of Israel in their attack upon the Christ of God, was apparently left as master of the field, yet he had suffered a moral defeat which ensured his final crushing. The weapon of death as the wages of sin, by the use of which he has held man in bondage (Heb. ii.14,15), was broken in his hand when he used it against Jesus, Who died for *our* sins, not for His own. This has ushered in the Day of Grace, while the earthly kingdom — the Day of Power — is at present in abeyance.

GOD'S ANSWER TO THE CROSS

The murder of His Son at the hands of men — both Jews

and Gentiles being implicated — has produced a reply from God the astonishing nature of which is often forgotten. It is not merely that His judgment upon this dreadful sin is held back to give men a chance to repent, but God has come out in grace to men on the very basis of the death of His Son. He (through the messengers of the gospel) entreats men everywhere to be reconciled to Him, offering them pardon and peace (2 Cor. v.19,20). Those who accept His grace are brought into the closest relationship to Himself as His children, and into indissoluble union with the Lord Jesus Christ as members of His body, His church, and are heirs with Him of the coming glory.

Moreover, if the members of His body are upon earth and their Head in heaven, yet the Holy Spirit is here — the other Paraclete of Whom the Lord spoke to His disciples (John xiv.16). It is He Who binds them to their Head and to one another; it is He Who reveals the things of Christ to them; Who bears testimony through them to the world; Who delivers them from the devices of Satan, as John says, "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world" (I John iv.4).

We have seen what amazing grace God is showing to men, and it is important to understand that His whole attitude to men, yes unbelieving men, is consistent with this. To understand it let us consider the patient grace of the Lord Jesus with men while He was here. How, when He was refused at one village, He quietly went on to another (Luke ix.52-56). When His life was threatened, He merely withdrew (Matt. xii.14-20). His last act before His hands were bound was to heal the ear which Peter had cut off (Luke xxii.50,51). Struck by the High Priest's officer, He remonstrated "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?" His answer to the crucifixion itself was the prayer "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

So today, when men revile His name or ridicule His claims; when they persecute His people even to torture or death, no fires of judgment descend to burn them up. His only answer is the gospel's message of forgiveness.

In conformity with this, His people are instructed to love

their enemies and pray for their persecutors. In communist prisons the torturers have been converted and are sent to prison in their turn. It is Saul of Tarsus over again. And what a victory for grace!

ALL POWER FOR BLESSING

Though the Lord Jesus has been raised to the place of supreme power and glory, believers in Him are led to expect suffering and rejection at the hands of men, just as He received them. "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." All power indeed is in His hands, but at the present time He is using it, not to subdue evil forcibly, but to strengthen His people in their service for Him. There is power in Him for every believer to live a life from which His own love and grace shall go forth into a rebellious world; power also to maintain the gospel testimony that seeks to win men's hearts. The door of opportunity is opened by His power in answer to the prayer of His servants. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth: go ye *therefore* and make disciples of all nations . . . and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age."

In the light of these scriptures, we can see how utterly wrong it was of the church in earlier ages to persecute the Jews, instead of seeking their conversion through the gospel. Hatred instead of love merely hardened them still more against the Lord Jesus. Similarly the attempt to oppose Islam by the sword instead of the gospel has left many millions in darkness for centuries.

MIRACLES NOW?

Much confusion exists about miracles. Some unbelievers claim that the gospel story is untrue because of the miracles it records, while others take the opposite tack and argue against the love of God because of the suffering He does not now miraculously prevent! Some Christians claim miracles of healing just as in the days of the apostles, and say that believers who are ill are not living by faith.

First of all it is important to recognize the special charac-

ter of the Lord's earthly ministry, which was renewed through the apostles. His miracles of healing were a testimony to Himself as the Christ, and were only a foretaste of the powers of the age to come — the Day of Power (Heb. ii.3,4; vi.4,5). Of that day Isaiah had foretold, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (xxxv.5,6).

These "signs" became rarer towards the end of His ministry as Israel's refusal of Him became clear, but were renewed in still greater volume after His ascension as He had promised (John xiv.12), so providing a witness to the power of the *glorified* Christ: "His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man whole", said Peter, responding to the challenge of the Jewish council.

When the gospel was carried to the Gentiles, God again "gave testimony unto the word of His grace (a very significant expression), and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands" (Acts xiv.3), though in this particular case the signs were God's answer to the Jews' unbelieving cavils. Later, at the council regarding circumcision, Paul and Barnabas declared what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them (Acts xv.12). Again, at Ephesus, God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul (Acts xix.11).

In every case, the emphasis is on the miracle as a *testimony* to the gospel message. There is no promise that every difficulty will be surmounted by a miracle, or that every illness or disease will be miraculously cured. Paul himself had to learn that his "thorn in the flesh" was to remain, in order that the power of the Lord might rest upon him; on one occasion he records that he had had to leave Trophimus behind, too ill to accompany him. We remember also that the Lord Jesus warned His disciples that they must not expect, when He was no longer with them, that complete provision for all their needs that they had previously experienced. In future they must make provision themselves (Luke xxii.35,36). Of course, He did not mean He would not help them, but that

privation and difficulty would henceforth be their lot.

We conclude that if miracles occur today, we might expect them where the Lord's servants are breaking new ground among the heathen, but certainly not where their effect would be to exempt God's people from the weakness and afflictions common to men. Rather may we count on Him to supply grace that we may be enabled to exhibit "longsuffering with joyfulness" whatever trial or sickness or sorrow life may bring. While no one can limit what God may do in response to the prayer of faith, it is evident that miracles in general are not characteristic of the Day of Grace. Most of the claims made today, when examined, turn out to consist only of gradual recovery from illness, and do not conform to the scriptural pattern.

As to the unbeliever's claim that the world's suffering denies the love of God, it is sufficient answer that the power of the world nailed the Healer's hands to the cross. But when He departed from this world, what programme did He commit to His followers? Did He send them out to heal the world's diseases, to feed its hungry multitudes, or to put down its tyrannies?

No, He commanded them to proclaim repentance and remission of sins in His name among all nations (Luke xxiv.47). This immediately began to "turn the world upside down" (Acts xvii.6), and if the message had been received by the world, war and crime and the social evils which result from human sin and selfishness would soon have disappeared.

Instead, led on by Satan, men at large have continued to refuse the message of grace, and so have continued in the bondage of their own lusts — lusts of the flesh *and* of the mind (Eph. ii.3).

It is perhaps necessary that the world should prove by experience what its preference for Satan's leadership entails, and prophecy suggests that God will not interfere in power until the tide of evil has risen up to its fullest height. Certainly we now seem to be approaching this.

Meanwhile the responsibility for restraining wrong doing is placed by God in the hands of rulers and governments every-

where, and the path of the Christian is one of submission to the powers that be, as Romans xiii. explains in detail. Hence we are exhorted to pray for rulers of all kinds (I Tim. ii.1,2), and to pay taxes, as to those who are God's ministers.

The present inter-governmental effort to stamp out the drugs traffic is one which Christians ought to support mightily with their prayers.

CONCLUSION

If God is now pleading with men to repent, instead of openly punishing their evil ways, it does not mean that God's moral government of the world is in abeyance, but He acts according to His secret providence. Men still, in general, reap what they sow, and this is equally true of believers, though in their case God frequently exerts a special loving discipline. However, neither good nor evil receives its full reward as yet. Only in exalting the Man Christ Jesus — the only perfectly righteous man — has God shown what value He places upon righteousness.

Finally, the frequent occurrence in the New Testament of the words "till" or "until" indicates, what many lose sight of today, that the Day of Grace is not to last indefinitely. "*Till* I make Thine enemies Thy footstool"; "*till* ye say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord"; "Occupy *till* I come"; "Let both grow together *until* the harvest" — these are reminders that the Day of Power is coming. The characteristics of that day must be left for later consideration, D.V.

(To be continued)

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

(Continued from page 72)

(B) IN CAESAREA (Acts x.)

In this second case we are instructed that the Holy Spirit was given to Cornelius and to those that were with him at Caesarea, and that they thereupon spake with tongues, as the disciples did in Jerusalem at Pentecost. We now proceed

to inquire what were the special features, if any, in this instance which warrant the modern claim that the power of tongues is an invariable accompaniment of the possession of the Holy Ghost.

It will be observed at once that Cornelius and his kinsmen differed in one very important particular from those in Jerusalem. The latter were Jews who had known the Lord in the days of His flesh, and who had received from Him personally the promise that He would send the Holy Spirit upon those whom He was leaving behind in the world. But those in Caesarea were Gentiles who had believed on the Lord through the word of the apostle. We read, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God" (Acts x.44-46).

In each of the two cases there was a public authentication of the gift of the Holy Ghost by means of the tongues which were bestowed, but the occasions differed. In Jerusalem the persons publicly authorised were preachers and witnesses of Christ, and this gift was known in its exercise not only to the usual dwellers in that city, but to those Jews who had come up from all parts of the Roman world to the headquarters of their religion. In Caesarea, the verification was not of those who *did* the preaching, but of those who *received* the preaching.

Hitherto, the gospel had been proclaimed to, and received by, Jews only, the Samaritans (Acts viii.), among whom our Lord Himself ministered, being included with the Jews for this purpose. The case now was that of a Roman military officer, who, with his kinsmen and near friends, was in deep exercise of heart and conscience. Officially, Cornelius belonged to the conquerors and oppressors of God's ancient people; nevertheless Peter was specially deputed by the Spirit of God (x.19,20) to carry to him the knowledge of the for-

giveness of his sins through faith in the anointed Jesus of Nazareth (x.34-43).

This act of Peter was of the highest importance in the history of the church. It was nothing short of the opening, for the first time, of the door of faith to the Gentiles, whereby they were accorded the privileges of grace equally with the Jews. Was such a step of God? and how should it be demonstrated once for all that it was the will of God there should in future be no difference between Jew and Greek? If henceforth converted Romans were to take their places in the assemblies side by side with converted Jews, and if all ancient racial distinctions were for ever obliterated, it was necessary that Peter's preaching to the Gentiles should be duly authenticated in a way that would settle the question for all time. It must be shown by adequate evidence that Cornelius and his friends were accepted of God as confessors of Christ equally with the believing Jews.

Now Luke's history records that while the preaching of Peter was proceeding, God gave the same gift in Caesarea to the Gentile believers as He had done formerly in Jerusalem to the Jewish believers. As God publicly acknowledged the Cornelian company, Peter was thereby empowered to receive them: "Can any man", he said, "forbid water, that these should not be baptised, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" And he commanded them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ.

Now we find that the right of Peter to recognise the small band of Gentile believers in this manner was challenged immediately by the saints. They very properly inquired what was the apostle's authority for so doing: "When Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him, saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them" (Acts xi.2,3). The apostle in defence showed the objectors that at Caesarea he acted throughout under the direction of the Holy Ghost. Referring to his preaching to Cornelius and his house, he said, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of

the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptised with water; but ye shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts xi.15-17). This evidence showed the brethren at Jerusalem that the reception of the Gentiles was in order, while the fact that they were suddenly endued with the power of speaking with tongues proved that they had received the Holy Ghost, equally with the Jewish brethren on the memorable day of Pentecost.

Yet another reference to this important crisis was made at a later date. This occurred when the great conference was convened at Jerusalem to consider what was the proper attitude of Gentile believers towards the law of Moses. The apostle Peter on that occasion again brought forward what took place at Caesarea. He said, "Men and brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among us that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv.7-9). Here again the gift of the Holy Ghost is quoted as the voucher upon which the Jewish Christians acted in their first reception of their Gentile brethren to a recognised position in the new community.

It is interesting to observe in passing that this single fact of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit is stated in slightly differing terms in these various passages:

- (1) The Holy Ghost *fell* on all them who heard the word (x.44);
- (2) He *fell* on them even as on us at the beginning (xi.15);
- (3) On the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost (x.45);
- (4) These have . . . *received* the Holy Ghost as well as we (x.47);
- (5) God bare them witness, *giving* them the Holy Ghost even as He did unto us (xv.8).

These varying expressions (falling, pouring out, giving, receiving) all refer to the gift and action of the Spirit whereby these Gentile believers were baptised into the one body (I Corinthians xii.13). But the special work of the Spirit, it must be remembered, is inward in character. He shall be "in you", the Lord said. Because He works subjectively, the outward manifestation of His presence is often slow, and is developed only by degrees. At Caesarea some evidence was required at once, so that Peter and those with him might know on the spot that God had granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life.

Accordingly, the identical sign was given on this occasion as was given at Pentecost — the gift of tongues. The Gentiles in the wisdom of God publicly received equal credentials with the Jews. By such means all prejudice against the whole-hearted reception of believing Gentiles as fellow-members of Christ was removed. And the racial jealousies which survived in the early church in spite of this supernatural voucher is practical proof of the necessity for the precautionary measure taken at the outset to show that there was no difference between them on God's side.

From the above considerations it is evident that the circumstances in which the tongues were given on this occasion were unique, and would not occur again. Once the fact was publicly established that it was God's will that Gentile believers should be admitted into the assembly, there was no further occasion on similar grounds for a recurrence of the miracle. The tongues served a special purpose at Caesarea, which was to constitute an immediate warrant that the Holy Spirit had been given of God to certain Gentile believers, and Peter acted upon that warrant, and commanded that they should be baptised with water. Showing that the evidential value of the tongues was only transitory, we have seen that when Peter referred back to the incident on two subsequent occasions he mentioned the gift of the Holy Spirit, but not the evidence on which he knew they had received that gift, namely, the exercise by them of new tongues.

We conclude, therefore, that nothing can be adduced from the scripture in Acts x. in support of the idea held by some that the power of speaking with tongues might be expected to continue as an abiding witness of the indwelling of the Spirit of God. They were given then on the unique occasion of the initiation of Gentile believers into the church of God — an event which would not occur again.

(C) IN EPHEBUS (Acts xix.)

Here again an exceptional case arose in the course of the apostolical labours which required that a divine witness should be given, corresponding in its character with that previously bestowed at Jerusalem and Caesarea. The gift of tongues in this instance demonstrated a further fact, namely, that the action of the Holy Spirit was uniform when such exceptional circumstances arose, whether they arose in the ministry of Paul or of Peter.

The persons concerned at Ephesus were not believers in the Lord Jesus from among the Jews as in Jerusalem, nor from among the Gentiles who knew not God as in Caesarea. The apostle Paul found there about 12 men who were disciples of John the Baptist.

No doubt these men were in their fatherland when John was preaching in the wilderness of Judea that men should repent because the kingdom of heaven was at hand. These men moreover, had believed the preaching of John and were baptised in Jordan confessing their sins.

Now, twenty years or so later, Paul meets with these men at Ephesus, still waiting for the promised King and His kingdom. Not knowing the Lord Jesus, they were ignorant of the Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost. Having ascertained their spiritual condition, the apostle spoke to them of the Lord who had come according to the testimony of the forerunner. The men believed the word of Paul, and showed the sincerity of their confession in that they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth,

Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples: and he said unto them, Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed? And they *said* unto him, Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was *given*. And he said, Into what then were ye baptised? And they said, Into John's baptism. And Paul said, John baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus. And when they heard this they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix.1-5, R. V.).

Now it is plain from the narrative that when Paul found these followers of the Baptist, they had not believed either in the Son of God or in the Spirit of God. Nevertheless they were separate as a party from both the Jews and the Gentiles who were opposed to Christ (Acts iv.26). How then should these be received? Were they to be regarded as upon an equal footing in the church with Jewish and Gentile believers previously received in other places? God showed there and then that they were admitted to a place of similar standing, and they were given the fullness of Christian blessing. Accordingly we read, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (xix.6).

These disciples of John the Baptist therefore became the nucleus of the assembly in that great city wherein the apostle went on to labour for about three years, and the seal of their acceptance corresponded with that given in the Palestinian cities of Jerusalem and Caesarea. The Holy Spirit, however, would not come upon them while they believed only in a Christ who should come, but when they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, believing that He had come, and that He was delivered for their offences, and raised again for their justification, and, moreover, was now glorified at the right hand of God, He fell upon them as He did at the beginning upon those of their brethren according to the flesh who believed likewise.

W. J. HOCKING

(To be continued, D.V.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Referring to the article "Christian Fellowship according to Scripture", in the March 1972 issue of "Words of Help", a correspondent has written to say that two paragraphs on page 27, beginning respectively with the words "While seeking" and "Does this differ", are not clear.

Now the author is rejoiced to find a reader both attentive enough to notice an obscurity and diligent enough to ask for some elucidation. An enlargement of the paragraphs seems the best way out. But first it should be stated that the whole article is a follow-up of that in the February issue "Calling on the Name of the Lord". There the contrast between what God's word has to say about the church and what man has made of it, is pointed out. Now many believers conceive it to be impossible, at this late day, to obey "the commandments of the Lord" (I Cor.xiv.37) in regard to church order and fellowship. They are content if only they can "sit under" a minister who preaches a pure gospel. But there are many who believe that, if the Lord has given commands, it must be possible to obey them; and that, whatever the difficulties, love to Him calls for this (John xiv.15).

The two paragraphs enlarged.

When in the early part of the last century, the movement to obey scriptural commands at all costs first began, the believers concerned began to realize that if they merely sought to correct erroneous practices, they would just form another sect, as others had done before them.

Hence, while discarding all the rules and rubrics, the forms and traditions of human origin (however ancient) which had been thought necessary to maintain order, they discovered in the word of God a simple pattern which was wholly of God.

To meet together in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, as members of His Body, the church, with no director for worship or ministry but the Holy Spirit, no rules but the scriptures, and no distinctive name — just Christians, or brethren in Christ — this was a ground of gathering *where every true believer ought to be*, and therefore was no sect.

(Continued inside front cover)

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CONTENTS

The Day of Grace and the Day of Power	85
Joseph — A Fruitful Bough	91
Speaking with Tongues (continued)	93

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(Continued from inside back cover)

the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will" (I Corinthians xii.8-11,R.V.). Tongues and their complement, the interpretation of tongues, are placed at the close of this list, indicating their relative importance from the divine point of view. The primary gifts are always those whereby the church is developed in love and faith and the knowledge of Christ. The sign-gifts, on the other hand, are always in scripture placed lowest in the scale, though man is apt to value them otherwise and unduly.

This grading is shown also towards the close of the chapter, where apostles are placed first, and tongues last: "And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, . . . divers kinds of tongues" (verse 28). Then Paul proceeds to exhort his readers to mark this order, which is God's order, and to strive after what He regards as the most worthy and useful in the church. They did not all possess all the gifts he mentions, but he exhorts them to covet earnestly the greater ones. "Have all the gifts of healings? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts" (xii.30,31, R.V.). The greater gifts were not miracles and tongues, but apostles, prophets, teachers, which were given for the establishment of the church in the great truths of its heavenly calling and its association with Christ on high. Those who cry up "tongues" today and their paramount importance are at variance with both the letter and the spirit of apostolic teaching. And as apostles and prophets have not remained until this day, so we are not entitled to expect the continuance of the miracles and tongues mentioned in the same enumeration.

(To be continued, D.V.)

THE DAY OF GRACE AND THE DAY OF POWER (II)

“Jehovah said unto my Lord,
 Sit Thou at My right hand,
 Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.” Psalm cx.

Throughout the centuries since the Day of Grace began, God has brought to Himself a rich harvest of souls, who as the bride of Christ will share His glory when He comes to reign. But mankind as a whole has never accepted the Lord Jesus, has refused to be reconciled to God, preferring to maintain its enmity. Though lately the forces of atheism have received a severe check, yet everywhere true believers are but a small minority. Meanwhile the feeble hold which many people still have on Christian morality is threatened by a rising tide of evil and lawlessness.

Hitherto God's longsuffering has held back His inevitable judgment, and the remarkable fruits of the gospel in many lands today should warn us not to be hasty in assuming that there is no more room for grace. But its day *will* end, and then the Day of Power follows. We may note that the idea — still held by many Christians — that the gospel will at last convert the world, has no support whatever in the Bible.

Now when the Day of Power dawns, it does not mean that the Lord Jesus will acquire any power which He does not already possess, for *all* power in heaven and in earth is already His. But then, at the Father's behest (for always He will carry out the Father's will), He will begin to use that power for the subjugation of His enemies.

Death—the last enemy to be finally destroyed (I Cor. xv.26) — will be made to release its hold on His saints. This will be His *first* act of power. From heaven “we look for the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile (i.e. lowly, for the word ‘vile’ has undergone a change of meaning) body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. iii.20,21). The sleeping saints will be raised and the living will be changed, both being made like

Himself, and will be caught up together to meet Him in the air, "and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. iv).

In the first three chapters of Revelation we find the church on earth. In chapter iv. the scene shifts to heaven, and John has a vision of glorified saints, represented by 24 "elders", clothed in white, seated on thrones surrounding the divine throne, and crowned with golden crowns. The word "crown" here is the overcomer's crown, using the same word as is employed when a victor in the games was crowned. But *these* crowns are not perishable laurel wreaths—they are of gold, the symbol of incorruptibility. It is these crowns which prove that these 24 represent saints.

Then in chapter vi. begins a series, or several series, of acts of judgment on this world. These judgments are of increasing severity, but the tide of evil and of opposition to God only rises higher and higher; Satan will be cast down from heaven (Rev. xii.9), and will do his utmost to bring all the world yet more firmly under his control, and to destroy every spark of testimony to God and His Christ. The personal intervention of Christ — Who will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, and accompanied by the glorified saints — will be needed to put an end to it all.

The immediate destruction of the Beast and the false Prophet or Antichrist, with their followers, then takes place, according to Rev. xix., but other enemies of God and of His chosen people Israel will remain to be dealt with later. For Israel, so long rebellious, and who will suffer more terrible tribulation than any she has yet undergone, will be so diminished that only a remnant will remain; but this remnant will turn to God and gladly acknowledge the Lord Jesus as their Saviour-God. He will espouse their cause, and will gather her outcasts from the ends of the earth. Her enemies, long bent on her destruction, will be compelled to acknowledge her as "the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord" (Is. lxii.12), and to assist in bringing back the exiles.

Thus the first characteristic of the Day of Power will be unsparing judgment against rebellious men. And the Lord Jesus will use His people Israel to subdue their foes, just as

God enabled David to subdue the surrounding nations (Micah v.8,9). How great a contrast with God's will for His people now! For now He is dealing in grace, then He will be judging according to men's deserts. Of the nations generally God says to His anointed King, "I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm ii.8,9). "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth." (Psalm lxxii.8).

The Lord will have His own earthly throne (Rev. iii.21)—that is to say, His personal reign as God's King will be for Him an *additional* glory. That place which He now has, "at God's right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world (age), but also in that which is to come" — this glorious place He will retain, and not as we sometimes sing "Oh leave the Father's throne."

When all open enmity on earth has yielded, He will sit on the throne of His glory (here, and here only, a literal throne is meant) and the remaining nations will be gathered before Him for judgment, as He tells us in Matt. xxv.31-46. Let us be clear that this judgment has nothing to do with the church, which long before will have been glorified with Christ. It is the judgment of the living (Acts x.42; 2 Tim. iv.1), for when death has come in, "nations" exist no longer; also here there is no hint of resurrection. It is men and women still living at that time who will be brought before that glorious yet earthly throne.

As at the transfiguration, His face will shine as the sun, and His eyes, "like a flame of fire" will discern and judge righteously. Those He calls "My brethren" are the first-converted Israelites who had preached "the gospel of the kingdom" among all nations (Matt. xxiv.14), and men will have shown either, belief in the message, by their comforting and helping the persecuted messengers, "hated of all men for My name's sake"; or else, will have displayed enmity to the coming King by despising His heralds. The righteous will be

invited by the King to inherit the kingdom: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat etc." But those who had refused the message and shown enmity to the coming King will be consigned to the fate prepared, not for men, but for the devil and his angels.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE

It appears, then, from the scriptures we have already looked at, that the kingdom will be composed entirely of righteous people — whether of Israel or of the nations. But they will be in earthly conditions, though endowed with every blessing. However, this will not mean of necessity that the new generations which will grow up will all be born again, though to Israel the promise is "Thy children shall be all righteous" (Is. lx.21). This leads us to another characteristic of that day — Satan will be bound in "the abyss", and doubtless his angels with him. Instead of his deceptions there will be the displayed glory of the Lord — seen no doubt over the Temple in Jerusalem if nowhere else — so that men will have no excuse for unbelief.

Moreover, will not the prophecy of Joel receive a more complete fulfilment then? "I will pour out my Spirit upon *all* flesh," so that under His benign teaching "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

This will be the day of universal peace, peace that will be maintained and if need be, enforced by divine power, and will be firmly based on equity. "With righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth" (Is. xi.4).

This same chapter of Isaiah gives us a beautiful picture — surely to be interpreted symbolically — of the subduing of that violence and oppression that the world has so long been plagued with. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

Now, the little child has to lose its innocence as it grows older: then, men will be led to learn the value of that simplicity and trust in one another which is the only basis of peace and concord.

HEALING AND PLENTY

What of the other evils that at present abound in this world? There is disease, and there is want. Now Israel will first prove the sufficiency of the Lord Jesus to meet these needs, as Psalm ciii. celebrates:

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; Who healeth all thy diseases;
 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies;
 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

Those wonderful miracles of healing which the Lord Jesus wrought when He was here as proof that the kingdom was at hand, will be repeated in still greater measure: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.” (Is xxxv.5,6).

Nor will healing be confined to Israel. This is shown figuratively in Rev. xxii. 2, speaking of the Tree of Life — “the leaves of the Tree shall be for the healing of the nations.” The Lord Himself of course is the Tree of Life.

A number of scriptures speak of that day as a time of plenty. To Israel Amos says, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt” (wave with corn, N.E.B. Amos ix.13). And Joel, “And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil . . . and ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God.” (Joel ii.24,26).

These are special promises to Israel, but a larger view is given us through the grand original promise to Abraham: "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Certainly the vast spiritual blessings of the Day of Grace are a fulfilment of the promise, but there is more to come. For now it is blessing to individual believers: but the promise speaks of blessing to all the nations. When the world has been purged of evil men, the blessing which is God's purpose for His creatures will flow out without hindrance.

The Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the true Seed of Abraham, will be the source of blessing, and His heavenly saints, who will share His reign (Rev. xx.4,6), will doubtless be the ministers of it. Unlike other kings, who are supported by their subjects, He will be the supplier of all good. The only tribute that He will receive will be the worship of grateful hearts; this worship will also be rendered nationally in the temple at Jerusalem, in an annual keeping of the feast of Tabernacles (Zech. xiv.16; Micah iv.1,2).

THE WHOLE CREATION BLESSED

Hitherto we have been thinking of the earth. But in Rom. viii. a larger vista is hinted at. If now the whole creation groans and travails in pain, it is but waiting for that Day: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. viii.19-21).

MAN'S HEART UNCHANGED

How pleasant it would be to learn that fallen man had at last been won over by the display of God's goodness during this long reign of blessing — 1,000 years of peace and plenty! But alas, the scripture of truth bears witness that it will not be so. Men who have not received the truth into their *hearts* will not be changed by outward blessing, however great and prolonged. So that when at the end Satan is again allowed

to tempt men, he will succeed in raising a massive rebellion against God's anointed King. Fire from heaven will consume them, and they and their tempter will be consigned to the lake of fire.

DEATH DESTROYED

The Lord's last act of power will then be the destruction of Death itself, by means of the second resurrection, the resurrection of judgment (John v.29). The wicked dead will be raised to face the judgment of the great white throne. Then will take place the completion of what Philippians ii. tells us, that every knee will bow at the name of Jesus. Happy are those who bow willingly while it is the Day of His Grace!

YIELDING UP THE KINGDOM

When all trace of evil has been removed, when every foe has acknowledged Jesus as Lord, He will hand back His kingdom to the Father. He himself, as Son of Man, will subject Himself in obedience, in complete contrast to the first man. God will be all in all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and the vast hosts of the redeemed, reconciled creation will enjoy that wonderful love of God as their eternal portion.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

JOSEPH — A FRUITFUL BOUGH

(Genesis xlix.22)

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall,” says Jacob with the prophetic insight and God-given prescience which marked his utterances upon the solemn occasion of blessing his sons on his deathbed.

Joseph is acknowledged as being by far the least faulty of any Old Testament character, as a type of our Lord. He has nothing recorded against him, but there is much in circumstances running parallel with those of his great *Anti-type*.

The present subject, however, is that part of the pictorial

parable in which Joseph is blessed by the old patriarch, who was giving his dying charges to his sons.

Of Jacob himself, another has written, "Truly we may apply to him, and in a far deeper sense, the words that England's great poet puts into the mouth of his most faulty hero, "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving of it." None of the patriarchs had such a glorious exodus as Jacob.

In the blessing pronounced by him upon Joseph he was singularly felicitous in the choice of "a fruitful bough" as descriptive of this son "whom he loved more than all his brethren." It is not, however, as the too fond father of Rachel's firstborn, but as Israel, a "prince with God," that he is speaking. "Joseph is a fruitful bough," says he, and in a parabolic form proceeds to reveal wherein the fruitfulness consists. "A fruitful bough by a well: whose branches run over the wall."

The picture presented is of a vine, its roots matted around an ancient well, its branches supported and extended by a wall. The vine in direct and unbroken contact with the unseen well, which in its turn is constantly being fed by springs from the everlasting hills, grows and flourishes even in the hottest summer, the wall serving to support and extend the branches, some of which actually over-run the wall. By an unwritten law in Eastern lands a tired traveller on the dusty highroad may rest under the shade and pluck some of the ripe fruit overhanging the wall.

The fruitful bough running over the wall thus becomes a type of the unconscious influence of a good man's life. The life lived as the result of communion with the Unseen Source of all blessedness, is also supported by a wall of testimony, and all unconsciously ministers refreshment to weary wayfarers on the road of life. Refreshed and comforted by the fruit of the bough of the vine that grows by the well, they thank God and go on their journey.

What a blessing indeed is that of a good and fruitful life, lived effectively, yet without strain or effort, because it is the outcome of living in touch with the infinite springs which come from the hills of God. The well the source of supply,

the wall the support by the testimony of a good life lived in the fear and love of God; the fruitful bough a channel of refreshment to wayfarers on the dusty hard road of life.

Who has not known such? People who will never know how much they helped us all unconsciously by just what they were. Says our Saviour, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And an Apostle in the very early days of Christianity prays that "saints and faithful brethren may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work," each one a fruitful bough indeed.

W. G. TURNER

(Reprinted)

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

(Continued from page 84)

III THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

If any man speaketh in a tongue . . . let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God." "Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether they be tongues, they shall cease; whether there shall be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away" (I Corinthians xiv 27, 28; xiii.8-10).

We now come to the Epistle addressed by the apostle Paul to an assembly that came behind in no gift (I Corinthians 1.7). Enriched as they were, however, with the gifts of the Spirit in abundance and variety, they had fallen, amongst other grave errors, into the snare of using these gifts for the gratification of their own vanity rather than for the glory of God and for mutual edification. One of the gifts so misused was that of tongues. And it is proposed, therefore, for our guidance today, to examine specially the instruction the apostle gave to the assembly in Corinth on this subject.

First of all, it may be pointed out that the very fact that

speaking in a tongue is a gift of the Spirit establishes the important truth that even when it was bestowed in the early days *some* in the assembly received the gift but not *all*. For this reason, the modern claim falls to the ground that speech in a tongue is an invariable accompaniment of the presence of the indwelling Spirit and an indication that such a person is full of the Holy Ghost. Young girls in their teens are now claiming to possess the gift of tongues, being carried away in their ignorance and immaturity by foolish delusions on the subject. These delusions must be considered for the most part to be either temperamental or demoniacal.

WHAT IS IT TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT?

We do not find in the scripture any corroboration of the idea that those indwelt by the Spirit are also full of the Spirit, nor of the correlated notion that those full of the Spirit speak with tongues as evidence of that fact. It is the teaching of the New Testament that the possession of the Spirit is a credential of Christianity proper, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His" (Romans viii.9). All those who have heard and believed the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians i.13). But it is nowhere stated that all such are consequently full of the Holy Spirit, though all are exhorted to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians v.18).

Some, however, seeking to set aside this statement, quote from the Acts the passage recording the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, and refer especially to the words "they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts ii.4). But this case at the inauguration of the church was evidently exceptional, and there is no record that a similar case occurred again where the whole company of the followers of Christ were equally filled with the Spirit. The propriety of bestowing the gift in its fulness at the outpouring of the Spirit according to promise can be readily recognised. Then it was indeed true that *all* were filled with the newly-come Paraclete, and *all* spoke with tongues.

But to be full of the Holy Spirit is in scripture language not applied to all believers, but is associated with certain persons on special occasions or under special circumstances. There are even instances which occurred prior to the Pentecostal day. Not to go back as far as Bezaleel (Exodus xxxi.3), it is written concerning both the father and mother of John the Baptist, as well as concerning the prophet himself, that they were filled with the Holy Ghost (Luke i.15,41,67). But in each of these cases the filling was for the utterance of prophecy, and therefore temporary, as in the case of the prophets of olden time (I Peter i.11; 2 Peter i.21).

On a special occasion the twelve told the disciples in Jerusalem to look out seven men "full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts vi.3) to undertake the distribution of alms. Clearly the whole assembly was not filled with the Spirit, for if so, such a qualification would not be prescribed. On another occasion, a company of the believers made special prayer to God because they were forbidden under penalties by the Sanhedrin to speak His word. Their prayer was answered, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness (Acts iv.31).

The same fact is also mentioned as being true on special occasions in the history of Peter; of Stephen; of Barnabas; of Paul; of the disciples at Antioch in a time of persecution (Acts iv.8; vii.55; xi.24; ix.17; xiii.9,52). Had it been the case that these persons were always filled with the Spirit and that the same condition was equally true of their brethren, there would be no force in the specific record of the fact in the special instances noted. Moreover, we know that the apostle Paul exhorted the saints generally to be filled with the Holy Ghost (Ephesians v.18), although he had in the same Epistle reminded them that they had been sealed by the Spirit (Ephesians i.13; iv.30).

It will be seen that the condition of being filled with the Spirit is only once associated with speaking with tongues, and that was when the Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost. On the other occasions it is variously connected with wisdom and joy, and particularly with the rendering of verbal

testimony by the servants of Christ to those who knew not or who opposed the gospel. And so far from the ability to speak with tongues being possessed by the whole assembly, we find that the apostle laid down certain directions for the guidance of those who had received this gift, but who were using it improperly. Paul does not at all contemplate that every one of the saints in Corinth had the gift. The exact contrary is implied when he asks them, "Do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? (I Corinthians xii.30).

On the other hand, all have received the baptism of the Spirit, for in the same chapter we read, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit" (I Corinthians xii.13,R.V.). This scripture shows that the baptism of the Spirit is true of all who are members of the body of Christ, and that it is not confined to those who speak with tongues as some at the present day allege.

TONGUES IN THE ASSEMBLY

Turning now to the Epistle to the Corinthians, we observe that the references to the gift of tongues are all found in the section in which questions of church order are treated (I Corinthians xii.-xiv.). Amongst the gifts of the Spirit enumerated, that of tongues as well as that of the interpretation of tongues are both included.

We must remember that the gospel brought believing men of all races, nationalities, and tongues, into close and intimate relationship in the assemblies. Brothers in Christ would be passing in the way of trade and commerce from time to time between such places as Antioch, Ephesus, Troas, Corinth, Thessalonica, and other towns. They would be certain to visit the assemblies as they had opportunity, for because of their faith they were no longer of the world. In the assembly differences of language would constitute a serious hindrance to the fellowship of the Spirit. Prayer, worship and ministry would all be unintelligible to the person ignorant of the language usually spoken in the local assembly. In like man-

ner if the stranger took part and spoke his own language, he would be unintelligible to his audience. And the Spirit's ministry of New Testament truth at the beginning was exclusively a *spoken*, and not a *written* one. Hence the greater need for tongues to facilitate the communication of truth among the members of the body.

Now we shall see in these chapters that God provided in the body of Christ some who had divers kinds of tongues and others who were able to interpret tongues. And the apostle enunciates for the guidance of all in this matter that unless there was present one who could interpret, a man with a tongue should keep silence in the church, and speak to himself and to God (I Corinthians xiv.27,28). Apart from interpretation, the assembly could not have fellowship with him in the exercise of his gift, and he was therefore to remain quiet, and not make a mere display of his tongue out of the vanity of his own heart.

The matter of tongues is taken up by the apostle in conjunction with other gifts, but in doing so he presents the great facts underlying God's gracious provision for the maintenance of the church as a self-contained unit here in the earth. It will help us in grasping the truth of this Epistle to observe the general subject before the apostle in each of the three chapters:—

- xii. — The variety of gifts provided by the Spirit.
- xiii. — The superiority of the exercise of love to the exercise of gifts.
- xiv. — The divine order for the exercise of gifts in the assembly.

TONGUES — A LESSER GIFT

In chapter xii. then we find that the apostle names nine gifts bestowed by the Spirit and wrought by Him. He writes: "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom . . . to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh the one and

(Continued inside front cover)

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CONTENTS

The Divine Workers XXXVI	97
The Woman of Samaria	101
"Sifted as Wheat"	104
Speaking with Tongues V	107
The Words "Convert" and "Turn"	Inside Back Cover

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

in the speech of the day. It is not now correct usage to employ the verb "**convert**" intransitively, that is, we cannot say, all men should **convert** to God, meaning, all men should **turn** to God. But three or four centuries ago **convert** was used in this manner. Instances could be quoted from secular writers of the Elizabethan period, but an instance is found in the Old Testament which will serve our purpose. This example occurs in Isaiah vi.10, where we read, "Make the heart of this people fat . . . lest they see . . . and hear . . . and understand . . . and **convert** and be healed." The meaning of the last few words expressed in modern English is, "lest they . . . **turn again** and be healed." Accordingly, the phrase is so rendered in most revised translations.

This solemn warning to the obdurate nation delivered by the prophet Isaiah is quoted four times in the New Testament (Matthew xiii.15; Mark iv.12; John xii.40; Acts xxviii.27). In each of these quotations, however, the phrase in question is translated, not "lest they . . . **convert**", but "lest they . . . should be **converted**." But the Revisers render it, "lest they . . . **turn again**", to correspond with the original prophecy in the Book of Isaiah.

It will be noted . . . that "**turn**" or "**turn again**" is a more faithful translation of the original word than "**be converted**". The phrase "**to be converted**" suggests that the **conversion** is accomplished by some power apart from the person himself, but this meaning is not found in the original word. The person turns himself, although we know from other scriptures that God works within him.

The prodigal son wandered further and further from his father until he "came to himself". Then he **turned**, for we read, "he rose, and came to his father". This was his **conversion**.

W.J.H.

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v.17)

Luke xv.1: "Then drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." The guests in "the house of one of the chief Pharisees" (chapter xiv.1) are left with their complacent superiority, and the multitudes who followed Jesus have dispersed at the thought of giving up all to become His disciples. Those who *now* come are *drawn* to Him — they have nothing to give.

The approach of each of these three gatherings is characteristic of their thought of Him in relation to themselves. To the Pharisees He was a menace to their ecclesiastical self-importance: to the "great multitude" who "went with Him" it seemed possible, in view of the healing of the dropsical man and the picture of the feast He had presented, there might be something to be gained by going along with Him. But the "tax-gatherers and sinners drew near unto Him." They had known His company before. No one but *He* wanted them. He was evidently "despised and rejected of men" in authority — they, too, were despised. There was a sense of welcome from Him — as if it gave Him joy to have their company.

The new translation gives the clear impression that, as a class, the tax-gatherers and sinners were known to gather about Jesus and to eat with Him. They were a community apart from the sight-seeing crowds that pressed in curiosity wherever rumour of a miracle spread — "and all the tax-gatherers and the sinners were coming near to Him to hear Him" (Luke xv.1, New Tr.). The expression of the *murmuring* of Pharisees and scribes which follows is not an isolated disapproval of Jesus' association but a generally accepted condemnation, with them, as indicated by the use of the word in the original. In their view, where tax-renegades and other delinquents of society were gathered Jesus might well be found — and this despite the frowns of religious leadership.

In the first parable Jesus answers the murmurs of enmity. The listening outcasts also hear — surely with deepening interest! "What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the

wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?" The Mind of Heaven is speaking. Something of *value* has been lost, and the Lord Jesus is emphasizing the importance of this loss to the owner. In Scripture no loss is trivial — it is always associated with value. The owner has lost something of value, and the listening outcasts from that religious hierarchy heard — it may be for the first time — that they were of value to God — they were a loss to Him. Moreover, the measure of that loss is such that it is more important to Him than all the remaining possession, for He will "leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until He find it." How deeply God must feel the loss of His creature!

"What man of you?" — it was a searching personal challenge. Each Pharisee — each scribe — was, in reality, under divine scrutiny. Tenaciously they held their "place" (John xi.48). It came before their "nation," in the record quoted. It was a "place" of importance as well as personal gain. They held a shepherd position in relation to the people of their day, and no man could do so and escape the scrutiny of God. They were still His people. The words of Ezekiel come to mind: "Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds: Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? . . . The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick . . . neither have ye sought that which was lost" (Ezekiel xxxiv.). They were responsible for those they despised as "tax-gatherers and sinners," and spoke their hatred of the true Shepherd Who was about to give His life for the sheep! We may reflect that the response to their enmity revealed the purpose of the Owner — the recovery and restoration of His loss. It is a matter of deep concern to God that He has lost man. The Seeker goes after that which is lost "until he find it." The chapter emphasizes that the labour and energy of divine Persons is exerted to bring man to repentance. This is the aftermath to the *seeking* — it is linked with the Seeker's joy in *finding*.

How is a man brought to repentance? It is an humbling experience. Left to himself a man knows nothing of it. He

may look back upon his life and wish he had had no part in certain events in it. These, also, may be excused, or explained, even dismissed. There may be sincere regret, indeed, but this is not "repentance toward God." Repentance is reaction to a conviction *in the soul* that all is not well — that the resources of mind and will are inadequate to overcome influences *within* that are disruptive of peace of mind — that sin is not a question of degree only, but of fact. Submission to this conviction, as before God, brings a man close to being "found."

It is the goodness of God which leads to repentance (Romans ii.4). The danger to a man who is without any thought of self-judgment draws out the love of Christ in seeking until He finds that one. The fulness of His unselfish love is seen in the laying down of His own untarnished life. It is His pledge of love. The repentant man sees himself under the judgment of God convicted of sin. It is then that the Shepherd finds him, and, taking all responsibility for him, "he layeth it upon his own shoulders, rejoicing." A love, hitherto unknown, has sought him; divine grace has found him, and who shall tell the joy of accomplishment in the heart of the Shepherd-Owner as He lifts His sheep to the mighty shoulder of divine resource!

"And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." Here is an harmony — a communion of JOY! It is presented as being where the Owner of the sheep has friends and neighbours — where, indeed, His own overflowing joy may be appreciated by those in sympathy and understanding regarding His purpose of recovery and His labours in achievement.

To be occupied only with *our own* joy in deliverance may promote thanksgiving, but there can be no *worship in the Spirit* apart from appreciation of *His own* joy in our salvation. "I say unto you that thus there shall be joy in heaven for one repenting sinner." Principalities and Powers are again discomfited! The work of the Great Shepherd, in all its perfection, has brought about that vindication of the righteousness of God which shows itself in repentance. In that sphere of perfect comprehension — Heaven rejoices!

The Son of Man has shown Himself, in this first of three parables, in His well-known character as the Shepherd. He follows this with two further parable pictures to emphasize the joy of heaven over the recovery of lost man. It is wonderful to realize something of the great care He takes to establish an understanding of the relationship that God desires as between Himself and man. Luke records the circumstances of these three parable expositions which give clear evidence of this.

We are shown a woman seeker in the second word-picture. How often this mishap must have occurred! How easily the hearers would have recalled it and the energy of the search for the "one piece" of silver! As compared with the lost sheep, there is, here, an inanimate possession. The living sheep, in its lost condition, could utter a cry of distress as the vulture shadow moved searchingly in the valley of the shadow of death. There could be no reaction to the searcher from the metal coin. How often, in His arduous journey, searching, through the years of His appeal to the Jewish people, must the Shepherd of Israel have paused to listen for the rare cry of "Good Teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (Mark x.17). The import of the parable reaches on to our own day. The soul is shown to have no spiritual reaction — no power of return. Yet it is still of value to the Seeker Who, in the revealing light of the searching Word of God, moves, even amid the dust of dead possibilities, until, ultimately, "She calleth together her friends and neighbours, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost."

How sweet it is to think of the precious communion which is open to us in this rejoicing! The Son, the Holy Spirit, the Father, are each individually revealed in these wonderful presentations of that holy relationship with poor man which is so desired by Divine Persons. Lost! he is sought until found! Dead in sin and unresponsive! he is the subject of search by the Spirit of God until recovered! In open withdrawal from the circle of the Father's love! he is brought from degradation to the embrace and security of the Father's house!

EDWARD T. WOOD

(It is proposed to continue, in the next issue, thoughts on the third parable from Luke xv., verse 11 — the far country and the Father's House.)

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA or A Study in Making Contact

There is more than one way of studying the scriptures, and the subject of John iv. 4-29 can be looked at from various aspects. In the present article we would like to examine it as a model, provided by the Master Himself, of how to make contact with a soul. Not that, of course, every soul can be approached in the same way; yet this chapter contains valuable instruction for us to profit by.

The Difficulties

These were considerable. First, the very fact of her being a woman, and alone. We find that the disciples, when they returned, were astonished to find the Lord speaking to a woman. Then there was the difference of race — He a Jew, she a Samaritan. Finally, she had something to hide — it is believed she chose this particular well because of its remoteness, so that she could avoid gossiping tongues.

The Opening

The Saviour begins by asking her a favour — to give Him a drink. Now most people get pleasure out of *doing* a good turn, whilst equally most of us are apt to dislike having even good things thrust upon us! So He does not begin by offering *her* the living water.

Now in order to give Him a drink, as He had no vessel, He would have to use hers, and this difficulty she at once points out. Here is a case where the New English Bible has a better translation than the A.V. For the A.V. "Jews have no dealings with Samaritans" is evidently faulty, for the disciples were even then buying food in the nearest town. The N.E.B. however translates "Jews and Samaritans do not use vessels in common".

His Light Touch Throughout

The Lord had achieved His purpose in asking her for a

drink, and now He abandons His request — He will not be drawn into a discussion of the difficulty. Instead, He now speaks of the gift of God, of Himself as the giver, of living water. This He would have given her, had she known enough to ask.

Her Readiness to Argue

Her curiosity now aroused, there is no trouble in getting her to talk! “You have nothing to draw with — the well is deep — where will you get this living water from?” (By living water she doubtless understood water from a spring, in contrast to water from a cistern.) “Are you greater than our father Jacob?”

The Samaritans were not, of course, descended from Jacob, and the subject of their origin was a favourite of dispute between them and the Jews. But once again, the Lord *avoids an argument*, and instead, enlarges on the living water. “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again: but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Still largely uncomprehending, she at least perceives that here is a gift worth having, and a person worth heeding. So now she asks Him to give her this water.

His Purpose So Far Accomplished, Jesus Makes a New Approach

No more about the water, but instead, “Go, call thy husband, and come hither”. For now the Lord had judged that it was the moment to touch her conscience. The rapidity of the change, the unexpectedness of His command, reminds one of a master chess player, playing with a comparative novice. Each move is so unexpected, and its purpose does not appear. Yet in so short a time checkmate is reached! So it was here.

She replies with a half truth, to cover up the real situation. She never dreamed it would come to this! “I have no husband.” In His reply the Saviour reveals to her His full knowledge of her life, of her five husbands — of her

vain search for satisfaction in what God intended as man's chief earthly joy — till at last she had gone astray into a life of sin. With gentle irony He says "He whom you have now is not your husband — in *that* at least you spoke the truth".

She Diverts from the Painful Subject, and the Lord Allows

Her to

She confesses Him to be a prophet, and raises the question of the true place of worship — Mount Gerizim or Jerusalem. There was no hypocrisy here, for such questions were of real interest to her, in spite of her present way of life. How needful to avoid putting people into categories, and to allow for the infinite variety which makes each person an individual!

Many of us, perhaps, would have tried to drag her back to the question of her sin. But oh, the beautiful wisdom of the Saviour! He knew her conscience was aroused, and would not easily sleep again, in His presence Who so evidently knew her through and through.

How light His touch, how gracious His dealing, as He enlightens her. He will answer her question. He will explain the great change that was even now coming to pass, He will reveal things never before made known, as One Who was able to make known God and His ways. So what we have to do, in seeking to reach souls, is not merely to expound a doctrine, "a plan of salvation", but to make known a Person, a Love, a Shepherd Who seeks the lost, a God Who seeks reconciliation with His creatures.

The woman's mind then was asking, Who is he? Can he be the Christ? So she says, "When Christ comes, He will tell us everything," and so the Lord reveals Himself, "I Who speak to you am He".

Arrival of the Disciples

As they arrive on the scene, the woman goes away. Was this an unfortunate interruption, at a critical point? Ah, no; the work in her heart was *done*, and she goes away, not as escaping from an ordeal, but as one who was rejoicing in her wonderful discovery. She had found the Messiah, and found Him to be, not only able to answer all her difficulties,

but also to know her altogether in all her sinfulness, and yet to have brought her the gift of eternal life. So, in the city she confesses Him as the Christ, and as a man who told her all she had ever done. It was a testimony that brought a large number to see Him for themselves.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

“SIFTED AS WHEAT”

(*Luke xxii.31*)

It was on the way to Gethsemane that the Shepherd, about to be smitten, told His sheep they would be scattered. It was Peter who protested, claiming to be possessed of a deeper devotion than the rest: “Although all shall be offended, yet will not I” (Mark xiv.29). He had said also, “I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death” (Luke xxii.33), and “I will lay down my life for Thy sake” (John xiii.37). But the Master made answer, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice”.

Peter’s failure and denial have passed into history. Yet was his case worse than others, or only more conspicuous because of his position and his boast? When with vehemence he said, “If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise: likewise also said they all” (Mark xiv.31). Peter was at least the last to leave. When “they all forsook Him and fled” (verse 50), Peter still “followed Him afar off” (verse 54), “to see the end” (Matthew xxvi.58). But it requires more than human confidence to maintain in the face of hostility the same faith that one has professed amongst friends. In the palace of the High Priest, warming himself at the fire in what he should have regarded as the enemy’s camp, his fortitude forsook him, and he — “the first, Peter” — denied with oaths and curses, saying, “I know not this man of whom ye speak”. So the last of His followers fell away: “the Lord turned and looked upon Peter” (Luke xxii.61), and went on to His death alone, save for the appearance of John with the faithful women by the cross. There

were also those secret disciples, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea, whose devotion survived the death of its object and moved them to give reverent burial to His body.

But what of Peter, who had "gone out and wept bitterly" when the cockcrow recalled the warning of His Lord? What agony of remorse and shame stirred his soul? Did he still hope against hope? Did his "faith fail not"? And what of the others? Poor shepherdless sheep, who "mourned and wept" (Mark xvi.10). "The breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord, was taken in their pits" (Lamentations iv.20). "We trusted that it had been He" (Luke xxiv.21). "As yet they knew not the scripture that He must rise again" (John xx.9).

Dawned the resurrection morning! "Go your way," said the angel to the women, "tell His disciples *and Peter . . .*" (Mark xvi.7). To most of them their words seemed as idle tales, but "then arose Peter and *ran*" (Luke xxiv.12). Not then upon his entering the sepulchre, but later in that wonderful "first day", the Lord appeared to Simon (verse 34). He was "seen of Cephas" before the others (I Corinthians xv.5), but what passed at that first meeting is not revealed to us.

Only on that later occasion by the Galilean Sea did the conversation take place which is so touching when rightly understood. (*See R.V. margin, or J.N.D.'s New Translation.*) For in John xxi. two quite different words are both alike translated "love" in the Authorised Version, and the perfect gradation of the original is lost. "Simon, dost thou love Me more than these?" How clear a reference to the shattered boast, "Though all shall be offended, yet will not I." But now he claims no superiority, nor even to *love* at all. Though grieved that in His third question the Lord adopted his humbled servant's own word, yet he could only answer, "Lord, *Thou* knowest that I am attached to Thee".

The lesson was learned. He was now such an under-shepherd as the Chief Shepherd could trust not to lord it over his heritage, but to be an ensample to the flock. "Feed My lambs: feed My sheep," was his commission; "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (I Peter v.3; John xxi.17; Luke xxii.32).

He was the leader still, as the earlier chapters of the Acts give evidence. The apostles are described as "Peter and the rest" (Acts ii.37), and healing virtue was ascribed even to "the shadow of Peter passing by" (Ch.v.15). It was no doubt the power from on high received at Pentecost which gave him such boldness, that he, who before had struck his colours at the challenge of a servant girl of the high priest, now fearlessly confronted huge concourses of people, charged them with having "denied the Holy One," and refused to be silenced by the council of rulers, headed by the high priest himself.

The "keys of the kingdom of heaven" having been committed to him (Matthew xvi.19), his was the privilege of bringing in first many thousands of the Jews, and afterwards the Gentile household of Cornelius. But it is noteworthy with what patience, when called to account for such intercourse with the uncircumcised, the once confident and assertive Peter "rehearsed and expounded by order," how his own prejudices had been overcome. Moreover, he seems to have yielded place to James (Acts xii.17; xv.13), and to have suffered rebuke (Galatians ii.11) from one whom he might well have regarded as a newcomer, yet whom he afterwards could refer to affectionately as "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Peter iii.15).

The two Epistles of Peter will appeal to us with fresh charm and interest if we remember that in writing of "the precious blood of Christ" he could recall Calvary; in writing that "God raised Him up from the dead," he had been one of the first to know it, and in exhorting us to cast all our care upon God, Who careth for us, he could draw this assurance from his own rich experience of God's grace. Who could speak better than he of "the longsuffering of our Lord"?

He had been forewarned of the manner of his end: "knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me": for his readiness to go "into prison and to death" was accepted. He should lay down his life for Christ's sake after all. By his death he should glorify God (John xxi.19). But in his last recorded

words before martyrdom, "Beloved, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness," we seem to hear the lingering echo of a cock's crow, which Peter could never forget. A. T. BEST

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*, September 1923)

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

(Continued from page 96)

III — THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL LOVE ABIDES, TONGUES CEASE

In the next chapter (xiii.) the apostle shows that love is of much greater value to the saints than tongues, in this way abasing the vain pretensions of those who boast in a mere display. The assembly may make advances in spiritual power and holiness without tongues and miracles, but not without love. Love is of God, for God is love. Love is for the eternal state, as well as for the present time.

To excel therefore in love should be the first and foremost aim of every believer. The way of love is the more excellent way, to which the apostle directs the saints in Corinth who were too much enamoured of those gifts which appealed to their senses rather than to their souls. He says to them, "And a still more excellent way show I unto you. If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (I Corinthians xii.31—xiii.2, R.V.).

Whatever the estimate of the value of tongues in modern days, the apostle rates them, whether of man or of angels, to be, in the absence of love, no more than "a mere instrument of sound without sense, dead, mechanical, devoid of moral worth". There is much clangour and clatter, but no true ministry of the Spirit bearing witness to the spirits of the saints. No edification results, for it is love that builds up, while tongues like knowledge puff up.

Now as the apostle mentions tongues, prophecy, and knowledge, at the beginning of the chapter, as just quoted, so he refers to all three in the latter part of the chapter, by way of depreciation as compared with love. They are but temporary while love is unending in its character and activities. We must put love first. Prophecy, knowledge and tongues are proper only to the circumstances of an immature state, but love will never be superseded. Love is the atmosphere of glory, even as it is the life-breath of the assembly on earth.

“Love never fails;
but whether prophecies, they shall be done away;
or tongues, they shall cease;
or knowledge, it shall be done away.
For we know in part,
and we prophesy in part;
but when that which is perfect has come,
that which is in part shall be done away.”

(I Corinthians xiii.8-10, J.N.D.)

A careful reading of this passage in a version such as that of the Revisers, J.N.D., W.K., and others, wherein the identity of the Greek terms is preserved in the translation, shows us that the cessation of tongues is stated in a special way. Prophecies and knowledge “shall be done away,” but tongues “shall cease”. The different phraseology is the more striking inasmuch as the tongues are interposed between the other two. Prophecy and knowledge shall be abolished, but tongues shall be discontinued. This distinction is difficult to understand if tongues were not to cease until prophecy and knowledge were done away.

Again, the two which shall be “done away” will be abolished “when that which is perfect is come”. What is only partial will give place to what is perfect when it comes. But tongues are not mentioned in this connection. We prophesy in part and we know in part, the apostle says, but he does not say we speak tongues “in part”. Why is this variation of phrase? It must have a significance. Does it not teach that the gift of tongues would lapse in the organisation of the assembly so soon as the wisdom of God

saw that the time had come when it was not longer needful?

It has been assumed by some that tongues will continue until the Lord's coming, because it is then that that which is perfect in respect of the saints will come. But it will be seen that only imperfect knowledge and prophecies are actually named as being "done away" at that time, although "tongues" is included with the other two in verses 1, 2 and in verse 8. There must be some special reason for this omission. And it certainly leaves room for the interpretation that the cessation of tongues would take place before knowledge and prophecies were done away.

There are some gifts that abide so long as the church is here; but "tongues" is not named among those that remain "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians iv.11-13).

When God's earthly people were scattered and Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed in A.D.70, the sign-gifts seem to have ceased. At any rate we read nothing about them in the later writings of inspiration. There were certain gifts of the Spirit associated with the founding of the church, such as apostles, prophets, miracles, tongues and their interpretation. When the foundation was laid and the word of God was complete (Colossians i.25), such gifts would lapse as the occasion for their bestowment no longer existed.

THE WORDS "CONVERT" AND "TURN"

. . . a remark on the use of our English word, "**convert**", because the translators of our Authorised Version used the expression, "**be converted**" when "**turn**" gives more correctly the sense of the passage in the original tongue. This is well understood by most students of the New Testament, and the modern translations agree in rendering the word in such passages by the simple verb, "**turn**" or "**turn again**".

By this change, the meaning of the scripture is given to us

(Continued on inside front cover)

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from the Scripture of Truth

Vol. LX

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CONTENTS

The Divine Workers XXXVII	109
Reverence in Worship	114
Speaking with Tongues VI	119
Praise and Worship			Inside Back Cover	

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

the Psalm we see Him alone, forsaken, in the depths of unutterable shame and suffering. He cries and is not heard. Then we read in verse 21, "Thou has heard Me from the horns of the unicorns". He is no longer alone. What follows this? "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee". He is no longer alone: He is a Worshipper with others. How did the Worshipper appear to God? He saw the true worshipper in the person of His own Son.

But He worships not alone. "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: **in the midst of the congregation** will I praise Thee." When the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, He brought His saints into a place where they had never been before. He had gone down into the depth of suffering and into death; now He associated His saints with Him in resurrection. He said to Mary Magdalene: "Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." He would declare His Father's name to His brethren.

Our worship is directed by the Lord Jesus, now risen and glorified. He has taken His place amongst us in order to lead our worship. What is the character of our worship? Is it not that the Lord Jesus is in our midst, and leads us in it? His resting-place is in the bosom of the Father, and He declares His Father's name to us. We joy in the Father as those to whom His name has been declared. G. F. Cox

(Extracted and slightly adapted)

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"

(John v.17)

Luke xv. (continued)

We have followed the Shepherd in His seeking, and have rejoiced to be among His friends and neighbours in a communion of joy at the success of His labours. We have seen the lamp in the hand of the woman, and have rejoiced, too, in the outcome of her sweeping and finding the lost silver. This work of the Spirit of God, so typified, gives us fresh sense of responsibility that, as vessels, we may be suitable for His indwelling.

The third parable, known to so many, and loved through nearly two thousand years, is never without its message for all who will heed it spiritually. The three illustrations are, however, divinely grouped. They form a trinity of emphasis in revealing the very heart of God — His yearning for lost humanity — His energy in seeking — His unselfish joy in finding. Only the self-judged and humble can know anything of the outreaching love that is prepared to do and to give to the uttermost so that man may be retrieved from the outcome of his own inherent failure. The message remains — in undiminished beauty — threefold in its truth — divine in its presentation of the Son of God, the Spirit of God, and the Father Heart of God, seeking in unity of purpose and rejoicing in unity of fulfilment.

"A certain man had two sons": once again the scene is familiar to His hearers. There is the home of security and privilege. The father-love flowing to his two sons, despite their differing personalities. The day of demand by the younger son, revealing an all too common restiveness under restraint — the elder, satisfied with his seniority and the rectitude of his behaviour.

The Lord Jesus continues to speak, within hearing of the two groups, using the manner of the East with its symbol and story. They would now appreciate that *persons* replaced the sheep as well as the silver piece which was sought and found. Thus *living men* were shown to be in responsibility. The parental house was a place of privilege, but the younger

son, grasping his portion, turned his back upon it and pursued his own course. Of him it had been written "We have turned every one to his own way". The elder son remained, but reserved his own views as to his outward legal attitude in the place of privilege.

The Lord Jesus continues His story, and the listeners are aware of the sin of the younger son in turning his back upon his father. The economy of words emphasizes the haste of leaving and of journeying to the far country, intent upon the fling of freedom and the spending of that substance which he claimed as his own. But the father, aware of the increasing distance, grieved over each step of his way.

It is such a *personal* story. There is "a certain man" — and there are individual sons of this man. Shall we miss the wonder of God's real interest in persons? He "so loved the world" of men — His far-reaching all-sufficiency would provide for the whole groaning creation! But each person among those hearers of long ago was invited to say "He is interested in *me*". My life story, past and present, is known to Him — yet He actually needs *me* for Himself! And, should that need be filled, there is *joy* in the heart of God!

Man continues to appropriate for his own use the wonderful gifts of God, and, instead of seeking the Author of these gifts, he removes himself far from the restraint of the knowledge of God. The journey is to the "far country". There are many who have travelled this way. Their resources of resistance to the evils of the "place of their desire" diminish as they are used. The pleasures of self-gratification also grow less — and still less with indulgence. The attractions cease to attract, and it is not within the capacity of man to give reassurance to the one who is now depressed, and even dismayed, by the famine conditions prevailing where he had thought to find permanent pleasure. "He began to be in want" — "no man gave unto him."

The Lord Jesus tells of a very sad case. So great is His warning love that He would cover all such cases. The younger son is seen as being joined to a citizen of that country. He is bound, in a slave condition, to feed swine. He has brought himself to a compulsory association with

the unclean, and there is a famished impulse to eat at the swine trough. For Jewish hearers this was the depth of degradation indeed.

“When he came to himself”: one thinks of the relief with which the Lord spoke the words! Here is the lost one being recovered. Here Grace brings the poor man to examination of himself — to self-judgment! He makes comparison between his evident condition of starvation and that of the hired servants of his father and passes sentence upon himself and all his rebellious hopes as he admits “I perish with hunger”. It is an expression of deep realization, and it is followed by the activity of repentance: “I will arise and go unto my father” — “I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight” — “I am not worthy”. These expressions are upon his lips — they arise from his repentant self.

There is no record of his steps in returning. He had said “I will arise and go”. He was “*a great way off*” — it was “*a far country*” — but it was there “the father saw him” — the word used is the same in both cases. Had the father at any time lost sight of him? It is at the “far away” place that the father is *near*, for it is the place of repentance — of turning back — from the swine trough of sin’s disillusion.

Repentance toward God has no place among the natural characteristics of man. He will apologize, as a matter of good manners. He will excuse himself and, at the same time, be annoyed that he has been placed in such a position. He will even feel that it is to his credit that he admits a fault — especially when he has convinced himself he has not committed one. Is he discovered in some misdemeanour? — he declares it is small as compared with those committed by others. But here is a man who knows he has “sinned before heaven and in God’s sight”. He appreciates that his course has been contrary to the Mind of infinite rectitude — the character and purpose of holiness. How does he assess the outcome of his repentance? How will he be received? Will penalties be inflicted? Will there be any form of retaliation? He is certainly convinced that the lowest place of servitude in his father’s house is infinitely superior to that for which he has spent his substance in the world of the “far country”. He is willing to take that place of subjection.

The Lord Jesus unfolds His story. How vividly He portrays the father's welcome to the repentant one — the longing of his love as, with unrestrained haste, he runs to meet him — the warm enveloping embrace even before the words of contrition are spoken — the lavishing of his love upon one who had turned his back upon him. It is the revealing of a heart of boundless love — the heart of God.

It was a mixed company that heard His story — He always "spoke with authority and not as the Scribes". The farming of the taxes was a considerable means of temptation to the publicans, and there was an admixture of failing humanity who, through poverty or inclination, would be wrongdoers and ostracized as such. The Pharisees and scribes were a class apart. For the "publicans and sinners" to hear the story and to learn of the father as being moved with *compassion* must have awakened thoughts unaccustomed, if not unknown. Compassion! the sympathy of understanding love overflowing from the heart of One Who "knew no sin" yet had compassion for all who were under the control of it!

The repentant admission of sin is always personal: "I have sinned against heaven and before thee". To judge ourselves is to discard any thought that relies upon self for support or strength to prevail over sin, and to look only to God in faith of His power and grace. It was when he returned that the son knew the great depths of the father's love. This assurance of the personal love of God is a gift of the Spirit to each one who turns in self judgment and repentance to Him. It is an awareness that one is precious to Him — an object of joy to Him! The kisses of the father are an intimate expression of this. Love beyond measure is indicated as the Lord tells them "the father . . . fell upon his neck and covered him with kisses". No doubt could now remain in that repentant heart but that the father's love knew no bounds in its fulness. It was a reception so different from that which he had anticipated. He would have been grateful to be permitted to work as a servant — to be associated with his father in a subservient capacity, and even this he could not merit. But all must be in accord with the perfect character of God. His standard must prevail. It is the *best* robe that must replace the

garments of dishonour.

There is a dignity as well as a responsibility in being clothed with Christ to enter the house. Pharaoh's ring conferred both upon Joseph. The sandals, which only a son may wear in the house, show, again, the grace by which "we, who were once afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" — Who enables us by His Spirit to move in conscious sonship. To walk as children of light in the intimacy and security of the house is to enjoy that which the Father has purposed for us by His grace. There we may breathe the atmosphere of His love and respond to it. The fatted calf is killed and the joy that follows is the shared joy of the Father: "and they began to be merry". The Lord Jesus gives no indication that this joy comes to an end. The killing of the fatted calf brings the thought of sacrifice and is that which sustains the feast. Without doubt, the eternal joy of the future will centre around the incalculable value of the death of Christ. There was a joy set before Him, surely, as He came to this part of His story, for He, and only He, could provide, by His death, the righteous basis upon which the Father could give us, now, the best robe, the ring, and the sandals of sonship.

The parable story continues. There are those in His audience who disdain the thought of GRACE — that unmerited favour divinely available at the greatest cost to the Giver. "Now his son was in the field": there is no joy in the field. There is labour and human achievement marred by disappointment, and some fear, but in the house, Grace and Love mingle with Joy. Yet the field is the centre of life for so many. Like the elder son, they declare, "I have served thee these many years and have never transgressed thy commandment". They are aware of the providential mercies of God and are thankful. They denounce the dissipated ways of spendthrifts and find cause for superior self complacency that they are "not as other men".

The sounds of rejoicing reach the elder son. "He called one of the servants and asked what these things meant." The good news of his brother's return was given to him, "and he was angry and would not go in". It is very beautiful to read that "his father went out and besought him". With

what patience the father hears the criticism of his acts of grace! His reply, too, is in terms of affection and gentleness. He uses the word "child" while setting the truth before him. "It was right to make merry and rejoice: because this thy brother was dead and has come to life again, and was lost and has been found."

The spiritual emphasis of rejoicing was not discerned by the elder son. He heard only the *sounds* of merriment. So concerned was he with his own rectitude — so satisfied that he had never transgressed a commandment of his father's — he refused to regard as valueless all that he had accomplished and to join in the joy of those who, with his father, were in a fellowship of rejoicing at the grace that could seek the lost until it be found.

EDWARD T. WOOD

REVERENCE IN WORSHIP

THE BREACH UPON UZZAH

(II *Samuel vi.*; I *Chronicles xiii.*)

King David and his army commanders, with the assistance of the priests and Levites, were bringing back the sacred ark, with rejoicing and sounds of music, giving praise to God. There was the ark — the gold-covered chest, with its golden lid upon which stood the two golden cherubim, carried along on a cart newly made for the purpose, and drawn by two oxen.

Just then the oxen stumbled — the ark shook — and Uzzah the Levite put out his hand to hold it still. What was wrong about that? Yet he died, instantly, to the dismay of all concerned, not least King David.

The fact is, everything was wrong, and had been wrong, from the start! For it was upon the ark, when in its place in the tabernacle, that the Shekinah Glory rested. There God manifested His presence. But David, in spite of his zeal to re-establish the worship of God, neglected to consult the law of God, so as to learn His will in the matter. Instead, he seems to have consulted his army commanders.

It was all wrong that the ark should be there, exposed to the people's gaze, for God's instruction was that before

it could be moved from the tabernacle it was to be covered by the veil which normally hid it from the priests. Again, the Levites of the Kohath family, upon whom was laid the responsibility of carrying the ark, were strictly forbidden, upon pain of death, to touch it. It was to be carried on their shoulders by gold-covered poles inserted into rings attached to the sides of the ark. All this is clearly laid down in Numbers iii.27-31; iv.5-20, but God's word had been completely ignored. Of course, everything had been out of order since the Philistines had been allowed to capture the ark. To serve God acceptably, zeal and energy are not enough. Otherwise Saul of Tarsus need not have been converted.

WHY SO IMPORTANT?

We may ask, what was the importance of this ritual, ignoring which was attended by such a dreadful penalty?

The fact is, that God, in calling out and establishing His people in their land, was training them for their task of truly representing Him to the surrounding nations. They were themselves with difficulty restrained from idol worship, yet it was theirs to learn, and to show forth the truth, that there is but one God, mighty, invisible to human eyes, yet desiring to dwell among men and make Himself known to them. Yet He was holy, and they hopelessly defiled and sinful. All this, and of course much more, was set out in picture form in the tabernacle and its ordinances.

God's presence among His people—what a stupendous fact! How necessary that they should learn something of its awesomeness, its solemnity! Their frequent lapses into idolatry showed how hard it was for them to understand this.

For us today it is important to profit by their failures, without getting occupied with shadows which have long passed away. There are two opposite mistakes we may make.

The first, which has troubled the church down the ages, is to forget that the tabernacle and its successor, the temple, with all their accompanying ritual, were but "figures for the time then present" (Heb.ix.9). The veil hiding the ark,

and the exclusion of all but the priests from the sanctuary, do not represent Christian truth even in figure. Still less are they to be actually reproduced in the arrangements for Christian worship.

Instead of being kept at a distance, the believer is "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph.ii.13). Instead of worshipping outside, with the glory of God veiled, we are exhorted "to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb.x.19,20). It is a rent veil, because He has been sacrificed for us. And, "We all, with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord" (2 Cor.iii.18). All this is of course by faith, but is none the less real.

"Enter into the holiest" — what does this mean? Plainly, as Heb. ix. teaches, we come where Christ is now — not into "holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us". So, persecuted saints of God may meet perforce in the woods, but their actual "place of worship" is in heaven itself. The magnificent cathedral, where the congregation sits at an immense distance from the "altar", is reproducing that condition which God has abolished, not Christian truth.

The character of Christian worship was made plain by the Lord Jesus in that well known utterance to the woman of Samaria: "God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". The actual words we use are not the most important thing, for God reads the heart, so that no one need keep silent because his words are inadequate. Shall we seek to "improve" the language of worship by using a liturgy of set prayers? How can such worship be more acceptable to God, seeing it must of necessity hinder the Spirit of God? For His work is to lead our hearts to feel and to formulate that response to God's goodness which, while it is our own response, is yet according to God — so as to be worship "in truth". But if the set prayer, written centuries ago, does not include that appreciation of the worthiness of Christ to which God's Spirit has led me, it must stop me giving expression to it.

All the wonderful language of the Prayer Book means less to God than simple words coming straight from the heart.

For the same reason it is difficult to sustain the objection, commonly made on the score of irreverence, to the practice of addressing God as "You" rather than the traditional "Thou". If the spirit is reverent, can we think that the eternal God is interested in what is ancient or traditional? If it is claimed that "You" is too familiar, what could be more familiar than "Abba", which is the child's intimate address to its father? When it is said that the Greek plural pronoun corresponding to "you" is not used in the New Testament to address God, this is merely because it was contrary to Greek usage to employ it, as "you" is employed in English, to address a single person. So if anyone finds that the practice seems to bring God nearer, as many do, it must be good, for him at least, however strange to those not accustomed to it.

The very word "familiarity" is significant. For God has, in His wonderful grace, brought us into His "family", and nothing ought to diminish our consciousness of this. Yet we know so well how familiarity breeds contempt, and it is this which constitutes the opposite error, to which we earlier alluded. Just *because* we are brought so near, our need for reverence is greater than Israel's was. We do not value aright the glorious grace which has brought us to God, or the precious blood that has cleansed us and made us fit for His holy presence, unless we remember both His holiness and our own sinfulness.

REVERENCE AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

In I Cor. xi. we find a most important example of this need of reverence, and of God's severity against the lack of it, in the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Some believers at Corinth, we read, incurred the Lord's judgment, even so far as to suffer death ("many sleep", verse 30), because they behaved in a disorderly manner at the Supper, some even getting drunk. This no doubt happened because the Supper was combined with an ordinary meal, but the principle is not affected by this. Paul writes, "Who-

soever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup”.

Now it is important to be clear that it is no question of the unworthiness of the person who eats or drinks. Our very presence at the Supper is a confession that we are but saved sinners. No, it was the *manner* of eating and drinking which was unworthy — unworthy because the solemnity of what was symbolised had been lost sight of.

The One Whose death we remember is the Son of God, infinitely holy, and approachable by sinful man only because of His death for us. “Guilty of the body and blood of the Lord” is perhaps not well translated — it is rather “guilty in regard to the body and blood of the Lord” — that is, their disorderly conduct was so much the more heinous because of the solemnity of the occasion. Again, the word “damnation” in the A.V. in verse 29, which has often troubled souls, should simply be rendered “judgment”. It is the Lord’s judgment or chastening of the guilty one in this life, so that he may *not* be condemned with the world (verse 32). It is evident, therefore, that “damnation” is not the meaning. Even where death was the penalty, the soul was saved. See also I Cor. v.5.

Again, we may not be guilty of disorderliness, but may still fail in reverence. If our minds are occupied with something or someone other than the Lord Himself, so that we eat and drink mechanically, it is unworthy of Him to Whom we owe so much. The apostle says, “Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat”. We need preparation of heart before we tread such holy ground. Yet note the words, “so let him eat”. For to say, “If I may so easily transgress I’d better refrain altogether”, is to show how little we value His grace towards us. We prefer, like Israel at Sinai, to keep at a safe distance (Ex. xx.19). If, on the other hand, we love Him, we shall want to draw near into His presence, with subdued yet joyful hearts, to bring to Him our tribute of praise, of worship, of remembrance — that which in His grace He longs for.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES III — THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

(Continued from page 108)

WITHOUT INTERPRETATION "TONGUES" MUST BE TIED

In chapter xiv. (I Corinthians), the apostle gives regulations for the exercise of Spirit-given gifts in the assembly, and special reference is made to that of tongues. We need not now do more than mention these passages briefly, and state their general teaching. It will be clear, however, from the texts that there was to be no use of the tongues in the assembly unless there was interpretation. And these texts are stated by the apostle to be the commandments of the Lord (verse 37), a word of solemn warning to those who wantonly set them aside.

(1) The gift of prophecy is superior to that of tongues because he that prophesies speaks to men to edification and comfort and consolation, and the assembly is edified thereby. One speaking in a tongue (without interpretation) speaks not to men but to God, and edifieth himself only. The apostle adds, 'I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied; for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying' (I Corinthians xiv.1-5).

(2) If the apostle himself came to Corinth speaking with tongues, he would not profit them unless he spoke to them by way of revelation or prophesying or knowledge or teaching (verse 6). The apostle further thanked God that he spoke with tongues more than all of them, yet in the assembly he would rather speak five words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue (verses 18,19).

(3) Prayer which is primarily a direct address to God was not to be in a tongue unless there was interpretation. This also applied to the giving of thanks, for as others in such cases could not understand they could not say, Amen (verses 13-17). Spirit-given communications in the assembly would be intelligible to all present.

(4) The apostle quotes a passage from Isaiah (xxviii.11,12)

to show how they were overrating the spiritual value of tongues. Because of the apostasy of the people of Israel God would not speak to them in the language they could understand, as the same prophet said in another place (Isaiah vi.9). Why should the Corinthians be so proud of the tongues which were given to attract the attention of unbelievers to what they did not understand, rather than to convince them of its truth? "Wherefore," the apostle concludes "tongues are for a sign not to those that believe, but to them that believe not" (verse 22).

(5) Edifying was to be the prime consideration in the exercise of gifts. This would not be the case if, when the whole church was assembled together, all spake with tongues. Such an exhibition of the lack of spiritual sobriety and self-control would lead a stranger to pronounce the place a bedlam (verse 23). What a dishonour to the Holy Spirit of God!

(6) If there was speaking with tongues in the assembly it was to be by two or three only who were to follow consecutively, and there must always be one to interpret. In the absence of an interpreter, a man must keep silence in the assembly, and speak only to himself and to God (verses 26-28). Confusion and disorder are not of God in the assembly, which is His house.

(7) At the end of the chapter the apostle sums up his instructions. He condemns unsparingly the extravagant and unauthorized use of tongues in the assembly, but he does not disparage what the Spirit gave. His gifts must be used under His guidance, which will be in His order and to the edification of the saints, *i.e.*, by interpretation, "Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. But let all things be done decently and in order" (verses 39,40).

We have now considered the relevant passages in this Epistle on the subject in hand, and we ask the question with which this inquiry was begun: is there any ground for believing that the power of tongues was to be perpetuated in the church down to the present day? And our conclusion is that no such warrant exists here any more than in Mark and in the Acts. Miracles and gifts of healing

are named equally with tongues as being in exercise at the beginning, but there is no hint of their continuance in the assembly when departure from the faith displayed itself in apostolic and still more in post-apostolic days.

In this Epistle Paul addresses serious warnings to the saints in connection with the various gifts, but it is remarkable that he gives more attention to their abuse of tongues than to that of any other gift. Being showy in its nature, it was on that account attractive to the natural conceit of man, and evidently it became a snare to the assembly then, as it appears to be still, in the case of some misguided ones.

In grading the various gifts according to their value in the church, the apostle places, as we have seen, tongues last on the list in order of merit. It was a sign not to believers, but to unbelievers. It was useless to the assembly unless there was the concurrent gift of interpretation. And the apostle, when pressing upon the church the overriding claims of love, as the mainspring of assembly life, mentions that tongues shall, in contrast with love, cease. If then the Spirit-given tongues of the apostolic time have ceased, what are the modern pretensions to that gift? If the latter are not of the Spirit of God, from whom do they spring?

(To be concluded, D.V.)

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

There is a difference between praise and worship. We may praise a man behind his back, but we cannot worship him unless we do so before his face. God has called us to intelligent worship. He has delivered us from fear: perfect love has cast out fear, and joy has filled our hearts instead. We have fellowship with the Father, and we joy in His beloved Son. We have fellowship with the Son, and we enter into the enjoyment of the Father's love.

In Psalm xxii. there is a sudden change of tone commencing with verse 22 — "*I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee*". The Lord Jesus is speaking. In the first part of

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from the Scripture of Truth

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CONTENTS

Christian Baptism	121
"If ye then be risen with Christ"	127
Speaking with Tongues VII	132

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

speaking through men's mouths to deceive, if possible, the very elect, we may be sure he works similarly in our day, though perhaps not to the same degree as he will do in the days of Antichrist.

From the precepts and examples of scripture we therefore come to the conclusion that a man's or a woman's mouth may be taken into possession by a power outside himself or herself, and things may be uttered unintelligible to either speaker or hearer, and that power may be Satanic or demonical in origin. As we have no scriptural ground for expecting the operations of the Spirit of God in this way at the present time, the presumption is that the modern movement of tongues is not of God, and that it must lead its adherents further and further away from the truth of scripture as they give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy to deceive and to destroy.

Many earnest believers are led astray because the votaries of this cult of tongues assume a garb of extreme piety. We are warned, however, in the word of God, not to be deceived in this respect. Ravening wolves will come in sheep's clothing (Matthew vii.15). False prophets wear a hairy mantle to deceive (Zechariah xiii.4). Ministers of Satan fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness (2 Corinthians xi.13-15).

We condemn the sincerity of no one; of this alone God is Judge. But many are deceiving themselves, and it will benefit us all to heed the apostle's injunction: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John iv.1).

W. J. HOCKING

(Reprinted from *The Bible Monthly*.)

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

It is strange that anyone familiar with the New Testament should ever contest the place of baptism as an initiatory rite in the Christian life. For the words of the Lord Jesus in the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew xxviii., "Go ye make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age" show that this was His will, not only at the beginning, but to the very end of this dispensation.

Then, lest anyone should cherish some fanciful notion that this was to be obeyed in any other than its plain, literal sense, we should note how, in the Acts of the Apostles, almost every group of converts in the earlier chapters is confronted at once with the call to be baptized. First the Jews at Pentecost, of whom 3,000 were converted, and baptized; then the Samaritans under Philip's preaching (viii.12); then the eunuch of Ethiopia (viii.38); then Saul of Tarsus, as soon as his sight was restored (ix.18); then the Gentile Cornelius and his friends, though here the challenge is not to the converts, but to the Jewish brethren. There is no mention of the baptism of the converts at Antioch (chap.xi.21), but certainly no reason to suppose it was omitted.

After this we read of the baptism of Lydia and her household at Philippi, then of the jailer and his household (xvi); of the Corinthians (xviii.8), and of the group of disciples of John the Baptist at Ephesus (xix.5).

This last case is important, because it shows the distinction between Christian baptism and that of John. Some have regarded one as just a continuation of the other. But in Acts xix. we read of disciples who had received John's baptism only, not knowing anything further. Paul explained that John's baptism signified repentance in view of the later coming of Christ, and on hearing this, these disciples at once submitted to baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus.

MEANING OF BAPTISM

It follows from this last incident, that the primary meaning

of baptism is the acknowledgement of Jesus as Lord and Christ. So, in conformity with this, Paul explains that he was careful, as far as possible, to refrain from personally baptizing his converts, "lest any should say I had baptized in my own name". For those previously acknowledging some other religion, baptism then involves its repudiation in favour of Christianity. Of course, for a Jew to be baptized, is really no more than acknowledging Jesus as the divinely promised Messiah; but in the eyes of Jews who refuse Him it is the repudiation of Judaism as a national faith, and hence causes bitter resentment.

The deeper symbolism conveyed by the act of baptism is brought out in Romans vi. and other scriptures. It implies a spiritual *death* — death to all that I have previously been. But it is more than just death, it is *death with Christ*. "Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" That is to say, in baptism I confess myself dead toward God, dead in sins, one whom Christ could only reach and save by Himself going down into death for me. But this of necessity implies an abandonment of all that I once was, as one abandons, or buries, what is dead.

Then just as Christ, Who died to sin once for all, now lives in the glory of God, so I who belong to Him, rise in figure to newness of life in Him. So Paul continues, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

Hence both in death and resurrection the believer is identified with Christ. The life we now have in our souls is His risen life, and in the power of this we have to live; live, that is, in this world. We shall, indeed, live in the glory with Him, when our bodies too have been brought into conformity with His glorious life. But for this we await His coming again: "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (verse 8). Again in

Galatians we read, "As many as have been baptized into Jesus Christ have put on Christ." It is noteworthy that here it is taken for granted that every Christian is baptized, and while it does not mention the putting off of that old, corrupt self, it does mention, as something which is true of every believer, that Christ is his life. Yet again in Colossians, "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith in the working of God Who hath raised Him from the dead" (Col.ii.12). Here we should note that it is one already dead, i.e. who has by faith accepted his true condition before God, who is baptized, or buried with Christ — so that the spiritual reality comes before the symbolic act. It is not *through* baptism that the spiritual change is brought about. Likewise "risen with Him" is through faith in God's working, and it is the one who has already believed who receives baptism, so that the outward act is also an acknowledgment of what God has done for him.

The doctrine of "baptismal regeneration", which teaches that in baptism the person receives life, or is born again, is not in accord with these scriptures. Indeed, going down into the waters of baptism is a vivid symbol of death and burial, not of the impartation of life. Moreover, that action of the Holy Spirit by which we are born again, is never mentioned along with baptism in scripture. True, we know that the Spirit descended upon the Lord Jesus *after* His baptism; but it is plain, if only from John's words to Him, that baptism was in no sense necessary for Him, but He sought it so as to identify Himself with the repentant ones among the people.

No doubt the words of the Lord Jesus "Born of water and of the Spirit" in John iii.5 have been taken to refer to baptism, but this ignores the fact that Jesus said Nicodemus, as a teacher of Israel, should have understood the reference. But how could he, if they referred to baptism, which was not instituted till some time after? We have only to read the words of Ezekiel xxxvi.25-27 to see that water is a figure of the means of spiritual cleansing — it is not meant literally.

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” This spiritual rebirth Nicodemus should have understood.

One more scripture which refers to the meaning of baptism is I Peter iii.21, where after speaking of the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark — “saved through water” — he continues “the like figure whereunto baptism doth also save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Christ”.

Peter makes it plain that baptism saves in a figure only. Water here certainly symbolizes death, but the water that drowned the wicked also bore up the ark. Hence Noah was saved *through* water in both senses of “through”, for he was sheltered in the ark, and brought at last into a new, cleansed world. Into such a position the believer is brought by the resurrection of Christ. Like Noah in the ark, he has passed with Christ through death and into resurrection. Baptism is not an outward washing, but Christ by His death and resurrection has taken away the believer’s sins, and given him a cleansed conscience.

THE MODE OF BAPTISM

A few controversial matters call for some discussion.

The mode of baptism — by immersion or sprinkling — is generally admitted to have been by immersion in N.T. times, even by those who now practise sprinkling. The emphasis on “much water” in John iii.23 is really by itself conclusive, and the symbol of burial is completely destroyed if we substitute sprinkling for immersion.

BELIEVER’S OR INFANT BAPTISM?

The Lord Jesus commanded His apostles to go and make disciples (R.V.) of all nations, and to baptize them — that is, the believers. Those who contend for infant baptism usually do so on two different grounds. One is that baptism is claimed to be analogous to circumcision, the rite by which

an Israelite's male children were brought within the Abrahamic covenant. But whereas the circumcision of infants was based upon precise divine instructions, there is no such command in regard to infant baptism.

The true analogy to circumcision, a rite which conferred a national place of privilege, is spiritual circumcision, what is called in Col.ii.11 "the circumcision of Christ" — "In whom also ye have been circumcised with the circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ" (New Tr.). This is, of course, a truth for believers, and hence has no reference to the baptism of infants.

The other ground taken is the baptism of households, those of Lydia (Acts xvi.15) and the jailer's (Acts xvi.33).

Now on the face of it, Paul's words "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" can only mean one of two things: either (1) that if only the jailer believed, he and his whole house would be saved; or (2) that the promise, believe and be saved, was a message not only for him, but for his household as well. The first is, of course, quite unacceptable. If we now enquire how his household reacted, we are told plainly (1) they all listened to the word of the Lord, (2) they were all baptized, (3) he rejoiced with them all, "having believed in God".

It is true that the last words (those in inverted commas) are in the singular, but this is surely because the jailer is the central figure, the leader of his house, in this joyful turning to God.

Now to introduce infants into this is to drag in what is just not there. It is pure assumption that there *were* even infants. And the same must be said of Lydia's household. And if we look further, at Cornelius and his household, we find the angel saying to him, "Send for Simon Peter, who shall tell thee words by which thou and all thy house shall be saved". That is, the same *words* which saved him, would save them. And how? Of course by believing them. No question of infants again.

If we are entitled to assume that there must have been

infants, then other assumptions are equally admissible. There may have been slaves in the household, who were baptized at their master's bidding, whether they believed or not. What slippery ground we are on!

In reference to infants, it may be well to say that their salvation, as of all children below the age of responsibility, in no way depends upon baptism, which we have seen does not in itself save anyone. Did not the Lord say, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"?

FORMULA OF BAPTISM

The Lord's word was "Baptizing them in (or rather, "into") the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit". Here is not only a clear distinction from John's baptism, but a wonderful expression of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. For here is but one *name*, into which the believer is baptized, yet three names are included — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is trinity in unity — Three Whom for want of a better word we call *Persons*, yet having but one name, one essential being.

Some find difficulty in a scripture such as Acts ii.38, where Peter tells the Jews "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;" or Acts xix.5, where the twelve disciples who hitherto had only known John's baptism were now "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus;" or Acts x.48, where Peter commands that Cornelius and his friends be "baptized in the name of the Lord".

Examined more closely, these expressions do not imply a different baptismal formula. For whereas in Matt. xxviii. we have "baptizing *into* the name," so implying the new sphere into which the believer is introduced, in Acts ii. and x. the expression "*in* the name of" is used, which gives the authority for the baptizing, rather than the baptism itself. But in Acts xix. it is "into the name of the Lord Jesus", because there is a contrast with the name of John the Baptist. But this does not mean that the Father and the Spirit were excluded. So the baptizer should adhere to the words of the Lord's own command.

WATER BAPTISM AND THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

Some have claimed that the baptism of the Spirit has made water baptism unnecessary. To His apostles the Lord said, "John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence". We may conclude that for the 120 in the upper room who first received the Spirit at Pentecost there was no other water baptism than John's, which they had already undergone. But for all believers after this, we have already seen that water baptism was insisted on. And notably in the case of Cornelius and his friends, their having received the baptism of the Spirit was the very reason why Peter demanded that water baptism should not be denied them. Actually the two things are not connected, so that one in no way replaces the other. The desire to be obedient to the Lord ought to make every Christian submit to water baptism.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST"

Colossians iii.

(Notes of an address given in London, 27th May, 1972)

The truths and exhortations of Colossians iii. are complementary to Colossians i., and it is very important to consider them against the background of the first chapter.

Colossians i. sets before us the transcendent glories of our Lord Jesus Christ, His personal pre-eminence Who is the image of the invisible God; the Head of all creation; the Head of His body, the Church; in Whom all the fulness of the Godhead is pleased to dwell; Who is the Redeemer; the Reconciler Who has reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death so that we stand in God's sight holy, unblameable and unprovable.

The third chapter unfolds the practical purpose of the presentation of the glories and pre-eminence of Christ. But, first of all, the Spirit of God occupies us with the Person of our Lord, now no longer on the cross, but risen and glorified, that our thoughts might follow Him there, that He might be the focal point of our spiritual gaze, that He

might fill our whole horizon, that we might gaze and gaze and gaze until our hearts are enraptured with Himself. Then, having fully contemplated His glories, and with our affections drawn out to our beloved Lord, our hearts are made ready to respond gladly to His will for us as unfolded in Colossians iii.

One of our paramount needs today, as we stand almost on the threshold of the Lord's coming, is a fresh realisation of the glories of our glorified Lord and Head, so that with our hearts focussed upon Himself, He may become the sole purpose and the all-absorbing object of our lives.

There are three important truths brought before us in Colossians in connection with our relationship with Christ:

1. We are united *to* Him as members of His body:
2. We are associated *with* Him in the fullest possible way: we have died with Him, we are buried with Him, we are risen with Him, our life is hid with Him in God, when He shall appear we shall appear with Him.
3. The purpose to be accomplished in our lives: that we might be morally *like* Him.

There are two sentences which unlock the theme of the Epistle: "Christ is all, and in all" (Chapter iii.11), and "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek" (Chapter iii.1).

Verse 1. The vital truth that we have died and are risen with Christ is established in Colossians ii.12. It is quite clear that when a man has died and been buried his life in this world is over. So it is for the believer. We did live once in the things of this world, as verse 7 reminds us, but now our life is hid in Christ. In Him it is secure and inviolate. There is no power in earth or hell that can rob us of our priceless possession of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Furthermore, Christ is our life (verse 4). Because this is true we have to express it practically. Is it seen that we have no other life but Christ Himself? The title of a book written by a world-famous cricketer reads: "My life: Cricket". He was absorbed with cricket; he thought,

played, talked and wrote about cricket. If the apostle had written such a book, the title would have been: "My life: Christ". The risen, glorified Christ of God was his whole life. He thought for Christ, he spoke for Christ, he laboured for Christ, he preached Christ, he suffered for Christ, his sole aim and object was the glory of Christ, his great desire was to depart and to be with Christ. And this same apostle says to us, as to the Corinthians: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Corinthians xi.1).

"Seek those things which are above." To "seek" implies diligence. But what are these things that we are diligently to seek? First we notice that they are the things *above*, exalted high above the low level of this world. The words "where Christ sitteth" give us their true character; it is everything that relates to our Lord Jesus Christ, risen and glorified: the Person of Christ — closer communion with, and deeper devotion to Him; the glory of Christ, the will of Christ, the word of Christ, the peace of Christ, the patience of Christ, the holiness of Christ.

Verse 2. "Set your mind on things above" (margin). To "set" implies a fixed and steadfast purpose, as also in Luke ix.51. It is in contrast to those who "mind earthly things" (Philippians iii.19). Such, like the man with the muck-rake in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", are obsessed with paltry things. So often our minds are volatile, they flit here and there: our thoughts, like a troop of horses loose in a field, all need to be rounded up and brought into captivity "to the obedience of Christ". If our minds are saturated with Christ, then our love and affections will flow out more and more to Him, and, furthermore, we shall grow into His likeness, for every man is assimilated to the objects that engage his mind.

Verse 5. "Mortify therefore . . . put off all these . . ." (verse 8). God says we are dead; therefore we are to put to death, in the power and energy of the new life, all the foul fruits of the old nature. The rose grower knows that a standard rose grafted on to a wild briar stock will some-

times send forth a shoot from the old wild stock. He cuts it off immediately it is seen. So is it to be with the believer: every manifestation of the old life, everything inconsistent with the glory of Christ, we are to put to death. What should our thoughts and ways be, seeing we are shortly to appear with Christ in glory?

Verse 9. In God's account "the old man", and all that relates to the old life, is put off in the death of Christ. It is, as it were, nailed to His cross and buried in His grave. In its place we have "put on the new man": resurrection life in Christ, a new creation of God in us.

Verse 12. Because this is true and we accept it by faith, we are now to put on practically that which belongs to our high holy calling. We are to put on the very character of Christ, so that He becomes everything to us. He is our life. He is the all-absorbing object for our hearts. He is the goal towards which we move. He is the pattern for our walk.

Believers are now addressed as the elect of God, holy and beloved. Primarily these titles belong to our Lord Who is the elect, precious corner stone on Whom we are built, God's holy and beloved One. Now they are given to us who, through God's grace, are chosen for Himself, who are holy as cleansed by the precious blood of Christ and loved as He. Are we, who are so designated, to put on the tawdry garments of this world when the Spirit of God has laid out for us the seven garments of gracious, lowly beauty of verses 12 and 13, that so become our high, holy calling? The world despises such lowly garments, but they delight the eye of God. Are they not the very same garments that our Lord wore so perfectly to the glory of God? Most certainly they are, and now we are to put them on and wear them to the glory of God.

Verse 14. Over all is to be seen the encircling girdle of love, the very nature of God which we see perfectly expressed in our Lord.

Verse 15. "And let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts" (N.T.). It is the peace He enjoys now, as also the

peace that filled His heart when He passed through this turbulent world. No circumstance, trouble or sorrow in our lives is to be allowed to dethrone the peace of Christ from our hearts.

Verse 16. The words: "you", "one another", the "Lord" in this verse cover the three areas of our lives:

1. The word of Christ comprises all the truth of which He is the centre. In Deuteronomy vi.6-9, we have the word of the law and the responsibilities laid upon the godly Israelite regarding it. But we have the word of the Christ of God, truth infinitely higher and more precious. How graciously the Lord's desire comes to us! There is no legal basis now, but "*Let the word of Christ dwell . . .*" Our Lord looks that we should be constrained by His love to respond gladly to all His desire for us. Moreover, it is to be a *rich* indwelling. We are the recipients of the riches of God's grace; the riches of His glory await us: in the meantime we have a rich portion for our hearts.

2. "*Teaching and admonishing one another.*" The divine order here is important. To attempt to minister to others before we have ourselves received a rich infilling of the word of Christ would be the greatest folly.

3. "*Singing . . . to the Lord.*" The verse is a complete circle. First there is the rich infilling, our tiny vessels filled to the brim with Christ: then spill over in love and service to others: and then in hymns and songs of praise to Him Who is the source of all this blessing, so that the Lord has His rich portion too from the hearts that He Himself has filled.

Verse 17. To do all in the name of the Lord Jesus is to have Himself as the only object before our hearts in everything we do. The result is two-fold. Firstly, all doubtful habits and occupations are ruled out at a stroke. They cannot be done in His name. His name is holy and His lordship is now stressed — the *Lord* Jesus. Secondly, the lowliest tasks are exalted to the highest level when done in His name, in communion with Him, in the realisation of His presence and for His glory.

A. E. JORDAN

SPEAKING WITH TONGUES

THE TESTIMONY OF PAUL

(Continued)

SATANIC SPEECH THROUGH HUMAN MOUTHS

The Jews were guilty of the unpardonable sin of attributing the power of the Spirit of God working in our Lord Jesus to Beelzebub, the prince of the demons (Matthew xii. 22-32). There is a danger today of falling into the converse sin of attributing what is the power of Satan to the Holy Spirit of God. The danger of this egregious error was not absent in the early church. The saints in a heathen city, like Corinth, were specially liable to the introduction into their midst of the oracular utterances of demons. The apostle reminded them of the idolatrous influence exercised upon them in their unconverted days (I Corinthians xii.2): "led away unto dumb idols howsoever ye might be led".

Satan, who was so active among the twelve in the days of our Lord, was ever seeking to corrupt the servants of Christ after His departure. At Philippi, for instance, there was the case of a maid, possessed of a spirit of divination (Python, *margin*), who brought much gain to her masters by soothsaying. She deluded persons by the evil spirit who spoke through her, and she sought to ally herself with the preachers of the gospel by crying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation" (Acts xvi.16-18). The utterance sounded well enough, but it was spoken by the spirit of deceit and not by the Spirit of God. And Paul cast it out of the damsel. There were women at Philippi who laboured with him in the gospel (Philippians iv.3), but the apostle would not have any association with the power of darkness but rather reprov'd it, and exorcised it in the case of this damsel.

Now Satan would not only use such seducing spirits in the streets, but would seek to bring such into the very midst of the assembly of the saints. And if a man were speaking in a tongue, how would the assembly decide whether he was led by the Spirit of God or by an evil

spirit? When it is known what is being spoken, the saints can prove the utterance by the word of God; for every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh is not of God (I John iv.1-3). Hence where tongues were used the apostle insisted upon the interpretation of tongues, as at Corinth, so that all might judge whether the utterance in a tongue was from a divine source. Let us not be deceived. Satan can send a lying spirit into the mouth of a man now as of old (I Kings xxii.22,23). And unclean spirits can cry out with a loud voice now as they did in Samaria (Acts viii.7).

We find from scripture that Satan wrought formerly among the people of Israel by using human "tongues" to draw them away from the living God. Instead of having recourse to Jehovah, they were persuaded to "seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards that chirp and that mutter" (Isaiah viii.19,R.V.). These diviners chirped and muttered in cries that were no more intelligible than those of birds and beasts. These weird and mysterious voices of the evil spirits which delude their votaries are again alluded to by the prophet in another connection: "Thou shalt . . . speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust; and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper (chirp) out of the dust" (Isaiah xxix.4). See also the reference to "whisperers" in the margin of Isaiah xix.3.

It should not be forgotten that Satan can imitate the miracles and wonders and signs wrought by the Spirit of God in the way of tongues as well as in other ways. The prophet Ezekiel (xii.24) referred to the counterfeit prophecies of his time — the "vain vision" and "flattering divination" in the house of Israel. In the future, the coming Antichrist will, it is foretold, exercise infernal power to such an extent that he will give breath to the image of the political beast, and cause it to speak (Revelation xiii.15). If then Satan used supernatural powers in the past by

(Continued on inside front cover)

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Words of Help

from the Scripture of Truth

Vol. LX

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CONTENTS

The Divine Workers	133
All Things New I	137
Going Slow but Holding Fast	144

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WORDS OF HELP

A Monthly Magazine for Believers

(Continued from inside back cover)

rupt believers and spiritual paupers. There will be more of the spirit of the poor prisoner of the Lord in Rome, who wrote, "I have all things in full supply and abound" (Philippians iv.18).

(From *The Bible Monthly*: believed to have been written by the late W. J. Hocking in 1944)

EDITORIAL

From January 1, 1973, the editorship of *WORDS OF HELP* will (D.V.) be in the hands of:

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN,
5 New Road,
RYE, Sussex.

Mr. Chamberlain has been a contributor to *Words of Help* for many years, and will already therefore be well known to regular readers. May his ministry continue to bring help and blessing to all.

The retiring Editor wishes to thank all those who have devoted their time and talent to the preparation of suitable articles in past years, and to express the hope that their ministry will continue, and that new writers will be encouraged to take up their pen.

THE DIVINE WORKERS

"My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v.17)

Luke xvi. One cannot but feel reluctant to leave the scene of divine joy depicted in the preceding chapter. Who better to unfold it than the One by Whom it would all become possible for the delight of His Father's heart! The music of grace was heard *beyond* the house — there is no subject for song compared with the unmerited overflow of the love of God to man. As for those who heard — who were closer to Him as being outside the circle of acceptance — would it not appeal as a story to be lived into a reality? Was it, indeed, possible that the Father had interest in them — was seeking them — to repossess them and to find His joy in so doing? As for the Pharisees and scribes, too, the blessedness of that which, by legal endeavour, was beyond their reach, might yet be known to them, for God desired sons in the house, in communion with Himself, brought to life and rejoicing in awareness of the illimitable grace which had made this possible.

We are not told that the JOY ceased! The music of GRACE is still to be heard.

And now the Lord Jesus tells His parable-story to those whose responsibility would soon be the outcome of their discipleship — and the test of it. His reference is primarily to the Jewish remnant among whom they lived, and to whom He had come. It applies, in principle, to mankind in general, of course, but the Jew had a history of the rich provision of God — of His protective mercy and His support for holiness. They could have shone as a light of testimony to the true God among the nations instead of bringing His Name into discredit by their dishonesty and the pursuit of their selfish purposes of pride. They were found to be failing in their stewardship and would be removed from their former position of favour among the nations. It is a very disturbing situation and the Lord Jesus presents it as such.

The unjust steward "said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship".

He faces the outcome. There is an underlying mercy and grace toward what is left of the steward nation that uses the things of God for its own advantage. The day of revealing and of divine action is approaching. He would have them consider with a view to their future. "I am not able to dig; I am ashamed to beg." Pride controlled them. Their character is exposed in the portrayal of the "unjust steward" threatened by disaster. To assess his disabilities was prudent, though his plan was conceived in unrighteousness. His preparation for his future wellbeing was commended. He was not obsessed by the present as were the Pharisees who waited to overhear and to ridicule.

The principle so clearly illustrated by the Lord Jesus is one that remains true until the close of this day of waiting. It is here that the disciple holds, as a steward, **ALL THAT OTHERS WOULD CALL THEIR OWN**. So the disciples are His hearers. What a privilege was theirs! There are those who overhear — as men do today — and ridicule. Yet there is a message — a word for all. Who shall limit the purposes of grace! The divine plan, in view of the failure of human resources, is made known, with the joy of its fulfilment. His disciples hear a story to be stored in memory for use in days of responsibility.

Wherever the humble mind, open to the living movement of truth, receives the divine word as a personal message from the very Fount of Wisdom, two truths become clear. There is the bounty of God, and, as a consequence, the responsibility of man in regard to it. The whole of the environment known to man owed its original perfection to the bounty of God. In the earliest record of the movement of this bounty, "the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Genesis ii.19). The man became aware of a provision which revealed the perfection as well as the bounty of God. The names he gave were the expressions of his reaction to each in relation to the Giver. The beauty of those forms — their

amazing construction, colour, movement — surpasses human comprehension, for since that day, “We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now” (Romans viii.22). Wonderful as it yet remains, its pristine perfection has succumbed to the sin of man. So, in presence of the wonder of creation, Adam was made aware of his responsibility to God. He was even brought into a fellowship of the divine purpose in that he had care of the garden which “the Lord God planted . . . eastward in Eden” (Genesis ii.8).

There are many instances recorded in sacred history in which men are shown to be in responsibility in view of the favour of God. There were those who failed under the test. There were others who were upheld in faith and became, in type, exponents of Him who took greater responsibility than all — for the sin of the world.

Verse 9: “And *I* say unto you, make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when it fails, ye may be received into everlasting habitations.” The Lord keeps to the theme of His parable. The unrighteous steward has used money that was not his own to buy friendships and obligations to himself in view of his approaching poverty. He was “more prudent than the sons of light”. The Authority for emphasizing this principle of prudence is the Lord Himself. “And *I* say unto you.” Does He not say it in divine awareness, and affectionate warning, of the insecurity of earthly values?

Surrounded by the influence of the mammon of unrighteousness, His disciples would remember His analogy. The unrighteous steward made friends for himself by using the possessions of his lord — who could not but commend his *prudence* in so doing, on the eve of his discovery and dismissal. The mammon, great in its influence as well as in its power which was derived from the unrighteous world, could be made to operate as a friend. In that beneficent capacity it would provide far more than the temporal house protection of the parable which “when it fails” (verse 9) leaves the worldling bereft and homeless. The disciple will use the

gifts of divine bounty in accord with the *character* and *purpose* of the Giver. This is true stewardship in submission to the mind of his Lord. Possessions are a sacred trust. The believer cares for them as such, and, in that he uses them as a trustee, becomes increasingly involved with the high purpose of their use and is characterized by those "everlasting habitations" in which, indeed, he already has his part: "For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven" (Philippians iii.20).

The mammon of unrighteousness, the temporary support of the world's habitations, will *fail*. The One who brings His illustration so forcibly before His disciples says "that, *when* it fails, ye may be received into everlasting habitations". It fails for those who treasure it as their own during life — it fails as they face death. The hour comes when complete failure will overtake it, but, for the believer, there is no question of failure, only of his being relieved of his trusteeship and being received (welcomed) into the realm of "everlasting habitations". There is a strong contrast between the failing structures of the world and those "everlasting habitations".

Meanwhile He tells them of the pure quality of faithfulness. Even in the small things "in that which is least" there is opportunity to be faithful to Him, and so rejoice His heart. The character of faithfulness is not sullied by compromise, nor is it restricted by circumstance. Its reality is constantly under test. The flow of strength to maintain it is hindered only by a lack of dependent faith. There is a searching in the sentences before us. Is there the impress of faithfulness "in that which is another's"? Do we regard as His alone those gifts, of whatever kind, with which He looks to us to be *faithful* stewards?

The covetous Pharisees listen as He says, "No servant can serve two masters". The word used conveys the thought of the house servant who serves as a slave in his lord's house. There is either hatred or love — loyalty or contempt. The Lord Jesus uses extremes of personality to emphasize the fallacy of believing that service is other than personal to

one master. His summary is clear. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Paul tells the Ephesians of his prayer for them on bowed knees to "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith (Ephesians iii.17). The thought of that precious indwelling brings assurance that mammon can have no authority there—no dwelling.

As we think of Him enduring derision from self-justifying leaders of the Jews, who oppose Him by every means available to them — who even plan His death — the power of the mammon of unrighteousness is menacingly evident. With fearless faithfulness He warns His disciples, for to use this mammon as a possession is to find oneself a servant suffering under its domination. The world of His day is no different, in this respect, from that of our own time. His words still reach us, over the centuries. To heed them is the way of love to Him.

EDWARD T. WOOD

ALL THINGS NEW

"And He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation xxi.5).

This divine utterance is placed in that part of the book of Revelation which describes the making of the new heavens and the new earth. But God's words can never be limited to the mere describing of events: they are the unfolding of His own mind, and this RENEWAL OF ALL THINGS is shown to be His steadfast purpose in answer to the ruin that sin has brought in. He designs to have everything according to His own mind.

The word "new" has two senses, which in the Greek New Testament are represented by two different words. We may illustrate by reference to a new potato. We use the term to describe the first of the season's crop of potatoes, and these are not in essence different from the old potatoes that will later be brought out of store, if we ignore for the moment the special "early" potatoes. But a grower may say, "This is a new potato", meaning a new variety that he has

developed, and all our named varieties were once new in this sense. Now in the New Testament the word in this second sense, "a new kind", is by far the most frequently occurring.

NEW THINGS ANTICIPATED

We must wait God's time for the new heavens and the new earth; but many of the best blessings of the **NEW CREATION** are the portion of the Christian already. They are the fruit of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary, and rest solidly upon His glorious resurrection, and flow forth from the **NEW PLACE HE** has — as **MAN** upon the throne of God.

But let us first enquire, Did any of these things begin before Christ came?

Certainly God began His preparations long before. Beginning with Abraham, we see the formation of the new nation from which Christ was to come. When God redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage, He gave them a new calendar, calling the seventh month the first as a sign that they were beginning a new life.

We know how completely Israel failed to maintain the place God had given them as His people, separated by their obedience to His law from the surrounding nations. But in Ezekiel xxxvi., where their future restoration is promised, God speaks of giving them "**a new heart, and a new spirit**". "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

NEW BIRTH, NEW LIFE

This is a clear statement of the **NEW BIRTH**, the neces-

sity for which the Lord Jesus impressed upon Nicodemus, but which also he should have known about from the scriptures. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii.5).

A new birth implies the beginning of a NEW LIFE, and this is the first of the "new things". The Christian enjoys this already. The fall has left man separated from God, spiritually dead and unresponsive to God. Ezekiel's language shows clearly the meaning of the Lord's words, "Born of water and of the Spirit". It is an *inward* renewal — a new heart and a new spirit, i.e. **a new life in the soul**, and it is accompanied by **a moral renewal**, a cleansing from sin. It is accomplished by God's own action, not by human effort: "I will give, I will put, I will cause."

What is meant by the sprinkling? It is not quite the same as washing, and almost certainly refers to the ordinance of the red heifer (Num.xix), in which a ritually unclean person was sprinkled with water which had come into contact with the ashes of the red heifer, burnt as a sin offering. The sin offering speaks of Christ; and water, a type of God's word, is here seen as cleansing man from sin's defilement by applying the efficacy of the once-for-all offering of Calvary. When a man learns (and when Israel at last learn) that Christ having died for him is the only way of deliverance from sin, when he believes this he receives the new life and complete moral cleansing from sin, as well as forgiveness.

We may note in passing that in the ordinance of Num. xix. the man has finally to *wash* himself — this signifying the practical effect of turning to God — he puts away his sinful and unclean *ways*. He now loves to please God — such is the character of his new nature — as Ezekiel says, "to walk in my statutes and keep my judgments and do them".

"Born of water and of the Spirit." No doubt it is by the working of God's Spirit in the soul that the truth is made effective, a man thus hearing God's word in his inmost being, and hence, as Peter says, he is born again by the word of God (I Peter i.23). And, wonderful fact, he is born of God, and becomes a child of God — a most stupendous statement.

Moreover, because the new life is of God it is eternal. A further character is given in the words of I Peter i.3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." That is, our new life is linked to a **new, living hope** — a hope which in its turn depends upon the resurrection of Christ — a hope which will be fulfilled when He returns to claim us as His, and gives us perfect likeness to Himself.

This new life is then spoken of in the Old Testament. The question arises, Did saints of old possess this new life?

If we look again at the words of the Lord Jesus to Nicodemus, we shall see that He is speaking of man's need of spiritual fitness for God's kingdom — "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He does not imply that such fitness could not be till the kingdom came. In fact, He showed that Nicodemus should have been aware of such need.

Moreover Jesus referred to the new birth as one of the "earthly things," and distinguished it from the heavenly things to be revealed later. But for man in all dispensations spiritual renewal is essential if he is to have communion with God. It is clear from Gen. vi.3 that God's Spirit wrought with man from the beginning, and we have clear evidence of the beginning of new life in God's people.

Thus, until God called him, "Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord revealed to him". There is a clear distinction here between Samuel's personal condition of soul and his call as a prophet — neither new life *nor* prophetic office had yet begun. Josiah when he was yet young (8 years) "*began* to seek after the God of David his father." Wicked Manasseh repented in prison and turned to God and was accepted, so beginning a new life of righteousness. And "Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter," and turned from the pleasures of sin to Christ (Heb. xi.24,25).

Now a new life must have a beginning, and this is a new birth.

Moreover, the principle of righteousness as the fruit of faith is clearly revealed in the Old Testament (Gen. xv.6), and also, that "the just shall live by faith" (Hab.ii.4). Let us ask, what is the quality of this "life"? Can it be the natural life, in which men are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. iv.18)? Of course it is not.

Certainly the full truth as to man's alienation from God did not show itself until at the cross he rejected God Himself come in grace, and equally, the spiritual condition of God's faithful ones is not clearly stated, but has to be inferred. It is also certain that they did not enjoy "life more abundantly" of which our Lord spoke (John x.10). Now, with Christ risen, the believer's new life has a special and higher character. In Eph. ii.5 we read, "**God hath quickened us together with Christ,**" so that it is Christ's resurrection life of power that we share. Again, in 2 Cor. v. we read, "**If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation**" — that is, he is already part of the new creation of which Revelation xxi. speaks, as far as his spiritual nature goes. This gives a new character to the believer's walk, which we must consider presently.

A NEW STATUS

In Galatians iii. Paul compares the status of believers before Christ, under the law, to that of an heir under age, and so under the rule of tutors and governors — differing nothing from a slave though really lord of all. Though possessed of divine life, they had no assured acceptance with God because the law could not give this. How could it, if acceptance depended upon a perfect keeping of the law? Consequently believers did not enjoy the freedom of spirit before God that the believer is now entitled to know, but suffered bondage and fear.

The Lord Jesus said, "The slave abides not in the house

for ever, but the son abides for ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." A slave could be sold to another master — he had no assured standing in the house. Not so the son — to him the house belonged. Hence the believer in Jesus acquires a new, assured status as one that belongs to God's Son (to Whom everything belongs). He is "in Christ" and to such there is no condemnation (Rom. viii.1).

His acceptance with God is Christ's own acceptance, and in token of his being spotless in God's sight, God has bestowed His holy Spirit on him as a seal of his acceptance. The effect of the Spirit's presence is to give liberty to the soul. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption (i.e. sonship) whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit Itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 15,16).

A NEW WALK AND A NEW SERVICE

"We are buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi.4).

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v.25).

The new life and the new status which we have in Christ both demand **a new kind of walk or conduct**. It is God's way first to assure us of the blessings of the new place He has given us, and only then to call for a new walk. The law of course did just the opposite — it called for a holy walk as a means of gaining life and acceptance with God, and this was a hopeless prospect for fallen man. But as Christ has died and risen again for us, we are to reckon that we also have died with Him — died to sin and died to the law, in order that, alive to God through Him (Rom. vi.11), we should serve God, not in the oldness of the letter but **in newness of spirit** (Rom. vii.6).

This last contrast means, that instead of seeking to satisfy the terms of that law which says "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not", we have as our object to please the Saviour, to follow His ways, to do His commands because we love Him. We rely, not on our own strength of character, which has so often let us down, but upon the power of the Spirit within us, being responsive to His gracious and holy promptings. This is "walking in the Spirit".

Thus we have

A NEW MOTIVE

Paul writes "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again". Only in death could the Saviour reach us, and His love was such that it brought Him down into death — the death of the cross — for us. The reckoning of love, then — our love in response to His — is that all those evil things which He died to deliver us from we abandon, and seek to live for Him, to carry out His will, to keep His word.

He speaks of a **new commandment** — "Love one another, as I have loved you." Not like the law, which said "love thy neighbour as thyself". No, this is a *new kind* of commandment, for it is patterned on His own wonderful love. As John writes in his epistle, "We love, because He first loved us" (I John iv.19 R.V.).

His love is the source of all blessing; it is the mainspring of that divine purpose to make all things new. It is then vital for us to be like Him in this, to be constrained by His love to us, to be motivated by love just as He is, and as God is.

Our attitude to men whom we have to do with tends to follow the pattern of their attitude to us — but how differently did He act! The spirit of the world, in all its self-centredness, tends to invade our thoughts and lives. But

He says, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the **RENEWING OF YOUR MIND.**"

A continual *transformation* is thus God's purpose for us, renewing us, in accordance with these wonderful truths we have considered, into His likeness. Not till we see Him as He is will this transformation be perfected. But let us not be satisfied with what we have already attained.

E. H. CHAMBERLAIN

(To be continued, D.V.)

GOING SLOW BUT HOLDING FAST

*"Hold fast what thou hast that no one take thy crown."
(Revelation iii.11)*

It is a striking but saddening feature of our day that so many children of God are suffering from extreme spiritual depression. Inwardly, they are dispirited and melancholy, and are not ashamed to say so. They confess they inwardly have an "all-gone" sensation, and admit they have lost interest. They look back regretfully upon seasons of Christian fellowship, and fear they have vanished for ever. Many brethren whom they loved and revered and followed as spiritual guides have disappeared; some have departed to be with Christ: and the faith of some, alas, has been overthrown by the specious efforts of the enemy. Songs of praise are silent in the sanctuary. Prayers are but vain repetitions. Solace for the soul is sought in the Lamentations of Jeremiah!

In the name of the Lord, we call upon our despairing brothers and sisters to rise up and stand upon their feet. "Be firm, immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord." "Be vigilant; stand fast in the faith; quit yourselves like men; be strong." "Look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen." Be neither engrossed with nor overwhelmed by the opposing circumstances of the moment. Remember that "things present" are not able to separate you "from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans viii.39). You may have to "go slow", but be sure you "hold fast".

Do not forget that the present lamentable state of the Christian profession is foretold in the New Testament. And He Who warned of the approaching spiritual calamities provided a resource for the faithful and a refuge for the feeble. Outlines of the "down-grade movement", of Romanism and modernism, and of the general apostasy are found in the Epistles. In the Letters to the seven churches in Asia seven phases of spiritual decline can be traced from loveless Ephesus to loathsome Laodicea. And here, too, we have the rallying call of Him in Whose right hand is "the mystery of the seven stars" **held fast by Him**.

And what is the counsel and command sent by the Lord of all the churches when fear and despair are spreading in the whole community? Again and again in those seven Letters His steadying summons sounds: "**Hold fast**". He looks for His own to **hold fast** His name and not deny the faith in the hour of persecution (ii.13). To those who are deeply tried, He says, "I do not cast upon you any other burden; but **what ye have hold fast** till I shall come" (ii.24,25). Further He considers those who, though feeble, are not swept away by current affairs, those who, though not "going strong", are "going slow", those who have "a little strength" and have kept His word, and not denied His name, and to each of them comes His clarion call, "**Hold fast what thou hast** that no one take thy crown" (iii.8,11).

"**What thou hast**"! Here is the secret of steadfastness. Consider what we have and can never lose! God Himself as Father; Christ Himself as Saviour and Lord, Propitiation and Advocate, High Priest and Mercy-seat; the Holy Spirit Himself as Comforter and Guide, Teacher and Intercessor, Earnest and Seal; the Holy Scriptures as light, food, and refreshment, as an inexhaustible fund of infallible wisdom and truth in a world of false values and deceptive issues! Such are the invaluable things we have. Let us then **hold fast** what we have; feel them in the hand, not for their security, but for our own contact with them and our personal satisfaction. Then we shall not imagine we have become bank-

(Continued on inside front cover)

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