

THE DISCIPLE

*A Periodical
for the Lord's people,
designed to promote intelligent
devotion to Him and
His interests*

Edited by
G. H. LANG



VOL. 1, No. 3

JANUARY, 1954

THINK UPON LOT'S WIFE

Luke xvii. 32

*Who here will follow Jesus Christ
Must be of serious mind,
And onward press, or standing still
Will soon be far behind:
For danger lurks in idleness,
Destruction of thy life;
Too late thou mayest it perceive:
Oh, think upon Lot's wife!*

*For she had gone from Sodom forth,
Where danger threatened sore;
And she would reach the refuge safe
God's grace had set before:
But as her heart in Sodom stayed,
And there had still its life,
Her body stiffened into salt:
Oh, think upon Lot's wife!*

*The Saviour speaks this solemn word
To me and thee today:
How easily the world can drag
The child of God away!
That it may not thy heart deceive
With 'Jesus live thy life,
Nor heed its fair enticing words:
Oh, think upon Lot's wife!*

*Oh, think not lightly of a sin,
It deadly poison hides;
And when its goal it has attained
Its judgment sure abides:
Oh, play not with thy blessedness,
Oh, trifle not with life:
How swiftly flies the time of grace:
Oh, think upon Lot's wife!*

(From the German)

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EDITORIAL

THE Editor offers to all Readers his Hearty Greetings and Good Wishes for 1954. What experiences, personal and public, the year may bring we do not know; but this need cause no distress of mind, for no one ever has known what even a day may bring forth, not to speak of a year. The natural mind lives in perpetual uncertainty, but faith enjoys the continual assurance that, to them that love God, all things are always working together for good (Rom. viii. 28).

This passage shows the place of *love* in the life of faith. True faith works by love. God indeed is lovable because He is love. Let us enter and traverse the coming year with the quietness that comes from the enjoyment of the love of God displayed in Jesus Christ the Son of His Love.

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*“ The opening of Thy words
giveth Light ”*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

SANCTIFICATION

An Address by

DR. A. T. PIERSON

at

BETHESDA CHAPEL, BRISTOL

on

August 15th, 1900

Edited from a verbatim report

THE Lord will have a holy people, and we now come to some teaching upon the subject of Sanctification—the making holy of God's justified people.

Let us read some verses that bear upon this subject, beginning with Romans v, verses 3 to 11. You remember that the first two verses concluded our study last evening. We saw that the justified soul has peace with God, and a permanent standing in Christ, and free access into the favour of God, and rejoices in the hope of the glory of God. Let us now pass on to chapter vi, omitting the passage in chapter v about Christ as the second man, the last Adam.'

May I call your attention to a few verses in chapter viii. 1-16. We shall see the bearing of these scriptures when we come to explain the argument of the apostle Paul, speaking by the Spirit, on the subject of the sanctification of God's people.

It is a very serious error, beloved, when the children of God get satisfied with a justified state wherein sanctification is lost sight of, theoretically or practically. It was perhaps a defect of the Lutheran Reformation, as we call it, that so great emphasis was laid upon justification that sanctification was comparatively lost sight of. It remained for John Owen, and others that followed him a century later, to help to draw the attention of the church to the subject of sanctification and so complete or complement, as it were, the teaching of the days of Luther.

During the last twenty-five or thirty years there has been unusual emphasis laid upon the subject of sanctification' sometimes going to great extremes. It is apt to be the case when people begin to lay emphasis upon neglected truth that they are very liable to carry the emphasis to an extreme. Yet there are few subjects that demand more earnest, prayerful, careful consideration than the practical holiness of God's people. My own attention has been drawn to the subject during the last ten years; I am sometimes inclined to think in a little disproportion to other themes, because my own early instruction in the subject was so neglected.

In studying this during the last ten years I have found so much blessing, and in attempting to bring it into practical contact with others, that I feel as though the Lord has given me some little mission in this matter among my fellow-believers; because I think we feel that when the Lord leads us personally to study some deep theme, it is always to help on other believers, who need it, by having neglected the study of the theme, or having been repelled from it by extreme teaching on the subject of holiness. So let us with reverent mind, and very humbly, sit at the feet of our Lord and see what He has to say of it, in this passage of Scripture, which extends from chapter v, verse iii, to chapter vii, verse 16. Of course we can take up only a few of these thoughts.

Let me stop to say (though it is hardly necessary in "Bethesda") that the difference between justification and sanctification is very marked. Justification is an act, sanctification a work. Justification is instantly accomplished, sanctification is a progressive work, gradually accomplished. In justification the believer does not co-operate, except in simply accepting justification, it is the judicial act of God; but in sanctification the believer co-operates with God. And we must never lose sight of this most important distinction, that in Phil. ii. 12, Paul gives in one verse the substance of the whole matter: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"; that is, work it out as something that has begun in you, and which is to be carried on to completion: "work out your own salvation," God working in you both to will and to do. There is the Divine side and the human side in one sentence, showing the co-operation of the believer with God. Many other passages of Scripture might be given but tonight we are to consider especially the teaching of the epistle to the Romans on this subject, and, without a systematic discourse, to follow its teaching.

In chapter v. 3-5, we have what appears to be not so much pertaining to justification as to sanctification, because here we see the process of the education of the justified soul. Here the justified child of God "glories in tribulation." Tribulation forms part of his discipline or education as a justified child of God, toward the formation of the image of God in him. Now what is the tribulation? You know the English word is taken from the Latin word "tribulum," a threshing sledge, and the word meant an instrument to separate the chaff from the grain. It was drawn by oxen, who, partly by driving the flail, and partly by their feet, separated the chaff from the wheat. The old poet Quarles, taking up that, says

"When by the prickly flail
God continually threshes out
of us our vain affections."

That is the idea, that of threshing. "We glory in tribulation," not because the tribulations are pleasant, but because of the

blessed results that they accomplish, that God accomplishes through them, in the sanctification of the children of God.

See the different stages, how beautifully marked. "Tribulation worketh patience." You cannot have patience without something to be patient about. Tribulation implies suffering, suffering implies endurance, and endurance implies patience. Patience is one of the fruits of the Christian character that can never be developed without suffering. Like certain night-blooming flowers which never open until the sun has set, patience is a night-blooming flower and never appears except in the night of trial. If you are not content to go through the night of trial you will never know the loveliness and fragrance of these fair flowers of God's planting.

"Patience worketh experience." This Greek word is a very peculiar word, I do not know any word that exactly translates it. It is a word that applies to the act of the assayer, who, when he has passed the metal through the fire, puts on it the stamp of approval.

When the metal was molten, there was so much alloy that it was impure, and it was called "reprobate," a word exactly the opposite of this word. And what is the thought? "Tribulation worketh patience," and patience brings the stamp of God's approval. God passes you through the fire, patience endures it, the dross is refined from the pure metal, and then God puts His stamp of approval on you. Now you will have hope. When you have passed through tribulation, and God has given you the sign and seal of approval, what a new hope springs up in your breast. In justification we have the hope of faith referred to in verse 2: "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." But it says that in tribulation we have the hope of experience, which is rejoicing in hope by faith. When you buy an anchor and hang it on the ship's side, that act expresses hope; but when actually relying on it in the storm, you rejoice in hope. This is not exactly the same as the hope of faith. It is the hope of experience.

This hope "maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit which has been given unto us"; love is poured abroad, flooded abroad in our hearts. That is to say, God bestows upon us such a new sense of love, a flooding of love, as that the effect is (may I use the figure of a flood still?) to draw out an answering burst to God.

Thus in verse 2 we have been looking forward to getting some glimpses of the glory of God and the glory of the believer, and beginning to see in some measure how that sanctification is being wrought out by God, in enabling you to partake of the love of God. You learn to love somewhat as God loves, and you see that the glory of God is beginning to be revealed to you in the transformation of your own character, which transformation began in tribulation, went

on through the suffering of tribulation, the seal of Divine approval being set on you, and Divine love flooding your soul. Shall we call this the education of the soul in sanctification?

But now another thought, one which to my mind is one of the most unspeakably precious in the Word of God. Look at verses 9-11, "Much more then being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him," etc. Dr. Moule, in his matchless commentary on *Romans*, speaking like the scholar that he is, says of these words that they carry the idea of something *continued*. Some of you know sufficient of the Greek tongue to know what power there is in some of these tenses, which it is very difficult to express in any English tense. Dr. Moule translates thus these three verses: "Therefore much more, justified now in His blood, we shall be kept safe through Him from the wrath. For if, being enemies, we were reconciled to our God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be kept safe in His life. Not only so, but we shall be kept exulting too in our God."

What a beautiful conception, that we are kept safe from wrath, kept safe in the life of Jesus Christ; and that in that life we are kept always rejoicing. So that if we had the idea just now of education, what have we now? Preservation, preservation! and look beloved, at the wonderful thought, the safe-keeping of the child of God is assured because *the sphere of safe-keeping is the life of the Keeper*. Oh, what a mountain top of glorious privilege and blessing, when we remember that fact!

I think the most important change in the Revised Version is in 1 John v. 18. You remember it reads in the accepted version: "we know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." In the Revised Version it is: "He that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not." The child of God is taken up into the life of Jesus Christ and that life becomes the sphere of his safe-keeping; he keeps himself indeed, but he is kept. What of your keeping? It is not worth anything if you are not kept.

Yet would God seek to keep you if you did not keep yourself? Look at Jude xx. 20, 21: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." That is one side. And now the doxology: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling." There is self-keeping, but there is Divine keeping, and these two in co-operation are realized in sanctification.

But the thought just here is not only that of education by the providences of God in allowing sorrow to come upon

us to develop these Christian graces, but that we are taken up into the very life of Jesus Christ, and that the sphere of our safe-keeping is through the life of our Keeper. It is a much more precious thought to us than the simple thought of our being saved from wrath. Of course in justification we are saved from wrath, but shall we be kept safe? We want to be kept safe. We enter into this holy safe-keeping, and the wicked one cannot touch us; and, so far as we abide in this sphere of safe-keeping, how can sin touch us, if we are kept safe in the life of Christ? And how can sorrow touch us?—I mean in the sense of distrust and murmuring against God—when in the sphere of that life?

If we pass on to the end of the chapter, an added thought is presented to us. The apostle seems to go on with one continued thought, the education of the child of God, his being taken up into the life of Christ for safety, and the consequent reproduction of the character of Christ. But then he speaks of Jesus Christ as the Second Man, the last Adam.

The first Adam being the representative of the whole race, Jesus Christ became the representative of the believing race of the children of God, standing before God as their Federal Head, and representing them in all their relations, in all their needs, in all their privileges, and in all their glorious destiny. Hence we have the five “much more” of this last part of chapter v, of which I cannot stop to speak. But now as we pass on from the idea of representation, we come next to the idea of identification. We are one with this Second Man, the last Adam, the Lord from heaven, and in chapter vi we shall find this identification brought out in a most wonderful way. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (verses 3 and 4).

You remember that in justification the two great things emphasized were Christ’s death and Christ’s resurrection. His death as an expiation for sin, His resurrection as God’s recognition of it. Then comes the reception of the Holy Spirit, empowering for a holy life. Now just as these two facts are emphasized in connection with justification, so they are emphasized in connection with sanctification. The death of Christ represents the believer’s death to sin, and the resurrection of Christ represents the believer’s life unto righteousness. How beautiful this teaching is, and how perfect the assimilation!

The burial of Jesus Christ is referred to here, but not emphasized, because it lies between the death and the resurrection. Burial is the natural sequence of death, and may I call it the antecedent of resurrection? So the burial

of Christ is not referred to emphatically, but incidentally, because it comes between the two great things, His death and His resurrection. He was buried because He died, and buried on the way to resurrection.

So you have this thought; once you were dead in sin, then you came to the cross and looked on the suffering Saviour, and you died in Him to sin. Then in baptism you confessed your identity with Christ, you are buried with Him; so that out of this baptismal burial you might come, like the Lord came forth from the sepulchre, with the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon you, as upon Him, henceforth to walk in newness of life, henceforth ascended, and setting your affections at the right hand of God. This wonderful truth is found in Ephesians, and especially in Colossians, where this identification of the believer with Christ is so marvellously brought out.

Now there is another step or stage in this wonderful teaching about sanctification. I pass over chapter vii because I must hurry on to chapter viii. There you meet with the idea of the inhabitation of the Spirit of God, subsequent, of course, to Christ's resurrection, the Son of God raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. This is repeated in your experience and mine, our resurrection in Him, and the incoming life of the Spirit of God to inhabit us, as He inhabited Jesus Christ, so that we become His temple.

Thus you have here a still further conception about sanctification. Look in chapter viii. 2: "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." It is not only inhabitation, but it is emancipation, it is the freedom of the believer from the law of sin and death, that is, of course, from a downward tendency. The law of the Spirit of life has an upward tendency. And we all know how in the natural world one force counteracts another. This chair is held down by the force of gravitation [taking hold of one]; but when I put my arm under it (raising the chair in my hand) the counteracting force brings it up. So the sinner gravitates hellward, away from God, but the Spirit of life moves upward, God-ward. Hence enters the counteracting force in the life of the believer. You cannot serve God until the Spirit of God is in you, for there is no force to counteract the influence of the natural, unspiritual, Satanic, and worldly.

But when the Spirit takes possession of you it lifts you up, creates in you an upward tendency, Godward, with the power to rise God-ward. So let the Spirit of God lift, emancipate you from the law of sin and death, and you will not continue under it.

If you follow chapter viii you find this idea of the Spirit within, freeing from the power of sin, and enabling the believer to fulfil the works of the law which it was impossible for him to fulfil before the Spirit became an indwelling power. The

first part of the chapter has to do with the indwelling of the Spirit, inhabitation. But now the Spirit becomes an *element*. Look at the remarkable language in verse 9: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

The question now arises, how is it fulfilled? How shall I be in the Spirit and the Spirit in me? Every child understands this fact, that there is nothing of which this is true but an *element*. What is an element? It is that in which I am, but at the same time it is in me. The atmosphere of this room is an element. I am in the atmosphere but the atmosphere is in me. I could not have life if the atmosphere were not in me, and I could not sustain life if I were not in the atmosphere.

And the Spirit of God is here treated in chapter viii as an element in which the child of God lives and moves and has his being. Like any other element it is greater than the man into whom it enters, so that he lives in the element, while it lives in him. Just as the fish is in the water, and the water in the fish, and the bird in the air, and yet the air in the bird; and just as a poker in the fire gets hot, so that the fire is in the poker (and you find it out if you touch the poker), so the Spirit of God is in me, else I should not abide in the Spirit; and I am abiding in Him, else how should this life be sustained from hour to hour?

This is a wonderful conception, this conception of the believer. And whence comes this wonderful power of life? Some one says: "I should like to be a Christian, but I could not hold out any more than the fire in the poker." No, because you are not reckoning on the power of God. But suppose, by the grace of God, the Spirit of God enters you, and you get into this element in which the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes you free from the law of sin and death, then you will find in your condition now an element you knew nothing about before.

I have seen this in dealing with inquirers. A man once came to me so given to drink that his wife found it impossible to live with him. I begged him to give it up. "I cannot do it," he said. "I have tried over and over again." "You are not a child of God," I answered, "for I have noticed that when you get into trouble, it drives you not to prayer but to drink. Get down on your knees, and take the Lord Jesus Christ, as what He is appointed to be, a Saviour; give up all false salvations and lay your head upon Him as the Justifier and Sanctifier." He got down on his knees, accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and he never had another desire for drink.

How often this is repeated! A man enters into the Spirit of God as a new element in which he lives. Resolutions are but as a spider's web in the presence of temptation; nothing stands but the power of something within you, enabling

you to hold on steadily, and to live a new life in God.

This seems to me to be the trend of the argument in these chapters. God has promised an education for His children, and you must submit to all God's dealings, not fretting and complaining, but restful about whatever He does. As dear Mr. Müller used to say: "In one thousand trials it is not half of them that work for the believer's good, but nine hundred and ninety-nine and one besides." "All things work together for good to them that love God." You can trust yourself to the providential process whereby God means you to be sanctified. Then you are taken up into the life in Christ, to be kept safe from wrath, to be kept safe from sin, and even from the loss of spiritual joy, as far as you abide in Him.

And remember you are then in Him as your Representative; identified in His death you die in Him, are buried with Him; in His resurrection you come forth, and by the Spirit indwelling you He is continually moulding and assimilating you to the image of God. You are emancipated from the law of sin and death, and finally enter the element of the Spirit of God, sustaining you for a holy life. May I not call the Holy Spirit our atmosphere of safe-keeping?

But as we have already said, in sanctification there is the co-operation of the believer, he is not simply passive, as in the work of justification. Let us look at what these wonderful chapters have to say as to the other side of this great matter, our co-operation with God in our sanctification.

There are certain words which stand out very prominently in these chapters, to which I would call your attention. First of all, look at the word "Know." In chapter vi. 6: "Knowing this first, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin." The first step in our co-operation is to know, or recognize, God's purpose concerning us. We must know the truth, else how can we obey it? We must know God's purpose for us, or how can we apprehend, understand, and co-operate with that plan? Therefore the first thing is to settle in your mind that it is the will of God that you, having been justified, shall be sanctified, and that being in Christ dead to sin judicially, you, through the power of the Spirit of Christ, die to the dominion of sin. This is very clearly taught in the passage, as we shall see.

I ask your attention to another word, "Reckon" (verse 11). "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." What is the force of this word, "reckon"? God gives you a certain judicial standing, reckon yourself to be there and so in Him judicially—reckon yourself to be just exactly what God reckons. He does not impute sin to you, but He does impute righteousness. Now reckon yourself what God reckons you, reckon your place

to be where God puts you, and apprehend your high privileges. It is the privilege and duty of the child of God, not only to work for holiness, but to claim it in Christ; which is as much as to say, "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin." If God says a thing, count upon it, depend upon it, for it is true; and shape your conduct according to it. There is vast power in that wonderful word, "Reckon."

What is the next expression? "Let not sin therefore *reign* in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof" (verse 12). Disclaim the reign, and power, and dominion of sin over you. Look at verse 14. If I may speak of a matter of personal experience, this is the most helpful verse that ever came to me. "Sin *shall not* have dominion over you," not "ought not to have," not "under certain circumstances will not have," but "*shall not*." It seems to be God's decree of emancipation !

If sin has dominion over you as a justified child of God, something is wrong, and certainly the wrong is not on God's side. Have you ever waked up to this thought, that if sin has any dominion over you, dominates you, controls you, there is something wrong in your relations with God? If there is any known sin that holds the sceptre over you, there is something wrong. Not that you may ever expect in this life to be sinless, for the nearer you get to God, the more conscious you will be of your unlikeness to Him, so that things for which you used to apologize, will become dreadful and even abhorrent, things which were doubtful are doubtful no longer. Thus the more we become like God, the more we shall see our lack of assimilation to Him. But, beloved, when sin is a known sin, its renunciation should be instantaneous, and its abandonment should be permanent.

"Sin shall not have dominion over you, *for ye are not under law but under grace*" (verse 14). This is one of the most important dispensational sentences in the Bible. The law commanded, but it did not enable; grace does not abate the commands of God, but enables, gives enabling power. So we are no longer under the law which commanded, but did not enable, but under grace which commands and does enable, therefore "Sin *shall not* have dominion over you."

See how it is said of Jesus Christ, "Death no more hath dominion over Him" (verse 9). And you have died in Christ and been buried with Him, and have come up by the power of the Holy Spirit into a resurrection life, and you should be like Him: death no more hath dominion over Him, and sin no more has dominion over you. You have no idea of the power that will come to you when this conviction takes possession of your soul, when the Holy Spirit is poured into you, and empowers you; you will meet the sins that used to beset and defile you, and set them, as it were, at defiance.

And thus we are prepared for another word, "*yield*" (verse 13). As we have the words "know," "reckon," "shall

not have dominion," or "reign" over you, so we have the word "yield."* There is a negative and a positive side of this command. What is the meaning of yield? Give up to the control of another. A man may be connected with a tyrant master, but when he is free from that tyrant master, emancipated, that master ceases to have further control over him.

Sin used to control you, but now, as it threatens to assail you, you face it, and that sin, which once threatened to overcome you, you overcome, because "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made you free from the law of sin and of death" (chapter viii. 2). It is as the apostle says in this chapter vi. 6, 7, "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin. For he that hath died is justified from sin." Whichever way you put it, whether the body of sin is dead, or the disciple dead to sin, the law of sin is annulled because one party in the transaction has died.

"Obey," is a more striking word than "yield." It is the positive side now. "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you"; margin, "whereto ye were delivered" (chapter vi. 17, R.V.), a striking term. The doctrine of God is a kind of mould; the children of God are put into that mould, and take its impression, and the obedient child receives the whole mould of the impress to which it is delivered.

Now you are determined not to let sin continue to dominate you, but on the other hand to yield yourself to God, totally, altogether, and make it your habit to obey Him, as it has been your habit to obey sin. There is one more thought to which I would call your attention amid the multitude of thoughts in this passage. It is in chapter viii in these remarkable words: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (verses 5 and 6). Here we have an additional thought and it is most marvellously adapted to encourage and strengthen.

The mind of man is like a mirror, and a mirror has this peculiarity, that it reflects anything upon which it is turned. If you turn a mirror downward it reflects what belongs to the earth, stones, earth, all refuse, and all that crawls on the earth, and it is impossible but that it should reflect all these things if it is turned down. Turn it upward, and it reflects the sun, moon, and stars, and the light of heaven.

* The proper translation here of *paristanete* and *parasteesate* is the active "present"—make a present of yourself; not the passive "yield." A burglar may "yield" to a policeman; a wife "presents" herself to her husband. cf. Roms. vii. 1-6 (so R.V.). L.

The mind of man is like a mirror, turn it down and it reflects what is beneath—that is the mind of the flesh. You turn it up, and it reflects that which is above—that is the mind of the Spirit. Now the peculiarity about this wonderful mirror is, that it retains the image of that which it reflects. If you turn your mind downward, and keep your mind thinking about the things of earth, it not only reflects, but retains them, it takes their image into itself, and so the whole man becomes more and more carnal.

On the other hand, if you turn your thoughts, mind, affections, desires upward, the mind becomes more and more spiritual; it reflects heavenly things and also takes upon itself the image of the heavenly things, so that you positively become spiritually, heavenly minded, God-like in character.

If we stop and look for a moment at our own experience, I think we all see that it is exactly so; the different things you think about, dwell on, turn your affections and mind toward, are the things that dominate you. The things of earth make you to become more and more earthly-minded, more and more sensual, more and more carnal.

One reason why the Lord let in a day of rest in the seven days of the week, is that we may turn away from these things, which engross even the child of God, and lift our thoughts and feelings to the things of God, and so become spiritually-minded, if we cultivate the habit of directly reflecting upon the things of heaven and of God. And so the man who takes the day of rest, and turns it into a day of secular enjoyment, is not so much defrauding God, but wronging himself. As a boy, when my eyes were weak, I used to find that they were rested from the close study of things around, by lifting them up to the hills and the distant horizon. And so when the mind has been looking at carnal, earthly things, you rest it by looking at heavenly things, by looking away to the domes and spires of the celestial city, the new Jerusalem.

One more thought, and then I close. “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (chapter viii. 14). What a blessed idea it is, that God gives to us the Holy Spirit as a kind of magnet, thus to become our personal Guide in the life we lead. And I have sometimes been entranced to see how this thought runs through the first part of Romans viii.

When a little child is born into the world it wants several things. In the first place it wants to be fed, then to be taught to walk and talk, and its mind needs to be cultivated and led in what we call moral training. And we see in chapter viii that the child of God, born into God’s family by the power of the Spirit, is regarded as having the moral tuition of the Holy Spirit, as being “led by the Spirit.” As a child of God, it is nourished not according to the carnal but the spiritual.

And it is taught to talk. What is "Abba?" "Abba" is the Aramaic for "Papa," perhaps one of the first words that infant lips frame. When a little child begins to talk, it says the easiest forms. Now the words with one prominent consonant formed without the aid of the teeth, by simply closing the lips, like "Mama," and "Papa," and when the vowels are the very simplest and formed by the breathing of the breath, these are the first words used. So "Abba" is the Aramaic for "Papa."

The thought seems to be that the Spirit takes the child of God under His own tuition, teaches him to talk in the prattle of God's infant children; teaches him to walk, and takes the hand of the disciple and leads him where God would have him. A precious thought.

You have been justified; are you sanctified? Have you ever found what your place is in the plan of God? Have you ever realized all your position and privilege as a child of God? Have you ever said to sin, "Thou shalt not have dominion over me; my bondage is broken, the term of my service ended, and my apprenticeship to the devil for ever dissolved." Have you yielded your members as instruments of righteousness? Have you truly laboured, by the grace of God, to continue in unwavering, unhesitating obedience?

Do you realize that the Spirit is actually come into you, and makes you a temple of God's habitation, that Spirit becoming the element in which you live and move and have your being? Do you realize that the wondrous work of the Spirit is now to assimilate you to God's likeness; so that you are dependent upon His teaching, educating, strengthening and helping, and the whole power of your life towards God is dependent upon the Divine life that is communicated to you?

Oh, that God may teach us that it is His will to have a holy people, and that He has provided for our holiness.

In next issue "Glorification" by Dr. Pierson

INQUIRE OF THE FORMER AGE (III)
G. H. Lang

VIII

It has been remarked above that the Enemy of all truth has always studied to confuse good men upon the two great subjects of the church of God and the return of the Lord. As to the latter matter the Lord very specially warned us that false prophets would seek to lead astray the very elect, and Paul warned the Thessalonian believers against this attempt by spirit agents (Matthew xxi. 4: Luke xxi. 8: II Thes. ii. 2). It was therefore to be expected that an attack would be launched against that fresh search into prophecy a century ago.

It soon transpired that two of the most learned and powerful men in that notable group (J. N. Darby and B. W. Newton) held divergent views. They agreed upon such major matters as that the kingdom of God could not be established on earth until the return of the King; that His return to the earth would be preceded by the rise and reign of the Antichrist and the persecution of the godly by him; that his destruction, the deliverance of the godly, the overthrow of Gentile world rule, the reinstatement of the Jewish people as the chief nation on earth—would all attend this descent of Christ to the earth. And they both expected that the descent of the Lord would effect a resurrection of dead saints and be accompanied by a rapture of the living.

They differed however upon the subordinate question of whether that removal of the church to heaven by resurrection and rapture would be before the rise of Antichrist or at the close of his reign. As their respective views upon prophecy became systematized, this divergence developed other differences, and in the course of some ten years these close friends had become estranged, brotherly concord failed, and out of the original minor disagreement there grew contention and division, bitterness and strife. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention before there be quarrelling" (Prov. xvii. 14).

After this most lamentable controversy had passed its climax, Tregelles wrote in 1849 that

You appear to be so perfectly aware that the opposition to Mr. Newton arose entirely from his prophetic views being disliked by Mr. Darby that I need not insist on the point. Out of this sprang all the charges against Mr. Newton, and the endeavour to condemn him on *every possible* ground. Had he accorded with Mr. Darby on prophecy, we should never have heard *his* voice raised against him as to ministry or church order; his writings

would not have been scrutinized with severity in order to glean matter of accusation (*Three Letters*, 71).

This statement was written while Darby was alive to contradict it, and it seems to have been justified. Only it should be added that Newton just as intensely disliked Darby's views on prophecy, and opposed him with equal vigour, though more courteously.

This unhappy contention presently extended among the assemblies of Christians they influenced. It is not our present purpose to pursue this history. We remark only that here again is felt the breath of that Spirit that now worketh for the obscuring of truth. For many onlookers the whole topic of prophecy was prejudiced, as being apparently a cause of contention.

This so lamentable and ungodly spirit has, alas, persisted; dogmatism and intolerance have too much marked the advocates of these systems of interpretation, especially that initiated by Darby. One ponders ruefully what might have been the happy results had those two great scholars and Christians continued in the original brotherly search and inquiry, until the reasons for divergence had become evident and the reconciling factors apparent. "The sons of this age are for their generation wiser than the sons of light" (Luke xvi. 8). Scientists faced by contradictions in theory or experiment would set themselves to discover errors in theory or mistakes in practice, and thus seek harmony and progress. Why was it otherwise with those searchers into the meaning of God's Word? One can but attribute this finally to the subtle unperceived influence upon their spirits of the great Deceiver. If the *spirit* of a Christian deteriorates, so that love is chilled, and its daughters humility, patience, forbearance decline, then it is easy for the Enemy to blind the mind and stiffen the will into antagonism. Thenceforth it becomes possible to love what one honestly thinks to be truth, and which may be truth, more than one loves the brother who differs in opinion; whereupon subtle reasons are found to justify strife, such as the duty to contend for the faith or to safeguard fellow-saints from error. But not even right steps can be taken aright if brotherly love has declined. "Let *all* that ye do be done in love" (I Cor. xvi. 14).

IX

As Darby's views and prophetic scheme mightily prevailed and have very widely dominated evangelical thought, it may be helpful to examine some of his basic grounds, especially as his system is the foundation of the notes of the widely accepted Scofield Bible.

William Kelly was another fine scholar. He came into the Movement in the early forties. It is said that a tutor at Trinity College, Dublin, told him that if he would settle there as a coach he could make his fortune. He answered,

“ Yes, but for which world ? ” In a pamphlet entitled, *The Rapture of the Saints: Who suggested it, or Rather on What Scripture ?* he gives on pages 5 and 6 Darby’s own account of how he came to believe that that Rapture would be before the day of the Lord. Kelly does not give the reference to Darby’s writings where the statement is found. He quotes it as follows:

It is this passage* which twenty years ago [i.e. from 1850 when he wrote] made me understand the rapture of the saints before—perhaps a considerable time before—the day of the Lord (that is, before the judgment of the living).

This shows that by 1830, in the middle period of the gatherings at Powerscourt House, Darby had reached the conclusion that the rapture of the church would be before, and perhaps a considerable time before, the advent of the Lord to judge the wicked alive on the earth at His coming. Newton, on the contrary, held that the descent of the Lord to the air, with the gathering of the church to Him in the clouds, is to be one instantaneous act on His way down to the earth to destroy Antichrist.

It seems that Darby was in part right, in part wrong. In the statement quoted he does not say what in the passage cited showed him that the removal of the church must precede the coming of Christ to the earth for judgment, and he only hints at the reason in his *Synopsis* (v. 117) written some years later. The hint is that the saints are to appear *with* Christ when He comes in glory and therefore must have been taken to Him in advance. But with this Newton’s view agreed. The difference between them was as to the *length* of the interval between the removal and the descent to the earth. Newton regarded it as but the “ twinkling of an eye ” (1 Cor. xv. 52), Darby that it was a period of some length. Darby was right. I do not know whether he had already seen that the word *parousia* (“ as touching the coming, the *parousia*, of the Lord ”) implied some period, but it is now well known that this is its force. It covers not only the arrival of a person but the duration of his stay, and therefore implies a period.

But Darby’s programme of the End days required, or was developed to require, that the removal of the church *must* be before the End days *set in*; that is, that the *parousia* must extend over at least the seven years of the supremacy of Antichrist, that is, the Seventieth Seven of Daniel’s prophecy (Daniel ix) ; and, in this early statement quoted, he speaks

*II Thes. ii. 1, 2, which Darby (*New Translation*) renders :
“ Now we beg you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that ye. be not soon shaken in mind, nor troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as (if it were) by us, as that the day of the Lord is present.”

of "the rapture of the saints before—perhaps a considerable time before—the day of the Lord." I have looked steadily, repeatedly, I hope dispassionately at II Thes. ii. 1, 2, and I fail to see the slightest hint in the words used as to the length of the interval, i.e. of the *parousia*. Yet Darby says that the passage gave him ground to think that the interval might be "considerable." But this he ought to have tested, and have proved, if possible, from other passages. It looks as if it was the *assumption* of this idea that was the point where his thinking on this subject was subtly side-tracked. From the very next verse it is plain that the event mentioned in verses 1 and 2 cannot take place "except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition."

On the other hand, Newton's thinking was inaccurate from want of discerning that the word *parousia* demands *some* period and cannot mean only an instantaneous event. That is to say, between the moment when the Lord will descend to the air and the saints rise to Him there, and the hour when He will come to the Mount of Olives in judgment on the Beast, there *is* an interval: but Darby had no warrant for considering that it will be "considerable," covering seven years or more. In my commentary on *Revelation* (192-195) it is suggested that the *parousia* will begin during the Seventh Trumpet (thus according with I Cor. xv. 52, "the last trump"), in which case the descent to the earth will be at the close of that Trumpet judgment. Thus (as against Newton) the *parousia* will be a period, but it will not be at all as long as Darby's scheme requires.

On this matter Kelly, in the paper mentioned (22) wrote words that ought still to be pondered by supporters of his and Darby's views, as well as by others. He said:

Granted the great truth of His coming for the saints in sovereign grace before they follow Him from heaven for His overwhelming judgments on the earth, the interval is quite secondary; but this too can only be learned satisfactorily from scripture. Surely acrimony might well be spared in searching into such a detail, though of no small interest and importance.

Supporters of Darby's scheme assert that the coming of Christ for the church before the End days is taught in I Thes. iv and I Cor. xv. These are the chief passages they use. Thus the late W. E. Vine, at a meeting in Exeter in 1918, at which I was present, when arguing for that early advent, said that the prophetic parables of the Lord and the book of Revelation are hard to understand, but that these two passages are simple, and we do well to base our beliefs on the plain scriptures rather than the difficult. This is a tacit admission that the view in question is not found in the chief prophetic portions of the New Testament, the Gospels and the Revelation. Yet in fact the two passages cited yield no light whatever as to whether the events they mention are

to take place before the Tribulation under Antichrist or after it. The relation of time between the two events is not alluded to even remotely.

From the first the advocates of that pre-Tribulation coming of the Lord were faced with the formidable facts that the only coming of Christ known to the Gospels and the Revelation is accompanied by power and great glory, being as brilliant and visible as a flash of lightning, and that these portions of Scripture do not speak of a pre-Tribulation coming of Christ. The attempt to meet this obstacle involved various assumptions; for example:

1. The pure assumption that whereas in Revelation iii. the churches are seen on earth, in chapter iv they are regarded as caught up to heaven in the person of John, and as seen enthroned there in the twenty-four Elders, who are assumed to be representative of the glorified saints. In my treatise on that book (chapter V) this is examined in full detail, and it is proved (I venture to think conclusively) that the Elders do not "represent" any one, but are simply the twenty-four senior angelic rulers of the universe. Kelly's learned exposition of that book, as far as it affects the church of God, and the meaning of the term "saints," depends entirely upon the assumption that the Elders represent the church, and falls without it.

2. Inasmuch as the coming of the Lord is presented in the Gospels and the Revelation as public and open, it was unavoidable that the supposed pre-Tribulation coming, not being mentioned, should be a secret event, not known to the world.

In 1864 Dr. Tregelles, who, as above noted, was one of those earliest students of prophecy and acquainted intimately with the whole of the developments now being reviewed, published his discussion *The Hope of Christ's Second Coming*. On page 35 he stated that the theory of a *secret* coming of Christ was first brought forward about the year 1832, which means that it was introduced during the period of the Powerscourt meetings. In a footnote he added:

I am not aware that there was any definite teaching that there would be a *secret* rapture of the church at a secret coming, until this was given forth as an "utterance" in Mr. Irving's Church, from what was there received as being the voice of the Spirit. But whether any one ever asserted such a thing or not, it was from that supposed revelation that the modern doctrine and the modern phraseology respecting it arose. It came not from Holy Scripture, but from that which falsely pretended to be the Spirit of God, while not owning the true doctrine of our Lord's incarnation in the same flesh and blood as His brethren, but without taint of sin.

Baxter's *Narrative of Facts* concerning the Irvingite movement throws some light on this. It was in August 1831 that

he himself first fell under the "power" energizing that movement (chapter iii.); but he mentions that *some time before this* his sister had "heard several utterances from Miss E. C. [the chief prophetess among the Irvingites] in which she most emphatically pronounced that Christ would come at an hour when even His own people would not be looking for Him—that the time of His coming would not be known to His own people." Certainly that would be a secret coming.

It is therefore clear that in the Irvingite circle emphasis had been laid upon the secrecy of the Coming before it had been advanced in the other circle. Tregelles was very well read in Christian literature, ancient and modern, and he had a phenomenal memory. As therefore he had no recollection of having read of this doctrine it is probable that it was not advanced before the Irvingite days. Yet *too much* must not be made of this, for (1) it is the cunning of seducing spirits to commingle truth with error, and so to confuse the former and commend the latter. Thus a demon-inspired utterance *may* contain an element of truth. (2) No evidence is available that any of the Powerscourt circle took the idea of a secret rapture from the Irvingite utterances, no evidence beyond Tregelles's assertion, and for this he gives no proofs. Yet even if it was from them that this idea was taken, no more can be said than that they ought to have tested it very thoroughly from Scripture.

In his paper before quoted William Kelly repudiated with indignation the suggestion Tregelles made. But Kelly was not in the circle till some years after the Powerscourt time and he may not have known how the idea first arose. In any case he laboured in vain to repudiate Tregelles, for his argument was directed to prove only that the doctrine of the *rapture* of the saints was held before the Irvingite days, and that the word had been used in that sense by accredited English writers. But Tregelles had not questioned this. He was far too well informed to have challenged it. It was of a *secret* rapture that he wrote, the word being in italics. This issue Kelly merely avoided, though the italicized word is in the extract he gives from Tregelles. He did not deny the assertion that the idea of a *secret* rapture originated in the Irvingite circle, nor did he offer any other account of its origin.

These two examples from two such trained minds illustrate how the statements of the best scholars need to be scrutinized. Tregelles implies more than the fact he mentions fully warrants, and Kelly argues beside the point. This is the more to be noted because it has been, and is, deplorably common for the rank and file to accept unhesitatingly, and to repeat very positively, whatever some revered leader may assert. But as a Bishop said to his clergy, "Remember, brethren, that none of you is infallible, not even the youngest of you."

At this point Kelly gives a piece of information not, I

think, otherwise available. Speaking of Darby's statement above quoted as to the meaning he saw in II Thes. ii. 1, 2, Kelly added (pages 6 and 8) that

during a visit to Plymouth in the summer of 1845, Mr. B. W. Newton told me that, many years before, Mr. Darby wrote to him a letter in which he said that a suggestion was made to him by Mr. T. Tweedy (a spiritual man and most devoted ex-clergyman amongst the Irish brethren) which to his mind quite cleared up the difficulty previously felt on this very question . . . It was new, however, to hear that Mr. Tweedy . . . was the one who first suggested, as a decisive proof from scripture, II Thes. ii. 1, 2.

Here there seems another instance of the need to watch strictly what good and able men say. The first statement—that of what Newton said to Kelly—does not aver that Tweedy spoke to Darby about II Thes. ii. 1, 2; it says merely that he made a suggestion, but what that was is not recorded. Later Kelly added that it was about that passage; but he was writing from memory in 1903, when he was 82 (fifty-eight years after the conversation with Newton), when Tregelles's statement first came to his notice.

In any case this suggestion, whatever it was, did not come to Darby as a personal illumination through meditating upon Scripture but from another believer. It did, however, suffice to settle for him a matter before in doubt, and it reached him at the time when the formidable difficulty stated had to be faced, namely, that the Gospels and the Revelation know nothing of a secret coming of Christ and a secret rapture of the saints. This idea involved another basic assumption, namely:

3. That the reason why the three Synoptic Gospels and the Revelation do not even hint at this secret event is that they are not addressed to believers as Christians, but as Jews. Whoever first suggested this idea (and I have sometimes wondered whether *this* was what Tweedy proposed to Darby), it is absolutely basic to Darby's whole scheme; and it came in, not as a result of direct and careful exegesis of the New Testament, as a truth itself discoverable there, but as an expedient to resolve a difficulty to a dispensational scheme then being formulated. It was not a notion lying clearly in Scripture, only long overlooked, but was a human explanation to dispose of an awkward fact.

The subject will not be argued here at length, the present object being simply to glean lessons from the original years in which these subjects were investigated in modern times, and this is one of the facts which emerge.

Of necessity much else developed from this assumption, such as that:

(a) There is to be in the last days a remnant of Jews who will believe in Jesus as Messiah, after the church

has been removed. Of such a company we find no word in Scripture, though it does picture a small remnant of that people who in those times will fear the God of Israel and be called upon to keep the law of Moses (Isa. i. 9: Rom. ix. 27, 29: Mal. iv. 4-6: etc.). But the very fact that they will be under the law of Moses shows that they will not have reached the liberty that is in Christ. To these are wrongly applied passages which speak of "saints" as holding "the faith of Jesus" (e.g., Rev. xiv. 12). It is not until the nations attacking Jerusalem are being destroyed by the Lord that that godly remnant will "look unto Him they pierced" and "mourn" (Zech. xii. 8-11).

(b) It has to be assumed that the Lord, when addressing His apostles, spoke to them as representing that supposed believing remnant. Yet He knew perfectly well that He had chosen them out of and separated them from the world, the Jewish world that had rejected Him as much as from the Gentile world that would do so (John xvii). And He knew that they were the men who were to lay the foundation of that *new* society, the church, that He had told them He would build, and would be its most distinguished members. In the whole of their writings is there a hint that they looked upon themselves as connected with a Jewish company of the End days?

(c) From this theory it followed that the Sermon on the Mount, and other precepts and commandments of the Lord given when on earth, do not apply directly to Christians, but only by way of indirect application. The effect of this has been adverse to discipleship, as was foretold from the first by those who rejected Darby's views on this matter. Yet the final direction of the Lord ere He ascended was that the apostles were to make *disciples* and teach them to observe *all things whatsoever* He had commanded themselves to do (Mat. xxviii. 18-20). Their epistles, by their use of Christ's sayings, show that they did this.

(d) To avoid this plain command the theory required the further advance that the direction to spread the gospel, with other commands involved, such as baptism and the Lord's Supper, are not for observance in this age, but for that Jewish remnant when they engage (as is supposed) in the work of evangelizing the nations in the End days.

These ramifications of this dispensational scheme were not developed fully by its first exponents. This was done logically and to the bitter end by E. W. Bullinger, the outcome being that only Paul's prison epistles belong properly to the church, and all the rest of the New Testament, like the Old Testament, is "Jewish."

It is of spiritual significance and importance that the falsity of this line of teaching was exposed about the time it had become widely spread, and by one who never mentioned it. In the Bampton Lectures for 1864 T. D. Bernard showed

conclusively that all the teachings of the apostles were rooted in, and, by the instruction of the Spirit, grew out of, germinal sayings by Christ when He was with them. This is the antithesis of the dispensational division of the New Testament propagated by Darby and perfected by Bullinger. When, in my hearing, that learned Christian Jew, David Baron, was asked his opinion of Bullinger's views he replied: "It has been my endeavour to unify the Word of God, not to divide it."

The scheme may be tested by one single passage, with which the whole Bible is in accord. It is alleged that the *parousia* will commence with a secret pre-tribulation coming of Christ for His church, to be known at the time by them only; but that the *epiphany*, the public outshining of His glory, will be at the manifestation of that glory before all men. It has been taught that the former is that for which Christians are to look as their true expectation. Yet Paul, who is supposed to be the one who first received the revelation of that pre-tribulation rapture, is the very one who declares that the "blessed hope" of the church is "the *epiphany* [the shining forth] of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. ii. 13).

Involved in the scheme are such further assertions as that the church is "above dispensations" (whatever that may mean), and is so peculiarly the object of grace that it would be wholly inconsistent for it to have to endure the great tribulation of the End days. Yet it has been permitted to experience the indescribable horrors of the persecutions under the Roman Emperors, the Inquisition, the Boxers in China in 1900, the Bolsheviks, and now again in China. Those who so argue must surely forget the Lord's statement to the apostles, "In the world ye have tribulation" (John xvi. 33). That word was not merely prophetic, but general; tribulation is your normal experience while I shall be away. The great Tribulation will not be distinct in nature from the age-long tribulation, but will be its climax and conclusion. The notion that the church will not have to meet it is enfeebling. It were wiser that we should ask for some good reason why we in, say, England should escape what has been the constant portion of the people of Christ, and should prepare our hearts to accept it, if God should so will.

It has been mentioned above that one of the subjects discussed at Powerscourt House was whether the promises of God to the church are conditional. It would have been interesting to know the answers. At least some of those present were distinctly Calvinistic in theology. They held firmly to the truth that the salvation from wrath granted to the believer in Christ is eternal and so non-forfeitable. Their tendency was to apply this to all post-conversion privileges also. Within the area of the church glorified they allowed for differences of reward according to merit, but the principle

of reward must not be extended beyond this. In particular, the church of God is especially and peculiarly the object of grace. This led to the adoption of the term "sovereign grace." Thus in the statement quoted Kelly wrote of "the great truth of His coming for the saints in sovereign grace."

The idea conveyed by the term "sovereign" is that the grace of God is absolute, unfettered, and that the privileges it grants are free of conditions or limit. Where is this term or an equivalent found in the New Testament? It is not there. The grace of God is not unfettered. It is conditioned and balanced by His other attribute of righteousness. It is blessedly true that "grace reigns," but it is not the rule of an absolute autocrat in disregard of all other considerations. Rom. v. 21 shows this by saying "grace reigns *through righteousness*." Grace cannot do ought not consistent with righteousness.

Grace must confer upon the guilty a righteousness which can be recognized by the righteous Judge of all the earth. This grace does through the atoning work of Christ. Grace must also produce in the justified a righteousness such as a holy God can acknowledge and reward. This grace does by forming in the believer the character of Christ, by His dwelling in the heart. Now the sinner may refuse to accept the grace that would grant him righteousness in Christ; in which case he cannot obtain that saving benefit. Likewise may the believer thwart that inward work by which the Spirit would develop in him the character of Christ; in which case he will fall short of what the grace of God would have made him and conferred upon him. Very true are Tauler's words that, when God gives the crowns, He will not crown us, He will only crown Christ in us, for Christ alone is worthy of a crown. Thus grace is conditioned not as to what it is willing to confer, but by what we are willing to secure. In the whole range of its blessed activities it must work through righteousness. The term "sovereign grace" blurs the distinctness of this truth.

The common mistake was adopted that the Lord had taught, that the apostles had believed and taught, and that Christians in general had accepted, that His return might be at any moment. It has been urged that he cannot be looking for the Lord who holds that events must take place first. It is asserted that Scripture puts no events as to precede that supposed secret rapture, for the church is "outside prophecy." And when it is replied that Christ very distinctly told His disciples that "when ye see these things [of which He had been speaking] coming to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh" (Luke xxi. 31), the reply is made that this is "Jewish," the church is not the kingdom! This assertion is discussed at length (and, I think, completely refuted) in my book on the Revelation, in Dissertation II, "Did the apostles expect the return of Christ in their time?"

How could they have done so seeing that the Lord expressly told them that His absence would be long (Mat. xxv. 19; Luke xix. 12), and that Peter had to live to be an old man and then die? (John xxi. 18, 19). In that Dissertation it is shown that the New Testament use of the terms "to look for," "to wait for" most certainly do allow the thought of events intervening before the event expected.

X.

Hero worship is dangerous. Subjection of mind to one teacher, acceptance of a scheme of thought without searching into its principles and details, contention for a school of interpretation, are barriers to progress in knowledge. A good hen will find scraps on even a waste-heap. A keen-eyed spiritual botanist will detect a fair flower of truth among rank weeds of error. The true student gleans in all fields and gathers a large sheaf. Careful scrutiny of the differing lines of teaching here reviewed discerns truth in each and mistakes in all. Each looked from a different standpoint and saw features of the landscape others missed, and none saw the whole prospect. Had they patiently and quietly continued their joint survey their maps might presently have been made to correspond, instead of showing divergent features and roads.

As mentioned above, Darby was right in holding the *parousia* to be a period, but wrong in placing its commencement before Antichrist. Newton was right in placing it at the close of the Tribulation, wrong in not seeing it to be a period. Darby was close to truth in expecting a rapture before the End days, but wrong in associating with it the descent of the Lord and the resurrection of the godly, and in connecting it with 1 Thes. iv and 1 Cor. xv. For there is to be a removal before the End days, only not of all believers, but of such as watch and pray, keep the word of Christ's patience, and so prevail to escape all those things that will then be about to come on the earth. Upon unwatchful Christians that day will come suddenly as a snare, and they shall in no wise escape the then fast approaching End days (Luke xxi. 34-46; Rev. iii. 10; xii. 5; xiv. 1-5). But that escape and catching away will not be effected by a descent of the Lord from heaven, nor will it be accompanied by a resurrection. Those affected will simply be taken alive to heaven in order that they may not have to endure the Tribulation, seeing that they will not need its purifying fire. There are passages in Baxter's *Narrative* which suggest that he and Edward Irving, in spite of the confusion of thought in and around them, had glimpses of the part that faithfulness and worthiness have in being raptured. This aspect was strongly emphasized in an anonymous Irvingite book of 1868 entitled *The Purpose of God in Creation and Redemption*.

Therefore they were right (and Irving was among these)

who regarded the rapture as prefigured by those of Enoch and Elijah, but wrong in regarding those events as types of the rapture of 1 Thes. iv. only. For, as Heb. xi. 5 expressly states, Enoch was translated because "before his translation he hath had witness borne to him that he had been well-pleasing to God," which cowardly-minded and carnal Christians are not (Heb. x. 38: 1 Cor. x. 5, 6). And Elijah was taken alive to heaven as the crown of a strenuous life of faithful testimony amidst hardships and perils. And at the last, those backward believers who stedfastly endure the Tribulation will thereby become qualified for rapture, though they might have escaped the End days had they walked formerly in faith and obedience as did Enoch and Elijah.

The key to the perplexities that baffled those earlier inquirers, and over which, alas, they separated and fought, is a *moral* key. The hope of our Lord's return is intended to *sanctify* us and so to fit us for the inheritance by faith in Him (Acts xxvi. 18). "Every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). "Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, be sober, and set your hope perfectly [undividedly] upon the favour that is being brought unto you at the apocalypse [unveiling, not a secret affair] of Jesus Christ . . . [and] like as He who hath called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living: because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 13-16).

Therefore at every point teaching may be tested by its moral tendency and effect. This rules out such opinions as that the claims and commands of the Lord, as given in the Gospels, do not apply to Christians; or that the warnings addressed to disciples by Him or the apostles do not apply to regenerate persons. Such views do not serve to sanctify but tend rather to carelessness of heart and ways. By their fruits they are known. Many who have held those views have, indeed, acted as if they denied them, and have lived in fact according to scriptures they in theory held to be "Jewish." God be praised for this inconsistency. But it is not to be denied that many of those who most vigorously contended for such opinions have brought forth the bitter fruits of a controversial spirit, of opposition to any views but their own being taught, and of schism among the people of God. If there be found in us that "true humiliation of soul before God" for which Groves longed, then shall we be patient and forbearing with those who differ from us; and then, as to matters in which such humble souls may be otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto us (Phil. iii. 15.). And this He is even now doing among the lowly in heart.

In the enthusiasm engendered at that time by the great hope of our beloved Lord's return, it was presently suggested

that the intense renewed interest therein of that period was the fulfilment of the cry to the Ten Virgins "Behold, the Bridegroom! Come ye forth to meet Him" (Mat. xxv. 6). The only comment needed is that, in that case, the foolish virgins have had a sufficiently long time, a century and a half, in which to buy the oil needed! Yet the unwarranted notion is still maintained by people who do not reflect for themselves, but merely repeat accepted assertions.

XI

William Kelly inquired as to the world for which he might make a fortune. This points to another vital feature of those early searchers for truth, even that they were prepared to pay whatever price was involved in securing and using it. Many of them were in a position to pay what the natural man regards as a high price. Some of them could forego high prospects in the academic world. Others could surrender social position, style, and comfort. Mr. Parnell (later Lord Congleton), with an income of £1,200 a year (say £6,000 now) lived at one time in a house rented at £12 a year. It was a common feature that their houses were furnished and ordered in a style that would not deter the poorer brethren from visiting them happily. Maybe that sometimes they went to an extreme in this, but the principle was of love.

A. N. Groves gave up a dental practice with an income of £1,500 a year, as then valued. He and his wife gave away a fortune of £10,000 which came to them, and went to Persia with the gospel in dependence upon the Lord to meet all needs. He was the pioneer of modern faith enterprise in the gospel.

R. C. Chapman knew at his conversion that pride would be his besetting sin, so he abandoned his London practice as a barrister, gave away his means, went to Barnstaple, where formerly he used to drive in a carriage and pair, and took as his home a workman's cottage in a side street. His quaint, but very instructive comment was, "My pride never got over it." He had scotched that sin at a stroke. This was not the step of the aged and mature saint that a few of us remember. At the time he was under thirty and had been a man of fashion moving in good society, with the world at his feet. He was tall and powerful, in full vigour of mind and body. If he wished to go from Barnstaple to Ilfracombe, a dozen or so miles of hilly road, he would walk over to breakfast. And he would tramp the forty miles to Exeter and think nothing of it. This was the man who turned wholly from the world to join the family of Caleb and follow the Lord wholly.

Darby was trained for the bar, where he had excellent prospects, his sister's husband being Chief Justice of Ireland. It is said that he had such a high opinion of the powers and learning of his younger kinsman that he hoped that he

would be the one to codify Irish law. But Darby feared to sear his conscience by possibly using his talents to defeat justice, so he abandoned law and became a clergyman. When light came upon the thoughts of God as to His church he walked in that light and abandoned that profession also. A well-informed elderly friend, who had moved in Darby's religious circle in Darby's time, told me that his father was so incensed at his son's course that he disinherited him. But I do not know in just what sense or to what extent this was the case.

Such examples show that those men were prepared to "buy" the "wine and milk" of Immanuel's land (Isa. lv 1). On this diet they became "nourished in the words of the faith," even the "healthful words, the words of the Lord Jesus, and the teaching which is according to godliness" (I Tim. iv. 6; vi. 3; II Tim. i. 13). Being thus healthy and strong they could toil and endure. They gave heed to the words of the Lord from heaven: "I counsel thee to *buy* of Me gold refined by fire, that thou mayest become rich" (Rev. iii. 18). They became rich, so rich that they had abundance to give to the needy in soul, and through them the whole church of God was enriched.

This could not have been had they been unwilling to pay the price. The law rules still. There are today brethren of talents and learning who yet are not rich and do not enrich others. They discover in the treasury of the Word nothing fresh. Why is this? Is it for the reason that they are like some of whom Wesley wrote, that they had sundry excellent qualities, but "most unfortunately they know everything and therefore they learn nothing?" or is it that they are not willing to pay the price?

Yet those earlier leaders, whatever the price they had paid, would have said with a still earlier man of social position, learning, and leisure, Paul the apostle of Jesus Christ, "What things were gains to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse" (Phil. iii. 7, 8). A woman throws away lightly the household refuse, nor thinks she has done ought noteworthy. The disciple's earthly price is nothing; the heavenly gain is infinite, enjoyed now and hereafter.

An English clergyman told me that he had been on holiday in the Hebrides. Not having seen a newspaper for a fortnight, on leaving Church on Sunday morning he bought one in the street. An elder of the kirk saw its title, and ejaculated as he passed, *News of the World: which world?* The question for me, as for Kelly, is for which world am I living? ; is it for the seen or the unseen, for flesh or spirit, earth or heaven time or eternity, self or Christ? Oh, to heed the words of Paul, "For me to live is Christ . . . Brethren, be ye imitators

of me, and mark them who so walk even as ye have us for an example ” (Phil. i. 21; iii. 17). In spite of their failures, those whose affairs are here considered did seek so to live, wherefore in goodly measure they inherited the blessing of their father Abraham, and were blessed and made a blessing.

After Israel’s return from Babylon God gave them instructed teachers of His law like Ezra, with whose word there was authority over conscience and heart. Such God-sent teachers gradually ceased and by the time of our Lord there was a class of scribes who merely peddled the wares of famous rabbis but had no message from God. Hence when Jesus began to teach, men “ were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as having authority and not as their scribes ” (Mat. vii. 28, 29). He threw light upon the old truths and added new truth. His word fitted the times, searched consciences, demanded advance; and He paid the price of a prophet by being hated by the scribes, persecuted, and killed. But He served the will of God in His generation and furthered His cause on earth.

At the Reformation God gave to faithful men the message needed for that period. They brought out of the treasury of the Word things new and fitted to that time. They, too, endured a great fight of afflictions but were good soldiers of Christ Jesus. Presently they enshrined and limited their message by entombing it in Creeds and Confessions. They have been followed by a race of scribes mostly content to repeat what their first leaders taught, peddling their wares, with but seldom one who had a message direct from God.

The teachers of a century ago likewise were shown in the Word things new to that generation, things which disturbed the Ecclesiastical mind. Those truths were the message needed to meet the then state of the church. They spread them fearlessly and vigorously, paying the regular price for being men with a message from God for their times. They too, in this respect, were good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

Today their followers are mostly scribes, peddling their wares, repeating the same ideas in much the same phrases, but without a fresh message from God to meet present needs. They bring forth nothing new out of the Word, and commonly they resist and persecute any one who does so. History repeats itself. What is now greatly needed from God is teachers with some message or messages for the present times; men who can throw fresh light on the truths already held and can bring to light truths or phases of truth not yet recognized. The need is for teachers who can search the conscience of the comfortable and worldly-minded, and lead the people of God forward. These also will be hated and opposed by their carnally-minded brethren and will need the courage of the good soldier of Christ Jesus. They, too, must pay the price, make the sacrifices, incur the losses

incidental to soldiering.

The Lord has many servants, few soldiers. Seven thousand still worship Him; few Elijah's fight for Him. True are the words of Thomas a Kempis:

Jesus has now many lovers of His heavenly kingdom but few bearers of His cross. He finds many companions of His table but few of His fasts. Many follow Jesus as far as the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the chalice of His passion.

May the Lord in His mercy give again to His church messengers with a message, soldiers with stamina, warriors who will lead others to victory, conquerors who, even though they die in His battles, shall sit down with Him in His throne. Is the reader prepared to be one of them ?

THE PILGRIM TURNS HOME

From *Das Labyrinth der Welt* (The labyrinth of the World)

by

JOHN AMOS COMENIUS
dated 13th December 1623

THE Pilgrim wanders through all departments and experiences of the World, seeking quiet and satisfaction for his heart and finding only disquiet and dissatisfaction. At last he is brought to look down into the gloomy depths of the world of the dead, whereupon he says:—

Throwing away the spectacles that had blinded me, I rubbed my eyes, stretched as far forward as was possible, but saw there only horrible darkness whose bounds were not to be searched out by the power of human comprehension; and therein was nought but horrifying worms, toads, serpents, scorpions, rottenness and stench, with the smell of sulphur and pitch, body and soul shuddering through and through with nameless torment.

Terror seized me in every member, my whole body shivered, I sank to the earth paralyzed from fear. “Pitiable, miserable, unhappy Creature” I cried, “is this the lot you expected at the last? Is this the end of your grand deeds, the goal of your much-vaunted power, and the final outcome of your wisdom? Is this the eagerly desired peace, the long hoped for rest after such manifold distress and vexation? Is this the immortality with which you so often comforted yourself? Oh, would that I had never been born, never come through the portal of life, if, after all the vain toil, there shall be nothing more than to be a prey to this darkness and this terror. O God, O God—if, at least, there is a God—pity Thou my misery!”

The Seven and Thirtieth Chapter

THE PILGRIM TURNS HOME

Scarcely had I ended, and was still shivering in all my members, when suddenly behind me there rang a subdued voice, which cried: “Turn back!” I lifted my head a little and wished to see who had called and whither I was to turn myself; but I saw no one, and my former Guide had forsaken me.

And see! that voice caused itself to be perceived again: “Turn back!” Because I did not yet know whither I should return, or how I should raise myself from my feebleness, I was grieved. Then the voice cried to me the third time: “Return into the place whence thou wentest forth, into the little chamber of thy heart, and shut the door behind thee!”

And this counsel I followed, as far as I understood it. Well for me that I hearkened to God's voice. Yet this also was already His grace. Thus I gathered together, as well as I could, my thoughts; closed eyes, ears, mouth, nose, and all other avenues of the soul, and now contemplated my heart; but see, it was in darkness. But as with blinking eyes I looked around a little, by means of a feeble gleam of light, which fell through a crack, I perceived in the roof of my little chamber a large round glass window, but so dirty and smutty that it let in not the least light.

As by this poor feeble illumination I looked further all around I saw hanging on the walls certain pictures, which at some time had certainly been done by a master hand, but now were completely faded, mutilated, and badly disfigured. As I drew a little nearer I read the inscriptions: Foresight, Humility, Righteousness, Modesty, Moderation, and others. In the middle of the room lay in complete confusion broken ladders, wrecked and cracked reels, cords, then a pair of wings with feathers plucked, and finally clocks, with broken or bent spindles, teeth, and drums, all in the greatest disorder.

With astonishment I considered all these contrivances without suspecting how and by whom they might well have been so badly damaged or how they could now be again brought into order. Yet I entertained the hope that he who had led me here, whoever he might be, would again let me hear from him and would further instruct me concerning all these things. For that of which I here saw the beginning pleased me well, not only because in this chamber there was not the fearful stench as in the places through which I had wandered in the world, but also because here there was no such revelling and rioting, buzzing and grumbling, groaning and scratching, blustering and raging, dragging and tugging of which all spheres of the world had been so full, but here the deepest stillness reigned.

The Eight and Thirtieth Chapter

THE PILGRIM RECEIVES JESUS CHRIST AS GUEST

While I thus gave myself up to my thoughts and waited to see what would now happen, there suddenly shone aloft a quite clear light, and as I lifted my eyes to it I saw the upper window full of light. But in this light God moved downward, only indeed in human form, yet still in the true splendour of God. His countenance shone beyond measure, yet it was not unbearable by human eyes. But there came no terror from Him, but a charm the like of which I have never seen in the world, and in pure kindness and graciousness He at once spoke to me these loving words:

“Welcome to me, welcome, My dear son and brother.” With these words He also embraced and kissed me most kindly. At the same time He poured forth a most lovely fragrance in my soul, and an indescribable joy passed through

me, so that my eyes ran with pure tears; nor knew I how to respond to such an un hoped for welcome and greeting than, with humble glance, to look up to Him with a deep sigh.

As He saw me thus completely overcome with joy, He continued: "Where tarriedst thou, my son? Where didst thou so long remain? On what paths did you walk, what did you seek? Comfort in the world? But where could you find it except in God? and God, where else but in His temple? and in which temple if not the living temple which He has Himself chosen, in thy heart? I saw thee as thou wentedst astray; but, my dear son, I would not longer wait; therefore have I brought thee to thyself, and led thee into thine own heart, for this have I chosen for My dwelling place. If thou wilt dwell with Me, then wilt thou find what in the world thou soughtest in vain, peace, comfort, the true glory and full satisfaction. This I will promise to thee, My son, and fear not to be deceived as in yonder world."

As now I heard these words, and perceived that this was my Redeemer, of whom when in the world I had already heard enough, I folded my hands, stretched them out to Him, and said, not with fear and anxiety as formerly, but with inward joy and with full assurance: "Here I am, my Lord Jesus, receive me, Thine will I be and remain for ever. Speak Thou to Thy servant and grant that I may obey: say what Thou wilt and grant that I may hearken with joy; lay upon me according to Thy will and give me strength to bear it; command what pleases Thee and give what Thou commandest; and let me be nothing, that Thou Thyself mayest be all to me."

The Nine and Thirtieth Chapter

THE PILGRIM BETROTHS HIMSELF TO THE SAVIOUR

"I accept it from thee, My son," He said; "continue thus, and then be called My possession. Indeed, thou art, and wast, Mine from eternity, yet thou knewest not this earlier. I have long since intended for thee the comfort which I will give thee, but thou hast not conceived this. For wonderfully entangled and intertwined are the ways by which I brought thee to thyself; but thou hast not understood Me, nor perceived the hidden purposes which guide His chosen ones; so thou wast not aware of My workings with thee. Yet was I always and everywhere with thee, and have led thee by roundabout ways, so as at last the more inwardly to unite thee with Myself.

"The only thing which I require of thee is, that thou wilt transfer to Me the zeal which is squandered in the world, and the striving which men direct only to earthly things: so long as thou livest this is to be thy only occupation; and what men there indeed seek but never find, this will I give thee in abundance, the true joy and peace of soul . . .

“ Verily, I say to thee, My son, if thou possessest riches, wisdom, beauty, understanding, the favour of men, and whatever else is most highly treasured in the world, be not lifted up thereby ! Keep thyself at liberty from all these things, whether they belong to thee or not, and in thy inner self devote thyself to Me alone ! Only if thou hast renounced all things, and thy self also, wilt thou find Me and the inward peace which I promised to thee.”

Then I cried: “ O my Lord and God ! now first I perceive that Thou art all in all: who possesses thee can renounce the whole world, because he has more than he can desire. I know that I have sinned in that I went astray in the world and hoped to find peace in things created. But from this hour will I have no other pleasures beyond Thee; to Thee will I be wholly devoted; but strengthen Thou me that I turn not again from Thee to earthly things and desire again all the folly of which the world is full. Thus will I build on Thy grace which shall guard me now and evermore.”

The Fortieth Chapter
THE PILGRIM IS TRANSFIGURED

And while I so spake it became in me ever clearer, and those pictures, which before had been faded and disfigured, were now radiantly fine and seemed to move. Also the scattered and broken wheels joined themselves into a whole and formed a perfect clock, which set forth the course of the world and God’s wonderful leading. The ladders were again set up and leaned on the window, which thus afforded an open prospect and let the light of God stream into the room. Also the wings had now richer feathers than before; and God the Lord took them, bound them on me and said: “ My son, I dwell in two places, in My glory in heaven and on earth in a humble human heart. In future thou also shalt dwell in two places, here in thy house, where I am present with thee, and then by Me in heaven, whither thou thyself on this pair of wings—prayer and the longing for the things eternal—shalt soar, as oft as thou wilt, to blessed enjoyment. I will then have good pleasure in thee.”

The Two and Fiftieth Chapter
THE PILGRIM SEES GOD IN HIS GLORY

For see, in the height sat God, the Lord of Hosts, on His throne. Brightness radiated from Him from sunrise to sunset . . .

So I saw God’s inexpressible greatness and majesty, heard the indescribable song of the heavenly hosts, more exalted and mighty than our eyes, ears, heart can grasp and conceive.

And full of astonishment at the glory of the heavenly things sank I on my knees before God’s throne, and, ashamed, of my sinfulness, I cried with my unclean lips: “ O Lord, Thou art a mighty God, full of compassion, gentleness, long-

suffering, and mercy, exercising grace to thousands and forgiving their misdeeds and sins. O Lord, have mercy on me also, for Christ's sake."

The Three and Fiftieth Chapter

THE PILGRIM IS RECEIVED INTO THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD

As I ended my Lord and Saviour stooped from His throne and heard, and spake to me the delightful words: "Fear thou not: I thy Redeemer am with thee: I am thy Comforter, fear thou not. For see, thy misdeeds are taken from thee and thy sins are forgiven thee. Thou shalt exult and rejoice; for thy name also stands written here; serve Me faithfully and thou shalt be as one of these! Let thy fear of God be heightened by what thou here seest, and later thou shalt see yet greater things. Be steadfast in the work to which I have called thee, and walk faithfully the way to bliss which I have shown thee. So long as I leave thee in the world regard thyself only as a guest, a stranger, a pilgrim; in thy heart thou art now of the household of God; for see, I make thee a citizen of the heavenly kingdom. Therefore cultivate diligently intercourse with heaven. Lift up thy heart to Me as high as thou canst, but to thy neighbour condescend as deep as thou canst. Use earthly things so far as they are necessary to thy life, but seek thy joy always in the heavenly things only. Obey My words, but to the world, as regards the bodily cravings, offer opposition. The wisdom which I bestow guard deep in thy heart; but to the outward be simple, as I have commanded thee. Let thy heart speak, thy tongue be silent; be ever soft to the request of thy neighbour, but hard against thine own need. With thy soul serve Me alone, with thy body whom thou canst and must: do promptly what I command thee, and bear patiently what I lay upon thee: flee the world, attach thyself to Me; you belong to it as to your body, to Me with thy whole soul. Well to thee if thou doest all this, My son. So then to thy life's end remain true to thy calling, and rejoice in the blessedness to which thou art called."

The Four and Fiftieth Chapter

CONCLUSION

And the vision vanished; but I fell on my knees, lifted my eyes to heaven, and gave thanks, as well as I could, to my Redeemer in the prayer following:

"Highly to be praised art Thou, my Lord and Master! Most worthy of worship, blessed be Thy most holy Name in all eternity! All angels praise Thee and all saints proclaim Thy praise! For Thy power is great and Thy wisdom unfathomable, yet Thy mercy stands above all Thy works. I will praise Thee, Lord, as long as I live, and sing to Thy holy Name as long as I can; for Thy mercy has made me glad and filled my mouth with pure joy. For Thou hast

snatched me from a raging torrent and set me on firm ground. I was so far from Thee, O God, Thou my eternal joy, but Thou hast in mercy Thyself drawn near to me. I wandered, Thou hast led me ; I knew not where, in and out, but Thou hast shown me the right way. I wandered again from Thee and had lost Thee and myself, but Thou appearedst again and gavedst me back to Thee and myself. I came to the door of hell, Thou snatchedst me back and leddest me upward to the gate of the heavenly kingdom.

“ Therefore, my soul, praise thy Lord, and what is in me bless His holy name. My heart, O God, rejoices to meet Thee; for Thou art higher than the highest heights and deeper than the deepest abyss, wonderful and full of mercy. Woe to the thoughtless who have forsaken Thee and yet think to find peace, which neither in heaven nor on earth nor in the depths is to be found apart from Thee; for only in Thy bosom finds our heart its eternal rest. Heaven and earth are Thine, are good, lovely, and desirable, for they are created by Thee; yet are they neither so good, so lovely, so desirable as Thou, their Creator. Therefore can they grant to the seeking soul no full satisfaction. In Thee is all fulness: our heart is unsatisfied so long as it comes not to rest in Thee.

“ I have come late to love Thee, O Thou eternal Glory, because I so late perceived Thee; and I perceived Thee as Thou beganest to enlighten me, Thou Light of heaven. Who has not personally experienced Thy mercy knows not Thy greatness; but thou, my soul, acknowledge thy Lord ! Oh that my soul may be quite intoxicated with Thee, O Thou fragrance of eternity, that I might all things forget that are not Thee. Hide not Thyself from my heart, Thou highest Loveliness: and should the things of earth hide Thee from me, then would I rather die, so as to see Thee and never more to lose Thee. Lead, guide, carry me that I neither stumble nor fall. Grant that I may love Thee with an eternal love, and that, for Thy sake, I may love nothing else besides Thee, O Thou eternal, infinite Love !

“ What shall I say more ? Lord, now I am Thine, Thine am I for all eternity. Gladly will I renounce heaven and earth so as to be only Thine. Only withdraw Thyself not from me, then have I enough for all eternity. My body and my soul rejoice before Thee, the living God: oh, when shall I at last enter Thy presence to see Thee face to face ? Take me, O Lord, if it is Thy holy will: I am ready. And, if Thou wilt, call me when and where it may please Thee. For see, I will go where Thou shalt call, and do what Thou commandest. Let Thy good Spirit accompany me and guide me on even ground throughout the temptations of this world, and Thy mercy bring me on my way through the frightening darkness of this world unto the eternal light. Amen.”

SELECTIVE RESURRECTION AND RAPTURE
IN RELATION TO
THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE REGENERATE,
AN
AFFIRMATION
by
G. H. Lang

IN connection with the study of truth, and of prophecy in particular, I have more than once commended in print the following remarks by Dr. Robert Daly. They were written in 1838 and are found on page ix. of the Preface to *The Letters and Papers of Viscountess Powerscourt*. He said:

I consider the whole Church of Christ to be much in the dark with regard to prophecy, and more or less in error concerning it; and that the best way to correct the error, and attain more light, is to encourage free discussion upon it.

Therefore all sober and fair examination of a subject is to be welcomed, from whatever side it proceeds. But it can only be deplored when controversialists endeavour to create prejudice by unwarranted assertions. For at least one hundred and twenty years there have been serious and competent students of the Word of God who have believed it to be the clear teaching of Scripture that the honour of reigning with the Lord in His kingdom is a privilege not guaranteed to every child of God, though it is offered to each such in this age. This involves that sharing in the raptures or the first resurrection, which will remove to the heavenly regions those who are to reign there with Christ, while open to all believers is not assured to all, but to those only "who are accounted worthy to attain to that [the Millennial] age and the resurrection which is from among the dead" (Luke xx. 35). We consider that this view alone answers to the many conditional statements of Scripture and also supplies both needful stimulus to holy living and check against the abuse of the grace which provides such a great prospect.

Upon so important a theme concentrated examination is needful and helpful, but there are some who seek to discredit the doctrine by alleging that it negatives the truth of the eternal salvation of those who are born of God through faith in the Son of God and His atoning work. No accredited teacher of the view in question will admit this, for it is of the essence of our view that we emphasize heavily the contrast between life eternal as a free gift and sharing the glory of

Christ as a reward. The assertion serves to give some very greatly needed body and weight to their opposition, for without it there would be no warrant for alleging that the doctrine impinges upon the faith of the gospel. The fact that it is found necessary to use this makeweight is silent testimony that the view is consistent with the faith.

The sure way to rebut this unjustified allegation is to oppose to it the following statements by leading persons who have advocated the doctrine of Selective Rapture and Resurrection.

The great theme of the return of the Lord Jesus was studied afresh by godly persons from about the year 1825, and it was generally held that all believers alive at the time of the event and all the dead of this Christian age who had life in Christ would be rapt or raised to share the kingdom and glory of the Lord. But there were some of the earliest of those students who doubted this last opinion and thought that the high honour of reigning with Christ was contingent upon faithfulness to Him in this life. But in those early years such divergence of opinion was never regarded as challenging the faith or as imperilling fellowship or as restricting public ministry. There was then too much theological knowledge, balanced judgment, and above all too much brotherly love to hinder friendly discussion.

Statements upon this subject are on record by Anthony Norris Groves, R. C. Chapman, and Lady Powerscourt, the lady in whose Castle in Ireland were held conferences for the study of Scripture which had profound influence. Groves' words may be read in my *Anthony Norris Groves* page 298, Lady Powerscourt is quoted on page 292, and R. C. Chapman on page 32 and more fully in my *First Fruits and Harvest*, 29, 30. On pages 28 and 29 of this last treatise it is shown that Hudson Taylor held the same view, and others of his generation who did so were W. Fuller Gooch and Samuel H. Wilkinson.

Upon the matter of the eternal security of the regenerate Lady Powerscourt wrote:

Death has left its sting in the humanity of Christ, and has no more power to harm his child. Christ's victory over the grave is his people's . . . Omnipotent love must fail before one of his sheep can perish: for, says Christ, "none shall pluck my sheep out of my hand." "I and my Father are one"; therefore we may boldly say, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." *Letters and Papers*, 285.

What one who held the views in question regarded as the basis and character of *salvation* is seen in these words of A. N. Groves:

O, what a blessed passage is that in Rom v. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, *much more* being reconciled we shall be saved by His life." Yet the more I feel of this assurance of such unmerited love, the more hateful sin appears in all shapes, and the more my soul desires entire devotedness to the whole will of God, and conformity to my gracious Lord.

And again:

Is it not a sweet fruit of unconditional salvation that it has taught the soul *to esteem God's will concerning all things to be right?* Imperfect obedience to the divine will can only be, I conceive, the fruit of *imperfect love.* (*Memoir of A. N. Groves*, 189, 234).

The expressions are to be noted: "assurance . . . such unmerited love . . . unconditional salvation," and this as the basis of holiness of life.

R. C. Chapman wrote:

How great the blessing—redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of the grace of God. Let us but keep this in view, this perfect eternal redemption, and all is well. Then has patience her perfect work, and we submit to the hand of God, not because we cannot resist, but because God is love and is our Heavenly Father.

What think you of Christ then, my dear Sister? I know your answer. He is altogether lovely. He is now sitting for us at the right hand of God, and the stability of His throne is our strong foundation. (*Selected Letters*, 2, 3.)

And again:

Moreover, my soul, know thou the day makes haste to come when that which is in part shall be done away; this body of death is not for ever; but the workmanship of the Spirit of Christ shall endure for ever; for the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." (*Hymns and Meditations*, 166, 167.)

Here also note the expressions "eternal redemption . . . strong foundation . . . shall endure for ever."

Passing on to the middle of the last century the chief exponent of these views in question was the learned Robert Govett, M.A., of Norwich, Fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. Among his voluminous writings is *The Righteousness of God the Salvation of the Believer*. On page 376 he deals with Rom. viii. 31, "What therefore shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who shall be against us?" He says:

The intentions of Almighty power and wisdom must needs be fulfilled. Satan with his angels and evil men are against us, and would gladly destroy. But all opposition will not avail to frustrate the salvation of God's

providing. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, are engaged on our behalf. Here is our *security* that we shall enjoy eternal life (page 376).

And again:

The believer then, made a son of God by the love of God in Christ, shall certainly attain at last the glory of eternal life (page 551).

In the latter part of the last century and the beginning of this a Cambridge classical scholar, G. H. Pember, M.A., became a leading exponent of prophetic Scripture and of Selective Resurrection. From pages 28-30 of *The Church, the Churches and the Mysteries* we cite these statements as to the eternity of salvation. The theme is John v. 24-29.

With His most solemn formula the Lord introduces this wondrous and gracious revelation, that, at the moment when we receive His word, and believe the testimony which His Father has given concerning Him, we have crossed the boundary which separates life from death—aye, and have done so before the awful Judgment throne is set up between them. In that instant, by the word of His power, by that mighty working whereby He is able to subject all things to Himself, a germ of immortality has passed into our being, which—like all the gifts and callings of God—when once given, can never be withdrawn . . . Such being the case, how could we ever perish? How could God sanction so great a waste as the destruction of those whom He has created anew in Christ Jesus, and made perfect in Him! . . . True, then, were the words of the Lord when He said: “Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.” And true, also, the words of the Apostle: “And this is the record, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life, is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life: he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.” The first, then, of the three mighty acts is a resurrection of the spirit; or the spiritual resurrection, which involves everlasting life, and is identical with the new birth, or the new creation in Christ Jesus. It is an absolute and undeserved gift from God, and can only be obtained as such.

Mr. D. M. Panton, B.A., Editor of *The Dawn*, followed Mr. Govett in his ministry at Norwich. His major pamphlet is *The Judgment Seat of Christ*. In a full treatment of this vast theme there are not unnaturally some things I should not say, but it is a searching treatment of its solemn subject, too searching, I fear, for some Christian readers. But it has helped many. A worker in a distant land, able and zealous, became somewhat of a trial to fellow-workers by her persistent efforts to get many things ordered by her views. I sent her this

pamphlet. She wrote to say that since she had therein learned that the Lord is the true and only competent Judge, and that He duly takes in hand all matters, she no longer felt the need that *she* should strive to rectify everything. For years thereafter she proved a valued co-worker. The paper opens thus:

It is the joy and wonder of God's Grace that all saving merit in our Lord's life and death becomes ours on simple faith: "for by grace have ye been saved THROUGH FAITH; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; *not of works*, that no man should glory" (Eph. ii. 8, 9). A sinner's works, so far from saving him, have actually to be repented of—"REPENTENCE from dead WORKS" (Heb. vi. 1):—for "the FREE GIFT of God"—unfettered therefore by any obligation on the part of the Giver, and thus completely severed from our merit—"is eternal life *in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. vi. 23) . . . We thus draw eternal life solely from the Son of God. "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is *in His Son*. He that hath the SON HATH THE LIFE; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 11, 12). Eternal life thus rests for ever on simple, saving faith, which produces immediate regeneration, incorporation into Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, and indefectible life. "He that *believeth* on the SON hath EVERLASTING life" (John iii. 36).

These unequivocal utterances might suffice to show that the leading advocates of Selective Rapture and Resurrection have declared plainly that the eternal security of the believer in Christ is emphatically part of their teaching. Here I should much prefer to leave the matter, but it is the case that at the present time I myself am the principal writer upon the same side, and it is to nullify as far as possible my writings and influence that present criticisms are mainly directed. It is the more regrettable that writers of today should bring the complaint that the doctrine in question negatives the doctrine of eternal security, for they are acquainted with my writings and must know that I have declared emphatically my conviction of the eternal security of the regenerate. I ask the unbiassed reader to ponder these three statements from three of my books on these subjects.

On pages 14, 15 of *Firstfruits and Harvest* it is said that

It is at this point that the "ifs" of the Word of God come in, and are so solemn and significant. Whenever the matter is that of the pardon of sin, the justifying of the guilty, the gift of eternal life, Scripture ever speaks positively and unconditionally. The sinner is "justified freely by God's grace," and "the free gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. iii. 24; vi. 23), in which places the word "free" means free of conditions, not only of

payment. Eternal life therefore is what is called in law an absolute gift, in contrast to a conditional gift. The latter may be forfeited if the condition is not fulfilled; the former is irrevocable. But as soon as the sinner has by faith entered into this standing before God, then the Word begins at once to speak to him with "Ifs." From this point and forward every privilege is conditional.

One of my present critics wrote a long attack upon my treatise *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*. He had therefore read the following very definite avowal on pages 14 and 15 in the Preface:

This book is written by one who is thoroughly persuaded that the teaching of Scripture is that no justified and regenerate persons can ever be finally lost. Devout and learned men have held the opposite; and they support that view by many solemn passages, such as John xv, Heb. vi, and others. In my *Firstborn Sons, Their Rights and Risks* I have endeavoured to show that these portions of the Word are harmonious with the belief that no person once saved can be lost eternally, but that they do contain a searching warning message to the child of God, especially as regards the millennial kingdom. It is upon this line that some parts of *Revelation* are here expounded; but I must ask once and for all that the reader, when he comes to these passages, will remember that it has been here avowed in advance that salvation from the lake of fire, once secured by faith in the precious blood of Christ, is unforfeitable.

Yet in spite of this avowal my critic alleged and alleges that my views contradict the truth of eternal security. Present critics know well that two years ago I issued an extended commentary entitled *The Epistle to the Hebrews*. This sets forth at length the privileges that grace grants to the obedience of faith and also the penalties incurred by godlessness in believers. Now at the very heart of this exposition there is a special discussion to prove the eternal security of all the regenerate. It occupies nearly six pages of small type and runs to over 3,000 words. The concluding sentence reads:

Happy indeed is he who, as touching his status as righteous before God, sees Christ to be his *all*, for thus will he be assured that his judicial acceptance by God is necessarily as eternal as the righteousness of his Surety.

It is greatly to be desired that in future critics will be honest enough to acknowledge that those they oppose believe as they do upon this matter, seeing that the proofs of this are here made public.

NOTE. An example of the criticism deprecated may be found in a recent discussion entitled *Who Will Go when the Lord Comes?* by W. R. Lewis and E. W. Rogers. It is issued

from the office of "Echoes of Service," Bath; by post 3s. 3d. The Introduction opens as follows:

There fell into the hands of one of the writers recently a book in which was the following: "The initial condition upon which man may aspire to this beatific vision is the atoning work of the Redeemer . . . But the final condition for realizing in fact that which the atonement has made possible is set before us in the clause . . . "Pursue the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord" . . . The eternal security of the believer depends solely upon the sovereign grace of God. It is altogether independent of works. It is "not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. ii. 9). Salvation is effected alone through the work of Christ on the Cross, and His resurrection, appropriated by faith, applied to the believer by the Holy Spirit. To this nothing can be added."

It is to be observed:

1. That no references are given to any books in which it is said the doctrines rejected are taught, not even to the one quoted; so that readers are precluded from testing either the quotation or its context.
2. The reader is left to assume with the writers that what the writer quoted meant by "this beatific vision" is the same as the "eternal security of the believer," that is, "salvation," as it is added, "Their future salvation is no contingency." The rest of their book follows this assumption, and on it is based the charge that, according to the writer and others, "salvation" is not by grace alone but is "by the work of Calvary plus something of human endeavour." This is the only really weighty element in their strictures.

The writer cited was dealing with Heb. xii. 14: "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord." In the paragraphs *just immediately preceding* the words quoted he showed that "the Lord" in this verse is not Christ, because every eye shall see Him at one time of judgment or another, according to Rev. i. 7: Phil. ii. 10, 11: John v. 22. He added that, "It is therefore to some face to face vision of God the Father that our clause refers," and he cited numerous passages in support. *This* therefore was "the beatific vision" which *he* considered this scripture to make conditional upon sanctification. In the *very paragraph quoted* he made this unmistakably clear by describing "the beatific vision" as "the fullest and highest bliss possible through the blood of Jesus, even this supernal vision of the face and presence of Him Who before was personally inaccessible to man."

Early in the *same chapter* the writer had stated clearly his belief as to the standing and security of the believer. He dealt with the words of Heb. xii. 24: "Ye have come unto the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better than that of

Abel," and said:

No matter what is the privilege now known, or hereafter to be gained, all our standing and hope is based upon the atonement of Calvary . . . And to all eternity, and in whatever height of glory we may reign on Mount Zion, we shall discover our security to stand in that eternal redemption.

" I stand upon His merit:
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land."

Even these critics will surely acknowledge that *some* privileges and rewards attached to salvation may be lost without imperilling salvation, and the writer was dealing with the vision of God the Father as the highest of these possibilities. It was only by disregarding his plain definition and the whole context that his term "the beatific vision" was made to seem equivalent to "salvation" and thereupon the unjust charge formulated that he taught that salvation depends upon grace and law, faith and works. Thus the critics gravely perverted his teaching, created an entirely false issue, and completely misled their readers.

The book in question (now out of print) is my *Firstborn Sons, Their Rights and Risks*, pages 75-77, 65, 66.

G.H.L.

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