

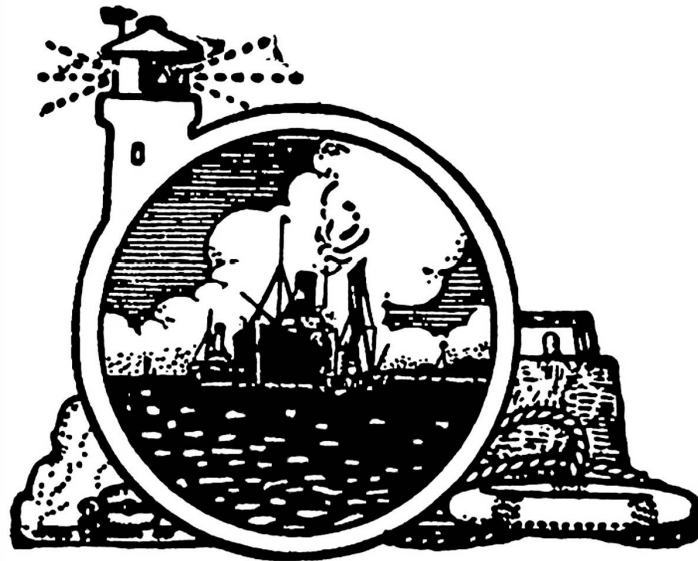
THE DISCIPLE

VOL. 1, No. 1.

MAY, 1953

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“The opening of Thy words giveth Light”

Psalm 119:130. (R.V.)



CONLEY & SCHOETTLE PUBLISHING CO., INC.
P.O. BOX 660594
MIAMI SPRINGS, FLORIDA 33166

1984

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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

PUBLISHERS COMMENTS

Special delight is ours in providing **THE DISCIPLE** periodical in its entirety for the student of the Word of God that must have the finest of materials from which to study. G.H. Lang has long been regarded "By all these writings, as by his spoken ministry and private correspondence and conversation, . . . to be for many of us 'an interpreter, one among a thousand' . . . ". (Dr. F.F. Bruce, **THE WITNESS**, December 1958).

All non-advertisement copy from the covers has been placed onto vacant pages where possible, that nothing of the original would be lost. The reader will, of course, ignore the out-dated addresses of former distributors and printers of the original periodicals which are inserted in the body of material.

Your attention is called to Volume 1, Number 6 of October 1954, pages 174-186. This section deals with Divorce and Re-marriage. In recent years there have appeared other works that, in our opinion, update and more correctly advance the exposition of this study. We take the liberty, at this time, to mention a few very worthy additions to your study and library:

1. **THE DIVORCE MYTH** - Dr. J. Carl Laney, Bethany House Pub., Minn, MN
2. **THE MISCARRIAGE OF MARRIAGE** - Dr. Andrew Telford, Grace Pub. Co., Tampa, FL
3. **MARRIAGE and DIVORCE** - Dr. Theodore H. Epp, Back to the Bible, Lincoln, Nebraska
4. **THE PRESUMPTIONS OF DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE** - Dr. Warren A. Allem, Gospel Folio Press, Grand Rapids, MI

Our very special appreciation to Mrs. Mary Lang Lewis in making available these very rare and very excellent studies of her father. She has laboured diligently over the years since 1958 in printing, mailing, answering countless letters, loaning books and booklets, and prayerfully waiting upon the Lord that these works of Mr. Lang would be advanced to Bible students everywhere. Your satisfaction will be as ours when you take part in telling others of like faith of the 'once again' availability of **THE DISCIPLE**.

CONLEY & SCHOETTLE

EDITORIAL.

The object of this periodical is stated distinctly in its sub-title. It is (*a*) for the Lord's people, and (*b*) to promote intelligent devotion to Him and His interests.

To be a thorough disciple of Jesus the Lord is a serious matter, not to be attained without some real understanding of His demands and directions, and not to be maintained without personal attachment to Himself and devotion to His affairs. To serve this end the contents of this paper must needs be serious and weighty, informative as to the Lord Himself and as to His purposes and projects.

It follows that these pages can be helpful only to those who are resolutely determined to follow the Lamb whithersoever He may lead in this tangled and adverse world, and who will, therefore, give serious study to what is written. Others will not benefit, and they are most earnestly requested on no account to ask that the magazine be sent to them. Wastage is wicked.

No commercial element will enter into the production and distribution of "The Disciple." It is a humble offering of love to the Lord and His people, to serve spiritual ends alone, and, therefore, only those are morally entitled to receive it who are fully minded to benefit by it spiritually.

By the gracious enabling of the Lord it is offered gladly to these on the same favourable terms on which we are permitted to buy His wine and milk, that is, without money and without price. Application should be made to the honorary Distributors, COLTISHALL GRANARIES LTD., COLTISHALL, NORWICH, NORFOLK. If you can place copies with other serious Christians, who will read these pages, and will kindly undertake to act as distributor to them, please mention the number required. This help will be valued.

As to how often this paper will appear, faith will leave this to the Lord Who orders wisely all His affairs.

20 OAKLEY ROAD,
WIMBORNE, DORSET.

G. H. LANG.



G.H. LANG

A photograph taken in the garden room at Wiedenest when he was at work on the translation of *The Triumph of the Crucified*.

PREFACE

This volume is the second in a proposed series of reprints of the works of G. H. Lang by Messrs. Conley & Schoettle in the U.S.A. The series will embrace not only prophetic matters, but also the vast range of divine truth which came from Lang's pen such as Church order, finance, the Christian role in society, the present world order and its end, the judgment of both Christians as well as the ungodly at the Bema and the Great White Throne respectively.

The large works, long out-of-print, will come first, followed by smaller books and pamphlets bound-up in larger volumes. Finally, it is hoped hitherto unpublished material, especially his Magnum Opus, left in manuscript form, **PREVAILING TO ESCAPE** being a definitive treatment of the Partial Rapture doctrine from the author's standpoint.

George Henry Lang was a teacher whose oral ministry had great lucidity and weight: his written work shared these qualities. Just as his holy walk gave weight to all he said, so every page of written work breathes devotion to Christ as he seeks to bring before the Christian public the mind of the Eternal. Above all, Lang was master, as his Puritan forebears, at application of Scripture to the life and walk of God's people.

However, being an independent thinker, it was in the real of interpretation of Scripture, especially prophecy, that caused him to become the most controversial figure among Brethren among whom he mostly moved, since J.N. Darby. In the words of a relative by marriage, Douglas Brealey, himself a much used servant of Christ, his study of prophecy "led him into avenues where some of us could not follow" - exactly the position of the publishers and of the present writer. Nevertheless, for mature students to have such vital, scholarly and thought provoking writings before them must be a great service to the Church of God at large. Whilst rejecting the Partial Rapture and its concomitants, they acknowledge much to warm the heart, inform the mind, and direct the feet of the Saints in the writings of G.H. Lang.

May all who know the benefits of these works join in prayer, wishing all involved in the God speed.

Hemsworth, England

23 October 82

Jack Green

G.H. Lang – A modern Caleb

'He hath followed me fully' Numbers 14 v. 24.

Two courageous men were born in 1874; Churchill and G.H. Lang. November 20th will mark the Centenary of that lucid and powerful Bible teacher – G.H. Lang. He was never called before kings or judges, but he was that rarity – a man who taught what he really believed, and lived by what he taught regardless of consequences. This simple courage was to him but simple common sense. God was his father, and father's wisdom is always good. I commend the idea to us all. It saves a lot of heartaches if you refuse to look at the hazards, and look simply to God.

His childhood was spent in a christian home at Greenwich, Bermondsey and Sidcup. At the age of 7½ he trusted the Saviour; of that experience he wrote 'it was so real that it is as vivid after 70 years as if it had just happened.' The first of many adventures in guidance occurred when about 13 years old, he was attacked by a bullying gang from Bexleyheath. He recounted later 'I was about to answer cheekily when something arresting happened. There rang in my heart words I had no recollection of having heard before:' "A soft answer turneth away wrath." I changed my tactics, answered quietly, and was allowed to go home without damage. That experience has been a determining factor for more than 60 years. I have taken for granted that God will work, speak, guide and help and that the Bible is the medium He chooses to use for His messages. I have heard His Voice in the Book not once, but many times.'

By 1899 he was an insurance assessor's clerk with very good prospects but one day he was given an assignment which touched his conscience. He set out to ask a friend's advice, when a voice said 'I will instruct thee.' (Psa. 32.8) He returned home and waited some days; on 27th. May the Voice said 'Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Col. 3.7) He saw at once he could not do the business called for. On 1st June he wrote his resignation, without having any other job to go to. I remember him telling me. 'The ink wasn't dry on that letter, when a deep peace filled by soul.' He promised the Lord to take whatever job he was let to; 'until then' he told me, 'I said I would devote all my time to his service.' His eyes twinkled as he continued, 'I am still waiting for that job.' So for 54 years he served God in many lands: Britain, India, Burma, Egypt, Tunisia, Palestine, Syria, Scandinavia, Germany, Poland, Rumania, and elsewhere. He laboured in teaching, writing and most valued of all by a great circle of friends personally counselling hundreds of believers to lives of total devotion to Christ.

Almost his last journey was to the wedding of our friend George Patterson in 1953. In 1954, at 80 years of age, he told me that the Lord had said to him that his journeys were ended, but he began to publish a new magazine, 'The Disciple' given free to all who would read it prayerfully; each edition published only when the Lord had sent the money for it. I have a full set, 22 numbers, more than 950 pages; close on half a million words, more than half as long as the Bible, mostly from the pen of an ailing man in his 80's.

George Lang wrote 14 major books, and innumerable booklets, 3 of which were published by the Enfield Christian Bookshop! I recall him saying, 'No man should write a book until he is 40. He needs to prove his theories in practice before publishing'. All but 9 of his many writings were published after he was 50.

His views on prophecy and the hereafter did not win universal acceptance: his views on the Church, the most lucid and scriptural expositions I have ever come across, are unacceptable to denominational Christians and most clergy. He trusted his reputation to God, and when doors were closed he found others opened by the Lord! He very strictly maintained silence before men on the subject of financial needs. He truly lived by faith.

Probably his most influential books were his biography of Anthony Norris Groves (1939) and *The Churches of God* (1928). In my view, all believers should read both before their 25th birthdays, they would avoid having to unlearn so much in later life.

Lang's quiet, gracious, determined spirituality stemmed from a love for Christ which valued more than anything else the great gift which the risen Saviour had given him, the personal anointing of the Holy Spirit, which he said took place in the 30th year of his life.

The titles of some of his best pamphlets are evidence of this great preoccupation: 'The Rights of the Holy Spirit in the House of God. (1938) 'God at Work on His Own Lines. (1952) 'The Personal Indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (1954) 'Praying is Working. (1918). The same theme runs through his biographies: 'A.N. Groves', 'Aroolappen', 'E.H. Broadbent' and his autobiography, 'Pages from an Ordered Life.'

F.F. Bruce concludes his Epilogue to the posthumous edition of Lang's biography thus:— 'He takes his secure place in the ranks of those whom we are bidden to bear in mind: Remember your guides, who spoke to you the Word of God, consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith.' (Heb. 13.7).

I have been fortunate to have known several people utterly devoted to Christ. G.H. Lang was one of them. I thank God for his memory.

M. Collier

By kind permission.

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. 1

MAY, 1953

THE SECRET PLACE

(Psalm 91: 1. 1 John 4: 16)

*There is a safe and secret place
Wherein the soul should dwell:
So secret that no subtle foe
That hiding place can tell;
Securely hid in God Himself
The saint is safe from e'en himself.*

*There far removed from strife of tongues
Is quiet from earth's roar;
Nor lurking fear of unknown ill
The heart can harass more;
From anxious thought the soul shall cease,
Close hidden in the God of peace.*

*And he who dwells in love doth reach
That hiding place secure,
His inward man doth rest in peace,
Whate'er he may endure:
God, like a rampart strong, surrounds
The heart that dwells within love's bounds.*

*My soul, throughout each passing hour
Abide in love, in God;
Nor wander from that secret place,
Thy safe and still abode.
Love rules supreme in heaven above,
Let all thy life be ruled by love.*

L.

HUMAN CONDEMNATION

An Address by

DR. A. T. PIERSON

at

BETHESDA CHAPEL, BRISTOL

on

August 14th, 1900

Edited from a verbatim report

WE will read a few passages to get the thoughts of the apostle on the subject of Human Condemnation.

Romans i. 16-25; ii. 1-16; this is the arraignment of the Gentiles.

In the first eight chapters of this epistle to the Romans there are four great leading thoughts:

1. The thought of universal condemnation; this extends to the middle of chapter iii.
2. Then the great subject of the justification of the person; this occupies most of the argument until the middle of chapter v.
3. Then the subject of sanctification, which occupies the argument until about the middle of chapter viii.
4. Then the subject of glorification, which concludes chapter viii.

These things naturally fall into the order in which they are found here. God is seeking in this to show men first of all their great need, their universal need of salvation; then justification, then sanctification, and then the end and goal in eternal glory. It may be very profitable to us to think God's thoughts with God, and follow carefully this train of thought during these four meetings.

We begin tonight with the subject of condemnation. The scripture we will take as our text this evening, which gathers up all the thoughts of the verses that precede, is the latter part of chapter iii. 9, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin"; and now the latter part of verse 19, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." That verse and that solemn sentence ends the first part of the argument. How beautifully, and yet how terribly, the whole argument is summed up in these words.

If we start with chapter i verse 18 we read, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold down the truth in unrighteousness." Here begins the arraignment of the human race, without any distinction of persons, that, as we have seen, "all the world may become guilty before God."

The whole preceding passage makes a distinction between two classes of people, the Jews and the Gentiles; the church of God is not referred to yet, because at the time before Christ there was no church of God; there were Jews and Gentiles, but the church of God began on the day of Pentecost, and this argument looks back to the previous condition of the world before Jesus Christ came as the atoning Surety. So the two great classes considered were Jews and Gentiles, or the Jews and Greeks, where Greeks stand for Gentiles as the representative nation of the earth.

Look at this statement that "all the world may become guilty before God." The human race as a race is a guilty race. We see in these days on every side a disposition to apologize for human sin, and especially for the sin of that class called "the heathen world." But the Bible makes no apology for the heathen world. There are several expressions in this passage of Scripture that are quite unmistakable, and I want you to notice that one occurs right in this connexion, in the latter part of chapter i. 20, "They are *without excuse.*" Man is continually apologizing for the heathen world, and making excuses for them, who, as they say, having never had the written Word, and never having known of the Lord Jesus, are to be treated leniently, even in the judgment of God. But the Bible says, "*They are without excuse,*" and it is quite time that we should see why it is that they are without excuse.

The Bible never condemns a human soul for not following any light that it had not to follow. Therefore the heathen world is not condemned in the word of God for the rejection of Jesus Christ, for He was never presented to the heathen world. Note that distinction. They were not condemned for disobedience to the written law of God, inasmuch as they never had a written law of God; but their condemnation by the Spirit of God, in this epistle, is, that notwithstanding the fact that they had no written law of God, and did not hear of Jesus Christ, as a Saviour, they are "without excuse." Why? Because they had a knowledge of God, and when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God. They could not glorify Him as Father, for the fatherhood of God was not clearly revealed to them. They could not glorify Him in His revelation, for His revelation was not given to them; but when they knew Him as God they glorified Him not as God. And the condemnation of the whole world, apart entirely from the gospel message, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and of the revelation of God—the condemnation of the heathen world is on this ground, that the light which God had given them they did not follow.

Let us look at this a few moments (verse 20): "For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead," or Godhood. His eternal power and Godhood are clearly seen ever since the

creation of the world. Something that is made argues a *Maker*; a thought argues a Thinker; a design argues a Designer. Nature is something that is made, hence it implies of necessity a Maker; nature is thought put into a material form, and that implies a Thinker; nature is permeated and penetrated by the evidence of design, and that implies a Designer. And His eternal power is seen; because it is not as a vessel launched and left to itself, it implies there is some One who preserves, as well as creates.

For all through creation reaction takes place; all through there is supply and waste, things change, and this implies Someone who supplies. So the evidence of His eternal power and Godhead is nature, which implies a Maker, Thinker, Designer, and Upholder.

And now what does it mean when it is said, "They glorified Him not as God?" We all understand what a patent right is. If a man invents a machine, the Government gives him the right to use that machine and have the benefits accruing from its sale. And, reverently let the word be used, God has a patent right to the creatures He has made. They glorified Him not as God, because they did not acknowledge Him as Creator, and did not acknowledge themselves as created, and did not thank Him for their creation and preservation, and all the various blessings He had given them, and did not glorify Him as Creator, nor yield themselves to His service, nor give themselves up to His worship. It was the thing that was made rebelling against its Maker, the thing thought of rebelling against the Thinker, the thing designed for service rebelling against the Designer.

Look a little further and see this awful arraignment. Have you ever noticed how the Bible puts the whole subject? When they knew God they glorified Him not as God; but what did they do? They turned from the Creator to the creature, and they glorified the creature when they refused to glorify the Creator. I wish I could put this as it seems to me the Spirit of God puts it in this passage. Here was God lifting up the whole human race, and into the hands of that race God, in the origin of things, put the sceptre of dominion over "the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." There was thus God sovereign over man, and man sovereign of the rest. Now what did man do? He took that over which God made him sovereign, and lifted that to the place of God; took the fish of the sea, and the reptiles of the earth, and put them in the place of God. Was there ever perversion more terrible than that; the whole system turned upside down? Man was not content to worship his fellow-men, who had a sort of sovereignty in the beginning, but he actually took the animals, over whom God made him sovereign, and put them in the place of the Creator, and the one who would not serve the Creator served animals.

Look a little further. Man had the revelation of history; not only that of creation, but that of moral government. Paul the apostle tells us, "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Let us notice this expression; it means "to hold down." If a man tried to rob and murder you, you would like to get him on the ground and hold him down till help came. Man has thus held down the truth, tried to throttle the truth, as if it were an enemy instead of a friend of man; tried to stop its utterance because it taught the rebel his sin, and condemned his course; it arraigned them for judgment; and, as the apostle says here, speaking by the Spirit, they "changed the truth of God into a lie."

Take that remarkable expression in verse 28, "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Take that expression in verse 32, "who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them!"

Now we begin to see the awful arraignment of the human race.

1. God made man, and man refused to recognize God as Maker.

2. God made man sovereign, and he took the very objects over which he was sovereign originally, and put them in the place of God.

3. God revealed Himself in nature, gave men glimpses of the truth in nature, and they "turned the truth of God into a lie," and held down the truth in unrighteousness; as if the truth were an enemy instead of a friend, and as if it were to their interest to silence the voice of truth, when it was to their interest to hear what the truth had to say.

5. And they not only did the things that were wrong, but found pleasure in them, and in promoting transgression of the law of God on the part of their fellow-men.

This is the arraignment of the whole world. The apostle is not here testifying of the Jew or Gentile as a class but in the name of God he arraigns the whole human race, and says there is not a man on earth who has not been guilty of these things, from the beginning of time until now.

The arraignment is most awful. It is awful sin. It is moral sin against God; unwillingness to retain God in their knowledge, shutting their eyes when the light came, refusing the truth, holding down the truth, and not only revelling in sin but having pleasure in those who committed it.

Not only so, but the apostle brings a heavier indictment than this, if possible; even that man watched the course of human sin, and saw its end, condemnation—and yet went on in sin. Observe it is not only those who have the written gospel, the written oracles of God, but the whole world is condemned as a race.

There are three expressions that occur in Romans i, and they are as terrible as anything you could find:

- (a) "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness"—verse 24.
- (b) "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections"—verse 26.
- (c) "God gave them over to a reprobate mind"—verse 28.

These expressions are what we call judicial expressions, that is, expressions that denote the act of the judge in judicial abandonment. And men looking on saw their judicial abandonment, saw men who began to sin, sin more and more, given over to uncleanness. Then they saw the second stage of this judicial abandonment, that by and by God gave them up to vile affections, so that they had no desire for that which was good, and became truly vile. And then they saw a still further abandonment, "God gave them over to a reprobate mind," those who justified sin and accused God. Their plea was that there was no God, that sin was no sin, that righteousness was not righteousness, that there was no such thing as truth, that it was all a lie. That is the reprobate mind.

These things follow in order. To give men over to uncleanness is the first stage; to give them over to vile affections is the second; and to give them over to a reprobate mind is the third. And my humble judgment is that when a man is given over to a reprobate mind he is never reclaimed, he is given over to eternal perdition, and there is no hope. This is the last stage of judicial abandonment.

And observe, the apostle testifies by the Spirit to man, and works independently of revelation, of Scripture, of the oracles of God, making, by the power of the Spirit, the whole world to stand guilty before God, (1) for not giving Him homage as Creator; (2) for not yielding Him service as Maker; (3) for not recognizing Him as the great Thinker and Designer and Upholder; (4) for not being willing to receive the truth; (5) for holding down the truth in unrighteousness; (6) for not being willing to retain God in their knowledge, but (7) taking pleasure in sin and sinners. They so acted in the face of human history, that no man sins without being given over to uncleanness, progressing from uncleanness to vile affections, and by and by, if he persists, to a reprobate mind. They saw all these things going on in history; did it make them different? not at all, they went on sinning more and more. In a promiscuous assembly it would not do to read the last part of this chapter, because it is too horrible. But it is the history of the human race, wherever sin has been allowed to reign.

There is nothing more evident of the human race than this—that the false religions, such as the Roman and Greek deities, while they were held up before men as the objects of homage and reverence, it was part of the conditions of

their worship that purity and chastity should be sacrificed. And all these things were going on in the name of religion. Men saw God had given over whole nations to these vile affections and this reprobate mind, and yet they went on sinning, and not only did these things, but had pleasure in them that did them. It is a most marvellous thing, that in the face of these facts, men should be found who profess to be Christians, who still apologize for the sin of the heathen, and try to make out some excuse for their iniquity, when God solemnly says with regard to them, "They are without excuse."

It is said regarding the Gentiles, "They are without excuse." What does it say in chapter ii about the Jews? This: "Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." You sit in judgment on someone else, and say that you do not come under this condemnation, but you are doing the same things in other forms. What is the truth about the Jews, the Jews as a class? You find a solemn arraignment in Romans ii. from the beginning to end. What is the indictment? What are the items in the indictment?

The first is this. The Jews were doing just what the heathen did, only under a different name and with a certain refinement of external appearance. What was the chief arraignment of the heathen? That they did not yield homage to God. Was the Jew also clear? Look at the worship of the golden calf at Sinai. Go further down in their history and you find Jeroboam setting up two golden calves at Dan and Bethel, in distinct violation of the command, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." Then they went into the worship of Baal, of the sun and moon, of Jupiter, and Astarte. They took this worship from the Syrians, and it came in amongst them through Jezebel, the daughter of the Sidonian king. And what was the worship of Baal and Astarte? The same as the later worship of Jupiter and Venus, two of the worst of the heathen deities of Rome. So that this people who denounced idolatry were idolators. Idolatry was their sin. God had to send them into captivity, amongst the heathen, to cure them of idolatry. They were doing the wrong thing they denounced, guilty of the same idolatry as the people around them. Trace the history of the Hebrews as portrayed in the Old Testament, and tell me a sin of which the heathen were guilty, of which the majority of the Jews were not guilty?

Go a little further and you see the second indictment. Disobedience to the known law of God. Those people who were outside the Jews, had not the oracles of God, but the Jews had, and that was clearly the distinction in old time. Now you would have supposed that when the living oracles were given to the Jews they would yield themselves in

obedience to the inspired commands of God, and that if they had this important expression of His will, they would do His will. What do we find but a systematic violation of these commands from beginning to end? so that God was tempted to destroy the people entirely, and give them over to the power of their enemies, because of their perpetual disobedience and murmuring.

What is the last indictment in chapter ii? That they trusted in outward rites instead of the inward state and thought because they were circumcised they should be acceptable unto God, when their whole life was a lie, so that the apostle has to say to them "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly."

What is the indictment? Formality and idolatry. If you want to see how this was awfully manifested among this people long after idolatry had been put away finally, and they were released from captivity, look at the time of the Lord Jesus, when the very Son of God and the Messiah made His appearance among them. They planned to catch Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up; and not only so, but what, I think, is the most remarkable thing ever heard in history, is that all the prominent men were conspicuous in the Sanhedrin which actually condemned Jesus Christ unheard, and unlawfully, suborning false witnesses, providing false witness, upon which there could be a shadow of justice in His condemnation; thus they became partners in the death of the Son of man.

Before I leave this awful arraignment I want to call attention to another thing we see in chapter ii: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not a law, are a law unto themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another," that is condemning or acquitting. The apostle had treated of the whole race of man, and then came to speak of the particular place and condemnation of the Jew. He turned to speak of those who in contrast with the Jew had no written law, and he says significantly that they are not without law, but are "a law unto themselves." Notice this, for it is a tremendous point in the argument. What does the law say? "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not." Suppose there was no written law of God, no decalogue, would there still, your reason asks, be any voice "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not?" And your conscience answers, "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not." So if there were not the outward law of God there would be the inward law of God, written in your hearts as men and women, independent entirely of your training in a Christian country. Thus we have the whole world "guilty before God." It is a remarkable fact that the Lord said that the Holy Spirit would come "to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin,

because they *believe not on me*”; not to convince of thieving, lying, adultery. Why? Because men do not need the Spirit of God to show them the sin of these things; there is something within them that says, “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not.” The Spirit is given especially to convince them of unbelief or the rejection of Jesus Christ; *that* no man will ever see the guilt of, if the Holy Spirit does not show it to him.

Now observe this, there is not only a voice within that says, “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not,” but an awful court in your own being, and it never ceases to sit, and to sit in judgment; and you cannot bribe that court, the judge is incorruptible, the witnesses cannot be suborned, and the sheriff will always do his part. That court is the court of your conscience. It never stops its work. When you are on your bed that court is awake, and sometimes your dreams at night accuse you, and cause you torment if you are an unforgiven sinner. There is no court that ever sat in this world that can compare with it in diligence; no court this side of the judgment seat of God can compare with it. Do you want to see the operation of it? Look at the brethren of Joseph, Genesis xlii. When the brethren of Joseph stood before Joseph, and did not know who he was, they were accusing themselves; no voice from heaven or earth was accusing them. “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.” Notice what was in operation there. In the first place there was *memory*; “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear” (that was twenty years before). There was the voice of *conscience*; “We are verily guilty.” There was the voice of *reason*; “Therefore is this distress come upon us.”

You may scout the idea of Hell, but you have a hell within. Hell is in operation, practically, when your memory calls up the scenes of the past, and your conscience proves you guilty, and your reason justifies your punishment as something that is righteous and deserved. You have hell, and if God did not reveal a hell, you could reveal one, and though we might fight against the doctrine of a future state, we not only find that truth in the Word of God, but in our own constitution. Let a man pass out of the world, and if there were no eternal punishment, he might go on suffering for ever. Let him call up the past, and conscience prove him guilty, and what is to save that man from misery? Milton puts these words into the mouth of the fallen angel: “Which way shall I fly infinite wrath, and infinite despair? Which way I fly is Hell, myself am Hell.” I was talking with a murderer and seeking to lead him to Jesus Christ before his execution, and he said, “Even if God forgave me, I could never forgive myself; I shot my mistress in a fit of jealousy,

and I sent her to hell in the midst of her sins.”

Ah, there was memory, conscience, reason ! My beloved friends, you can never get rid of yourself unless you get rid of yourself by getting into Jesus Christ; that is life and salvation. Memory will never cease to recall the past, and conscience and reason to justify your punishment, unless you are in Him, and memory, conscience, and reason have all passed under the blood. I am more afraid of an uncleansed memory than of unending consciousness. The very things we think we have forgotten, we have not forgotten at all. It is just like writing on a page of a book and turning it over. It is not taken out of the book, and I may go back and read that page twenty years after, and find it as fresh as ever it was. A man aged 65 went to see the village where he lived when a child, and which he had left fifty years before. He found it just as he left it, for many of these villages do not change much in fifty years. He went up the street, there was the old house much as when he left, but for a fresh coat of paint, and the little shop opposite, once a grocer's store, now an ironmonger's. And immediately there occurred to him something he had not thought of for fifty years. He went into the shop, borrowed a hatchet, and went to the wood-shed against the house and stripped off some covering, and took up a penny lying there. His mother had sent him on some little errand, and seeing this little opening in the shed, he had dropped it in. And for these fifty years the memory seemed to have faded away till some association brought it up.

My friends, you cannot afford to go into eternity with an uncleansed memory, and nothing can make your memory clean but the precious blood of Christ. You have to store your memory with something else besides your sins, if you are not going to be wretched in the future state. And sometimes I think that God's book of Remembrance may be nothing more than the human memory, on which we inscribe day by day the occurrences that take place, and in eternity we shall review these occurrences, and they will stain our consciences, if, as I have said, they are not cleansed.

“We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin,” “without excuse,” inexcusable. We have all held down the truth in unrighteousness. We have all known the time in our unregeneracy when we did not like to retain God in our knowledge, and when we had pleasure in sin and sinners. And although we may be children of God, have we never known what it was to have had idols and practically worshipped idols ? Have we never known what it was to be ensnared by formality and hypocrisy in our religion, substituting outward forms for the inward state ? Have we never known what it was to be blind to the heavenly vision, and, notwithstanding the clear light of God's truth, to have walked contrary to the law of God ?

We never get where we do not need the power of the

blood, and though I have been a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ for many years, my consciousness of sin against God has been deeper than ever during the past few years, deeper than ever before. For the nearer we come to our blessed Master the more we feel our lack of likeness to Him; and many things we should have apologized for some years ago, many unrecognized sins, and many we thought to be trifling sins, become very enormous, because we are learning more of what sin means.

The thought I want to leave with you tonight is this; I want to go back to the thought, "They are absolutely without excuse."

When Joel Parker was at Rochester there was a self-righteous man who justified himself, and would not accept Christ. Joel Parker determined to seek the salvation of that man. So he went to his smithy and began to talk to him, "Are you saved?" "I know I have done nothing so very bad." "But, I ask, are you a saved man; Do you trust in Jesus Christ?" He again made excuses for his self-righteous rejection of Jesus Christ, and Joel Parker, feeling he had made no impression on him, said to him, "Promise me one thing, that you will do what I ask you." "Tell me what it is," he said. "No, I won't tell you, it is a perfectly reasonable and righteous request." He promised. "I want you to remember, Mr. Lee, that there will be no excuse at the bar of God," and he left him. Mr. Lee could not get the thought out of his mind; "There will be some excuse," he emphasized the thought, bringing his hammer down with great force, "Did I not go and get my brother out of prison when he was condemned to death? Oh, yes, there will be excuse," and down he came with his hammer. Again came the expression, "no excuse at the bar of God." He argued with himself and tried to make out some excuse that would be acceptable to God for his non-reception of Jesus Christ. He threw down his hammer and went home and said, "Wife, there is no excuse at the bar of God; let us get down on our knees, and confess our sins before God." They knelt down and accepted Christ. Mr. Lee counted that day the day of his birth, and that year the happiest he had ever known. He went about the town and sought to bring his acquaintances to Christ, and those who had been brought to Christ by him celebrated his birthday.

I say to you, my friends, there will be no excuse at the bar of God. Some of you may have come in here unsaved. Take refuge under the atoning blood, don't trifle with your own salvation, make no excuse for your sins. No excuse will stand when you stand before God; you will make no excuse then; you will be found speechless. I pray you, while it is the accepted time, and the day of salvation, to cast yourself in lowly submission and surrender before God.

(Next issue "Justification" by A. T. Pierson.)

INQUIRE OF THE FORMER AGE

—*Job viii. 8*

NOTES UPON THE MODERN RECOVERY OF TRUTH
CONCERNING THE CHURCH OF GOD AND PROPHECY

G. H. Lang

I

THE purposes of God centre in His Son, Jesus Christ, and are directed to His glory. The revelation of these purposes to man advanced through long ages and was completed through the apostles and prophets of New Testament days. At once it became the necessary effort of Satan, the Enemy of God and man, to obscure that light and corrupt men's understanding of God's purposes and ways. Confusion as to these spread rapidly. Nor were only emissaries of Satan used to diffuse darkness, misunderstanding, and false opinions, but truly devoted Christians also, being blinded, helped the evil work. Perhaps the earliest known post-apostolic instance is Ignatius, the martyr bishop of Antioch, who greatly exaggerated the office of a single elder to rule each local assembly.

Not many centuries had passed before, in nominal Christian spheres, there had spread thus a general pall of darkness as to four main matters:

- (1) The nature, order, and future of that society of persons termed in the New Testament "the church of God."
- (2) The nature, course, and future of the Jewish people.
- (3) The nature, course, and future of the nations of the world.
- (4) The nature, character, and circumstances of the personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ in relation to these matters and to the fulfilment of the plans of God.

This pall and blindness lay heavily and almost undisturbed through the thousand years of the Dark Ages. Only now and then and here and there did individuals or groups gain from the Word of God gleams of light upon one or another of these principal themes or their subordinate subjects. And these were visited with bloody suppression by that vicious and fierce "Jezebel" who had usurped the place of Christ in the nominal Church*.

Yet God did not forget to be gracious. As that millennium of darkness rolled slowly on a Wycliffe here, a Huss there, and a Savonarola yonder gained light and diffused light, and in

* See E. H. Broadbent's *The Pilgrim Church* (Pickering & Inglis Ltd.).

century sixteen morning broke by the re-discovery and wide proclamation of the mighty truth that the justification of the sinner is procured through the perfected redemption wrought by Christ on the cross and is secured by faith without legal works.

II

But as to the four great matters mentioned the Reformation period remained in much obscurity. Luther did indeed see clearly the true character of a local church of Christians, but he turned from that light and agreed to the subjection of religion to the State. In this matter the Reformed Churches became more definitely anti-Biblical than the Roman Church they had left. That Church asserts that the State should be subject to the Church. In its principle this is Scriptural, for it is the purpose of God that the saints shall judge the world and angels (I Cor. vi. 2, 3); that is, the church glorified is hereafter to share the rule of Christ over earth and also heaven. The error of the Catholic claim is that this sovereignty is to be exercised in this age and be the means of establishing on earth Augustine's City of God. The pursuit of this aim betrayed the Papacy into the embrace of Satan, for he has the same principle and purpose. Pride, cruelty, and much ungodliness followed.

Yet the Reformed error is still worse. It takes the sphere which God has created and reserved for Himself, the church, of which Christ the Son of God is the sole Head, and gives it to Caesar. The acting head of the State becomes automatically the head, in his realm, of God's house, even though he may be an immoral tyrant like Henry VIII of England or the unspeakably licentious Frederick the Great of Prussia, the notorious sodomite and atheist. Thus, as in the earliest days, good and devoted Christians like the great Reformers were beguiled by Satan into serving his fell ends. Still may a lover of Christ like Simon Peter be, wholly unconsciously, Satan's agent to put a stumbling-block before Christ and His people.

This disastrous system prevailed in nearly all the Reformed countries. Freedom of religion, but lately won at so stern a cost, was withdrawn, and those believers who refused submission were bitterly suppressed by these State Churches, as before by the Roman Church. For example; early in century eighteen Defoe, in the Preface to an edition of Thomas De Laune's *Plea for the Non-Conformists*, stated that so lately as in the reign of Charles II of England (1660-1685), nearly 8,000 Dissenters perished in the plague-ridden jails of this country.

Even when Dissent at last gained liberty (1689, the Act of Toleration) the various bodies retained features which were of man, not being shown in the Word of God as part of His ordering for His church. Much confusion of teaching continued upon the four chief themes mentioned. A dominant

idea in Protestant theology was that Israel had no national future, the Old Testament promises and prophecies being transferred to the church, to receive only a "spiritual" fulfilment. The course of world events was to be a gradual amelioration of human society by the "leaven" of the gospel, until all mankind should have been brought unto God, and only then would the Lord return to rule the earth. Than this, no notion is more thoroughly contrary to Scripture and history.

In century eighteen the grace of God moved afresh in England. The evil, worldliness, and deadness which had largely paralyzed the Reformed regions was disturbed powerfully by travelling preachers such as Wesley, Whitefield, and many others. But this gracious movement still left confusion upon the chief topics in view. Wesley remained to the end a clergyman of the State Church. Even when clerical opposition compelled him with reluctance to form separate Societies they were gathered on a wholly inadequate basis, it being sufficient that applicants for membership should have "a desire to save their souls" (*Journal, May 18, 1788*); whereas the true church of God is limited to those who have been actually born again and indwelled by the Spirit upon faith in Christ. Nor was the darkness much dispelled as to things future, though probably the Wesleys themselves saw that the personal return of Christ is the true hope of His people. One may infer this from remarks by John Wesley and from his brother's fine hymn "Leader of faithful souls," with its closing lines "With joy upon our heads arise, And meet our Captain in the skies," an evident allusion to I Thes. iv.

III

But the strong emphasis of that period upon personal holiness of heart and life had blessed effects beyond those which had followed the Reformation. Hearts were rendered susceptible to advance, and the Spirit of God led such onward in the understanding of His Word.

In the third decade of century nineteen eyes were opened to see the true nature and unity of the church of God, the difference between the church and Israel and the Gentile nations, and the purposes of God for each group. The opening up of the plans of God, as stated in His Word, was nothing less than revolutionary from the standpoint of the Established Church and Nonconformity. To meet this situation God had taken a step that was at least most unusual, if not without precedent. His movements to recover lost truth and to revive Christian practice have regularly commenced among persons of lowly social status and only later have reached out to people of higher rank. In the present case this was reversed. The group of men who first saw and spread the truths in question were mostly of good social position and first-class education. Many of them had won the highest academic

honours at various Universities, which entirely forbade their ecclesiastical opponents from saying that if only these men knew Hebrew and Greek, and had studied theology and history, they would not hold such opinions. And being men of leisure and means they were in a position to spread the light widely, by speech and pen, and they knew how to state it lucidly and with conviction.

The movement that grew out of this beginning became known as "The Brethren," though they disclaimed the term as limited to any but the whole family of God.

IV

In *Occasional Lectures* (vii. 19) William Kelly said:

.. we must not adhere to those systems of doctrine that never can bear an infringement of a view that is held popularly. For instance, perhaps we have all been brought up in the notion that all the children of God, in all ages, compose the church of God. Now it will be found on closer research that this is not supported by the word of God.

Many who adhere to the system of prophetic interpretation of Darby and Kelly would do well to observe the first sentence here. Theirs is the view held popularly, but they will allow no infringement of it, on any point. This has paralyzed their progress.

The second sentence indicates the view of the church of God held generally a century and a half ago. It was expected that the gospel would extend its benign influence until all mankind had turned to the Lord, whereupon these, with all the saved of all preceding ages, would form one universal church.

The third sentence shows the direction and result of that closer research undertaken a hundred and twenty years ago by certain learned godly students. They saw that Scripture distinguishes between that limited portion of the saved called the church of God and the rest of the saved, assigning to the church a distinct and distinguished place in the counsels of God.

1. That the church is a limited company of the saved, with special functions, offices, and dignities, was to be learned from the figures of speech employed to describe it. (a) It is to Christ a body, through the members of which He carries out on earth His purposes (I Cor. xii : Eph. iv). Now the body of a man is not the whole of his environment, or upon whom should he exert influence by it? (b) It is a building: "I will *build* My church" (Mat. xvi. 18), which building is a temple for God to inhabit (Eph. ii. 19-22: I Cor. iii. 16, 17). The temple at Jerusalem was not the whole of the city and land. (c) It is to be a governing body (Lk. xii. 44; xix. 17, 19: Mat. xix. 27, 28: I Cor. vi. 2, 3: Rev. ii. 26, 27; xx. 4). But the rulers in a kingdom are fewer than the mass of subjects they rule. (d) It is to be a capital city, the centre of administration of the empire; but the capital is not the whole

country, but the central place where the citizens resort and to which they bring their wealth to the honour of the King (Rev. xxi and xxii). (e) It is to be a bride, "the wife of the Lamb" (Rev. xxi. 2, 9). Now the Queen is not the whole of the King's subjects, or over whom should they reign?

2. This so evident and so important distinction between the church and the rest of the saved carries obvious implications. It was not an afterthought but was part of the eternal plan of God that this company should be related to His Son in these special intimacies just mentioned. Each member of the church should be redeemed and justified by precisely the same means as the rest of the saved, even the precious blood of Christ; but, being thus saved, their destiny and dignity should differ according to the electing foreknowledge of God (Rom. viii. 28-30: I Cor. ii. 7: etc.). Those early searchers saw this clearly, but they did not see that it is to this special dignity that the election and foreordination of God apply. Being Calvinists they continued to regard the Divine election as concerned with what persons should be saved, instead of accepting the clear statements of the Word that salvation from perdition is the honest desire of God for all and that the death of Christ made this possible for all, though only those who repent and believe get the benefit of the redemption (I Tim. ii. 3-6: John iii. 16: I John ii. 2: etc.). Thus they left this aspect of the church in some obscurity.

3. In those early investigations the question was considered whether the promises to the church are conditional or absolute. Here also Calvinistic thought prevailed with most, and only a few saw clearly that these high privileges were a gift indeed of Divine grace, since no son of Adam could claim them of right; but yet they are the reward that grace proposes for that suffering with Christ which falls to those who espouse His cause in this age when He is despised and rejected by men in general (Lk. xxii. 28-30: Rom. viii. 16, 17: II Tim. ii. 8-13: I Pet. iv. 12, 13: Rev. ii. 25-28; iii. 4, 5, 11, 12, 21: etc.). They did not see that being a "prize" it could be forfeited.

4. But it was seen clearly that the believer in this age is united by the Spirit to Christ as the Man in heaven, not as connected with this earth. This gives colour and character to his whole outlook and life. When in the next age the Lord returns to the earth as its Sovereign, those who then repent of sin and accept Him will become related to Him as subjects in His earthly kingdom. This will continue eternally in the new earth (Rev. xxi. 24-27). But the church will have been removed to that one of the many regions in the heavens which the Lord has gone to prepare (John xiv. 2, 3) and to which He will remove her by resurrection or rapture as the first act on His return from heaven (I Thes. iv. 13-18). The notions that all the saved "go to heaven," and that there is no alternative between "heaven" and "hell," are negatived

by the fact that there is to be a new eternal earth, with saved nations inhabiting it. I do not know that this was seen by those early searchers, but it is mentioned here as something evident and illuminating.

5. It is a defect of our human nature that a discoverer is apt to overestimate his discovery. Some of those searchers did so with the figure of the body. In their writings this figure of the church is employed more than any of the others, and some uses are made of it not warranted by Scripture. The unity of the body was declared to be the ground of meeting of Christians. Now the Lord Jesus had said that His name was that ground. He spoke of "two or three gathered together in My name" (Mat. xviii. 20). It is relationship to Himself, not to His body, which brings us together.

In those early days of research some suggested that not all believers of this age will of necessity share in the first resurrection and belong to the church glorified. Against this it is urged that it would involve a mutilation of the body of Christ and allow Him but an imperfect body. The fallacy here is that the figure of the body is extended to a realm and time to which it is not applied in the Word of God. In Scripture it is used with a present application, not to teach about matters prophetic. It illustrates the present relationship between the Head and the members and the present use He makes of them. As soon as the next age comes in view other of the figures mentioned are employed, such as the city or the bride. It is vital to employ figures of speech strictly within the limit of use by the Holy Spirit. Confusion has resulted by applying the figure of the body to matters ecclesiastical, such as reception or exclusion of believers; or to matters prophetic.

Equally does confusion and error follow if figures used in Scripture of the future are brought forward into the present age. We are not now the bride of the Lamb, but only an affianced virgin (II Cor. xi. 2, 3). The church does not become the wife till the marriage day, at the coming of the Lord (Rev. xix. 6-9). To have observed this could have prevented some of the evils of mysticism. Similarly, there is no ground for the mechanical notion that the church must be composed of just such and such a number of believers, neither one more nor less, because the human body is formed of a precise, unvarying number of bones. It is an inference not warranted in Scripture.

6. Along the same line of objection it is asserted that every believer of this age is a member of the body of Christ, because incorporation into that body is effected by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Just as the many members of the human body are one living entity because the one spirit of the man pervades the whole organism, so are the members of the body of Christ made such by the indwelling of the one Spirit. Now many assert strongly, as if it were beyond dispute the plain teaching of Scripture, that every regenerate person,

simply by the fact of his new birth by the Spirit, is automatically sealed, anointed, and indwelt by the Spirit of God. I have not been able to discover the source of this opinion, but, as regards those early teachers, it is fact that leaders among them repudiated this notion.

In *On the Sealing with the Holy Spirit*, p. 18, Darby speaks expressly as follows: "that a person may be born again, and not have received the Holy Ghost, is perfectly certain according to the Scriptures." He refers to the fact that the first disciples were born of God while Jesus was with them, for they believed on Him, yet they did not receive the Spirit till the day of Pentecost. He cites also Acts viii, the believers at Samaria, and the case of Paul, who was converted on the way to Damascus, but was not filled with the Spirit till three days afterwards (Acts ix. 9).

In Vol. X of *Things New and Old* (1867), p. 198, C. H. Macintosh wrote, "We consider that Acts xix. 1-7 does most clearly show that persons may be 'disciples' and 'believers,' and yet not be sealed with the Holy Ghost."

Arguing at length to the same effect, in *The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (1867), pp. 161, 162, and contrasting the reception of the Holy Spirit with belief and repentance, William Kelly wrote very strongly:

It is a subsequent operation; it is an additional separate blessing; it is a privilege founded on faith already actively working in the heart. So far is it from being true that a man receives the gift of the Holy Ghost the moment that he believes, that it may be well doubted whether there ever was such a case since the world began. I do not mean to deny that the gift of the Holy Ghost may be practically on the same occasion, but never in the same moment . . .

It is to be noted that thus three of the very earliest students of these subjects in those years saw so clearly the teaching of Scripture on this matter.

7. In those earliest years the condition of the reception of a believer to fellowship was not membership in the body of Christ, or attainment in knowledge or experience, but simply whether Christ had received him. So Groves said in 1827: "we are evidently called to know nothing among our fellow-Christians but this one fact—Do they belong to Christ? Has Christ received them? then may we receive them, to the glory of God." And so Darby in 1839: "Whenever Christ has received a person—we would receive him . . . as our Table is the Lord's not ours, we receive all that the Lord has received."

The fact of the oneness of the body of Christ had precious applications. It was acknowledged that each member of Christ is responsible to seek the upbuilding of every other member of Christ, not only of such as separate from a sectarian association. Consequently they were prepared to minister the word in churches, chapels, halls, or private gatherings,

wherever opportunity offered to build up the body of Christ. To the end of his long life Darby maintained this liberty and discharged this duty, even against remonstrance by narrower-hearted brethren.

On the same ground a welcome was given to every believer to join in worship and partake of the Lord's Supper. He might be in clerical garb, but that did not debar. And being received, he was free to exercise for the good of all whatever gift the Lord had entrusted to him.

In those early days it was felt right to have fellowship with all that was of God, according to the Word; and therefore to join all Christians in preaching the word, in study of the word, in prayer. The line was drawn only against what is not of God, being not sanctioned by the Word.

These and other important matters of the same kind I have discussed fully in my life of Anthony Norris Groves.

8. There is an instructive example of how the same mind may make at one time a just inference and a false inference.

It is clear that there can be no human body without a head. Christ did not become the Head of His body, the church, until His ascension to the Father and the pouring forth of His Spirit into His disciples. Therefore the body of Christ, the church, did not exist before the day of Pentecost, but had then its commencement. This was of much importance, for it at once revealed the distinction between this new society and what companies had preceded it. The Jewish people and the Gentile nations existed before Pentecost. Hence this new society was distinct from them. Pentecost brought into being a third order of mankind, and thenceforward the human race showed a threefold division, the Jew, the Gentile, and the church of God (I Cor. x. 32, 33). When Paul invaded Corinth with the gospel he found the heathen temple and the Jewish synagogue already there. The effect of the gospel concerning Christ was to draw some away from the temple and some from the synagogue, and this new and third religious group formed the church of God in Corinth. The claims of Christ are so radical, so uncompromising that they who joined themselves to Him *lost their status* as Gentiles or as Jews, and formed together one *new* man in Christ (Eph. ii. 11-22). Those who did not believe remained Greeks or Jews, and thus the distinction between the three circles continued unmistakable, as it does still,

But from the same fact, that the church commenced at Pentecost, a false inference was drawn, even that godly men who had died before Pentecost could not form part of the church, but will have only a lower status in the coming kingdom of God. That illustrates how an erroneous conclusion can result from unwarranted extension of a figure of speech. The figure of the body was applied to the past and to the future, instead of being restricted to present application.

It should have been remembered that this is not the primary or principal figure of the church. The first figure is that of a building (Mat. xvi. 18), a palace-temple for God. Of this spiritual house there were two foreshadowings, the tabernacle erected by Moses, and the temple built by Solomon. The former was not erected until the second new year day after redeemed Israel had left Egypt (Ex. xl.); and when it was reared up it was formed of materials some of which had existed long before the idea of a dwelling for God had been proposed. Much of it, indeed, had been brought out of Egypt when the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians. It was so with Solomon's temple. It was not till the fourth year of his reign that he began to build, but then he incorporated into the structure the vast treasures that David had long accumulated and dedicated. It is to be noted that this treasure was acquired by David in his victorious campaigns (I Chron. xviii. 6-11).

Analogy suggests that thus the Son of God, in His age-long conflict with Satan and sin, had acquired for Himself in the period before Pentecost many living stones that He can build into His heavenly church. The New Testament supports this. To Abraham was opened the prospect of the heavenly city, which he and later men of like superior faith, embraced and pursued, living by consequence as pilgrims and strangers (Heb. xi. 9-16). Not all godly men of ancient times are shown to have risen to *such* faith, or to have foregone the earthly to attain to the heavenly. The argument of the Galatian epistle is that all true believers today become spiritual descendants of Abraham and share in his promised spiritual blessings, we being free-born sons *as was Isaac* (Gal. iii. and iv.). It seems incomprehensible that Abraham and Isaac shall be denied a share in that promised heavenly company and glory in hope of which they lived and suffered. Nor is this notion based on ought but a mistaken inference from the figure of the body.

The baleful effect of the misuse of a figure of speech, and in particular of that of the Head and the Body, had a very solemn illustration as early as the fourth century A.D. The church historian Neander, dealing with the attitude of Augustine to the Donatist controversy, says:

Hence he [Augustine] could say (*De unitate ecclesiae—On the Unity of the Church—c. 49*): “No one attains to salvation, and to eternal life, who has not Christ for his Head. But no one can have Christ for a Head, who does not belong to His Body, which is the Church.” Hence the error, growing out of this confounding and mixing together of distinct notions, that the union of believers with Christ was brought about through the union with this visible church. And hence, in following out this principle, he asserts: “The entire Christ is the Head and the Body—the Head is the only begotten Son of God, and

the Body is the Church. He who agrees not with scripture in the doctrine concerning the Head, although he may stand in external communion with the church, notwithstanding belongs not to her. But, moreover, he who holds fast to all that scripture teaches respecting the Head, and yet cleaves not to the unity of the church, belongs not to her." (*ibid*, s. 7). (Neander's *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, ed. Bohn, iii. 290).

This involves the false notions (a) that salvation and eternal life are secured only by membership in the visible church; (b) that therefore to leave that fellowship, whether voluntarily or by excommunication, involves the forfeiture of salvation. (c) From this was derived the terrible and tyrannical power of the clergy over souls by the weapon of excommunication. (d) As the only door into the church was baptism, an inevitable and cruel logic compelled the cruel dogma that the unbaptized are necessarily damned eternally, including infants.

These and further fatal teachings resulted from the primary misuse of the figure of the body, in its being applied to the matter of salvation; whereas the truth is that only those who, by faith in Christ, are already of the number of the saved are ever baptized in the Spirit and incorporated into the body of Christ.

Yet in this mixture of truth and error there was, however, the true element, that one who forsakes the church, or is scripturally excommunicated, is not a member of the body or a sharer in its privileges and prospects, not until he is reunited therewith. This ought to be acknowledged, though the extension of the forfeiture to the loss of salvation is to be rejected. And the warning should be accepted of the danger of misuse of this or any figure of speech.

The rediscovery of these sublime truths as to the true character and prospects of the church of God was of momentous importance and vast influence. The minds of believers innumerable have been clarified and illuminated. The purposes of God for Christ, His church, Israel, and the Gentiles have been grasped. The heavenly calling of the church being perceived has drawn disciples to walk like Abraham as pilgrims and strangers on earth, doing all good to all men touched on life's journey, but with the heart ever pressing on to the heavenly goal. That mistaken ideas and unwarranted inferences have in measure lessened the benefits received, does not alter the general fact that these truths were a message from God suited to that day and still carrying blessing to the lowly of heart.

(*To be continued.*)

BAPTISM

A GREEK was asked the meaning of the Greek word *baptizo* (baptize). He pointed to a ship and said: "If that ship should sink completely under the water we should say it had been baptized." Asked further if that would be said were some drops of water to be sprinkled on the ship, he replied: "No, for that we should use the word *rhantizo*."

This last verb is used in Heb. ix. 13, 19, 21, and x. 22, and its noun *rhantismos* at Heb. xii. 24 and I Pet. i. 2. They are correctly rendered by "sprinkled" and "sprinkling."

This present-day usage of *baptizo* is the invariable meaning in the New Testament. The word signifies to dip, to immerse; as in Luke xvi. 24, "that he may *dip* the tip of his finger in water": John xiii. 26, "I shall give the sop when I have *dipped* it" (in the dish): Mark vii. 4, "The washing [dipping] of cups and pots and brazen vessels" ("couches" is to be omitted; see R.V.). It is plain that such articles could not be cleansed by the mere sprinkling of a few drops of water.

Therefore of baptism John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you *in* water (Mat. iii. 11); and we read "they were baptized by him *in* the river Jordan" (Mark i. 5): and thus it is said of Philip and the eunuch (Acts viii. 38), "they both *went down into* the water and he baptized [dipped] him. . . and when they were come *up out of* the water." To what purpose the descent into the stream or pool had the need been only of a few drops for sprinkling? One of the eunuch's servants could have brought a cupful. The mediæval pictures of John standing in Jordan and pouring water over a candidate standing beside him are fictitious and wholly misleading. No Greek would have described such an action by *baptizo*. Greek had plenty of words for the act of pouring; as *ballo* in John xiii. 5, "He poureth water into the basin," and *katacheo* in Mat. xxvi. 7, "and poured it on His head."

The matter is, indeed, so clear that Bishop Handley Moule in his Commentary on Rom. vi. 5 speaks of the baptismal "plunge" and "emergence" and owns that at first baptism was by "entire immersion." And thus also Dean Stanley says that "baptism was not only a bath but a plunge, an entire submersion in the deep water" (*Christian Institutions* 8). In the ruins of the great church at Carthage, which dates from the early centuries, I saw a font of such great size as shows that immersion long continued to be the practice. In fact, the first direction in the Prayer Book of the Church of England is that the child shall be dipped in the font, sprinkling being only allowed if the child is certified to be too weak to endure dipping; though in practice this direction is universally disregarded, which shows how readily religious persons disregard what is well-known to be a requirement of God by

Holy Scripture and substitute human tradition and preference.

This last habit of mind began directly after the times of the apostles, that is, as regards baptism; for the very first post-apostolic writing, at the beginning of the second century, if not slightly earlier, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, sanctions pouring in place of dipping. This was where sufficient water for immersion might not be available, which shows that immersion was the earlier and apostolic baptism, and also illustrates the readiness to vary from the apostolic practice. It shows further that the great Enemy made one of his first attempts to corrupt Christianity by an attack upon the form of baptism. He saw that to change the form would destroy the doctrine attached to it. To change the forms of the two Divine ordinances and to introduce non-Scriptural ceremonies were two of his earliest measures to corrupt Christianity.

Sprinkling is not dipping, and therefore it is not baptism, though called so by men. It is an unwarranted and misleading use of the word. The Anglicized word *baptize* is not a *translation* of the Greek word, but is simply an unworthy *hiding* in English of the meaning of the Greek word. To have *translated* the word the translators must have used dip or immerse, but that would have opened the eyes of the general reader to what scholars already knew, even that the ceremony of sprinkling is not the New Testament ordinance of baptism.

Only by means of the true form of the ordinance can its true doctrine be expressed. For baptism is a burial: "We were *buried* [entombed, Moule] therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was *raised* from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Who would deem a corpse to have been buried if a few grains of earth were sprinkled thereon and it were left on the surface uncovered? Burial is effected according to the words of Abraham: "that I may bury my dead *out of my sight*" (Gen. xxiii. 4).

There is a principle of law, Divine and human, that the act of an agent is the act of a principal whom he represents. The greatest example is that the death of Christ is deemed to be the death of the believer in Him. In His burial the believer is considered to have been put out of the way; in His resurrection the believer is reckoned to have been raised a new creature to live in a new realm. Before God Christ is the Representative or Agent of man. What He did, suffered, experienced we are held to have done.

He died on account of my sin: then I died on account of it, and through Him paid its last penalty and am free.

He died out of all relationship to my sins, responsibility for which He had in grace assumed. In Him, then, I too died out of all relationship to my sins, and hence the challenge: "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" One cannot at the same time be both dead and alive.

Christ rose again in a life beyond the power of death. Death, as to its nature, is that the *spirit*, the principle which animates man's composite being, is recalled by God who gave it and it returns to Him (Eccl. xii. 7: Luke xxiii. 46: Acts vii. 59). But the spirit is not the man himself. Man is a *soul* (Gen. ii. 7, "man became a living soul"). This man, soul, person dwells in a body of flesh, which body can be useful to him only as long as it is energized by the spirit. When the latter is withdrawn the body corrupts and falls to pieces, whereupon the soul, the man, ceases to be a *living* soul and becomes dead—still existing and conscious (Luke xvi. 23: Rev. vi. 9-11), but not living, in God's sense of the term. (See my *Firstfruits and Harvest*, 46-58.) Thus the human spirit of Christ returned at death to God (Luke xxiii. 46; "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."). He himself, the soul, went to Hades, the realm of the dead in the lower parts of the earth (Ps. xvi. 10: Acts ii. 27: Eph. iv. 9). His body was buried in the tomb.

This break up of man's threefold being, death, the penalty of sin, we call *dissolution*, because the former partnership of these three elements is dissolved. But glorious is the fact that "Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more, death no more hath dominion over Him" (Rom. vi. 9). Having paid the full penalty of the sin He had made His own, our sin, the Father released Him therefrom, immediately, entirely, eternally. Resurrection is the reuniting of spirit, soul, and body, and henceforth Christ "liveth in the power of an *indissoluble* life" (Heb. vii. 16).

Into a share in *this* life, beyond the region where sin blights and death blasts, the believer is introduced by vital union with Christ, his Representative. Of this union with Christ in His death, burial, and emergence, with its escape from the former sin-ruined, death-ruled state, baptism is the Divinely appointed symbolic expression.

It is the office of the Holy Spirit to make all this morally effective in the inner experience and outer practice of the man of faith, which He does according to the measure and constancy of faith. Where faith, instructed by the Word, takes hold of the thought of God, claims daily its fulfilment, dedicates itself wholly to God to do only and fully His will, then and so far the union between the man of faith and Christ is made operative, and the believer knows experimentally God's thought as to baptism, even that we have been "buried with Christ in baptism, wherein also ye were raised with Him, through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Col. ii. 12). This wide range of vital experimental truth, so admirably expressed by immersion, is completely concealed by sprinkling, to the great impoverishment of the soul even if the person be a believer.

Now no person ought to be buried until he has died. No one should be baptized until, by personal faith in Christ, he

has associated himself with the death of Christ as his own death to sin, law, and judgment. The mental grasp of these truths will at first be imperfect, but the faith must be real, and any ceremony before faith is not baptism according to God, though men may call it this. We are not Anabaptists, for we do not demand the second baptism of one baptized; but we do take the inflexible position that a rite performed upon one not having personally exercised faith is not Scriptural baptism at all, even though it be by immersion.

The great champion of the truth that salvation is by faith, Martin Luther, could not but acknowledge the requirement of Scripture that faith ought to precede baptism. To justify still the baptizing of infants he went to the extreme of asserting that the infant must be supposed to have a capacity for faith. But many who will not adopt this desperate expedient, invent another way of meeting their dilemma, and assert that the faith, or supposed faith, of sponsors will stand instead of the faith of the infant. But Scripture knows nothing of this vicarious faith unto salvation. It is a theological fiction, carrying no experimental power, but serving effectually to hide from many souls the necessity that they must personally trust Christ.

A truly godly clergyman confided to me that, forty years before, he went straight from his ordination as a "priest" to the parish in the east end of London where he was to serve. That afternoon there were infants brought to be baptized. He told me that as he looked into the faces of the parents and godparents, and saw there the evidence that they were heavy drinkers, yet were about to take solemn vows to rear the children in the fear of God though themselves having none of His holy fear upon their hearts, it rushed over his soul what a hypocrisy the whole ceremony was, and he felt that he must go straight away and resign his orders. But, he added sadly, I did not do so, and so here I still am. Thus may a godly man miss the way of God, and know through a long life that he failed to reach God's real will for him.

But while only the dead should be buried, all the dead ought to be—every believer in Christ should be baptized. This He commanded. The apostles would have had no more right to omit the baptism of a disciple than to fail to teach him to observe all the Lord's other commandments (Mat. xxviii. 19, 20). And therefore Peter commanded the baptism of Cornelius and his friends though these had already received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Acts x. 45, 48). Peter's action stands squarely against the notion that it is the spiritual that alone matters and he who has received the spiritual need not observe the external symbol. For Peter the baptism in the Spirit was reason and ground for the baptism in water, not reason for omitting it.

Others make void the command of the Lord and the example of His apostles by the device that the period of the

Acts was an "interim dispensation," that the period of the church had not yet set in, and that baptism and the Supper of the Lord do not apply now that this last age has come. The fact that baptism and the Supper were unvarying ordinances immediately after the days of the apostles shows that this idea was unknown to the church which the apostles taught. It is modern dispensational invention.

How important and urgent was the question of Ananias to the newly-converted Saul: "And now, what art thou going to do? Arising, get thyself immersed" (Rotherham, *N.T. Critically Emphasised*, Acts xxii. 16). That is, the responsibility lay upon Saul to act, to be baptized, accepting the name of the Lord he had hitherto rejected, and thus to wash away his sins in so opposing Him. Saul's obedience was prompt: "Straightway . . . he arose and was baptized." (Acts ix. 18)

According to Scripture *blood was sprinkled, washing was always with water*. All speaking and singing of washing with blood confuses the typology and conceals the truth (Rev. i. 5 reads "loosed" not "washed"). For Saul, baptism in the name of Jesus was the public confession that his whole public life had been utterly wrong, especially in its opposition to Christ, and thereby symbolically he washed it all away from before men and commenced a new life, which life was through Christ, in Christ, for Christ. It was somewhat as when a schoolboy washes his slate clean because he finds that the sum has been quite wrongly worked and he must begin all over again. Compare I Peter iii. 21.

And now believing but unimmersed reader, what are *you* going to do? It is high time that you followed Saul—arise, and get thyself baptized.

The words of Ananias, "baptize thyself" (*baptisai*, mid. voice), may suggest that the person dipped himself under the water rather than being dipped by another. There is a post-apostolic reference to this practice, but I cannot just now trace the passage.

There remains to be noticed the relationship between baptism and reception into the house of God, the church.

Baptism as a confession that one was dying out of a former circle of life and entering a new and different sphere of associations, was well known in both the Jewish and pagan worlds of New Testament times. The Gentile when professing to become a Jew, religiously speaking, was immersed. And when a candidate was initiated into one of the heathen religious orders, the "Mysteries," he was immersed. The meaning in either case was that he held himself to have died to the former sphere in which he had moved, to have been buried in symbol as one dead, and thereupon to have entered a new association, to the Head of which he was thenceforth utterly surrendered, and to the interests of which order he was to be utterly devoted.

In any land or time where this is understood—as among

Hindus, Jews, or Moslems—immersion should be insisted upon as a condition precedent to one being acknowledged as a Christian or admitted to the privileges of the house of God. Upon those who are used to bring a soul to faith in Christ as Saviour and Lord lies the responsibility to see to it that their converts are at once instructed in the meaning and duty of baptism and are required to give this proof of acceptance of Christ as the Lord to be obeyed. For in one aspect baptism is a token act, a sample of the rule that is to regulate all the future, even obedience to Christ as Lord.

But there are spheres where, by reason of false instruction, many evidently regenerate persons, whose lives are markedly consecrated to Christ, sincerely believe that they have been baptized according to the Word of God, though they have not been immersed after conversion. They honestly think this latter act unnecessary because they were christened in early days. Direction as to how to deal with these devoted but unenlightened souls cannot be found in Acts ii. 37-47, and similar passages, for these contemplate not this class but the former, those who do know the true nature of baptism, and are opposers of Christ. And because in those first days all did understand the real force of baptism the New Testament gives no ground for thinking that any person was considered a member of the house of God until he had been baptized.

But instructions as to how to treat the unenlightened persons in view may be found in Romans xiv. 1 to xv. 7, "Him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decisions of doubts," not even though that doubt be as to the place and force of a divine ordinance (circumcision; Gal. vi. 15, 16; I Cor. vii. 18, 19). "Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God."

Here are

(1) The right angle of approach—to see how many may be received, not how many ought to be excluded.

(2) Those who are already of the Fellowship ought to be received—"receive ye *one another*." The sole test is the person's attitude to Christ as LORD, manifested by obedience to what is known of His will, especially baptism, if there is light on that command. But if there is not that light, but there is other evidence of obedience to all the light yet gained, then we should receive one another, and not penalize a true disciple for want of light on that ordinance. Since we are all in measure blind, no one seeing all truth, want of light would shut us all out of the house of God. But fellowship with God, and therefore with one another, is dependent upon walking in the light, that is, in that measure of light one has—more than this cannot in love be demanded; and then the blood of Jesus is held to atone for involuntary ignorance John i. 7).

(3) The pattern of reception is, "as Christ received you"; and this He graciously did as soon as ever our heart truly

bowed to Him as Lord, without waiting to remove all our ignorance upon His perfect will.

(4) The principle that should guide is the securing the glory of God, which is not done by shutting out of His house any whom He has already welcomed, but rather by our receiving them and helping them to walk with Him in holy fellowship with His people.

But let each believer remember that the grandest promises of God, as to spiritual blessing in this age and glory hereafter, are given to "the church of God"; so that he who by refusing baptism, or otherwise, neglects to associate himself with this company, or later dissociates therefrom, he being no longer of the church militant has no right to expect to have part in the church triumphant. One cannot be both in and not in the fellowship of saints, both of and not of this heavenly society. One is not a member of a community until he has united with it. It was by baptism that believers were added to the apostolic company, and thereafter it was for them to continue steadfastly in this circle.

Finally: it is clear that, as only those who have already been justified by faith in Christ should be baptized, therefore salvation precedes baptism. The latter therefore cannot effect or affect the former. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration is therefore a colossal lie, false to Scripture and to fact, a fatal deception assuring the blindness and ruin of souls innumerable.

And further: because salvation from hell is not dependent upon baptism but upon faith in the Redeemer and His atoning blood, therefore the doctrine that infants dying unbaptized are lost eternally is wholly a *non sequitur*, another monstrous falsehood serving only to make the sinner dependent upon the "Church" and its ministers who administer its so-called "sacraments." The salvation of persons incapable of faith depends upon the knowledge which God, the righteous Judge, has that redemption was effected for their benefit by the plenary, substitutionary, atoning sacrifice which Christ offered for the whole world (John iii. 16. I Tim. ii. 3-6: I John ii. 2).

To confuse men as to the true meaning of baptism, and thus to break down the line of separation between those born of God and those not so born again, was almost the earliest endeavour of Satan in his attack upon the church of God and its message. He succeeded all too well and widely. But this is the greater reason why the ordinance should be maintained and practised according to the Word of God. To spoil what is of God and to introduce what is not of God was his double wile. Let us watch and fight against both forms of his attack, so that in doctrine and practice we may abide in Christ and in His word. Then will He say, "thou didst keep My word and didst not deny My name" (Rev. iii. 8).

L.

THE STILL AND QUIET SOUL

Please join me in a short meditation upon verse 2 of Psalm 131:

*Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul:
Like a weaned child with his mother,
My soul is with me like a weaned child.*

The *soul* is the spiritual part of us:

To be *still* is to be in a state of peace:

To be *quiet* is to be noiseless:

To be *weaned* is to get accustomed to other food than milk;
to be coaxed into independence.

For the soul to attain to this condition is of priceless value and is the beginning of the superior life of being hidden with Christ in God. We all know something of the ordinary life, the inferior life, the life with its routine alternation of strength and weakness, of serenity and disturbance, of joy and bitterness; in short, of a constant state of fluster, flurry, bustle, with no long periods of stillness and peace; the life of self-direction, with all its ups and downs of emotion and temper, the general unevenness of the self-centred, self-occupied life. Too sadly we may all say that our experience has been largely made up of such ineffectiveness in our Christian testimony.

The fundamental cause is that the soul has remained in bondage to the material side of life: it has continued to be fed upon milk only, and naturally in consequence it cries out at delays, frets at frustrations, and gives no end of trouble to others.

Too many Christians know little or nothing of the *quiet* life in the soul, when the soul is separated from the fleshly life, the life that indulges freely in all the cravings of the senses, being given over to the pursuit of pleasure in appetite and self-indulgence, to the neglect of the mind and the soul. Such thereby degrade the whole being, so that though they grow in years they remain children in things spiritual. They are good while in the company of other Christians, but when alone they weakly yield to sin, partake of the sins of others, and even in their private life may secretly practice evil. Thus they hide their light.

It demands resolution to wean oneself from the world, the flesh, and the devil, to turn from the lust of the eyes and of the flesh, and from the vain glory of life, and really to believe that the world passes away and the lust thereof, and therefore to shun and deny it entire.

It takes courage to resist the desire to walk after our own lusts, and not to be complainers against the godly, the saintly, whose lives are a challenge to all sin.

It demands absolute faith in God and His Word to study to be quiet, to renounce self, to practice the independence of faith;

but the resolute, the courageous win a prize of great value—even freedom of soul from all dominance by things external and material.

The Christian should see and be persuaded that the spiritual life is the life that matters; that we should first and foremost give our attention to the inner man, the new man in Christ, begotten of His Spirit; It is the instincts and cravings of this spiritual nature that are to be gratified and cultivated. We must with diligence strive to enter upon the life beautiful, the life separated unto God, the life set apart for God's own possession.

This is simple. It is secured and preserved by daily profound meditation upon the Word of God, by daily prayer in intimate communion with God, by daily maintaining with firmness a constant spirit of prayer in the inner, the new man, even in the midst of life's many duties, great and small. It is also requisite to act daily upon the knowledge given to us, so turning faith into practical living in all our affairs, and to accept from God daily His gifts, promises, and assurance that we are His; that He is in us and we are in Him; that as our Father He loves us unceasingly; that His Holy Spirit dwells within us according to promise.

Stillness and quietness will then be our portion: we shall be ushered gently into God's realm of peace and holy joy: we shall see beyond the daily trial and burden and infirmity: and beholding Him daily we shall be brightened through His indwelling presence and fragrance. Our souls shall rise to behold Jesus and shall be separated from the fleshly influence and tyranny. Then we shall not possess

a haughty heart, nor lofty eyes,
neither exercise ourselves in great matters,
or in things too wonderful for us (ver. 1).

In other words we shall be well satisfied with the will of God, and it shall be sweet to us whether it comes in forms which the flesh detests or otherwise. We shall be humble and learn the beauty of being permitted to sit at His feet, where none shall make us afraid or entice us from that holy place.

Y.

*“If ye abide in My word, then are ye
truly My disciples.”*

—JOHN 8 : 31.

THE SECRET PLACE

(Psalm 91: 1. 1 John 4: 16)

*There is a safe and secret place
Wherein the soul should dwell:
So secret that no subtle foe
That hiding place can tell;
Securely hid in God Himself
The saint is safe from e'en himself.*

*There far removed from strife of tongues
Is quiet from earth's roar;
Nor lurking fear of unknown ill
The heart can harass more;
From anxious thought the soul shall cease,
Close hidden in the God of peace.*

*And he who dwells in love doth reach
That hiding place secure,
His inward man doth rest in peace,
Whate'er he may endure:
God, like a rampart strong, surrounds
The heart that dwells within love's bounds.*

*My soul, throughout each passing hour
Abide in love, in God;
Nor wander from that secret place,
Thy safe and still abode.
Love rules supreme in heaven above,
Let all thy life be ruled by love.*

L.

THE DISCIPLE

VOL. 1, No. 2.

OCTOBER, 1953

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EDITORIAL

The preliminary Notice regarding this magazine was sent to many hundreds of friends. Though only a general idea of its character could be given, nor could it be known what the cost would be, yet a considerable majority of those who learned of the project asked to receive the periodical if issued. This token of confidence and of spiritual appetite was an encouragement to go forward.

Hearty thanks are offered to those who have kindly expressed appreciation of the first issue. One writes: "I have read and re-read it, and I find it to be 'wine on the lees', 'bread without scarceness,' to my soul." A learned and busy man says: "I have read it with enjoyment and profit; this is *not* one of the many periodicals which go to the waste paper basket after first perusal."

It is desired that those who are thus helped will in turn give help by introducing *The Disciple* to others who will really value its messages. This is a duty of love and gratitude. It is designed for those only who will seriously ponder its contents, but such have only to apply to:

Coltishall Granaries Ltd., Coltishall, Norwich, Norfolk,
who will forward without charge.

*"The opening of Thy words
giveth Light"*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

THE SENTINEL

“*They watch on behalf of your souls,*”—
Heb. xiii.17.

*His lonely post he holds
The long night through.
Nor voice is heard, nor leaf is stirred
He nothing seems to do:
Yet many lives are in his hands,
And so he stands.*

*He nothing seems to do,
Yet cares for all:
He guards twixt friends and foes,
A check to these,
A rest to those,
Lest the sleepers' heaving breath
Be stilled in death.*

*Thus are there those who watch
O'er precious souls—
So quietly, so patiently,
They nothing seem to do ;
Yet weary vigils keep
O'er slothful souls that sleep
With danger nigh ;
And the foe is held at bay,
And the slumberer sees the day,
Nor thinketh why.*

*When with the morning light
The King shall leave His height,
And end the long-drawn fight,
And crush the foe,
The praises He will tell
Of the lonely sentinel,
And those he saved will bless
His faithfulness.*

From *The King and Other Verses* by G. H.
Lang.

JUSTIFICATION

An Address by

DR. A. T. PIERSON

at

BETHESDA CHAPEL, BRISTOL

on

August, 15th, 1900

Edited from a verbatim report

WE have considered "condemnation," let us read now some passages on the subject of Justification, beginning with Rom. iii. 20-28. The most important teaching on the subject of justification is comprehended within these eight verses. There is generally one place, at least, in the Word of God where every great subject is once for all treated, and treated fully. It may be touched on in passages elsewhere, but in no other place does the Spirit of God gather together, and present in a single view, all the great teaching on that subject; and here is one place where the doctrine of justification is set before us. This therefore should be a precious kind of scripture.

In chapter iv. we have a little fuller treatment of the relation of faith to justification and we will read now verses 3-5, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt." If you work you get wages, and wages are the equivalent of your work; and if you can obtain a righteousness by working, it cannot be a matter of grace, it is a matter of debt, it is something owed to you and not bestowed on you by faith.

Verse 8: "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." See how beautiful this is; God will not impute to us sin, which really belongs to us, but He will impute to us righteousness, which does not belong to us.

Let us look at verses 14-21. We have seen that by the law comes the full knowledge or consciousness of sin, and now the other statement is that, "the law worketh wrath." There is no comfort in the law to the sinner, because it only brings him a knowledge of sin, and only worketh wrath, bringing penalty and condemnation.

Perhaps you may question what this has to do with justification, this passage which deals with the remarkable faith of Abraham. One of the great difficulties in the way of accepting the testimony of God is that it seems too much to be true—that God does not impute the sin that belongs to me, but that He does impute to me His righteousness which does not belong to me. It is difficult to take in so wonderful a truth. And never does the joy of faith come to us until we are fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able also to perform (ch. iv. 21).

We approach tonight, beloved, one of the most exalted themes in Holy Scripture, and it would not be surprising if this wondrous scripture should unfold to us some thoughts upon the subject of justification that have never come to our minds before, so full is this passage of teaching on this subject. It would be very interesting to you in studying this scripture more closely to note the fact that the crucial points in the argument are marked by the word "therefore"; in almost every instance where the argument turns that is the first point, as we call it. For example; chapter iii. 20: "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight"; verse 28: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Then in chapter iv. 16: "Therefore it is of faith"; and in chapter v. 1: "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God." If you take the line of argument there laid down and follow the occurrence and re-occurrence of this word "therefore" you will see that they mark the points of the argument. For the sake of brevity let me call your attention to three things.

- (1) What is the nature of justification?
- (2) How this justification is made our own.
- (3) What are the results of justification, what it includes.

This passage in Romans iii. will grow upon you as you study it, in the wondrous completeness with which it sets forth the wonderful truth of justification. You will find six remarkable statements.

(1) That the unrighteousness of man is universal, that man is wholly under condemnation, and that there is no justification in the natural state. That remarkable description of the natural man in his alienation from God, which is found in chapter iii., contains an element of depth from one of the most terrible passages in the Old Testament, and if you examine it closely you will see that *all* men are wrong, and that every man is *all* wrong. "There is none righteous, no, not one." See the emphasis of repetition. And having started with the fact that all men are wrong, now see how the blessed Spirit teaches us that man is *all* wrong, throat, lips, tongue, mouth, feet, eyes all wrong, their daily activities all wrong.

(2) Then having made this general statement supported by arguments from the Old Testament, the second statement which is made is, that *by the law no such justification* or righteousness is procured. For observe the reason, that just as soon as man has transgressed the law, he always stands before that law from that time forth as a transgressor, and in the eyes of the law can never be anything else. Therefore there is no possibility of any man recovering himself by the deeds of the law, even though there should be the most pertinacious and persistent effort on his part to be justified. It is utterly vain for man to go about to establish his own righteousness; he is a transgressor and in the eyes of the law

will always be a transgressor.

(3) Then, that there is a righteousness which is of God, which is apart from the law, a divinely procured righteousness, which is of God by faith in Jesus Christ; offered unto all men and actually placed like a white garment from heaven upon all who believe.

(4) Then the next statement is that justification is free and gracious. You do not have to do anything to earn it like wages. You do not have to do anything to deserve it like a reward of merit. It is bestowed upon all with absolute freedom, on the simple condition that you take it as a Divine gift. For after all faith at the bottom is nothing but the reception of what God gives, and there is no act more simple than receiving a gift.

(5) There is another statement made here on which I must tarry a moment, for it is important. We are told that this righteousness includes "the remission of sins that are past," chapter iii. verse 25. If you notice the marginal reading you will find that this word means "passing over." Some translate it remission. Some have suggested translating it "preemption," in order to make a distinction between this and other words. What does it mean? That God passes over sin in His forbearance? Some have interpreted it as having to do with the Old Testament saints, whose sins He passed over in view of the coming of His Son. But I will suggest a possible interpretation which throws much more light on it in my mind. There is a certain obligation which every impenitent, unreconciled sinner, who perishes finally in his sins, owes to the work of Christ, and that is, the temporary passing over of his sins through Divine forbearance, e.g., the parable of the Fig tree. It had not borne fruit for three years, and the owner of the vineyard said, "Cut it down"; but the plea again was, "Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it, and if it bear fruit well; and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down." Is not this an illustration, possibly, of the passing by of transgression through the forbearance of God to give opportunity for repentance and faith, to see, as it were, whether the sinner will turn from his wickedness and accept Jesus Christ?

"Sins past"; for example, the sins of the past life; first of rebellion; and second a coming short of the glory of God, in not doing things we ought to have done; what we call sins of omission, as well as others which are sins of commission. On this ground the sinner is condemned—up to this point for the rejection of Jesus Christ as the Saviour, which is the greatest sin in the eyes of God, and which is the one sin which, if persisted in, cannot escape damnation. Now God passes by these sins for the time being, suspends judgment to see if the sinner will believe; and if the sinner does believe all these things are passed over, will never be mentioned; God will never retain them for judgment, they

are cast out of sight in the depths of the sea.

But if the sinner now persists in unbelief and rejection of Jesus Christ, remission is not granted to these sins, but he is cast into judgment with the impenitent and unbelieving. There is a righteousness which God has manifested and which is so wonderful that it makes possible the passing by of transgression through the Divine forbearance; God, in other words, can suspend judgment upon sin, and the punishment due to sin, because of what Jesus Christ had done to make the salvation of the sinner possible and to extend the limit of Divine forbearance.

I say that interpretation has thrown great light on the passage to my own mind, and given me great help in the understanding of God's plan of redemption. It even seems as if one might understand why Christ was sent to be "the Saviour of all men, especially of those who believe," that He is not only the propitiation for our sins, but for the whole world, as John says in chapter ii. of his first epistle. Not that all are saved, but that all men owe to Jesus Christ's mediation the stoppage of Divine judgment, the arrest of the process of Divine condemnation, the opportunity to escape by repentance and faith.*

(6) The last of these great statements is, that God can be just, and yet the Justifier. A judge that condemns a prisoner and fails to proceed as judge, setting him free instead, violates the law, and such a judge would be removed from the Bench and indicted for unfaithfulness. It is a very dangerous thing to exercise clemency toward a known criminal. How, then, can God forgive a sinner, and make a sinner just, without imperilling His own principles? This is the mystery of redemption. God hath "set forth" Jesus Christ "to be a propitiation"; Him Who knew no sin to be "made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

God foreordained that His own dear Son should bear the sin on the cross, and thus by His sufferings make an expiation that should satisfy Divine justice and the demands of Divine government. And so our sin being laid upon Jesus Christ makes it possible for God to extend to us forgiveness of sins, reconciliation, restoration.

* A.V. "remission of sins that are passed": R.V. "passing over of sins done aforetime." There seems no question that the R.V. is correct. It is very true that God is forbearing with each sinner in the hope that he will repent and his former sins be forgiven; but the reference here is to God not having fully punished men for sins before Christ came, and how this forbearance was justified because Christ was coming to atone for the sins of the world (I John ii. 2). See Speaker's Commentary, Alford, Liddon, Moule, and especially Trench, Synonyms, xxxiii, ed. 12 (L.).

But now I want to call your attention to three particular things here set forth. Let us look at (1) the nature of justification, (2) the terms on which it becomes ours, and then (3) the effects or results of the reception of this justification by man.

(1) The nature of justification. It would not be strange if some of us here, who have been trained in the knowledge of Divine things, have overlooked one great element of justification. It is not simply an expiation for sin. In chapter iv. verse 25, we have a very significant statement: "who was delivered up for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Our justification therefore was not completed on the cross. We may say without irreverence, that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ alone would never have saved a solitary sinner. Death was the penalty of sin, and Christ endured it as the penalty of sin, and if He had remained under the power of death, there would have been no justification procured, because He would simply have been "made sin," would have been abiding under sin's penalty. It was necessary that He should be raised from the dead, in order that it should be shown that His work on the cross was accepted and so available for the redemption of man. It is not a dead Saviour that can justify you and me: it is a living Saviour, who having passed through death lives as our justification. A most important thing.

He was delivered over for our offences, that was part of the conditions of His justifying work; but He was raised again, and made that justification complete and effectual. So that we must never stop at the cross, but always go on to the sepulchre. It is not at the cross that hope comes into your heart, it is at the open door of the tomb.

However much we may make of what Christ has done for us on the cross, it is only as it is connected with what He has done for us at the right hand of the throne of God, it is only as connected with this completion of the work, that the work done on the cross avails for salvation. I have a strong thought that this is part of the meaning of our Lord's words in John xvi. 10, when He says that the Spirit will "convince the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father." His ascension to the Father was the proof that His work as the atoning sacrifice was a complete and accepted work.

So the Spirit not simply calls our attention to the fact that He died, but to the fact that He rose and lives for ever. Therefore you will find that the New Testament preachers did not speak so much about the cross as about the resurrection of Jesus Christ; that was the corner stone of the whole structure. Therefore I emphasize it, because I believe that God would have it impressed, that justification rests and depends upon resurrection as the necessary result of His atoning death.

This lets us into the nature of justification. Let us under-

stand that it is not simply pardon. A pardoned sinner is not a justified sinner. If there should go forth today from one of our prisons a man who had been under sentence of death, but had been pardoned, and so had escaped the gallows, he would not be a justified man; he would not take his stand in society, you would not take him into your house, as a citizen who was a law-abiding citizen, but you would regard him as a pardoned criminal. But God under *His* government never pardons a man and holds him unrighteous. Justification is not simply punishment remitted, but the standing on the platform of a righteous man, as if he had never sinned.

Do you not now see that it must be connected with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, for the cross only speaks of death, but the resurrection speaks of life? The cross tells of suffering for sin, but the resurrection tells of a new vitality, of life coming into the soul from God and becoming the foundation of a new experience, character, and condition. And therefore justification is connected with resurrection, for it is connected with regeneration, it includes and involves it, and there is no justification without regeneration.

You see, beloved, how God in no way becomes an accomplice with sin when He justifies, because justification is not simply a garment covering my filthiness, it is a Divine investment over a regenerate man; there is the new nature beneath it, the new nature imparted by God, by which I become partaker of His nature. And so God does not justify a man without giving him that nature which is His own nature, aiding in the promotion of sanctification, and the completion of all the work in glorification, when he shall finally stand clothed in Jesus Christ's righteousness, holy and fit for God's companionship.

This is the nature of justification. See how inclusive it is. To think I can stand today holy before God on that standing, and that justification is now in God's eye complete, except as it does involve sanctification and glorification; "whom He justified, them He also glorified."

(2) But now I want to dwell for a few moments on what is the great condition of my receiving this justification, of my coming upon this platform of standing as a righteous worshipper before God. We say, it is faith, and it is; but what does that mean? It means justification by faith without the deeds of the law. What is faith, and how does justification become mine through faith?

There are two ways of becoming justified, that is, taking it not as the experience of men, but as a possibility, looking at it simply in the light of a theory—two ways of being justified; one by the deeds of the law, the other by the great deed of faith. For I call your attention to the fact that in God's eyes faith is a deed, for when the Jews came to Jesus saying, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God," what was the answer?—"This is the work of God,

that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." The first of all deeds is to believe.

When Adam was created, God gave him life, and the condition of the continuation in that life was that he should continue in obedience. And so we might say in regard to Adam it was, "This *do*, and live." God never says that to the sinner, and as long as you think there is anything you can do to obtain life, you will never live in the sense of the New Testament Scriptures. If you depend upon any outward act of obedience to justify you in the presence of God, you will never be justified.

Dr. Brooke says that the most wonderful truth in the epistle to the Romans is chapter iv. verses 4 and 5: "To him that worketh *not*"; that stops all working, all the "deadly doing" of attempts to get into the favour of God, attempts however "great or small":—"but believeth," hath faith. There is the essence of the whole of God's teaching; if you stop your working and go on believing you will at once receive justification, but as long as you persist in working you will never have justification.

God's first word to Adam was, "This *do* and thou shalt live"; God's word to the sinner is, "Believe and live, and then do." You cannot do until you live. You cannot live by doing; you must first have life and then you can do. When life is in you, you will have the power to will and work, because God is willing and working in you; but up to the point of your having received life, you can do nothing.

Therefore the only deed of the sinner is to receive life. Life brings power, and makes doing possible.

I have often thought that the reason why the Sabbath of the Old Testament gave place to the Lord's Day of the New, is because the Sabbath was ordained to be rest after work, but the Lord's Day is rest before work. The Lord's Day is a time of communion with Him, of getting strength from Him, getting repose in Him, and then we take up work on the basis of the Divine rest that we get on the Lord's Day. So there is a great deal of difference between the two dispensations, which these few and simple words will help make clear, "This *do* and live"; "*Believe* and live"; believe and then do; work and then rest; rest that I may work.

(3) Now let us go to the other point, the results of justification. We have seen that our Lord suffered for our sins on the cross, and rose on the third day that we might receive regeneration, and having been justified, start on a new life in a holy walk with God. And we have seen that we must believe in order to live, and live in order to do the works of God.

But being now justified, what does justification include? Take chapter v. verses 1 and 2; I call your attention to every word, as part of the presentation of this marvellous truth.

Look at the results of justification; "Therefore being

justified by faith we have *peace with God.*" What is that? It is the peace of reconciled relation. It is not "the peace of God" which Paul refers to in Phil. iv.: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding," that is, the peace of conscious experience, of God's indwelling, but quite a different thing; and I pray you not to confuse the two things, because the confusion of these has brought darkness into many a man's life, and sometimes almost hopeless darkness.

They think because they are justified they have some sudden and marvellous experience of the peace of God taking possession of them. They may find their experience does not conform to their expectations, and may think they are not justified because they have not this peace of which they have heard others speak.

There are as many different operations of God in grace as in nature, different ways in which God chooses to deal in His gracious purposes; and I want you to notice this fact, that you may have peace with God without any consciousness of a change of relation. If I were in debt and a friend of mine paid it for me, though the fact of the payment may not be known to me, yet I am released from my debt, just as soon as my friend paid the debt; there is no more claim on me, and the consciousness of the debt being paid has nothing to do with the cancelling of the debt. When two armies are encamping near each other, the lines which divide them are often not exactly located to the knowledge of everyone, and if you had been taken captive by the enemy, you might get across that line and be safe, without knowing it; but your not knowing that you had passed it makes no difference to the fact of your being in safety.

Some look for evidence in themselves, and because they have not this evidence many lose confidence in the fact of their justification. The great thing is just to depend on the word of the living God. I remember a little girl of ten came to me when I had a church at Detroit. She came on the day appointed for conversation with those who were anxious about their souls. "Well, dear child," I said, "have you come to see me about your soul; do you want to be a Christian?" "No, Sir, I want to come into the church because I am a Christian." "Well, how do you know you are a Christian?" "Because God says so, Sir." "Where?" "Why He says, 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out'." "That does not say you are a Christian." "Why, yes, Sir, because I have come to Him, and so I know He has not cast me out."*

* My memory is that the Preacher added that one of the examining elders inquired: "But, my dear, what about the Slough of Despond?" And the child replied, "Please, sir, *I didn't come that way.*" (L.)

No believer, however mature and however aged, could give a better account of himself or his experience. Your feelings may benefit you on the one hand, or they may deceive you by the absence of what you expect, or by the presence of what you have no authority to expect. But in either case, the soul that believes on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, knows on the basis of God's assurance that he is saved. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God," not "the peace of God," which will come in due course; it may come very soon; but the peace of a reconciled relation. The prodigal was received into the Father's house as a son. It has nothing to do with the mere feelings of man.

Not only so, but we are told we have a standing. "This grace wherein we stand." The careful student of the New Testament will notice three words used in it, that constantly recur, and have a great deal of significance—stand, walk, sit. As typical of Christian experience they are exceedingly simple. "Stand" refers to the permanent position of relationship; "Walk" to all the changes of activity from point to point, of temptation, trial, duty, and suffering, always in the companionship of God; and "sit" refers to the completion of the circuit of duty or search, as when one who has been wandering about, seeking something, having found some satisfying thing, sits down satisfied with God.

Now here we have the word "stand": "Wherein we stand." "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock." That is standing; you get to a place where there is standing. You get out of this filth and mire and your feet are put upon a solid rock. It is a great thing to have a standing, to have a rock under your feet, and to know that the word of God cannot fail, and the atoning merits of the Lord Jesus are never insufficient for any wants. And the moment the sinner believes, he comes out of the miry clay, God puts his feet upon a rock, and there he stands; and though heaven and earth pass away, that rock is never disturbed; it is the Rock of Ages.

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace"—God's favour. As Campbell Morgan of London says, "I am a loyal subject of the Queen of Great Britain, but I have not access to the Queen, and if I got near her I should find fifty persons standing between me and her person—not because I am disloyal or disobedient, but because I have not the privilege of access."

But when you are justified, no one can stand between you and God, not even the Lord Jesus Christ, because *in Him*, you stand accepted before God. You have a right now to press your claim immediately upon the Divine acceptance; you can go and offer prayer without any intercessor; no angel or archangel stands in your way; you are a reconciled child, and God waits to receive your petition and hear your

prayers and grant your requests in the name of the Lord Jesus.

You may plead and ask what you will in His name; and so far as you ask in conformity to the will of God, and in obedience to the precepts and commands God gives for your guidance, you may be sure that the Spirit of God is working in you even in prayer so that you may pray as you ought; you may be sure that in the Lord Jesus Christ you may have the same access to God as we read of in that wonderful discourse before the crucifixion, where the Son of God says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He will give it you" (John xv. 16; xvi. 23).

"And we *rejoice in hope* of the glory of God." What is the idea of that word? It is that you begin to see in your own justification the evidence and forecast of your own full glory. Justification is the point of reconciliation to God, of restoration to home and fellowship; and if you receive into yourself that nature by which you are made partaker of the very life of God, you are made to see how it is that even in the present you have the forecast and foretaste of the perfection of glory.

And so, beloved friends, how beautiful is what was said by Benjamin Wills Newton, that God loves to teach His little children by pictures, and that the three crosses were a very suggestive picture of Divine truth. On one side the impenitent, disobedient thief, dying as a rejector of Jesus Christ: on the other side the penitent and believing thief, accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour and departing to Paradise: and between the two Jesus Christ Himself, the source of all life and salvation. Thus as we look at these three crosses our thoughts pass from death unto life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

How simple to come and "lay your sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God"; to remember that He died for you, and that He rose from the dead for you; that there is no deed you have to do in order to live, nothing but believe. Then a life of holy doing becomes possible to you, by the indwelling of the regenerating and transforming Spirit. Being justified you have a perfect relationship with God as a reconciled child; you have peace with God; you stand in His favour; you have access to the Father by Jesus Christ, with the anticipation and forecast of the final perfection of the saints in glory.

May God graciously cause every one here to accept this justification for His name's sake.

INQUIRE OF THE FORMER AGE (II)

G. H. Lang

V

THE Enemy of truth at once set in motion powerful antagonistic efforts to neutralize what God was doing. One which he initiated at the very same time was the Tractarian movement at Oxford. It was designed to reimpose the doctrines and practices of the corrupted post-apostolic period, and so to prevent a return to the apostolic days and ways. It is sadly significant that his chief agent in this return to darkness was one who could tell of a genuine conversion to God in his youth, John Henry Newman.

But the second, and perhaps equally effective manœuvre of the Enemy was to divide those who were spreading vigorously the recovered truth of the nature and unity of the church of God, so spoiling the testimony to that unity; and again, and alas, his chief, and wholly unconscious agent in this divisive work was the learned and devoted scholar who first, and beyond others, had discerned and disseminated this truth. For John Nelson Darby was shortly beguiled into a series of opinions which developed disastrously into a ruinous division amongst the many who by then had embraced the truth as to the church of God. He formed and spread the notions that:

1. There was in apostolic days an original condition when the church of God stood in pristine order and beauty according to the mind of its glorified Head. Yet the very low state of the church in Corinth soon after its formation by an apostle, with schisms, immorality, and false doctrine, together with the early declension of the churches in Galatia, show that no such high and noble general condition as was imagined ever existed.

2. It was then asserted that this original condition had fallen into ruin and could not be restored; from which was deduced the consequence that no local church could be put in the original order by having recognized elders to rule it and elected deacons to serve it. Thus "ruin" was asserted to be the permanent irremediable condition of the church of God to the end of this age.

3. Darby held tenaciously that the church of God is a visible, universal body on earth. He was strongly opposed to the principle that local assemblies of Christians in each place where found are the only visible exhibition of the invisible church universal.

4. By consequence, he insisted that all churches everywhere, being part of a visible universal society, are bound by the

church acts of each other local church, as in the matter of receiving or excommunicating members. As a result, when churches in the movement refused this principle of discipline, and insisted that no local church was necessarily bound by the acts of another local church, but had duty to consider whether that action was Scriptural, he could do no other than reject such churches, and in 1848 he forced a general division by insisting upon his principle of discipline. By this step the outward and spiritual unity of the church of God, which he had clearly and powerfully expounded twenty years before, was, as to public testimony, wrecked by its chief advocate.

The salient details of these affairs can be read in my Life of A. N. Groves, another chief actor in them. Here it is enough to show how evidently Satan has a powerful aversion to the truth as to this society, the church of God. As in the earliest days, so in these later times, he strives to keep the subject in obscurity, and subtly diverts to his ends the minds and efforts of truly godly men. Learning and devotion, so valuable in themselves, are not of themselves a safeguard against his methods.

In the book just mentioned it is shown at what point this great man of God was betrayed into leaving the safe path for a false track. When he declared his intention to cut off from communion those churches which should refuse his principle of discipline he was challenged to show what scriptures warranted the cutting off of an assembly entire. He admitted there was no scripture for doing this, but claimed that when godly men seek guidance by prayer they are entitled to believe that they receive it, even though there be no scripture for the course they decide to take. This meant that he abandoned in this matter the foundation principle that he and his associates had all formerly avowed, even that the Word of God is the *sole* rule and guide in the things of God. He ignored the fact that the men of God who refused his view were equally men of prayer, some of them, like George Müller, markedly so, yet they felt led to take the very course which he condemned. The divergences demonstrated the insecurity of his method of seeking guidance, and it emphasized the necessity of God's Word written as His means for our ascertaining His will. This abandonment of the Word of God as the only rule has had an ever widening influence among Darby's followers, as well, of later years, among those who then refused his principle, and who are known as Open Brethren. The inevitable effect is spiritual deterioration. This has been shown in some of my books, and will be mentioned in our last chapter.

VI

In connection with this renewed inquiry as to the true nature of the church of God as a people associated with Christ as the Man in heaven and glory, and therefore dis-

sociated in heart from the earth and intended by God to be removed to the heavenly place and glory where Christ is, there naturally arose inquiry as to the circumstances of that coming removal and of the return of Christ to effect it.

An early indication of this renewed interest in the return of the Lord was that Henry Drummond, banker and Member of Parliament (not the same as the later Prof. Henry Drummond, scientist and evolutionist), convened meetings for the study of the subject at his mansion at Albury Park, Surrey. This was in 1827. Edward Irving and his associates attended these gatherings. Mr. Drummond became a leading supporter of Irvingism and one of its "apostles."

In that movement there developed, alas, most unsatisfactory features, including alleged use of unknown tongues and prophesying under spirit inspiration. One of the chief of these inspired prophets was Robert Baxter. After leaving the Movement he published a full account of it in a *Narrative of Facts concerning the "Unknown Tongues" and Supernatural Manifestations in members of the Rev. Edward Irving's Congregation and Other Individuals, and Formerly in the Writer Himself—Manifestations Preceding the Establishment of the "Catholic Apostolic Church."*

Almost the chief subject upon which the "prophets" spoke under power was prophecy and the coming of the Lord. They made many predictions which the lapse of but a short time showed to be false. The Jews were to be restored to their land speedily, with vengeance upon all their enemies. An Indian chief, then present, was to return to his land and bring his brethren to God; which never happened. All the Seven Trumpets of the book of the *Revelation* were to be fulfilled within the next three years and a half, the first four within two years, the others in the succeeding year and a half. Within that same period "the saints would be caught up to the Lord, and the earth wholly given up to the days of vengeance."

These and other false predictions by Baxter were confirmed by the chief prophetess of Irving's Church, Miss E. C., speaking under power. And she, and other "gifted" persons, confirmed Irving in his fatally false doctrine which he expressed as follows: "I say not that Christ has the motions of the flesh, but that the law of the flesh was there all present; but that whereas in us it is set on fire by an evil life, in Him it was, by a holy life, put down, and His flesh brought to be a holy altar, whereon the sacrifices and offerings for the sin of the world . . . might ever be offered up." It was this statement by Irving of this pernicious view of the essential sinfulness of our Lord's humanity, and its confirmation by the prophets of the Movement, which opened Baxter's eyes to the fact that it was by demonic energy that they were taught and empowered, whereupon he left the Movement completely.

It is fact concerning the "Tongues" Movement of the

past forty-five years that, in its early years, there were many equally false prophecies uttered under power, and that Irving's fatal heresy was repeated more than once by its "inspired" speakers. No doubt they, as he, were blinded and did not recognize the fatal nature of their teaching. All this further emphasizes the feature that true Christians may be deceived and caused to serve Satan, even while their experiences are intermingled with ecstatic joy, peace, prayer, praise, and their false utterances are combined with a certain measure of truth.

Baxter specially stresses the front-rank place given to the subject of the Lord's return and the emphasis placed upon the alleged nearness of that event. These features have been equally prominent in the later "Tongues" circles.

VII

One who attended the conferences at Albury was Viscountess Powerscourt of Powerscourt House, Bray, County Wicklow, Ireland. Henry Craik of Bristol described her as "a dear humble saint" (*Diaries and Letters of Henry Craik*, 168). Some years ago the then Dowager Lady Powerscourt told me that in the family circle she was still spoken of as "the good Lady Powerscourt."

It was understood that J. N. Darby had thoughts of marrying her. His family, though not titled, moved in the same social circle, his father being John Darby of Markley, Sussex, and Leap Castle, King's County, Ireland. I am informed that this castle was destroyed in the 1922 disturbances. My father, who knew J. N. Darby well, told me that he did not carry through his desire because his brethren advised him that it was more needful that he should travel among the assemblies. It may have been so, but it could have been that union with so fine and strong a lady would have afforded the balance that might have hindered some of the disastrous actions that mingled in his useful life. It is said, though I cannot confirm it, that it was after the abandonment of this hope that, sitting with the lovely prospect of the lakes of Killarney in view, he wrote the lines:

This world is a wilderness wide:

I have nothing to seek or to choose,
I've no thought in the waste to abide,
I've nought to regret or to lose.

And then he reveals the solace and inspiration of the pilgrim heart:

'Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below;
And 'tis there, when I reach Him above,
As I'm known, all His fulness I'll know.

Yet had they married the union might have been short, for Lady Powerscourt had died before April 1837 (*Groves' Memoir*, 368). In 1838 Dr. Daly, Rector of Bray, issued, her *Letters and Papers*. These reveal strength of intellect,

clearness of expression (in which she might have greatly improved J.N.D.), breadth and depth of meditation, and, above all, heavenliness of spirit. Dr. Daly remarks:

She, of all the Christians I have been privileged to know, came nearest to that which she has, in such strong, uncommon terms, stated to be her idea of a Christian; "*Not one who looks up from earth to heaven, but one who looks down from heaven to earth.*" She appears to have ascended a high and holy eminence, and thence to have looked down upon these earthly scenes, with which too many are entirely engrossed.

Upon Lady Powerscourt's interest in prophecy Dr. Daly wrote:

She was known to have very deeply considered it, to have conversed with those persons who were most remarkable for their study of it, and to have consulted the books which have been written on it; and, above all, to have read the Scriptures with much attention to the subject.

Upon this topic he adds sensible words worth perpetuating. 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. In order to reach the end, it is essential not to mistake as to the way. It is not equally essential to form correct anticipations as to what shall be found at the end. Those who are on the way shall reach the end, and then all their mistakes concerning it shall be corrected.

It had been well indeed if other leading students of prophecy at that time, and their successors, had followed this sane counsel; but presently schemes of interpretation were settled, and each came to regard his school of interpretation as certainly correct. This developed intolerance, and unwillingness that any view should be expounded other than those of that particular school. Especially has this been known among the followers of Darby's scheme. The consequence has been that for nearly a century "Brethren," who at first led the way in the rediscovery of God's plan for the future, have added nothing material to the unfolding of that plan. Nothing of consequence has been added to those schools of interpretation since the books published about the middle of the last century.

It is worthy of note, and pertinent to our present theme, that this devoted and heavenly-minded Lady saw that reigning with Christ in the future is contingent upon suffering with Him in the present. In view of the worldliness of the church she laid great emphasis upon this (*Letters*, 143-146). A. N. Groves and R. C. Chapman, two other prominent leaders of that early period, likewise saw that sharing in the first resurrection is a reward of present faithfulness, not a

privilege guaranteed to every believer. One of the subjects discussed at the Powerscourt meetings next mentioned was whether the promises to Israel and the church of God are conditional. (Groves *Memoir*, 296, 378; Lady Powerscourt's letter is given in my *Anthony Norris Groves*, 292, 293: Groves's statement on 298: Chapman's on 32).

The study of prophecy at Albury in 1827 moved Lady Powerscourt to convene such gatherings at Powerscourt House in 1829 or 1830. These continued till 1833*. Very able Bible students attended. This gives opportunity to glance at some of the array of scholars in the Movement God saw fit to instruct and use at that time.

J. N. Darby went to Trinity College, Dublin, and was Classical Gold Medallist before he was nineteen. Benjamin Wills Newton was, I believe at the same age, Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, and the next year was First Medallist. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles became a leading critic of his time of the text of the New Testament. G. V. Wigram was a scholar, especially in Hebrew. He was rich, and expended £50,000 in the production of the invaluable *Englishman's Concordances* to the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. J. G. Bellett was another classical prizeman, and was trained for the law. The social class in which such moved is illustrated in Sir Edward Denny, Bart., an Irish landlord with an annual rent roll of £13,000. He was humble in spirit, generous, and the writer of many choice hymns. He was also the designer of perhaps the earliest (in that period at least) of Prophetic Charts.

I do not know whether A. N. Groves attended these meetings. If he did it must have been at their commencement, for in June 1829 he left England for Bagdad and was not in this country again till 1835; but he was in contact with Lady Powerscourt. George Müller, of Bristol, and his co-worker Henry Craik, were, as stated, there in September 1833. The former had taken the full course for the Lutheran ministry, which included Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and he knew

* Neatby (*History of the Plymouth Brethren*, 38, 39) thought that Prof. Stokes was wrong in saying that the meetings ceased in 1833. He relied on a statement by J. B. Stoney that he attended one as late as September 1838. But Stoney was wrong, for, as mentioned above, Lady Powerscourt had died before April 1837 and her *Letters* were issued in 1838. The Editor of Henry Craik's *Letters and Diaries* (p. 166), says that Craik and Müller in September 1833 attended "the last of these meetings." This agreed with Stokes. Müller tacitly passed this by contributing an Introduction to the book.

English well, in addition to his native German. Craik was a brilliant scholar, especially in Hebrew. Together they were used to build up the large church at Bethesda Chapel, Bristol.

The learned Dean Alford wrote of Craik: "I often corresponded with Mr. Craik on matters of scholarship in the Greek New Testament, and never without profit." He knew much of the Greek Testament by heart, and he was "almost as familiar with Latin as with his own tongue" (*Diaries*, 311, 312). The value of this is seen in his writings (few and rare), especially in his *New Testament Church Order*, a valuable study. He died in 1866. The following pleasing revelation of his character is given by Müller in the Introduction to the *Letters and Diaries*: In 1849 the university of St. Andrews, his *alma mater*, wished to honour his scholarship by conferring the degree of D.D. He had no desire for such distinction, but when declining he said that he had a younger friend who was purposing to make literature his lifework and to whom a degree would be helpful. He was sure the University would find him suitable, and if they would grant him a degree he would take it as a favour to himself. So Tregelles was given the LL.D. One can believe that in due time the University felt that it had honoured itself. Some years later the University repeated their desire, but again Craik declined the honour.

God expects us to ponder His work. Those of us who have little or no earthly learning should observe His choice of such really learned men, and be thankful that they were drawn to devote their powers and knowledge to the work of the Lord. We all benefit by it, and should praise God.

Bellett has told of the gracious spirit that sanctified the earliest of those gatherings at Powerscourt. He wrote: The meetings were truly precious to the soul, and night after night did I retire to my room at Powerscourt House in a deep sense of how little a one I was in Christ, in the presence of so much grace and devotedness around me through the day.

Well indeed it would have been if that lowly and lovely spirit had been retained by all those present: it would have preserved from the bitterness and false speaking some displayed in later controversies. Bellett did so continue; but even so good a man as Wigram wrote against Bethesda and its leaders, Müller and Craik (who had shared in those hallowed meetings) tracts (which I have read) which were so offensive that his own friends induced him to withdraw them. Groves' comment on them was fully justified that "the language was disgraceful to the writer alone" (*Memoir*, 428). Groves added:

I do most fervently pray that my soul may be filled with Himself and not with those angry questions: what seems really wanted is that *true humiliation* of soul before God,

which makes the beam in our own eyes visible, and the mote in the eye of another comparatively disregarded . . . Where is the love that "thinketh no evil," that "suffereth long and is kind." It is surely the concision, not the circumcision, that is now at work.

Truly each Christian needs continually to heed that word: "take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously" (Mal. ii. 15). Between the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man there lies the necessary work "be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Eph. iv. 22-24); for it is seriously possible to have the right mind as to a matter but the wrong spirit in dealing with it.

Craik lets us know the type of subjects discussed by those godly and learned disciples at Powerscourt House. He mentions these (*Diary*, 168, 169):

The difference between the Everlasting Covenant and the Covenant of the Lord.

Is the visible Christian Church founded on the basis of the Jewish?

What is the nature of the ministry and ordinances of the former?

Are the promises to either, or both, conditional?

The analogy between the close of this dispensation and the former.

What is Mystic Babylon?

Is the call out of her to be a Divine call at a set period, or is it a perpetual call?

What is the connection between the present and the future dispensation?

The Temptations of Satan.

He adds these remarks worth much notice:

Monday 23rd September. Arrived at Powerscourt from Glenmore about 1, and met together for the breaking of bread.

Saturday 28th September 1833. Heard brother Müller expound in the morning, after which had the Lord's Supper at Lady Powerscourt's. Took leave and came to Dublin.

So that, at that time, it was already seen to be Scriptural to have the Lord's Supper at informal gatherings in a private house, and on other days than the first of the week, and more than once in the same week. This accords with apostolic liberty and practice. Acts ii. 46 shows four things: (1) that believers gathered publicly in the temple for public worship; (2) that they broke bread privately in their houses; (3) that this last was in conjunction with their ordinary meal: "they took their food"; (4) that it was habitual to do so on any ordinary day: "day by day." All this was at that time, early

in century nineteen, revolutionary as against established ecclesiastical sentiment and rule. Some today have receded from this liberty into the bondage of thinking that the Lord's Supper must be held only on Sunday morning.

Some six years earlier, in 1827, A. N. Groves had suggested to J. G. Bellett in Dublin that the apostolic practice had been to break bread on the first day of the week. This presently became the rule in assemblies as they developed here and there. The scripture advanced is Acts xx. 7. This reads: "In [during] the first day of the seven, we having been gathered together to break bread, Paul dialogued with them, being about to depart the next day, and extended the talk until midnight."

Now all that this statement asserts on the point in view is that they did, as a fact, gather to break bread on *that* first day of the week. It is not even an inference that this was the regular practice; for an inference must have in a statement some basis from which it can be drawn, and here there is no basis. As far as Luke's statement goes, it is *pure assumption* that Christians were at that time accustomed everywhere to meet regularly on the first day of the week to break bread. From the context it might more reasonably be assumed that they met that night because Paul and his company were to leave the next morning, but this also is mere assumption, for *no* reason why they met that night is given.

Luke's words do indeed establish liberty to break bread on that day of the week, but they create no rule; nor was it needful to indicate this liberty, for it had already been shown by Acts ii. 46 as mentioned above. Moreover, if we must be precise on the point, the narrative shows that the dialogue extended till midnight, when Eutychus fell and was resuscitated; then, on returning to the upper room, after this interruption, the bread was broken, and the conversation was resumed. So that in point of fact, whether Jewish or Roman time be supposed, it was early morning on the second day of the week that the bread was actually broken. This destroys the supposed precedent for the first day of the week being the correct time for the ordinance, and agrees with Acts ii. 46 that every day, and any hour of the day, is proper. It was not on the first day of the week that the Supper had been instituted by the Lord.

We hope to return to this subject in a later paper. Here it will only be added that, both when the Supper was instituted and at Troas, conversation on Divine themes both preceded and followed the observance; so that ministry of the truth both before and after is very Scriptural, and the holy ordinance might properly be observed informally during what we call a Conversational Bible Reading. For John's narrative of that unique evening describes interchange of thought between the Lord and the apostles, and Luke says of that night at Troas that Paul *dialogued* and *homilized* (ver. 7)

both terms meaning conversation.

That subjects so profound and practical were examined by men of such spirituality and ability explains how a new direction and impetus was then given to the exposition of the Word of God, and reveals why those early days came to affect the general outlook and expectation of the whole church of God. Nor must we fail to note the part the Lord assigned to women. It was a sister in Christ, Miss Bessie Paget, who led A. N. Groves out of high church blindness and bondage into the liberty that is in Christ; it was a woman into whose heart God put it to convene in her house the important gatherings here considered.

Of course, as time went on these same mighty and precious subjects, and others, were discussed and taught in a thousand places; but we learn of no other spot than Powerscourt House where such a group of front-rank leaders met for several years to spend a week together on such themes. Some of them were under thirty, and none, as far as I know, had reached forty years. So they were not elderly. But they were devoted to Christ and His interests, and therefore the Spirit of truth could enlighten and use their trained minds. Nor could they have foreseen that God intended to exert through them a blessed influence upon the whole of His church, an influence still felt after more than a century, in spite of their later failures. This calls us to walk simply with God in humble response to present leading, fully persuaded that He is always doing far more than we can suppose. His way is perfect, and He makes our way perfect while we walk with Him (Ps. xviii. 30-32).

The meetings at Albury were likewise of men of learning and social standing, but they did not attain the wide influence of those at Powerscourt. This may have been in part because those former students accepted the view that this present age would end in 1847. This false conclusion was reached by following the "historical" school of prophetic interpretation, with its erroneous "year-day" basis of calculation. This scheme has led to many later calculations as to the end of the age which time has likewise falsified. Guinness's *Light for the Last Days* affords a conspicuous instance.

Was it this element that moved Lady Powerscourt (who attended at Albury) to call gatherings at her house which should be free from "historicism" and date fixing? The schools of interpretation which developed from these gatherings, though divergent in some particulars, have never fallen into the snare of fixing dates for future events.

(To be continued)

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN the time of Christ the military oath taken by the Roman soldier was termed the *sacramentum*. Now our Lord had distinctly forbidden His followers to take such an oath (Matt. v. 33-37; Jas. v. 12), from which we may feel sure that He did not appoint for them any *sacrament*. The term as applied to the ordinances appointed by Christ is objectionable by importing ideas not intended by the Lord.

The Roman Catholic church and some others have seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, penance, the mass, clerical orders, marriage, and extreme unction, of which only baptism and marriage are of Divine authority, and these are ordinances (things *ordained*), not sacraments. The mass has no true relation to the holy supper as instituted by Christ, but is of heathen derivation and nature, and the other four sacraments—confirmation, penance, orders, and extreme unction—are unknown to Holy Scripture.

Thus there are but two Christian ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper; marriage, though truly of Divine authority, being pre-Christian and for all mankind, not only for disciples of Christ. With baptism we dealt in a former paper.

These two ordinances were intended by Christ for perpetual observance by Christians throughout the period of His absence until His return. It was on the occasion when He instituted the Supper that He said: "I come again, and will receive you unto myself" (John xiv. 3), and Paul adds that by this ordinance we "proclaim the Lord's death *till He come*" (I Cor. xi. 26). The apostles, including Paul, practised both ordinances.

Fairly early in His ministry the Lord had spoken publicly of the necessity that men should eat His flesh and drink His blood if they would have eternal life (John vi. 51-58). This had no reference to the Supper, for

- (a) The eating and drinking in question were necessary for the sinful men to whom Christ was then speaking: the Supper was instituted much later, in private, for disciples. As the eating and drinking was needful at the time Christ was speaking it could not be dependent on the Supper, for this was not yet instituted and of it no one knew anything.
- (b) In any case, that eating and drinking was not of Christ's actual flesh and blood, or of anything else material. His hearers wrongly supposed the Lord to refer to some eating of His physical flesh, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (John vi. 52). But Christ replied that even could they do this it would be useless, for, said

He, "the flesh profiteth nothing" (ver. 63). Now the only flesh of which He or His hearers had spoken was His own physical flesh, so that His words declared that even the eating thereof would profit nothing.

It is falsely asserted that by priestly consecration the bread and the wine are changed into the veritable flesh and blood, soul and divinity of the Lord. But were this miracle a possibility it would be valueless, according to the above explicit statement of the Lord Himself. For the imparting of spiritual life to the spirit of man is a spiritual process, and can be effected only by a spiritual Agent and means, not by anything material: "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the *words* that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life." And so Peter said by the Holy Spirit that believers are "begotten again . . . through the *word* of God" (1 Pet. i. 23).

For preservation from the dangerous errors connected with the mass, that "fond thing vainly invented," it is important thus to know that John vi. does not refer to the Supper of the Lord, but to a purely spiritual reception by faith of Christ to be our spiritual life, by sincerely believing His words.

The Supper has two chief ends. It is a remembrance and a partaking.

It is a remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, even as He said at the institution, "this do in remembrance of Me" (Luke xxii. 19). Things present and visible press ceaselessly upon us and create a perpetual danger that we forget the past and the unseen. Hence Paul's exhortation to Timothy, "Remember Jesus Christ" (1 Tim. ii. 8). The Supper is a powerful external aid to this remembering of the Lord. On this account its frequent observance is a benefit, seeing that the influences occasioning forgetfulness operate constantly.

There is, however, no bondage as to the frequency of repetition or the day or hour for observance. At first believers broke bread every day (Acts ii. 46): "And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." Acts xx. 7, reads: "Upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed [dialogued] with them." It is only an assumption that those at Troas used to meet on the first day of every week to do so. It cannot be dogmatically asserted from the passage that they did this regularly on that day, and on that day only, or that all Christians everywhere did so, or only once a week. All that Luke distinctly affirms is that on *that* first day of the week they had gathered for that purpose.

The first passage cited justifies the ordinance on every day of the week, and therefore on any one of the days. The other passage encouraged its observance on the first of the week.

It was, however, not instituted on the first day of the week, and therefore in the absence of express precept believers are not limited to that day.

It was instituted in the evening and is accordingly termed a supper, and it ever seems most appropriate and congenial when observed in the evening. It was evening when saints gathered at Troas, for the room was lit with many lights. That it is a supper shows how invalid is the ritualists demand for early morning communion. As C. H. Spurgeon said, no one ever heard of a man taking his supper before his breakfast until these men invented the idea.

But Acts ii. 46 quoted speaks of observance "day by day," not specifying any part of the day; and in point of fact, on the occasion of Troas the actual breaking of the bread did not take place on the first day of the week or in the evening, but in the early hours of Monday; for Paul had discoursed till midnight, then came the death and resuscitation of Eutychus, and only thereafter was the ordinance observed.

These details imply liberty as to day and hour; which is in harmony with the non-legal genius of this age of spiritual liberty given to grown-up sons of God, as argued in the Galatian epistle. And it is of practical moment that this liberty should be preserved, for in periods of persecution such as the church of God has often known, knows still in places, and will know yet further, it is not possible to insist on a set time or day. Nor, as is manifest, can there be one special day or hour when only it is right for Christians to remember Christ.

Acts ii. 46 shows further that the holy ordinance was observed in private houses, for they were in the habit of "breaking bread at home," as well as daily. We know a region in Europe where the police had prohibited meetings of believers and they had not broken bread for about a year. Yet any "two or three" might have done so in their homes, with this scripture as warrant, and so have enjoyed the benefit of the ordinance. How wise, simple, and gracious are the Lord's measures for meeting the needs of His people.

The same passage shows that the first believers broke bread in connection with the ordinary family meals: "*breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness.*" The two phrases standing together are thereby distinguished, which shows that the former refers to the holy ordinance.

It was during the social meal connected with the passover feast that the Lord had introduced the new association of that bread and cup with His own person and work. Likewise does I Cor. xi. show that the believers at Corinth observed the Supper in connection with a social meal of the whole company. This was known as the *agape* or feast of love, and though it had led to abuses at Corinth the apostle does not repudiate the practice but regulates its observance.

It is thus clear that fasting as an indispensable preliminary

to communion has no warrant from the Word of God.

It is healthful that this picture rise before the mind. An ordinary house the place; a customary meal the occasion; the Supper quietly and easily conjoined therewith. No ecclesiastical building, no priest or functionary, no altar or sacrifice, no vestments or ornaments, as lights, incense, or crucifixes, no formality. The Supper observed in simplicity; the home dignified thereby, the ordinary meal sanctified and solemnized.

We have formerly written as follows:

“ If in the observance of the Lord’s Supper there be preserved the essential features of an eastern social meal, the guests gathered round the board, and the bread and the cup passing familiarly from hand to hand, it is all but impossible that the office of the Mass, with its dogma of transubstantiation, should be attached to the ordinance. For in such simple, artless, yet withal solemn, observance there is obviously no room for an elevated altar with worshippers kneeling before it, and a consecrating celebrant with gorgeous and symbolic vestments. The external simplicity protects the internal essence ”
(*Church Federation, A Study in Church Life and Order*, 24).

It has been taught of late, and in a quarter where one least expected and most regrets it, that because the Supper is a remembrance of Christ His absence is implied, not His presence. Those so teaching hold also that only such brethren as have attained spiritually to priestly capacity ought either to minister the word or administer the ordinance in Christian gatherings; but that after one of these has broken the bread and blessed the cup then Christ becomes spiritually present.

Spirituality of mind, priestly energy of a spiritual kind, is indeed greatly to be desired in all who serve God publicly in His church. Without it the service can be of little glory to Him or profit to His people. But the teaching above mentioned is scarcely distinguishable from the Lutheran doctrine of consubstantiation. This doctrine denies, indeed, that the bread and wine have by consecration ceased to be what they appear still to be, bread and wine, and have become what they do not appear to be, the person of Christ, which latter view is termed transubstantiation. But consubstantiation means that when a priest has consecrated the elements of the sacrament, then Christ is personally present in the elements of bread and wine, and the believing partaker does receive the literal, though invisible, body and blood of Christ, as well as the bread and wine.

Transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and the first view before mentioned have in common: (a) that the Lord is not present prior to the blessing of the elements; (b) that upon consecration He becomes present in some sense that before was not the case; (c) that only a limited class of men of a

priestly standing can effect this wondrous difference.

But against this is to be put the plain statement of the Lord that when any two or three disciples meet in His Name "there am I in the midst" (Matt. xviii. 19, 20). This is so completely independent of the breaking of bread that the promise stands in connection with prayer on any subject. Suppose therefore that disciples are met to pray concerning any matters, and that before parting they are moved in love to exercise their right and privilege to bread break in remembrance of Christ, it is clear that He cannot be brought into their midst by means of the ordinance, for He has been with them all the time according to this His promise.

There are godly souls here and there who feel it impossible to share in the Supper if leavened bread and fermented wine are used, and some will not receive to the Supper any who would use such elements elsewhere. They feel that, as in Israel leaven was a symbol of evil, it becomes so very wrong to use it in symbols of the sinless Lord as to necessitate refusal of fellowship in the Supper. In argument they seek to impose the blame for this breach of Christian fellowship upon the vast majority, because these will not banish the fermented elements, whereas in fact it is they who would impose their view upon the mass of Christians under penalty of withdrawal of their fellowship.

Personally we should be happy to have unleavened bread and glad to have unfermented wine. The latter is clearly within our Lord's descriptive term "this fruit of the vine." But we can by no means deem it of the Lord to force this as an indispensable condition of communion.

It does not seem certain that the principle of fermentation in liquors is scripturally the same as that of leaven in bread. We understand that authorities are not agreed as to whether in New Testament times passover wine was or was not of necessity unfermented. It is possible that the wine at the Lord's Supper in Corinth was intoxicating, for we read: "another is drunken" (I Cor. xi. 21). Yet the apostle did not command its banishment, though that would have prevented the abuse he condemns. Evidently he did not deem its presence to nullify the virtue or validity of the observance, though the abuse of it did so (ver. 20).

With all respect for the conscience of others we feel (a) that the insistence on this detail is at variance with that freedom from legal restrictions and details which characterizes the gospel age as contrasted with the age of law. This freedom is necessary under the conditions of the church of God. In the case in point it can be easily seen that unfermented grape juice is not, and never can be, available in many remote regions of the earth, in many severe climates, to many extremely poor people. To insist upon such wine would simply deprive multitudes of the Supper. This the gospel does not

do: it would be contrary to its essential spirit of love.

(b) We feel also that fellowship of heart, divinely generated by the Spirit of love, is too powerful and too precious to be set aside as to its outward manifestation by such a secondary consideration as the invisible quality of the elements.

(c) Seeing that the Lord graciously and blessedly grants His presence at the Supper where fermented elements are used, who are we, His poor servants, to absent ourselves or to refuse others on such a ground? Are we wiser or holier than He?

Yet for ourselves we approve the use of unfermented grape juice, though on practical grounds. Seeing that in many regions the abuse of intoxicants is so dreadful (as in England), we ourselves completely abstain from them so as to be able with sincerity and a good conscience to exhort and to encourage those who are injured thereby. It seems to us regrettable that many young people should first taste these temptations to sin at the feast that tells of redemption from sin and demands abstinence from sin.

We knew as a fact of a Sunday School Superintendent, formerly a drunkard, whose passion for liquor was revived at the Sunday evening communion service of his church, so that he went direct therefrom, drank to excess, and was found at a street crossing in a slum we knew well wanting to fight all and sundry.

We knew personally an esteemed and much used worker who was converted from a life of drunkenness. Shortly thereafter he attended the Supper of the Lord at a hall we know. As soon as the cup reached the end of the seat, he, at the other end, caught the smell, and the demon passion instantly rose in him in fury. He knew, as he told us, that were he to have put that cup to his lips he would have drunk it all and have rushed thence to get more. Falling upon his knees he cried inwardly for salvation until the cup passed him. We regret deeply to add that the brother in charge of the cup, learning afterwards how the case had been, said, "Oh, you are one of those teetotal fanatics." The babe in Christ gave the sweet but severe answer: "Dear brother, do not call me that: call me the 'weak brother,' and I will tell you how our Lord says you should treat me."

Were it not far better to remove the risk of such most deplorable happenings, even if they are happily infrequent.

When one brother refuses to break bread with those who would use fermented wine, and when another, at the opposite extreme, refuses to commune if the wine is unfermented, one can only deplore the state of soul that ranks such a detail higher than public fellowship with saints in the power of heavenly love. We are assured by happy experience through sixty years that the Lord makes Himself known to loving hearts whichever sort of bread and wine is used. Bitterness and contention for either one or the other is not of Him.

“ Let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may build up one another.” “ But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth ” (Rom. xiv. 19, 10, 21).

Others again agitate for individual cups instead of all drinking from one. It seems to us greatly to reduce the sense of fellowship, of joint participation. We read that at the institution of the ordinance Jesus “ took a cup, and having given thanks gave to them: and they *all* drank out of it,” where the last clause gives emphasis to the fact that they all drank out of one and the same cup (Mark xiv. 23). In I Cor. x. 14-22, where communion is the leading truth pressed, it is as much and as clearly one cup that is set forward as one loaf and one table. Consistency might demand many tables and many loaves.

It is a supposed gain in hygiene that is urged by introducers of this novelty. In the West this factor is negligible. But we have been at the Supper in lands where lepers partook, and sufferers from even worse diseases inherited from former evil living. In such cases older brethren lovingly request the sufferers to sit where they will be the last to partake. If there is a contentious person who still wishes to force this matter of individual cups upon a church, is not the suggestion of a leading medical man wise and simple, that the one demanding it should be provided with a separate cup for his own use !

The sixth chapter of John, as before noticed, does not refer to the Supper, and all eucharistic teaching and practice based upon the contrary supposition are false and mischievous. Yet the Supper when instituted later set forth in symbol the same essential truth as Christ had taught in words on that former occasion under the notion of eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

The truth in question is, that there must be by faith a true and actual inward appropriation of the Son of God for the purpose that He shall be the nourishment and strength of the inward spiritual life.

In finite beings activity involves wear and tear, and tends to exhaustion of energy. It has pleased the Creator to store in bread energy such as man needs for recuperation. When he makes bread his own inwardly by eating it, it becomes part of himself, whereupon the stored energy is liberated and becomes his energy, by which he lives and labours afresh.

It is thus in the spirit realm also of man's being. Through trespasses and sins this nature in man is devoid of divine

life, for these separate between God and man, and the sinner is thereby dead toward God.

Christ, by death for our sins and by resurrection life, is to the spiritual nature the bread of God come down from heaven to give life unto the world. To eat His flesh and to drink His blood means that one appropriates to one's own case and need the atoning sacrifice which Christ offered for the putting away of sin. He "bare our sins in His body on the tree" (I Pet. ii. 24): He shed His life-blood, He poured out His soul unto death, to discharge the appointed penalty of our sins.

To accept this sacrifice for one's personal salvation from sin and judgment is, as the figurative language expresses it, to eat His flesh and to drink His blood. This we do by believing His words on the subject, so appropriating them personally and receiving as our life Him of Whom the words speak.

We knew in India an Englishman of low life and violent temper, a drunkard, curser, wife-beater, and blasphemer. He had threatened to kill his wife if she read the Bible to the children. He was by religious profession Unitarian. Reading secretly in John vi. the words "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven" (ver. 51) the Spirit of truth caused his mind to move at last correctly. He said to himself: "I always allowed that Jesus was a good man; but if he was a good man I ought to believe what He says, for good men do not tell lies. So as He says He came down out of heaven I ought to believe it." As he said to us after: "I ate of that Bread." The immediate result was a simply brilliant manifestation that he had indeed received a new life and was a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Until one has thus received the Son of God he has no life in himself (John vi. 53); but, on the other hand, the Lord said: "he that eateth Me shall live because of Me" (ver. 57), that is, because of what I will become to him as the inward vital energy of his nature. For according to the quality of the bread so is the energy of the eater. Because Christ is nothing less than that eternal life itself, which was with the Father, and was presently manifested in this world, therefore it is the energy of that divine, eternal life which is liberated to work actively in the one who by faith receives Christ to be his indwelling life.

This exalted and encouraging truth is set forth symbolically in the Supper. For we not only look upon the bread and the cup—that would suffice to remind us that the Son of God loves us and gave Himself up to justice for us; and were no more than remembrance intended by the ordinance nothing more were needful than to look and to ponder. But we are to eat the bread, as well as to look upon it, which signifies that faith is to appropriate inwardly, for our inward invigoration, all that Christ is as the true life of the believer.

The frequent repetition of the ordinance reminds us that faith must be continually appropriating Christ, that He may be ever renewing our spirit for the ceaseless battle and service of the Christian course. He said not: He that once ate of Me shall live because of Me; but "he that *eateth* Me shall live because of Me."

The actual conscious experience of this renewing may be most blessedly known by the heart through faith as the bread is eaten and the cup drunk; for these actions are symbolic of the interior activity of faith in appropriating Christ afresh to meet the constantly recurring strain that life puts upon the spirit. When thus enjoyed, how very far is the feast from being a formality: then truly does the soul sit at the table of the Lord and feast upon Himself as its heavenly food.

Further. The eating of the bread is external and symbolic: the internal reality is the appropriating of the words of God by or concerning His Son. Hence it is harmonious with the ordinance, and helpful to faith, that ministry of the Word should accompany the observance.

This took place in connexion with the passover feast, to which the Supper was presently appended. It was presumed that the children would inquire the meaning of the solemnities, and the father was to give the necessary instruction (Ex. xii. 26, 27; xiii. 8, 14, 15). So also when the family of God meet at the heavenly festival, there are babes in Christ, and it is well that their fathers in God should instruct them. How otherwise shall they partake intelligently and with spiritual profit?

It took place at the time of the institution of the ordinance. John xiii-xvi is the record of the deep and full instruction the Lord gave to His followers as they were with Him at the table and immediately thereafter. He is still and evermore present to enlighten, reprove, encourage.

There was ministry at Corinth. It was when they "came together" that they observed the ordinance (I Cor. xi. 17): it was when they "came together" that "each one" had a psalm, a *teaching*, a *revelation*, a tongue, a *prophecy* (I Cor. xiv. 26, etc.).

It was so at Troas (Acts xx. 7). Both before the breaking of bread and after Paul occupied the time in instruction conveyed in the form of dialogue and conversation (*dialego*, *homileo*); that is, statements by himself and the answering of questions raised by others. The actual observance of the Supper, indeed, occupied but a short portion of the long hours of that memorable night, much the longer time being given to ministry of the truth. On the precedents cited it would be perfectly in order to observe the Supper during what we call a conversational Bible Reading, or conversely, that such should be the character of the "morning meeting."

All three instances show that consideration of the Word should be the most important feature of a gathering of saints, as being most honouring to God by giving the first place to hearing His voice, and being most profitable to us by building us up on our holy faith. Singing held very small place in the meetings of the early church. The Lord and the apostles sang a hymn that night, it being almost certainly the passover psalm (No. 118). Paul remarks that at Corinth psalms were used (I Cor. xiv. 26). There is no mention of singing throughout that long night at Troas.

When given in the power of the Spirit of truth, and received into the heart with faith and obedience, such ministry as occupies the heart with Christ will enable the soul most profitably to eat of the bread and drink of the cup, for it will aid that spiritual feeding upon Christ which is the reality that vitalizes the symbolic eating in the ordinance. And *all* opening of the Scripture does this, for Christ is the ultimate subject of *all* truth.

The broken bread and the poured out cup draw particular attention to the body and blood of Christ sacrificed for our sins. Yet Christ in His death is not the whole Christ presented to our hearts by God in His Word, nor does it meet our whole need. Therefore at that institution of the Supper the Lord gave instruction upon many other aspects of Himself and His work, as upon prayer, the person and coming ministry of His Spirit, and His own return and glory. Nor can it be supposed that the cross and passion of the Lord was the only topic that long night at Troas. To confine the mind to one theme alone is to impoverish the soul. The Spirit presents *all* truth as He sees needful.

There are those who formally reject the Supper of the Lord as being a mere external ceremony, not necessary or useful to the spiritually advanced. There are also such as neglect the ordinance, and still others who partake in a formal manner out of custom. These attitudes are all to be deplored and avoided, together with the false, superstitious, magical conceptions of the Romanist or other ritualist.

To the humble, reverent, believing soul there is a reality and virtue in the ordinance not to be foregone. There is also a corresponding solemnity not to be forgotten or abused.

Though there is no magical change of the elements into the person of Christ, as declared in transubstantiation, nor mystical conjoining of the two as in consubstantiation, yet, as God sees and declares, there is a real spiritual association of the two, so intimate and practical that he who eats and drinks of the symbols in a sinful state of heart and life is guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord (I Cor. xi. 27). It is as if he laid violent hands on that holy Person and wantonly shed His sacred blood.

One who partakes in this unholy spirit does not discern

that by partaking of this bread he is approaching to the body of the Lord and dealing therewith. He does not discern that body as connected with the bread. To his dulled apprehension this bread is no more than any other piece of bread.

Such partaking is not merely profitless but positively dangerous, as many in the church at Corinth had found, being dealt with by God in judgment. They dishonoured the Lord's body, and God in recompense chastened them in their bodies. "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep," that is, in premature death (I. Cor. xi. 30).

As was well known to the Corinthian Christians, the heathen world was interpenetrated with numerous secret religious societies, known as the Mysteries, because their proceedings were kept profoundly secret. Each society was presided over and devoted to one of the principal demon gods.

Upon a candidate being admitted to initiation into one of these orders he was immersed in water, as a token that he held himself cut off as by death to his old outside associations and now deemed the society his real sphere of life. Thereafter, should a conflict arise between the interests of his business, his home, his political, or other spheres, and the interests of the Order, his duty was to the Society at the expense of other claims.

Later in the initiatory rites he was caused to eat of food that had been dedicated to the god of the order, the bread of the god: and if after this act of communion with the god he proved false to his duties and the rights of the order he became liable to condign and perhaps extreme penalties, which were enforced severely.

The solemn declarations of Paul in this chapter (I Cor. xi) were calculated to make these former heathen to feel that the true and living God was similarly jealous for His just demand for holiness and faithfulness in His people.

That great and holy God had in wondrous love given up to death His own beloved Son for the salvation of sinners, that He might become to them through faith the Bread of Life, the means of holiness and of communion with God. They who had been baptized into a life of association with that Son risen again from the dead, and who had thereupon eaten of that bread of God, must act consistently with this profession and high privilege, and to desecrate the sacred symbols of these holy realities, to prove false to their profession of fellowship with their holy Redeemer, was not to be tolerated by their God and Father.

By so much as the divine reality is honourable is the symbol thereof sacred. A national flag stands forth as the symbol of the empire, and to insult it is to outrage the empire. He who partakes with faith of the true Bread is profited by the symbol thereof: he who reaches not the reality finds the

symbol empty: he who by evil ways dishonours the Lord whose name he bears desecrates the symbol of His body, if he dare to handle it while in that moral condition.

Wherefore "let a man prove himself, and so [in this state of self-examination and purging], let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (I Cor. xi. 28). Oh, how does this word rebuke the careless, unprepared state of heart in which some come to the Feast. Giving no real care to be present in good time to begin the hour of worship; suffering the mind to roam over needless or even vain topics of talk as they come; indifferent as to whether a brother or sister has rightly somewhat against them—is it any wonder if these enjoy not the Supper or even are injured by partaking?

But it says not of an individual: "Let his *brethren* examine him and so let him *not* eat," but let each examine himself so as to become fit to eat. It is only in extreme and known cases of moral wickedness that the church is commanded to "put away the wicked man from among" themselves (I Cor. v. 13). Nor is it then merely a question of "putting away from the table," as the phrase runs, though this is included. Such exclusion is to be from all association, private as well as public.

The self-proving is to be personal, and with a view to partaking. The heart of Christ still desires earnestly to commune with our hearts. He is the same as when He said: "With [intense] desire I have desired to eat this passover with you" (Luke xxii. 15). But our heart can only go forth to His heart, and know His nearness and preciousness, as far as it is holy as His heart is holy.

To the heart that is set on holiness He can reveal His heart, and at His Supper is one place where this is blessedly possible. The very symbols of His person aid us in the remembrance of Himself and His sacrifice of love, so provoking our faith and love to fuller, more satisfying, inward appropriation of Himself as our life.

Let us give heed as He says "This do in remembrance of Me," and in that spirit of unreserved dedication to Him which we once set forth in our baptism in His name, let us fulfil this His dying request. That He appointed only two ordinances is the more reason that His followers should hold both to be sacred, joyful obligations.

It will be sorrowful to meet Him at last and to have to own that we refused, or neglected, or delayed to do His will. Well may we then "shrink in shame from Him at His presence" (I John ii. 28; see Darby, Alford, etc.). But it will be to the joy of His heart and ours, both now and then, to carry out faithfully all His good, well-pleasing, and perfect will.

The fact that all gathered eat of one bread and drink of one cup is a confession by each that he is in communion with

all the rest: "we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread" (I Cor. x. 17). A believer who in heart is at variance with and estranged from any other must of necessity act hypocritically if he eat. By the symbol he testifies to unity with that other, whereas spiritual unity has been interrupted. Oh, that each such would heed his Lord's words in Matthew v. 23, 24: "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." It were wiser, very far better, to refrain from eating the bread until all bitterness and variance were purged from the heart. We have the most vivid recollections of a gathering in south-eastern Europe when eighteen believers met, seventeen of them at serious enmity with the one and he with them all. They had wisely, though sadly, not held the Supper for six months. This morning they had met in the power of solemn truth that had been spoken to them for some weeks; there was frank and true confession by every person present; they one after another shook hands with the one brother in question; and then the holy feast was held, and perhaps we may never again be privileged to be at a season when so much grace was experienced in so short an hour. God abhors unreality and all hypocritical formality; but oh, how blessedly do hearts feel bound together in holy love as they join sincerely in this ordinance of love and fellowship. An instance is seen in the lines that close this paper.

One thought more. It is written for our admonition that "when the hour was come, He sat down, and the apostles with Him" (Luke xxii. 14). No one of them was late! Neither would any saint today be late unavoidably were the Lord expected in visible presence. Now to faith He is as really present as if He were visibly so. Therefore in this matter of punctuality, and of all behaviour at the Supper, let us be as reverent as if He were to be visibly before our eyes, remembering that we at least are visible to His eye. Being in this spirit we shall find that in His presence there is indeed fulness of joy, and the joyful heart will praise Him with joyful lips, and thus will be served the high and holy, and all-inclusive end of all worship, of all life.

Lines written by Miss Paget when her sisters and friends wished her to leave Barnstaple, November 1857, to reside in Exeter.

I cannot now return to thee,
I cannot leave my rest;
For here God's children comfort me,
And here I find I'm blest.
We worship not 'neath fretted dome,
Or organ's feeling sound,

Nor where the dim light streams athwart
The long aisle's sculptured round;
But simply, as of old they came,
According to the Word
They met in Jesus' sacred Name,
And called upon the Lord.
No priests adorned with priestly pride,
No altar railed around,
No multitude of mixed race
Are meeting on the ground;
But worshippers sincere are there,
And there the wine and bread,
Mysterious emblems of their Lord
Who for them groaned and bled.
Mysterious ! for by faith we look
Beyond the outward sign
To Him, who now will come again
In glory all divine;
To Him, Who said, Take this and eat,
Drink and remember Me—
We do it, Lord, for thy dear sake,
And long thy face to see:
We do it in sweet fellowship,
Communion with each other;
Not as a stranger alien host,
But brother now with brother.
Then, loved one, call me not away
From this dear chosen band;
I've much to learn, here let me stay,
That I may understand
More perfectly the will of God,
The love of God to me,
That love which changed to sunny calm
Life's dark and troubled sea;
That love which drew me nearer Him,
My portion and my stay,
My port in storms,
My light in clouds,
My Lord, my life, my way !

TALKATIVENESS

“ We exhort you, brethren . . . that ye be ambitious to be quiet ”
(I Thess. iv. 11).

TALKATIVENESS is utterly ruinous to deep spirituality. The very life of our spirit passes out in our speech, and hence all superfluous talk is a waste of the vital forces of the heart. In fruit growing it often happens that excessive blossoming prevents a good crop, and often prevents fruit altogether, and by so much loquacity the soul runs wild in word bloom, and bears no fruit. I am not speaking of sinners, nor of legitimate testimony for Jesus, but of that incessant loquacity of nominally spiritual persons—of the professors of purifying grace. It is one of the greatest hindrances to deep, solid union with God. Notice how people will tell the same thing over and over; how insignificant trifles are magnified by a world of words; how things that should be buried are dragged out into gossip; how a worthless non-essential is argued and disputed over; how the solemn, deep things of the Holy Spirit are rattled over in a light manner—until one who has the real baptism of divine silence in his heart, feels he must unceremoniously tear himself away to some lonely room or forest, where he can gather up the fragments of his mind, and rest in God.

Not only do we need cleansing from sin, but our natural human spirit needs a radical death to its own noise and activity and wordiness.

See the evil effects of so much talk.

First, it dissipates the spiritual power. The thought and feeling of the soul are like powder and steam—the more they are condensed, the greater their power. The steam that if properly compressed will drive a train at sixty miles an hour, if allowed too much expanse would not move it an inch: and so the true action of the heart, if expressed in a few Holy Spirit selected words, will sink into the mind to remain for ever, but if dissipated in any rambling conversation, is likely to be of no profit.

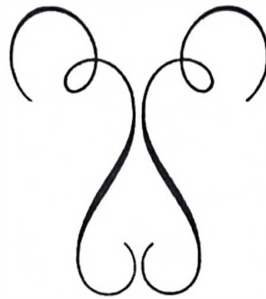
Second, it is waste of time. If the hours spent in useless conversation were spent in secret prayer or deep reading, we should soon reach a region of spiritual life and divine peace beyond our present dreams.

Third, loquacity inevitably leads to saying unwise, or unpleasant, or unprofitable things. In religious conversation we soon churn up all the cream our souls have in them, and the rest of our talk is all pale skim milk, until we get alone with God, and feed on His green pasture until the cream rises again. The Holy Spirit warns us that “ in the multitude of words there wanteth not transgression ” (Prov. x. 19). It is

impossible for even the best of saints to talk beyond a certain point without saying something unkind, or severe, or foolish, or erroneous.

We must settle this personally. If others are noisy and talkative I must determine to live in constant quietness and humility of heart; I must guard my speech as a sentinel does a fortress, and, with all respect for others, I must many a time cease from conversation or withdraw from company to enter into deep communion with my precious Lord. The cure for loquacity must be from within; sometimes by an interior furnace of suffering that burns out the excessive effervescence of the mind, or by an overmastering revelation to the soul of the awful majesties of God and eternity, which puts an everlasting hush upon the natural faculties. To walk in the Spirit we must avoid talking for talk's sake, or merely to entertain. To speak effectively we must speak in God's appointed time and in harmony with the indwelling Holy Spirit. "He that spareth his words hath knowledge: and he that is of a cool spirit is a man of understanding" (Prov. xvii. 27: Eccles. v. 2, 3).

(ANON.)



"If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples."

—JOHN 8 : 31.

THE DISCIPLE

VOL. 1, No. 3.

JANUARY, 1954

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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.

*“The opening of Thy words
giveth Light”*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

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)

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 gavest 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 beganst 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.

*Copies of the foregoing article, " Affirmation,"
can be had free from :*

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THE DISCIPLE

VOL. 1, No. 4.

APRIL, 1954

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*“ The opening of Thy words
giveth Light ”*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

MY SOUL IS LAID IN IRON

*My soul is laid in iron,
My feet are in the stocks;
My life is in that prison-house
Which only God unlocks.
Here in the dark I languish,
I fret and inly moan:
My heart, bereft of comforters,
Sits with its grief alone.*

*Sits with its grief exquisite,
Unutterable, dumb;
Or labours like a woman must
On whom her pangs are come.
I am in pain, and labour
In travail to bring forth
A Jabez or a Benjamin,
Whom sorrow brings to birth.*

*I am with child of sorrow,
And always bear about
The dying of the Son of Man
Who pours His sorrows out,
As once He poured His life-blood
Upon the cursed tree:
Yea, Christ still travails in His own,
And travaileth in me.*

*For I have come to Marah,
And moan on Marah's brink.
My God, the cup of bitterness
Thou giv'st me, help me drink.
Show me the Tree, and on it
One with pierc'd hands and feet,
The sight of Whom alone can make
Life's bitterest waters sweet.*

*And keep me in Thy prison,
Till I can kiss the hands
That laid this heavy yoke on me
And bound me with these bands.
Let me not fret nor murmur,
Nor struggle to be free,
Until my word comes, and Thy will
Turns my captivity.*

R. REEVE

GLORIFICATION
An Address by
DR. A. T. PIERSON

at
BETHESDA CHAPEL, BRISTOL
on
August 17th, 1900

Edited from a verbatim report

I HOPE I shall be followed by your special prayers tonight. I confess to a feeling of great shrinking from touching on this subject, feeling very deeply my own dependence upon the Spirit's teaching for grace to deal with so great a theme.

After the Spirit of God has led our minds to embrace the argument of this epistle, to see that all men are under condemnation, but that God has provided a marvellous righteousness which is offered to all and put upon all who believe—and then how He has provided for sanctification, conformity to Himself in actual character—we come now to a glimpse of the consummation of all things.

Our thoughts will naturally be limited to the passage before us, Rom. viii. 16-39.

This is a peculiar treatment of the subject of the glorification of the believer. In one sense it is not a full treatment of it, which is found perhaps more completely in other parts of the Word, but to my own mind it has this choiceness, that it presents the subject in connection with the foretaste we find in the present life of the glory that shall be revealed. In the words of the old hymn,

“The men of grace have found
Glory begun below.”

It is a very blessed thing that the child of God gets in this world a few crumbs of the full loaf that he is to have hereafter, and drops of the chalice that he is to drink for ever. So there are very few of the things of heaven, that will be supplied abundantly to the child of God, that we have not tasted in our experience here. In what then lies the difference? It is rather a difference of quantity than of quality! We shall rejoice in the worship of God; do we not find joy in the worship here? We shall there be united in fellowship with saints; do we find no joy in that now? We shall find ecstasy in obedience to Him; do we not find that ecstasy already? In glory we shall be in perfect accord with His will; do we know nothing of surrender to His will now? In heaven, not a heart but will praise Him; and are not our hearts swelling with praises now? We shall see the Lord Jesus face to face, which we only can do then, but have we

not even here some revelation of Him ? So you get one beauty in this passage, a glimpse of the glory that shall be revealed given in indications that we possess already a present foretaste and forecast of that home.

Let us see how the passage opens. The first suggestion of glory that is found in this chapter is in verses 16 and 17: "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (four of the most remarkable words in the passage; we see the meaning of them, or get some glimpse of it further on); "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."

Notice that word "together." What is the impression left upon our mind by this thought? May I reverently say, that what is His is ours! What is His is ours! For further amplification of this thought, we need only look at part of *II Corinthians*, the whole of *Ephesians*, and the whole of *Colossians*, and then look at the last chapters of *Revelation*.

The apostle here has no more than mentioned this common glory of the saints and the Lord Jesus when he says that, by contrast, our sufferings for Christ, the persecution involved, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." It is co-suffering, for he said in the previous verse, "If so be that we suffer with Him"; these things suffered for His sake and with Him, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

And here already is the first thought that comes to us in this precious passage, the incomparable glory that awaits the child of God: that all the sufferings that he endured in this present time, however heavy, however multiplied, however distressing to the flesh, however prolonged, are not worthy to be put for a single instant in comparison with the glory. This we shall refer to by and by, as the one climax thought that we shall take up before we close.

Upon this line of thought, the first thing I want to ask is a question. What is glory? How can we define it? I can no more define glory than I can define light. Men have tried to define light, but they cannot. Try to define the sun, to give a notion of what the sun is, to any human being who has never seen it, to a man totally blind, or to one born in, and who has always lived in, some of those mines on the Continent where people are born and live and die, and never see the light of day above them—try to define the sun to an inhabitant of one of these mines, who is always living down in the bowels of the earth, and you cannot. So glory is undefinable. There is no one word in the Bible that is more undefinable than glory.

But we can get some conception of what glory is, as the inheritance of the children of God. It seems a combination of at least three elements:

(a) Spiritual perfection in holiness.

- (b) Physical perfection, the perfection of the body in its redemption.
- (c) Perfection in the home in which the child of God dwells; and of course this is supremely dependent upon fellowship with God, and the presence of God with him in the glory.

And we come at once to a disclosure in this passage of the perfection, may I call it, of the children of God. I do not think anybody ever understood these words, and I do not believe they ever will be understood in this dispensation. Remarkable words they are, never has there been altogether an explanation of them, and there never shall be: "The earnest expectation of creation waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

When man sinned the whole earth felt the effect of the Fall. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee." Someone has beautifully said that "when our Lord went to the cross, He wore a crown of thorns, as if to indicate, even by the crown on His brow, that the earth should share in Redemption."

Here we read of the whole creation "groaning and travailing in pain together." Somebody has said, that all birds sing in the minor key, that the surges of the sea beat on the beach in a minor strain, and the wind howls in a minor key, as though there was something about the very sounds of creation that is mournful, showing that it is "groaning and travailing in pain together."

But there is one thing that is very definite in this passage, and that is the *redemption of our body*. In the whole New Testament, we have but one full explanation of what the resurrection of the body is, and that is in I Cor. xv. What marvellous language that is! Look at the contrasts in it. Let us turn to it, although it is outside the immediate limits of the passage we are considering. How marvellous is this argument! verses 42-49: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." There again we have some words that cannot be translated. "It is sown a natural body"; that means a soul body, suitable for the residence of the soul. "It is raised a spiritual body," that is a material body, suitable for the residence of the spirit.*

* The word "material" is to be noted. It imports correctly that the resurrection body will be actual, composed of real substance, a created thing. Such was the body of Christ after resurrection. Hence He could eat real material food, and His body bore the wound marks inflicted on His person. Only that body is of much finer texture than the

It is a mystery that the body sown in corruption should be raised in incorruption, that the body sown in dishonour should be raised in honour, that the body sown in weakness should be raised in power, that the body sown as a soul-body, the body that the soul inhabits, and which is especially adapted as the residence of the soul, is to be raised as adapted for the residence of the spirit.

For the five senses we have now, for all we know, we may have fifty then, and greatly enlarged facilities and faculties. Who can tell what the body of the saint will be in glory ! “ As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly ”; and the contrast between the body of our present humiliation, and the body of our future glory, is so great that no language can express it.

Now may I simply call your attention to the things in Romans viii which seem to be the prominent thoughts of the Spirit of God, without attempting to go into the various verses through this whole passage.

Seven things have been impressed on my mind, after much study, in this chapter viii, and as designed by the Spirit to occupy our thoughts as connected with the glory of the children of God in the future life.

- (1) Full sonship, with all that it implies.
- (2) Heirship, and the actual reception and enjoyment of the inheritance.
- (3) The liberty of the sons of God ; full and absolute emancipation.
- (4) A harmony that is absolute with all the will of God, and with all the creation of God.
- (5) Full and complete conformity to the image of Jesus Christ.
- (6) Final and absolute victory over all foes.
- (7) Eternal and inseparable unity with God.

Let us look at these seven things.

1. *Full sonship*, sonship reaching its maturity, sonship reaching the fulness of its conscious relationship to God, and the fulness of its enjoyment of the filial relationship to God, and the fulness of the Father's presence and love. You know how the word “ adoption ” is used in our English translation. Perhaps “ sonship ” is a word that more perfectly expresses the idea of the original. But I want to call your attention just now to some suggestions that have been made from time to time about this word “ adoption.” This is an illustration perhaps more than an interpretation. It has been said that the Latin word “ adoptio ” gives us a very fine illustration of what is included in the redemption of the body. You know that “ adoptio ” in the Latin language refers to the recognition

grosser material soul-body in which the soul, the man, now dwells. The same quality obtains in the spirit body of angels. (L.)

of a son by the Romans. When the son was grown up and celebrated his majority, we are told that the father, who might be, for example, a patrician, took his son to the Forum, and in the presence of the citizens of Rome, declared him to be his son, and heir to his estates. Then the "toga prae texta," or the costume of the child, was taken off, and the "toga virilis" was put upon him, in the presence of the Roman citizens. This was the recognition, the declaration of the son's relationship to the father, and of his having attained his majority.

I do not for a moment suggest this as an interpretation of the passage, but may we not use it as an illustration of the child of God coming to his majority, being recognized before the very universe of God, dropping the body of humiliation which he has worn in this world, and taking upon him the body of his glory, made like unto that of his blessed Master? Thus in the presence of the universe he comes to the full possession of his inheritance as a son of God, and is recognized by God as having come to full majority, and as having entered upon the fulness of privilege and blessing. The whole creation is waiting for the day of the manifestation of the sons of God, and for the clothing of the redeemed man with a body made like unto the glorious body of Jesus. Our glory in the future will include the abundant entrance upon the full privileges of sonship in the Father's house and in the Father's presence.

2. *Heirship*. Now take the second particular, Heirship. We are heirs presumptive, but we have not entered upon our whole inheritance. The most we have is a forecast of that full glory and blessing; somewhat as when a minor—a child, who has an estate in prospect according to the will of the father, but to whom the full enjoyment of the estate is not come—receives from the administrator of the estate the revenue of it, whereby he is fed, clothed, educated, and perhaps enjoys foreign travel to widen the horizon of his mind. He has not yet the inheritance.

It is just so with the child of God; he is yet in his minority; the time for his entrance upon his full inheritance is not come. But the Father does not leave us wretched through the years of this present life; communion with Jesus Christ, obedience to God and fellowship with Him, form a kind of revenue from that estate, like the interest of some vast sum, the possession of which the child has not yet actually gained.

What a wonderful category it is that Paul gives us again in I Cor. iii. I think it is the only case in the New Testament of an inventory of the possessions of a child of God: "all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." There is the inventory of the child of God's possessions, and can you add anything to that inventory?

3. *Liberty*. Look at the liberty of the sons of God. What is

liberty? Liberty is one of the greatest words in any language, and absolute liberty is the inheritance of the children of God. The last bond broken, the last fetter gone, the last unholy restriction removed, the last hindrance vanished to absolute freedom and absolute enjoyment for evermore. What is freedom? Did you ever hear John McNeil's story of the eagle? He found a young eagle on the plain, wounded; he brought it home, and fed and cared for it till it was healed and grew large and strong. It was kept in the hen-house in the corner of the back-yard. At last he thought he would give the eagle its liberty, and he let it into the yard. The great awkward bird had never stretched its wings, and had no conception of what use to make of them. By and by he set it on the coping of the wall, and as the sun rose over the horizon, and the eagle felt its beams fall upon its noble head, one wing began to stretch out, and then the other wing, and presently it soared off toward the sun, and was lost to sight. Then said John McNeil "You are an eagle in a hen-house—come out!" Liberty is the difference between the hen-house and soaring in the air, between bondage and liberty.

How little we know of what it will be to drop all restraint, to get out from all confined imaginations or feelings, and absolutely soar above, with the free and full exercise of all the powers of body and mind; with no sense of restraint or heaviness whatever, no tiring, no faintness, exertion without exhaustion.

All this, and a great deal more is included in liberty. And we shall never know what the liberty of the sons of God is, until that glory is revealed.

4. *Harmony.* Harmony with the will of God. "All things work together for good to them that love God." I like to let my thoughts go out beyond the limit. Have you ever studied the science of Astronomy? Have you noticed what a system this is of which the planetary bodies form a part? How marvellous these infinite distances, proportions, and dimensions!

And it is a perfect system, everything in its place. Most delicate is the balance of all these bodies, no scale was ever poised so skilfully, as God's universe is poised. All these planets and stars are suspended on nothing, but are bound by a controlling power, and if one force worked in the slightest degree too strongly, it would over-balance the others, and there would be chaos and confusion in the universe of God.

Every satellite moves round its planet, every planet round the sun; the smallest satellite has its orbit, and all are regulated by God. And this passage suggests to my mind that as soon as you believe in Jesus (by loving obedience), and come into God's orbit, all things in the universe are controlled for your good. As long as you are a sinner disobedient

against God, the whole universe is your enemy, you are out of your orbit, with no centre of motion (for that is found only in God), and everything is controlled to your disturbance and destruction. But the moment you are in Christ, you get into a Divinely created orbit, and begin to move according to the will of God, and nothing can disturb or destroy you, all moves for your good. Now glorification comprises this thing, the *perfection of harmony*.

There are in this world many things and circles that are contrary things, and do not move in our orbit with undeviating regularity and continuous obedience; and we often find these contrary forces too strong for us, and that they lead us away from God, into collision with the will of God. What a blessed thing it is not to have the bias of our hearts contrary to Him, not a motion of our will that is in the slightest degree in collision with the will of God.

By Jesus Christ it was said, "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do Thy will" (Psalm xl. 8). The infinite delight of the Lord Jesus Christ was doing the Father's will, and never once in all the experience of His earthly course do we find Him varying in the slightest degree from the path of perfect obedience. Now what will it be to be in such harmony with the will of God that there will never be the slightest variation in our devotion of soul or lack of absolute surrender to the will of God, and absolute delight in it?

5. *Conformity*. Notice still more. There will be perfect conformity to the image of His Son. "For whom He did foreknow He also did fore-ordain to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren." Note the word "foreordain." Perhaps I may be wrong, but it strikes me that in Ephesians i there is a distinction between these two words, "chosen," and "foreordained"; that one refers to God's choice in the eternal past, and the other refers to the eternal destiny which is before us. At least these words convey to my mind the contrast between the two eternities, and that God's plan for my salvation and glorification reaches from the eternal past to the eternal future. When did He choose us? in the eternal past. For what did He choose us? for an eternal future and the end of His foreordination is perfect conformity to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren.

We consider the meekness and humility and lowliness of mind and quiet spirit and undeviating obedience of our blessed Lord. We sit before the image of Him in the Gospels, and we are entranced by the unselfishness, by the majesty, by the beauty of temper, by the undeviating regularity of His submission to the Father's will, by the perfection which bursts upon us in the Scriptures. What will it be to have similar conformity to God ourselves? The beauty of our God being upon us, so that through the entire structure of our

being there runs a likeness to the Lord Jesus, so that He is "the Firstborn among many brethren." That is another element in the absolute perfection of the glorification of the saints.

6. *Victory.* Look now at the question of victory. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Dr. A. J. Gordon used to say, "How can any object be more than conquered?" That is a very difficult question to answer. He used to answer it somewhat like this: "When two armies come into collision, and one is defeated, that is victory; but when the army that is defeated is annihilated, so that it can never appear on the field of battle again, that is more than conquest."

It seems to me the idea of being more than victorious includes even more than this. In the Lord Jesus, "through Him that loved us," we are "more than conquerors," for, in the first place, we are not only conquerors over all our foes, there is not only the final annihilation of all our foes, but there is the assurance of this complete victory in advance of the conflict; so that we have no fear of the enemy or of the conflict, if abiding in the Lord Jesus.

Not only so, but, my brethren, we conquer without fighting, for our blessed Lord has done the fighting for us. He met our worst foe, Satan, and overcame him. He met death and overcame death. He met sin and overcame sin. And every conquest was a conquest of an unique character, and you and I as followers of the Lord Jesus are involved in the blessedness of this victory. And it is all ours without our own fighting, for our Captain has won the battle, and we are "more than conquerors through Him that loved us"; and that victory is an everlasting victory, and an absolute victory.*

7. *Inseparable Union.* And what shall I say about the inseparable union? I have reserved this for the closing thought, and I will be careful what I say. You may not agree with my comments on it, but I will give you my judgment as the Lord has taught me. I want you to look closely at the closing verses of this chapter. You notice here that in the first part of the latter half (ver. 35) he enumerates *seven* things, and in the second part (vv. 38, 39) *ten*.

There is one other case in which this is seen, in Hebrews xii: "Ye are *not* come" is mentioned seven times in connection with seven different things: "Ye *are* come" with ten things. It was the number of completeness, seven, and the other number of completeness, ten.

So he enumerates here, "Shall tribulation, or distress, etc." Have you ever noticed a kind of progress in thought

* The preacher was here presenting the ideal as it is for us in Christ. He knew quite well that Ephesians vi enters our experience. (L.)

here? the words seem to grow in emphasis as you proceed. "Tribulation" reaching the extreme of "distress"; "persecution," one of the most distressing forms of tribulation; "famine," coming in the wake of persecution, "or nakedness or peril," peril of life; "or sword," the drawn sword itself. There seems to be a progress of thought from beginning to end. And then the thought, "for Thy sake we are killed all the day long," may surely indicate that these sufferings of the children of God (sometimes running through the whole period of their mortal life, as with many of the children of God, especially in New Testament times, from the time they embraced the Lord Jesus to their martyrdom) was one experience all their days of suffering for Jesus Christ.

Notice the second enumeration, "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels"—here you ascend to the angelic realms; "nor principalities, nor powers"—here you descend to the infernal realms; "nor things present," this takes in all our present experience; "nor things to come," this takes in all our future experience, anything that pertains to this life; "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Nothing that pertains to death or to life, nothing that pertains to the angelic realms, nothing that pertains to the infernal realms, nothing that comes within the limit of our present experience, nothing that can possibly enter into the future of our experience—you see the kind of circumference that the apostle passes round, even all conceivable causes that might separate, and says they can never do so.

Thus we have seen that this passage calls our attention to the fact of sonship and its privileges, to heirship and liberty, to perfect harmony with God, perfect conformity to the image of His dear Son, absolute victory over all foes; but all this would be impossible if it were not for the eternal union with God.

Suppose anything could break up this union, and separate us from God, in the eternal future that stands before the children of God, then all these blessings would become impossible blessings, because of the possibility of their falling through. So the climax of the whole thought is found in this, that *all these blessings of the child of God, are unchangeable like Himself*. The chapter begins with "no condemnation," and ends with "no separation." "No condemnation"—sin and guilt put away, the believer justified and accepted; "No separation" gives the climax to the whole thought, and the beauty of the whole conception; and thus that whole enumeration of the future of the child of God is eternal and unchangeable.

"In Thy presence is fulness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). There could be no "fulness of joy" if there were no "pleasures for ever-

more." The best of your joys on earth lacks fulness, because it is not permanent. The love of wife and children, however continuous and satisfying for the time, has always this poignancy and anxiety connected with it, that death may come at any moment and take away the object of our love. The best of our earthly blessings are always tainted with the suspicion that they will be disturbed. But the pleasures at the right hand of God, the glory of the child of God is abiding in its eternity and immutability, like God Himself.

Now, beloved, I want you to notice another thing, which I have left for the last, and that is, that all this depends upon your union with Jesus Christ. Will you look back again to verse 17 and notice the expression here, "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." And what a beautiful expression in verse 39, "nor height, nor depth, nor any other creation, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." "No separation," in Christ Jesus our Lord. And it will be quite a study to notice in the last part of the chapter the prepositions that are used in connexion with our Lord, the prepositions and conjunctions, beginning with the expression "with Christ" in verse 17; and all the way through, preposition after preposition is connected with the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, for His disciples, and in relation to His disciples, until we come in verse 39 to the last of these prepositions, "in Christ Jesus." The mediatorial position of the Lord Jesus Christ is one of the greatest fundamental truths of the whole gospel.

The other night in speaking with regard to our access to God, I said that in approaching God there is no hindering medium between us and God, because we are *in Him* in access. I think I spoke carelessly, because it would be very easily misunderstood. Two things pertain to a medium. A medium may be an aid, or a hindrance; it may prevent or promote. For example: Take the light of the sun; clouds are a hindering medium, hindering the light; the atmosphere is a helping medium promoting its transmission. All I designed to say was, that we are never to think that the Lord Jesus stands between us and God, as though we had to pass by Christ to reach God. He is a *promoting* medium, not a preventing; we come *by* Him to the Father, we have access *by* Him.

The mediatorial position of the Lord Jesus Christ runs through the whole of Scripture and is very abundantly expressed in Romans viii. *With* Him we suffer, and *with* Him we are glorified; *in* Him we have salvation, and *through* Him we have access. And all the things that are given to the child of God in this life, and the life to come, in the future of glory, and the future ecstasies of that glory, are in Jesus Christ our Lord, Who is the medium of our access to God and the medium of God's access to us.

And here is the glory of redemption; we suffer with Him, and we are glorified together with Him. He is the Head of the body, and because the Head is crowned, the body is honoured, for you cannot imagine Christ seated upon the throne except as His body accompanies its Head, in His enthronization. And you cannot imagine Christ as the Bridegroom, without the Bride sharing with Him the place of honour and glory.

And so beloved, how unspeakable is the truth of God, and how unspeakable the future prospect of the child of God.

And if there be anyone here who has not found Christ as a personal Saviour, I want tonight, in the name of Jesus Christ, that you should enter at once into this relation of holy amity, of holy surrender; that you should take Jesus Christ to be your Saviour, that the guilt of your condemnation may be lifted and borne away by His precious atonement; that you may enter upon a justified standing and state, and that you may know what it is to have the Spirit working in you, gradually and rapidly conforming you to the image of God's dear Son. And in all this is involved future glory, with the present forecasts and foretastes of this glory, that may be imparted to you through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Note. It was my privilege to hear the last three of these four Addresses. It were well if much more of such expository preaching were available today.

During these three addresses the Preacher suggested fourteen renderings different from the A.V. Every one of these is in the R.V. This was the more noticeable in that he sometimes avowed dislike to the R.V.

(L.)

AN IMPORTANT TEXT

WAKE OR SLEEP

For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. I Thess. v. 10

THE words "wake or sleep" are understood differently. "Cocceius includes (1) the alternate states of the body in this life; (2) life and death; (3) and principally, spiritual slumber and its opposite. Whitby's restriction of the words to the first of these senses (*natural sleeping or waking*) was preferred also by Musculus, Aretius, Cajetan as cited by Estius, and has been allowed by Calvin, Bengel, Gill, Pelt. I agree with Alford in regarding this sense as 'trifling,' but not in thinking the third sense as any better worth mentioning even as a possibility" (John Lillie, D.D., *Lectures on the Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 309).

Yet the third sense is strongly maintained by some, as part of the argument in support of the view that rising in the first resurrection, and sharing with the Lord the sovereignty of the Millennial kingdom, is not at all dependent upon the moral condition of the believer but is wholly a gift of unconditional Divine grace. The words are held to mean that this high privilege is assured to every believer of this age whether he live in spiritual wakefulness or spiritual sleep. The following is a careful and temperate statement of this view.

The discussion turns chiefly upon the meaning of *gregoreō*. I maintain that it means in verse 10 what it means throughout the rest of that chapter and throughout the rest of the N.T., viz. to be "spiritually wakeful" and not to be "physically alive." Many scholars, such as A. T. Robertson, Abbot-Smith, Lightfoot, and Alford hold that it means to be "physically alive." My reasons for believing *gregoreō* in I Thess. v. 10 means to be spiritually wakeful are these:

1. In the other twenty-two instances of the use of *gregoreō* in the N.T. it never once means "to be alive"; but in the majority of instances "to be spiritually wakeful," and in the few others "to be or keep literally awake" in contrast to literal, physical sleep.
2. In verse 6 of I Thess. v *gregoreō* unquestionably means "to be spiritually wakeful." To translate there "to be alive" would be to make nonsense of the whole passage. And therefore it is extremely unlikely that Paul in almost

the very same breath would use the word in a sense not only different from verse 6, but from the whole of the rest of the N.T.; and so risk the Thessalonians understanding the word in its normal sense, when according to you and others he wished them suddenly to understand it quite differently.

3. The unlikelihood is further much increased when we observe that the word Paul uses for sleep, as the opposite to *gregoreö*, is not the word he uses in the previous chapter for sleep in the sense of death. It is *katheudö* not *koimaomai*.

4. *Koimaomai* in the N.T. is never used of spiritual sleep: always of death or literal physical sleep. *Katheudö*, however, is ever the word used to convey the idea of spiritual sleep: it is sometimes used of literal physical sleep, but never of death, unless we allow the very doubtful case of Jairus' daughter, where the Lord said of her *ouk apethane* (she is not dead).

5. In the immediate context of I Thess. v. 10 *katheudö* is used three times in verses 6, 7; each time of slothfulness, literal or spiritual, without the faintest possibility of meaning death. Therefore to translate *katheudö* in verse 10 by "death," or so to interpret it, is linguistically exceedingly arbitrary.

6. Alford in his commentary owns the difficulty of interpreting verse 10 in the sense of life and death. He offers no N.T. linguistic evidence for departing in verse 10 from the normal meaning of the words in question. His theology however forces him so to depart. The other scholars I have mentioned baldly state that the words in verse 10 are there to be interpreted in the sense of life and death. They offer not a scrap of N.T. authority based on N.T. linguistic usage. Presumably again their theology forces them to these linguistically arbitrary assertions.

7. Yet if one is prepared to allow the words to mean in verse 10 what they mean in the immediate context and consistently throughout the N.T., the meaning of verse 10 is then consistent with the doctrine of the whole of the N.T., which teaches that our salvation, initial or final, depends not on our works but is "by grace through faith." "We believe that by the grace of the Lord we shall be saved" (Acts xv. 11). Hence there is no need to depart in verse 10 from the usual meaning of *gregoreö*.

8. Now the point at issue in I Thess. v, 10 is strictly not the translation of *gregoreö* or *katheudö*. To be faithful to the Greek we must translate "whether we are wakeful or asleep, whether we wake or sleep." The question is the interpretation of the meaning of these words. Now all of us are, I judge, at liberty in the fear of God to state what we feel to be the right interpretation, provided that we allow our hearers or readers to perceive that it is

but our interpretation. But if to secure our interpretation we categorically state that the word *gregoreö* in I Thess. v, 10 means "to be alive," then we are not only arbitrarily imposing on *gregoreö* a meaning which it nowhere else in the N.T. bears, but in stating our interpretation as if it were the linguistic meaning of the word we are taking a license which done in the cause of truth is regrettable, indeed.

Taking separately the reasons here given it is to be observed:

1. As regards the uses of *gregoreö* and *katheudö* in the rest of the New Testament, this could have been no guide or help to the Thessalonians, for the New Testament did not exist. This letter was probably the first part of the New Testament to have been written. Yet they were expected to understand the statement, and for this were dependent upon their knowledge of the senses in which the words could be used in their native language, guided by the Spirit of truth as to which meaning was intended in each place. This means that they were cast principally upon the moral, spiritual, and doctrinal considerations involved to settle which meaning of a word was intended.

The use of a word in the New Testament is, of course, a very important matter, but it cannot be necessary or decisive for us in this instance; it may be helpful, but it cannot be conclusive, especially if a word is known to have other meanings than those found in the New Testament.

2. Was it, then, possible for *gregoreö* to be used in the sense of being alive on earth? It is the fact that it is not so used elsewhere in the New Testament. The same is the case in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. It is there used eight times and its cognate *gregorësis* twice, always in the sense of watchfulness. But this does not establish that the word *could* not mean *to be alive*. It is derived from *egeirö*, the first meaning of which is to arise from sitting or lying, to awake from sleep; but it then takes other senses, as to raise up children to a man, and it acquires what is its most important sense in the New Testament, that of rising bodily from the dead to new life. This became the dominant sense of its other derivative *exegeirö*. The Lexicons give Aeschylus and Euripides as so employing it. It is found in I Cor. vi, 14, where it is equivalent to its root *egeirö*: "God both raised (*egeirö*) the Lord, and will raise up (*exegeirö*) us." Rom. ix, 17 is its other place in the New Testament.

As the root and the cognate of *gregoreö* were thus used of resuming bodily life it is difficult to see why the same sense must be ruled out of the question, so as to forbid that meaning in our verse. Four scholars have been named who do so take it. Others may be mentioned, as Cremer, Ellicott on this

place, the Speaker's Commentary *in loco.*, and J. N. Darby, who says (*Synopsis, vol. v, 95*), "that whether we wake or sleep (have died before His coming or be then alive)." Were all these competent Greek scholars mistaken and unjustified in holding this meaning of the word? There would appear to be no sound linguistic reason against our passage having this sense, even though it be the only known instance. A well-known living scholar writes to me: "There is no reason in the words *grēgoreō* and *katheudō* themselves why they should not be used figuratively for 'live' and 'die' respectively" (F. F. Bruce).

3. But it is urged that Paul himself had only just before used the word in the sense of moral watchfulness, so that it must be thought improbable that he would so quickly employ it differently. Yet such sudden employment of a word in a changed sense is common in everyday speech. For example:

One was recently heard to greet a friend with the words, "Well! I hope you're well." In only six words "well" is used in quite unrelated senses. Or again:

"I shall presume that all present have experienced the new birth; and I hope that this presumption is not presumption, but accords with the fact." Here in immediate contact, "presumption" is used with two quite distinct meanings. Look now at the New Testament.

I John ii. 19: "They went out from us (*ex hemōn*) but they were not of us (*ex hemōn*): for if they had been of us (*ex hemōn*) they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest how that they all are not of us (*ex hemōn*)." Here *ex hemōn* is first used of bodily, personal removal from a local company, and then, at once, three times of an inward spiritual union. Only the inner judgment of the reader can see and feel the diverse meanings.

Luke xx. 37. Observe our Lord's use of *nekrōs* (dead) in two incompatible senses in one verse. "But that the dead (*nekrōs*) are raised, even Moses showed . . . when he called the Lord the God of Abraham. Now he is not the God of the dead (*nekrōn*) but of the living: for all live unto him." Here "dead" is first used in its common meaning of physically dead, as was the case with the Patriarchs; but then it is at once used in the sense that the Sadducees held, of non-existence, the argument against them being that God cannot be the God of the non-existent and therefore the continued existence of the dead is certain and their coming resurrection to be inferred.

I Cor. xv. Consider Paul's usage of *apothneskō* in this chapter. In verses 3, 22, 36 it means ordinary physical death: "Christ died . . . in Adam all die . . . is not quickened except it die." In verse 31 it is used metaphorically: "I die daily," i.e. I am daily in danger of death. In verse 32 it is used of annihilation, parallel to Christ's usage of

nekrōs just mentioned, these being the only places I have noticed in Scripture where "death" is allowed this meaning, it being used controversially in the sense given to it by the opponents being answered: "let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die" and are done with, there being no resurrection.

In view of this last instance we may accept Dr. Lillie's remark (at the place before cited): "That a word is employed with different meanings in the same context need not offend any one familiar with Paul's style."

4. The difficulty advanced as to *katheudō* not meaning death, but moral sloth, is equally met by the argument just given. The word does usually mean sleep, physical or moral; but it *can* mean death, and therefore Paul could rightly so employ it. In the Septuagint it plainly means death at Psm. lxxxviii 5: "the dead asleep in the tomb," and at Dan. xii. 2, "them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake to everlasting life." Nor does the case of Jairus' daughter mentioned seem "very doubtful" or doubtful at all. Mat. ix. 24: Mk. v. 39: Lk. viii. 52. Before the Lord had reached the house the message had come to the ruler "Thy daughter is dead," as all in the house knew (Lk. viii. 49, 53). The Lord's words "she is not dead but sleepeth" could not be a denial of what was obviously the fact, the physical death of the child. To force that idea robs the incident entirely of its miraculous character. Anybody could have roused her from natural sleep; only Jesus could raise her to life. Godet's words are very just: "Jesus means that, in the order of things over which He presides, death is death no longer, but assumes the character of a temporary slumber" (*Luke* i. 394; 3rd ed., Clark). Therefore in this place *apethane* and *katheudō* are descriptions of the same state of existence viewed differently. Therefore in our passage the latter word *can* have the meaning of death, even though a little before it has its moral force.

This is the more demanded seeing that in the immediately preceding verses moral sleep is emphatically reprobated as being utterly unworthy of the sons of light because it characterizes the non-Christian and his dark night.

5. To argue that it is unlikely that Paul here used *katheudō* in the sense of death because elsewhere he used the more usual word *koimaomai* is really to deny to a versatile and educated writer the right to vary his vocabulary, or to choose an unusual word which may properly express his thought. Since *katheudō can* mean bodily death the apostle cannot be denied liberty so to use it.

6. The true crux of the question is stated in para. 7 above as follows:

Yet if one is prepared to allow the words to mean in verse 10 what they mean in the immediate context and consistently throughout the New Testament, the meaning of verse 10 is then consistent with the doctrine of the

whole of the New Testament, which teaches that our salvation, initial or final, depends not on our works but is "by grace through faith." "We believe that by the grace of the Lord we shall be saved" (Acts xv. 11). Hence there is no need to depart from the usual meaning of *gregoreö* in verse 10.

As regards what is here called "final" salvation this assertion is simply to be denied. We take the writer's "initial" salvation to mean the justification of the guilty and the gift of eternal life. These two acts of God are the minimum indispensable to salvation in any degree. The sinner cannot acquire these by merit or work, because he cannot remove his guilt or bring himself from spiritual death to life; therefore they are what they must be, free gifts by grace to faith, and both are so described most distinctly: "being justified *freely* (*dörean*, unconditionally) by his grace" (Rom. iii. 24), and "the free gift of God (*charisma*) is eternal life" (Rom. vi. 23).

This change of legal status and of spiritual condition brings the now living man into a vast realm, the kingdom of God, with grand possibilities and privileges. These possible privileges are not described as "free," i.e. unconditional gifts. Most true it is that they are all provided by grace, and that grace is available to win them; but then it is possible to "receive the grace of God *in vain*" (II Cor. vi. 1), to "fall short" of that grace and to "come short" of attaining to what that grace had promised (Heb. xii. 15: iv. 1).

These warnings are addressed to Christians. They apply in particular to the matter of sharing the sovereignty of Christ in His kingdom, as it is written that we are "heirs indeed (*men*) of God, but (*de*) joint heirs with Christ [Messiah], *if so be* that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified *with him*" (Rom. viii. 17); and again, "If we died with him, we shall also live *with him*; *if* we endure, we shall also reign *with him*: *if* we shall deny him, he also will deny us; etc." (II Tim. ii. 11-13). Although these "ifs" stand with the indicative of the verbs, it is impossible to read them as "since" we do this or that, for it is not true that all believers do in fact die, suffer, and endure *with Him*, and obviously it is not true that all deny Him. The conditional force is not to be avoided. To assert the opposite is to assert that there is no backsliding, and to make void the warnings of the New Testament to Christians. This subject I have discussed at length in *Firstfruits and Harvest, Ideals and Realities, Revelation, and Hebrews*.

Our passage (I Thess. v. 1-11) is concerned distinctly with the future aspect of salvation, not the "initial" aspect. It deals with the "hope of salvation," not the entrance thereto. For it is not the intention of God that the sons of light and day (verse 5) should meet His wrath at the return of Christ, but that they should then obtain "salvation," that is, that

“salvation which is ready to be revealed in the last time,” which is the “inheritance” (the portion of the heir), as yet “reserved in heaven” (I Pet. i. 4, 5). This magnificent and heavenly inheritance is the highest possible development of salvation to which faith can aspire, and in His very first recorded mention of it the Lord set it forth as a reward for suffering on His behalf (Mat. v. 12: “Blessed are ye when men shall reproach and persecute you . . . great is your reward in heaven”). This is the key to all later references to the subject.

Of this most noble of prospects the noblest element is that it assures continuous enjoyment of the personal company of the Lord. All the saved will be blessed in His kingdom, but not all will be the personal companions of the King. Heb. iii. 14 says that “we are become companions of Christ [the Messiah *lou Christou*] if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end.” This high privilege is for those who “hate their life” in this age, who serve and follow Him in reality. Of such He says “where *I am* there shall also my servant be” and will be honoured by His Father (John xii. 25, 26). This may be followed throughout the New Testament. To the few who keep their garments undefiled in this foul world it is promised that “they shall walk *with Me* in white; for they are worthy. The one over-coming shall *thus* be arrayed in white garments” (Rev. ii. 4, 5).

Now it is distinctly of *this* salvation that Paul speaks in our verse: “that whether we wake or sleep we should live together *with Him*,” and all relevant passages likewise show that this privilege is contingent upon the sons of light not sleeping as do the rest of men, but being watchful, sober, having on the armour of light and fighting the good fight of faith. This Christ stated impressively when Peter objected to Him washing his feet. The act was symbolic of the need the saint has of daily cleansing from the defilement caused by contact with this defiled world. This cleansing the Lord is ready to effect by the laver of His word and Spirit (Eph. v. 25-27); and to one who refuses this daily sanctification the solemn word applies “If I wash thee not thou hast no part *with Me*.”

The 1946 Revisers of the American Standard Version make this read, “If I do not wash you, you have no part *in* me.” This would cut off the unsanctified believer from salvation entire. It is a flagrant and culpable mis-translation. But what Christ said to Peter did not put in jeopardy his justification or eternal life, but it did make the enjoyment of the personal company of the Lord to depend upon daily sanctification, as does the whole New Testament, and as the believer finds by present experience.

Therefore in place of accepting the above view, that to take “wake or sleep” to mean watchfulness or slothfulness, puts the passage into harmony with the doctrine of the whole

New Testament, we then rather see it as forcing the verse into open conflict with the whole New Testament upon the matter Paul states, that of living *with Him*. If we are right in this, the point is settled that the words in question cannot here have this moral sense.

7. This leads to the final consideration, which also by itself really determines the matter. When the words in question are taken to mean moral watchfulness or slothfulness the plain effect is that the carnally-minded believer is as sure to be a personal companion of the King in His glory as is the heavenly-minded saint; for says this view, God appointed that, whether we are watchful or slothful, we shall live together with Christ. What a premium is thus put upon slothfulness, and by the predetermination of God Himself! Demas forsook Paul, the aged prisoner, having learned again to love this present age; yet he is as absolutely certain as the faithful apostle to reign with Christ in the heavenly glory. This was put bluntly by a teacher of this view, when he said at a public meeting, "*No matter how you live as a Christian, you are certain to be part of the bride of Christ and to reign with Him.*" He emphasized the words in italics, it being the express point he was urging.

On this view it matters not a straw that Demas, because he loved this world, did thereby "constitute himself (*kathistatai*) an enemy of God," being spiritually an adulteress (Jam. iv. 4). The "adulteress" shall nevertheless be part of the Bride of the Lamb! And even Paul is made to teach this rank antinomianism, Paul who solemnly and regularly warned his children in the faith that unrighteous persons shall not have *inheritance* in the kingdom of God, on which very point they were on no account to suffer themselves to be deceived. I Cor. vi. 9-11: Gal. v. 18-21: Eph. v. 5. He tells the Corinthians that they themselves were the unrighteous persons he meant, saying, "ye yourselves do wrong (*adikeite*) . . . know ye not that wrong-doers (*adikoi*) shall not inherit?"

8. It was suggested above that it was the *theological* views of the scholars named which forced them to hold that the passage speaks of bodily death or life at the coming of the Lord. There is always danger that one's opinions may affect the judgment upon a particular point or passage, but this applies equally to those who wish to hold the moral sense of the words, it being a great support to the view that reigning with Christ is guaranteed irrespective of conduct. But the objection cannot apply to J. N. Darby, at least, for he held the opinion just stated yet took the opposite view of our verse, nor were the other scholars named of any one school of theology so as all to be biased in one direction. It would be fairer to allow that, apart from linguistic reasons, it was a just sense of *morality* that made them reject the meaning desired by some and which dulls the sense of moral urgency everywhere inculcated by the Word of God.

The view in question amounts to this—that in verses 6 and 7 Paul urges that to sleep in the night is natural enough for the sons of darkness but most unbecoming in the sons of light and day, who ought to be ever watchful, armed, and sober, like soldiers on duty. Yet nevertheless, says this view, in verse 10 he cancels this by assuring them that, even if the Christian does not watch, but goes to sleep while on duty, it won't seriously affect his heavenly prospects, because the soldier of Christ may sleep through the battle but be sure of sharing the triumph banquet! Is it not unjustifiable to force upon the apostle this moral contradiction? Is it not obvious that Paul must have used *katheudō* in different senses?

From the foregoing it appears:

1. That there is adequate linguistic ground to allow "wake or sleep" to mean "alive or dead."
2. That the objection that the writer would not in close contact use a word in two different senses is unfounded.
3. That it is contrary to the consistent teaching of the New Testament to regard the high and heavenly prospects of the saints as free of moral conditions.
4. That the view here rebutted is calculated to diminish fidelity and morality.
5. That therefore the words must be taken to mean that whether those who live godly in Christ Jesus are alive when He shall come, or shall have died, they shall live *with Christ* in His kingdom.

BIBLE SCHOOLS
A Letter to a Tutor

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Thank you for your letter.

The state of the world at any time is ever the peril of the church at that time. Today the whole trend of world affairs is toward centralization, and, alas, many who profess to be followers of Christ are fostering this plan in what they call His affairs. Hence the Property Trusts, Committees to deal with candidates for foreign gospel work, Central Funds, and the like measures. It is foreign to the mind and faith that marked workers from the assemblies a century ago. The authorities of the nations understand the plan, for it is borrowed from them, men without faith in God and not guided by the principle of pleasing Him. Thus for the present they smile upon philanthropic work so conducted and frown upon individual enterprise and local church autonomy. But as to which way is shown in the New Testament, as being the mind of the Head of the church, there is really no question in honest minds, and so neither is there question as to which method He really uses to further His ends. Faith will go on quietly along His lines, assured that thus will be reached the goal He seeks.

You ask my mind about Bible Schools. I am glad to read what you say as to yours not paying salaries, and so on. May these features long persist. Yet experience has shown that, after a time, when the original men of faith who commence a School pass out of it, the Enemy makes a dead set to get in men of another mind, and then deterioration sets in. Is there an exception to this as regards any long-existing School or theological College?

Then again, is it healthy that young minds, at the most susceptible yet immature period, should sit habitually under one or two teachers and be biased for ever by their lines of thought and ways? Is not this the principal reason why ministers and clergy are seldom able to imbibe new ideas however Scriptural?

My observation in many lands is, that all too often, the one who has been trained in a Bible School carries (perhaps unconsciously) an air of some superiority over workers not so trained. It is incipient clerisy.

It is to the good that an earnest young worker should acquire some knowledge of the original languages of the Word, as well as information as to oriental life and customs of olden times. In some cases knowledge of other religions is useful, though it is not so imperative as some Schools

would say. Many have acquired sufficient of such knowledge without attending a School. Moreover it is to be remembered that all this enriching and useful information does not by itself make a man or woman one of the called of God to spread the gospel. Paul, Timothy, Titus and their contemporaries had, by natural upbringing in those lands, far more of such knowledge than the most learned Western pundit can ever acquire; but that did not by itself qualify them to be pastors in the church of God or evangelists. Is not this sometimes too easily overlooked? and then those trained in a School go forth to the ministry without that indispensable *spiritual* endowment which a School cannot impart but may easily frustrate?

One of my early interpreters had been trained in two of the most famous evangelical colleges in your country (U.S.A.), having taken the two full years course in both and their diplomas. He was a master linguist. But after we had worked together daily for two months, studying for several hours a day the plans of God, he said that never till then had he gained a *spiritual* understanding of the Book of God.

I fear that in all Colleges and Schools I have known the course is too overloaded to allow of spiritual development proportionate to the mental; so that too often still that is true which C. G. Finney said of the Presbyterian colleges of his day, that men came forth from them to the ministry little fitted for it, as if, he said, students should leave a naval college knowing everything except how to navigate a ship.

These are some of the weaknesses I have seen, while still thanking God for what blessing has sometimes attended Schools.

My impression is that when a gifted teacher finds it in his heart to gather round him some eager souls and help them in knowledge, it may produce happy and lasting results; but when he then goes on to make a permanent institution of it, and establishes a "School," he has usually missed the mind of the Lord. Christ gathered a small group, that they should be with Him, learning His mind, watching His methods, catching His spirit, and then He sent them forth to the work. Paul had a few such younger men with him for a time, now and then as ordered by the Lord, and then they scattered. No permanent institution was founded by either the Lord or the apostle. This plan has been followed to much advantage. Formerly in this land there were such brethren who took younger men about with them for a while, who then went elsewhere and frequently proved to have been fitted by the Spirit. The Lord chooses gladly to bless His ways rather than ours.

Brethren qualified to expound the Word, when sent of God, have done fine service by gathering groups of believers here and there, in different lands, teaching them for a few

weeks or months, and then going further. This I have shown in my short life of my friend E. H. Broadbent. Many countries in Europe were blessed by such ministry of his.

The central point is that by this plan the Lord Himself retains His real control over this service as of other lines of effort ordered according to His Word. He settles the time, place, duration, and chooses and sends the teacher, all as He sees best. I dread any usurpation of His direct control by the establishment of something permanent on fixed lines.

You will, I know, not think that I am criticizing carelessly my dear brethren. You asked for my candid opinion, and this is the fruit of half a century of sympathetic observation.

The grace of God be with you as long as He keeps you in your present sphere. Only be ready to step out into any other line of labour at His call.

Yours in His love,

G. H. LANG

A SHORT METHOD OF PRAYER

by

MADAME GUYON

(1648-1717)

INTRODUCTION

It will, perhaps, lend interest to the following article if we give here a few facts relative to the life of the authoress. These are taken from the *Life, Religious Opinions, and Experience of Madame Guyon* by Thomas C. Upham. Readers would be well advised to secure a copy of the book for themselves, as they will find it a rich and fruitful pasture abounding in spiritual nourishment.

Jeanne Marie de la Mothe Guyon lived a life that was notable for intense piety, fervent zeal, and steady consistency. She must claim our sympathy in her sufferings, and if in any age it could be said that the world was not worthy of her, especially it would be so in that of Louis XIV. The few dazzling lights in that dark age serve to exhibit its dense darkness. A depraved Court, with a veneer-like profession of religion; a dissolute and extravagant nobility, with a beguiled and besotted populace; narrowness, bigotry, intolerance—all these, among many others, were traits that marked the age in which lived, and preached, and suffered, and died Madame Guyon. The friend of the saintly Archbishop Fenelon, like him she was persecuted for the truth's sake. To have done what she did, against all hindrances of malice, disappointment, and power, is enough to prove her to have possessed ability of the highest order.

Madame Guyon herself makes the following statement in regard to the publication of her book: *A Short Method of Prayer*. "Among my intimate friends was a civilian, a counsellor of the Parliament of Grenoble, who might be described as a model of piety. Seeing on my table my manuscript treatise on Prayer, he desired me to lend it to him. Being much pleased with it, he lent it to some of his friends. Others wanted copies of it. He resolved, therefore, to have it printed . . . Under these circumstances this book, which within a few years, passed through five or six editions, was given to the world. The Lord has given a great blessing to this little treatise; but it has caused great excitement among those who did not accede to its principles, and has been the pretence of various trials and persecutions which I have endured."

Books are God's instruments of good as well as sermons. He who cannot preach may talk; and he who cannot do, either, may perhaps write. A good book, laid conscientiously

upon God's altar, is no small thing. How abundant is the evidence of this: Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion*, Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, Thomas a Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*, and many other works which might be mentioned, have exerted a wide influence of the most salutary kind, felt in every part of the world, and perpetuated from generation to generation.

A CONCISE ANALYSIS OF:
A Short Method of Prayer

1. *Remarks in explanation of the use of the term Prayer.*

St. Paul (1 Thessalonians v, 17) has enjoined upon us "to pray without ceasing. Our Saviour (Mark xiii, 33) requires us "to take heed, to watch, and to pray." But what is that prayer? It is obviously something more than the formal offering up of specific petitions. The prayer of which I speak, is that *state of the heart in which it is united to God in faith and love.*

A man who has this heart, may pray at all times. It is the natural, the spontaneous flowing out of the heart, in the issues of its own moral and religious life. All classes of persons, in all ages and in all situations, may pray. If they have the spirit of prayer, how can they help praying?

Prayer, then, and *religion*, are the same thing.

2. *All without the spirit of prayer are invited to seek it.*

Come, ye famishing souls, who find nought whereon to feed, come, and ye shall be satisfied! Come, ye poor afflicted ones, who groan beneath your load of wretchedness and pain, and ye shall find ease and comfort! Come, ye sick, to your Physician, and be not fearful of approaching Him, because ye are filled with diseases. Expose them to His view, and they shall be healed! Children, draw near to your Father, and He will embrace you in the arms of love. Come, ye poor, wandering sheep, return to your Shepherd! Come, sinners, to your Saviour! Let all, without exception, come! for Jesus Christ hath called all. Yet, let not those come who are without a heart; those who are without a heart are not asked; for there must be a heart, in the natural sense of the term at least, in order that there may be LOVE. But of whom can it be said, that he is really without a heart?

3. *Directions to a person very ignorant and without religion in respect to the manner in which he may properly seek it.*

I will suppose that they hardly know anything, or are hardly capable of knowing anything, *except the Lord's prayer.* And this is my direction: let them begin with what they are supposed to know, namely, the Lord's Prayer. Let them say, OUR FATHER, and stop there; remaining in respectful silence and meditation; pondering a little upon the meaning of the words, and especially upon the infinite willingness of God to become *their* Father. And before they go further, let them

utter the petition, that He may become to them individually what He is so willing to be.

Let them proceed, then, to the petition, **THY KINGDOM COME**. And delaying upon this as before, until they can imbibe its *spirit*, which is one of the most important things in this process, let them apply the petition, as in the preceding instance, to *themselves*; beseeching this King of glory to reign in them, and endeavouring with Divine assistance, to yield to Him the just claim He has over them, and to resign themselves wholly to His Divine government.

Then let them take another petition; **THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS DONE IN HEAVEN**. And here let them humble themselves before God, and earnestly supplicate, that God's will, His *whole* will, may be accomplished in their hearts, *in* them and *by* them for ever. And knowing that God's will is accomplished in us when we love Him, it is the same thing if they should pray God to enable them to love Him with all their heart. And in doing this, however sinful and unworthy they may be, let them be calm and peaceable; not disturbed and agitated, as if there were no Saviour, no Divine Shepherd, who is the daily nourishment of His people, and feeds His flock, as it were, with *Himself*; not fearful and distrustful, as if God were not merciful or might not be true to His promises, when He pledges forgiveness for Christ's sake.

4. *Additional directions for those who are beginning to seek religion.*

Persons are not to overburden themselves with frequent repetitions of set forms of prayer. Our Saviour says, *When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking*. Begin with the Lord's Prayer as the simplest and best. Go over it slowly, calmly, believingly; not being in a hurry to go over the whole and then to *repeat* it, as if the result depended on the *repetition*, and the number of repetitions; but delaying upon each petition.

A second remark is, that you are to place God before you as the Being to whom you are to be reconciled, and from whom you are to receive all good. But be careful not to form *any* image of the Deity. The idea of God, whatever may be sometimes thought, can never be represented and set forth by anything which the eye beholds or the hand touches, by anything which exists in sculpture and painting. "*God is a Spirit,*" says the Saviour, "*and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*"

A third remark is this—do not forget Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, the Saviour, the second person in the ever blessed Trinity. He is the *way*. Enter to God *through* Him. Behold Him in the various states of His Incarnation. You are a man, with all of man's feebleness and temptations;—behold Him assuming humanity in order that He may sympathize with you. You are a sinner;—behold Him upon the cross, dying that you might live. In the Lord's Prayer,

God offers Himself to you. Uttering that prayer in Christ, who is the mediatorial way, you receive God; and in receiving Him, you receive the true and everlasting life.

Persevere in this way, asking for few things, and such as are very essential, found in the Lord's Prayer; pausing upon each with a calm and silent looking up to God through Christ; ceasing from your own strength in order that you may find strength in the Saviour by faith.

5. *Directions applicable to persons of some degree of knowledge and education.*

Those who have more knowledge, men of reading, may very properly avail themselves of their intellectual position in furthering this great object. The directions already given are exceedingly important to them. But in addition, let them read books on *experimental* religion, delaying upon the most important truths, and praying over them, till the power which is in them being made alive by the Holy Ghost, is felt in the heart.

Meditation also, as distinct from reading, is to be practised on similar principles. In retirement, endeavour, by a lively act of faith, to realize the relations in which you stand to God, and place yourself, as it were, in His immediate presence. In general, this is the first great thought upon which the mind should be occupied;—God is; God is *present*; God is our *Father*; to Him we *owe all*. Let the mind repose calmly and believingly upon these great truths, and other important religious truths, in which there is substance and food for the inquiring mind such as our lost condition by nature, Christ our Mediator, God the inward Teacher of men in the person of the Holy Ghost; dwell quietly and humbly, with the senses and thoughts withdrawn from the circumference to the centre. Thus wait upon the Lord with strong desire, but without agitation.

6. *Of an increased or higher degree of religious experience.*

The soul has at first but a little *realizing* sense of God. It says, *my Father*, it is true, but says it very *tremblingly*. But after a time it gains strength. It begins to see more and more distinctly how God, whom as a sinner it feared, can be fully reconciled. It believes more fully in God, because it believes more fully in Christ, who is the only way of access.

In this advanced state the soul begins to recognise the great truth, that our love to God should be without selfishness, and that our will should be perfectly united in His will. The servant, who only proportions his diligence to the hope of *reward*, renders himself unworthy of all reward. We must learn to seek God in distinction from His gifts, and God is in His **WILL**. Supposing, then, that God should smite you with afflictions without and temptations within, and should leave the soul in a state of entire aridity, do what God requires you to do, and suffer what He requires you to suffer; but

in everything be resigned and patient ! With humility of spirit, with a sense of your own nothingness, with the reiterated breathings of an ardent but peaceful affection, and with inward submission and quietness, you must wait the return of the Beloved. In this way you will demonstrate that *it is God himself alone* and His good pleasure which you seek, and *not the selfish delights of your own sensations.*

7. *Of abandonment or entire consecration to God in all things.*

But this cannot well be done without the principle of *abandonment*; by which I mean that act in which we resign, abandon, or consecrate ourselves entirely to God. Those who are consecrated, have given their own wills into the keeping of God's will. Such a soul is resigned in all things, whether for soul or body, whether for time or eternity; by leaving what is past in oblivion; by leaving what is to come to the decisions of Providence; and by devoting to God, without any reserve, the *present moment*;—a moment which necessarily brings with it God's eternal order of things, and in everything, excepting sin, is a declaration to us of His will as certain and infallible, as it is inevitable and common to us all.

8. *Of the test or trial of consecration.*

God will give us opportunities to try our test, whether it be a true one or not. No man can be wholly the Lord's, unless he is wholly consecrated to the Lord; and no man can know whether he is thus wholly consecrated, except by *tribulation*. That is the test. To rejoice in God's will, when that will imparts nothing but happiness, is easy even for the natural man. But none but the renovated man, none but the religious man, can rejoice in the Divine will, when it crosses his path, disappoints his expectations, and overwhelms him with sorrow. Trial, therefore, instead of being shunned, should be welcomed as the test, and the only true test, of a true state.

Beloved souls ! There are consolations which pass away; but ye will not find true and abiding consolation except in entire abandonment, and in that love which loves the *cross*. He who does not welcome the cross, does not welcome God.

9. *Inward holiness the true regulator of the outward life.*

When we have the true life *within*, we may reasonably be expected to have the truly regulated life *without*. "LOVE," says St. Augustine, "*and do what you please.*" If we have love without selfishness, it will not fail to work itself out in appropriate and right issues. The inordinate action of the senses arises obviously from the errors and perversions of the inward state. Mortify the inward man; and you can hardly fail to mortify and regulate the outward man.

10. *Of gradual growth or advancement in the religious life.*

The soul fully given up in faith and love, is astonished to find God gradually taking possession of its whole being. One of the evidences of growth in grace is a tendency to cease from ourselves, in order that God himself, in the operation of the

Holy Ghost, may exist and act in us.

A soul in this state is *prepared* for all times, places, and occasions; for society, for worship, for outward action. When, through weakness of purpose, or want of faith, we become, as it were, *uncentred*, it is of immediate importance to turn again gently and sweetly inward; and thus bring the soul into harmony with the desires and purposes of God. The more the soul becomes like God, the more clearly it discerns God's excellences; and the more distinctly and fully it feels His attracting power.

11. *Of a knowledge of our inward sins when souls are in this advanced state.*

If a soul, in this intimate nearness with God, should be left to fall into any error or sin, it would be immediately thrown into the greatest confusion and inward condemnation. God becomes the incessant examiner of the soul; but still in such a way, that the soul, moving in the Divine light, can see and examine for itself.

When we fall into errors, and even undoubted sins, the rules of inward holy living require us not to vex and disquiet ourselves; but simply in deep humiliation and penitence, to turn calmly and believingly, without fear and without agitation, to Him who forgives willingly, to that cross of Christ, where it can be truly said, that wounded souls are healed. Great agitation and vexation of mind are not necessarily *penitence* nor the result of penitence, but are rather the result of *unbelief*.

12. *Of the manner in which we are to meet and resist temptations.*

Temptations may be resisted in two ways. One way is to resist them in a *direct contest*. The other method is, to turn away the mind from the contemplation of the evil in its outward form, and to keep it fixed, if possible, still more closely and watchfully upon God. A little child, on perceiving a monster, does not wait to fight with it, and will scarcely turn its eyes toward it; but quickly shrinks into the bosom of its mother, in entire confidence of safety; so likewise should the soul turn from the dangers of temptation to her God. "God is in the midst of her," saith the Psalmist, "she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." (Psalm xlvii, 5).

If in our weakness we attempt to attack our enemies, we shall frequently be wounded, if not totally defeated; but by casting ourselves into the simple presence of God, in the exercise of faith, we shall find instant supplies of strength for our support. This was the succour sought for by David. "I have set," saith he, "the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth;—my flesh also shall rest in hope." (Psalm xvi, 8, 9) And it is said in Exodus, "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

13. *Of the soul in the state of pure or unselfish love.*

When we have given ourselves to God in *abandonment*, and have exercised faith in God that He does *now*, and that He will ever receive us and make us one with Himself, then God becomes central in the soul, and all which is the opposite of God gradually *dissolves itself*, if one may so speak, and passes away.

SELF is now destroyed. The soul, recognising God as its centre, is filled with a love, which, as it places God first, and everything else in the proper relation to Him, may be regarded as *pure*. It is not until we arrive at this state, in the entire destruction and loss of self, that we acknowledge, in the highest and truest sense, God's supreme existence; still less *do we*, or *can we*, have God *as a life within us*.

In experimental religion there are two great and important views—perhaps there are none more important—which are expressed by the single terms, the ALL and the NOTHING. We must become *Nothing* in ourselves, before we can receive the *All* or *Fulness* of God.

14. *Of the practice of the prayer of silence.*

When the soul has reached this degree of experience, it is disposed to practise the PRAYER OF SILENCE, so called, not merely because it excludes the voice, but because it has so simplified its petitions, that it has hardly anything to say, except to breathe forth, in a desire UNSPOKEN,—*Thy will be done*. This prayer, so simple and yet so comprehensive, may be said to embody the whole state of the soul. And believing that this prayer is and must be fulfilled *moment by moment*, the constant fruition crowns the constant request, and it rejoices in what it *has*, as well as in what it *seeks*.

The soul in this Divine prayer acts more nobly and more extensively than it had ever done before; since God himself is its mover, and it now acts as it is acted upon by the agency of the Holy Ghost. When St. Paul speaks of our being led by the Spirit of God, it is not meant that we should cease from action; but that our action should be in harmony with and in subordination to the Divine action. This is finely represented by the prophet Ezekiel's vision of the wheels, which had a living spirit; and whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went; they ascended and descended as they were moved; for the spirit of life was in them, and they returned not when they went.

We promote the highest activity, by inculcating *a total dependence on the Spirit of God as our moving principle*; for it is in Him, and by Him alone, that "we live and move and have our being."

15. *Of the true relation of human and Divine activity.*

In the early periods of his Christian experience man is required to labour much, strive much, act much, obviously to conquer himself, to smite and annul his own selfishness, to restrain and regulate his own multiplied and unholy activity,

in order that he may be rendered submissive and quiet before God. While the tablet is unsteady, it is obvious that the painter is unable to delineate a true copy.

It is thus in the inward life. Every act of our own un-subdued and selfish spirit, even while God is operating upon it, is productive of false and erroneous lineaments.

“If any man be in Christ,” says the apostle Paul, “he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” But this state of things can be made to exist only by our dying to ourselves and to all our own activity, except so far as it is kept in *subordination to Divine grace*, in order that the activity of God may be substituted in its stead. Instead, therefore, of prohibiting activity, we enjoin it; but we enjoin it in absolute dependence on the Spirit of God; so that the Divine activity, considered as antecedent in action, and as giving authority to action, may take the place of the human. “Jesus Christ,” we are told, “hath the life in Himself”; and nothing but the grace which flows through Him is, or can be, the moral and religious life of His people.

16. *Of the nature and conditions of the state of Divine union, or union with God.*

The result of all religion is to bring us into union with God. We are made one with Him in understanding, when by renouncing our own wisdom, we seek continually and believingly for wisdom from on high; one in affection, when we desire and love what He desires and loves; one in will, when our purposes are as His are.

The Divine WILL never varies and never can vary, from the line of perfect rectitude on the one hand, and of perfect love on the other. This is the law of its movement, unchangeable as the Divine existence.

There can be no true moral union between God and man, until the human will is brought into harmony with the Divine.

And this life of union, which is the highest and most glorious result of our being, is the gift of God. A fundamental condition of it is, that we shall resign ourselves to Him, that we may be His in all things, and that we may receive this and all other blessings at His hand. God alone can accomplish it. Still, the creature must *consent* to have it done. God loves His creatures; God is the source of light to them; God in Christ is the true Saviour. But man must, at least, recognise his alienation, and in becoming willing and desirous to be saved, must expand his soul to the Divine operation. The creature, therefore, must open the window; it is the least he can do; but it is the sun himself, the Eternal Sun, that must give the light.

GEORGE MULLER

AND

R. C. CHAPMAN

*Did they Change their Mind as to the Coming of the Lord
being After the Tribulation?*

G. H. LANG

It is testimony to the spiritual stature and weight of these men of God that their opinion upon such a matter is still discussed over half a century after their death. After a lapse of perhaps fifteen years this question has been again agitated, and some who affirm that the Advent will be before the End days have sought to support their view by reviving an allegation that, at the very close of their life, these famous saints reversed their life-long opinion to the contrary.

For reasons that will appear it is perhaps the case that I am the only man left from that earlier generation who can discuss this matter with some personal warrant, and without bias since I agree with both views in part and differ from both in part.

George Müller died on 10th March, 1898. I had then been living in Bristol for five years less five weeks. It was my privilege to hear him give, two years before his death, one of his last great public addresses. Bristol continued to be my home for eleven years, and I became very well acquainted with the leading men who had been intimate with him, in both his church at Bethesda Chapel and at the New Orphan Homes. James Wright, his son-in-law and successor at the Homes, G. F. Bergin, E. T. Davies, E. R. Short, H. W. Case, and many others favoured me with personal friendship, in addition to which I was constantly mingling with Christians in their circle of churches.

I remember Mr. Chapman also. On Thursday evenings 10th and 17th August, 1899, I was privileged to attend his Bible Readings at New Buildings, Barnstaple, and I afterward became acquainted with E. S. Pearce who lived with him during the later years of his life.

Both of these men of God imparted to me spiritual profit, so that I had personal interest in them and their beliefs and cherished the pretty abundant information concerning them that reached me.

The allegation that they altered their opinion as to the church passing through the great Tribulation depends in each case upon the testimony of one single person. This is an extremely noteworthy feature of the matter. That two such outstanding men, known all over the world, and known as holding an unpopular opinion, should have publicly

declared a complete reversal of judgment, and that in each case only a solitary individual should have made it known, itself raises grave doubts as to the allegation. It might have been rightly expected that in at least their home centres, Bristol and Barnstaple, the assertion would have spread like wildfire and have been at once common knowledge and theme of general discussion.

Further, it might well have been expected from such fine men of God that they would not have been content with a single unexpected statement but would have laboured to undo their former influence in mis-instructing Christians. On the contrary, the allegation rests in each case upon one brief remark attributed to each.

In the case of George Müller the solitary testimony was given by my friend J. A. Vicary of Bristol. It was that, only a short time before Mr. Müller died, at the last conference that he attended at Nicholas Road Gospel Hall, Bristol, he said: "The Lord is soon coming; I am an old man; but He may come before I die, indeed, He may come at any moment." This Mr. Vicary noted down. It is further remarkable that he did not discuss the matter or make it known but kept it to himself until a few weeks before his death in 1915, at least eighteen years after the words were said to have been spoken. He then communicated the information to J. H. Burridge, a teacher and writer of that period; and, be it further noted, he in turn did not publish the statement until the year 1933,* another eighteen years, that is thirty-five years after Mr. Müller is alleged to have so spoken. The reasons he gave for this long delay are very inadequate. They are given on page 20 of his booklet *George Müller and the Great Tribulation*. The effect of the delay was that most of the men of nearly forty years before had died and could not give their opinion of the allegation.

Thus J. A. Vicary's statement as to George Müller comes to us only through J. H. Burridge's statement as to J. A. Vicary.

As to R. C. Chapman, the solitary witness is John Knox McEwen, whose words we shall consider later.

When a matter of some importance depends entirely upon one witness a major point that at once arises is the reliability of that witness. Everyone acquainted with the human mind knows how easy it is for an entirely honest person to think that he heard something stated when in fact he did not hear it, save in a voice in his own heart saying to itself something that was his own opinion and which he thought the speaker said.

There was a striking similar incident just before the 1914 war. A British official had a tense discussion with a

* On page 1 of his booklet he says he is writing of events of "40 years ago," that is, of meetings at Bristol in 1893.

German Minister. In his report to London he said that the Minister had passed a certain remark. It was an objectionable statement and was used as British propaganda. Yet the Official afterward admitted that the discussion was long and heated, was partly in German and partly in English, and that he did not feel certain that the words had been used.

Now these three dear men, Vicary, Burrige, and McEwen, I knew personally, and acknowledging gladly their merits, and especially their Christian integrity, I feel sure no one could regard them as possessing that strictness and exactness of mind necessary for hearing accurately and reporting accurately some quite unexpected and startling statement. The inference from this is that the statements in question are not to be accepted as necessarily correct, but must be scrutinized and weighed against all relevant facts.

The above estimate of the brethren Vicary and Burrige can be illustrated. The invitation to those annual meetings at Nicholas Road bore the names of several prominent brethren in the Bristol assemblies. It was drafted by J. A. Vicary; but so little confidence did he or they place upon him in this matter that the draft was always sent to my friend and neighbour J. L. Stanley, a man of culture, to put in proper form. On one occasion Mr. Stanley mentioned to me that he had just done this and had said to J. A. Vicary that as the scripture quoted was from neither the A.V. nor the R.V. he supposed it must be from the J.A.V. !

The booklet named, by which J. H. Burrige at length gave to the public Mr. Vicary's statement, covers 24 envelope-sized pages. It shows how loosely the mind of the writer worked. It gives no date of issue. He mentions that he gave a month of addresses at Stokes Croft Chapel, Bristol. The context leaves the impression that the one topic was prophecy. In fact, only six addresses were on that subject. The year in question is not mentioned. It was 1893. He tells that at his request James Wright gave an address following his own series. The fact was that in April of that year James Wright gave two addresses in reply and G. F. Bergin two. He claims that on the evening of his (Mr.B's) last address Mr. Wright expressed agreement with ninety-nine out of a hundred of the points in his addresses, and that Mr. Wright almost fully assented to his views. But he fails to say that the four addresses mentioned were for the specific purpose of emphasizing that one point of disagreement, and to show that the Lord will not return at any moment, but will remove the church to heaven at the close of the reign of Antichrist.

Mr. Burrige further narrates that two or three years later he wrote a book on the coming of the Lord, but exhibits his carelessness as to detail by omitting its title. The book having been published George Müller and James Wright are said to have spent an hour over it for several mornings,

and Mr. Burridge says that he "had every reason to believe that Mr. G. Müller changed his views on the subject" (p. 17). It would have been much to the point if he had here given the warrant for this belief, but he gives none. It was not Mr. Vicary's statement, for that he did not hear till at least seventeen years later. It was about 1895 or 1896 that Mr. Burridge issued his book, for he says it was two or three years after the lectures at Stokes Croft Chapel (p. 14). If by the study of that book Mr. Müller's views were radically changed he had two or three years in which to have made this known, yet this he did not do, but only, as is alleged, at the very end of those years just before his death.

All the inattention to detail here mentioned exhibits that Mr. Burridge's mind was not marked by preciseness of thought or statement, and calls for careful scrutiny of his assertions. Another detail confirms this. When his paper first came to me I wrote to him. In his reply, dated 22nd February, 1940, he expressed regret at a remark regarding J. A. Vicary, which remark *I had not made!* But this letter gave this detail to be noted. He was in his 85th year in 1940, and therefore in his 78th year when he published his booklet in 1933. Now he states that Mr. Vicary "brought before" him his notes concerning Mr. Müller's statement, but he does not say that the notes were handed to him, or even copied by him. If then a man of 77 years, of no exactness of mind, was perchance writing from memory of something he had seen but once seventeen years before, this introduces a further element of uncertainty as to the words used.

Thus in the case as presented by Mr. Burridge there are various dubious points. (1) Did J. A. Vicary really hear what he thought he heard George Müller say? At the time he was himself well on in life. (2) Did he note down with accuracy what he heard, or thought he heard? (3) Did Mr. Burridge in old age repeat accurately what he was shown by Mr. Vicary? No certainty on these points can now be reached, for neither the persons nor the document can be examined.

I sent to Mr. Burridge a lengthy critique of his booklet and should have valued his criticisms. But he returned it unread, excusing himself on the ground of age and eyesight. But this disability did not hinder him from indulging in a lengthy dissertation on his own prophetic opinions. One of these was that "the sure and certain signs" showed that the "glorious event is drawing very near." Yet another twenty-one years have already elapsed.

As far as J. A. Vicary's statement can now be tested the result is adverse.

1. Mr. Burridge twice asserts (pp. 20, 21) that the facts "are nearly all public property . . . this paper presents nothing but simple facts which are public property. To which

many in Bristol today [1933] could bear witness if they would." Then why did they not do so? A majority of the believers concerned did not agree with Mr. Müller that the church will be on earth during the Tribulation. They would have rejoiced that he had changed his mind and would have spread the matter abroad. Yet this was not done.

"The Believer's Magazine" has always strenuously advocated the doctrine of the pre-Tribulation Advent. It was much to their satisfaction to be told that George Müller had accepted that view. Yet so completely unknown was the change that they seem not to have heard of it till Mr. Burridge wrote to them as late as the close of 1937. See their issue of January 1938, p. 21.

In his letter to me Mr. Burridge stated that a Mr. Jay and a Mr. Pitt of Bristol bore testimony to Mr. Müller's change of mind. The latter I remember. He was the father of the late F. W. Pitt at one time Editor of the *Advent Witness*. Another son, Mr. G. M. Pitt, lived at their home in Bristol until the year of George Müller's death, 1898. He informs me that neither from his father nor anyone else, until my present letter, did he ever hear that George Müller altered his mind on this point. If it had been known in their home it might have been expected that F. W. Pitt would have ventilated the fact, for he was a strong advocate of the opposite view to that of Mr. Müller, and he was in a position to spread the matter very widely. As far as I know he never did this. I invited Mr. Burridge to amplify his assertion that others besides J. A. Vicary testified to Mr. Müller's words, but he did not reply.

During the eleven years that I remained in Bristol, though moving habitually in that group of assemblies, I never heard a whisper of the change. It was not till after Mr. Burridge's booklet had appeared that rumours first reached me as I travelled about, and then not in Bristol where most of all the report should have been known.

Thus whichever of J. H. Burridge's statements is tested there is the same lack of corroboration, though abundance ought to have been available.

The late Mr. H. Veasey of Birmingham informed me that he had begged Mr. Burridge not to publish his booklet, because "the evidence of Mr. Vicary (the late), being a weak and ill man, was not sufficient evidence; and again, Mr. Müller having passed off the scene could not reply." After the booklet was issued Mr. Veasey wrote on 15th October, 1934, to Mr. Green, then Director of the New Orphan Homes, Bristol, and asked if they knew there of the alleged change by Mr. Müller. The Associate Director, Mr. T. Tilsley, replied to the contrary, that "As far as we know Mr. Müller believed to the end what he stated in his *Second Coming of Christ*."

Five years later, in 1939, I repeated this inquiry to Mr.

Tilsley. He was born in Bath, and lived there and in Weston-super-Mare, both near Bristol, for the last thirty years of Mr. Müller's life and for many years after. Moreover, he would have been specially interested in any change of mind in Mr. Müller for he held the same view as the latter. On 27th October of that year in his reply he mentioned Mr. Veasey's inquiry of 1934 and added: "Up till then I had not heard a whisper of the alleged change of view. I inquired of brethren in Bristol; but no one appeared to have ever heard of such a change and each agreed that it was most unlikely. Nor have I ever heard any one ever refer to such, from that day to this." I then asked Mr. Tilsley if he would particularly inquire of Mr. W. B. W. Sarsfield. He was advanced in days, and had spent his life in Bristol in the service of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution under Mr. Müller. For years he was in charge of its book depot there. Mr. Tilsley replied under date 8th November, 1939, that "Mr. Sarsfield has never heard of such alteration of view on the part of George Müller. Further he believes it to be extremely unlikely."

I have inquired lately of another veteran survivor of those years in Bristol. We co-operated in Christian service there as far back as 1894, four years before George Müller's death. He has continued in or near Bristol ever since, and in constant intercourse with believers and assemblies. Until my present inquiry he also never heard the suggestion of this change.

2. If anyone should have known of a change of judgment by Mr. Müller it was James Wright. Had he known that his father-in-law and Co-director of the Orphan Homes had just before his death adopted the view that the Lord might come at any moment could he have honestly stated the contrary when speaking about him just after his death? He gave at Bethesda Chapel a Memorial Address, published with the title "He Being Dead Yet Speaketh." On page 19 it is recorded that he said:

Dear Mr. Müller did not believe in what is called "The *Secret* Rapture," but he never made it a matter of unprofitable controversy. He believed that Scripture declared that certain events will take place first, and that these events are to be watched for by the believer."

This is the negation of the "at any moment" theory as to the Coming; and James Wright was far too godly to have declared publicly that George Müller so believed had he known that he had recently avowed the contrary. That James Wright did not know of such change in George Müller creates an almost conclusive presumption that it had never been made.

That the later Directors of The Scriptural Knowledge Institution never heard of the change is shown by the fact that in 1918, twenty years after Mr. Müller's death, they

re-issued his paper of 1881 entitled *The Second Coming of Christ*. In this (p. 20) he stated concerning 2 Thes. ii, 3 that

From this portion of the inspired Word of God we learn that the Lord Jesus will not come until after the manifestation of the apostasy . . . (p. 24). Do our hearts truly yearn after Him, and long for His glorious appearing? Are we also doing our part to hasten on His coming? And is it habitually our *prayer* that the Lord will be pleased to hasten the fulfilment of the events yet to *be* fulfilled before that day comes?

Apart from the statement attributed to Mr. Vicary there is not the slightest proof of the idea that George Müller ever varied from that opinion. Mr. Burrige was quite right in saying that no teaching as to the second coming of Christ can be established by quoting great men of God, for equally good and great men are ranged on opposite sides of this subject. As he justly said, belief must be based on the Word of God direct. And it is to be regretted that, on such very insufficient ground, he publicly attributed to this man of God a change of view in favour of that which he himself held.

The assertion concerning Robert Chapman is beset by much the same uncertainties and objections. It too depends upon a statement of but one witness, J. K. McEwen. In a letter dated 4th November, 1937, published in *The Believers Magazine* for January 1938, he said:

I was at a Conference in Leominster. Dear Mr. Tapson arrived on the second day from Barnstaple and said he had a message to convey to the brethren from beloved R.C.C. which took me by surprise—Tell the dear brethren that I am waiting for the Lord to come *at any moment*.

After fifteen years this was repeated in their issue of December, 1953.

1. The esteem I had for my good friend John Knox McEwen I showed by giving to him a chapter in my book *God at Work on His Own Lines*. But will anyone who knew him attribute to him a strictly exact and accurate habit of mind or of utterance? What if taken by surprise, as he admits, he also did *not* gather precisely what was said? In his case we are not told that he even noted down the words, and it was anything from 35 to 40 years after the event that he wrote his letter in 1937, for Mr. Chapman died in 1902.

That the dear man was not given to searching into a matter too carefully is shown in his letter. For he went on to suggest that "Perhaps the verse from the hymn, 'My soul amidst this stormy world'

My heart is with Him on the throne
And ill can brook delay,

Each moment listening for His voice,
Rise up and come away.

was written by our beloved brother at this time.”

Whether he quoted from memory, or copied from the collection of Mr. Chapman's hymns, in either case he made three errors in the text, with two changes in punctuation, and the omission of inverted commas from the last line of the verse. Moreover, so far from suggesting that the hymn might have been written quite at the close of the Writer's life he could have learned that it had been published thirty-one years before Robert Chapman died, the book *Hymns and Meditations* bearing date 1871.

2. But even assuming that he did hear the words correctly, and did, after 35 years, repeat accurately what he had heard, the further question arises whether Mr. Tapson repeated accurately what Robert Chapman had asked him to say. Here again it cannot but be asked whether so good a scholar and Christian, if he had changed his mind on so important a point, would have been content to announce this in so incidental, almost casual, a manner as a verbal message and in no other way?

3. Again we are faced with the same problem as in the case of George Müller, that a statement of a startling nature was made, as is said, at a public Conference but only one person appears to have noted or repeated it. Yet brethren went to the Leominster Conference from all over England, and one would have expected that news of a change of mind of one so revered would have been widely noised abroad and have become public property, especially as the more part of the hearers would have been happy about the change and only too eager to make it known everywhere. But it was fresh news so late as 1937 when Mr. McEwen first made it known publicly. The information was very welcome to J. H. Burrige, but not even he, though he travelled widely, had heard of it before J. K. McEwen's statement in 1937. See *The Believers' Magazine*, January 1938, p. 21.

If it is beyond explanation that the change on the part of George Müller was unknown in Bristol, it is equally inexplicable that the change by R. C. Chapman was unknown in Barnstaple, his centre for seventy years. Early in this century I moved a good deal among the assemblies in Devon, and of late years also, but no hint of this supposed change of mind reached me. Moreover, Mr. G. M. Pitt mentioned moved to Barnstaple in 1898, four years before Mr. Chapman died, lived there till recent years, and still is in the district, yet till I inquired of him recently he never heard that Mr. Chapman altered his view, but did know that he “decisively opposed the teaching that the Lord would come ‘at any moment’.”

Further, my late friend William Marriott of Sheringham, Norfolk, was brought up at Barnstaple under Mr. Hake's

care in Mr. Chapman's time. He spoke to me of those days. In 1925 he re-issued Robert Chapman's book *Suggestive Questions*. The Epilogue shows that he also knew nothing of any change of opinion by its Author on the point in question. On the contrary he informs us on p. 22 that Mr. Chapman said on prophecy "that he held the same views in his old age as he did in the very early days of his Christian course," and he repeats the incident that "Mr. Hake having told him of a conversation he had with some one who was assured that the Lord might come at any moment, he said, 'Well, brother Hake, I am ready, but it's not in the Bible'." It would have been misleading for Mr. Marriott to have repeated these things in print had he been aware that they ceased to represent R.C.C.'s latest view, but he knew nothing of this suggestion, which would have been most astonishing in one so connected with Barnstaple.

Again; I have recently inquired of a Christian who was born in the Barnstaple district ten years before Robert Chapman died, has lived in that area ever since, has moved continually among all the assemblies of the district including Barnstaple, and is a leader in one of them. On receiving my letter, informing him of Mr. McEwen's statement as to the change of mind of Mr. Chapman, my friend said to himself "And where have I been all my life that I never heard that before?" He mentions some significant facts. In the year 1907 the late Henry Payne, of Barcelona, who was a native of that district in Devon, discussed at a certain farm the question in hand in order to show from Scripture that the church will pass through the Tribulation. Two leading brethren of Barnstaple, Mr. Saunders and Mr. Thomas Pearce, felt it needful that the opposite view should be set forth, which was done at another farm in the district. They stipulated that at that gathering no names of elder brethren should be brought into the discussion. Would they have so decided had they known that they could have quoted R. C. Chapman as having at the last come over to their view? It is proof presumptive that they did not know of the supposed change, though members of the same assembly that Mr. Chapman had built up and taught. And that was within five years after his death.

It has been already mentioned that E. S. Pearce lived with Mr. Chapman all the later years of his life. No one in all that period was so well acquainted with him and his beliefs. It was he who took down from Mr. Chapman the lengthy statements afterwards issued in the book *Suggestive Questions*. Now my friend tells me that about the year 1925, twenty-three years after Mr. Chapman's death, Mr. Pearce visited him and narrated the incident before given when Mr. Chapman said that the teaching that the Lord might come at any moment was not in the Bible. It is out of the question that E. S. Pearce would have given that as Mr. Chapman's

view had he known that at the close of his life R.C.C. had gone over to the other side. And it seems equally out of the question that, if Mr. Chapman had sent such a message to a public conference, E. S. Pearce should not have known of his change of belief.

Yet again; W. H. Bennet, who wrote the life of Mr. Chapman, published in the very year of his death, apparently did not know of the supposed change of judgment or he could scarcely have given the following as his views as to the coming of Christ:

The following words were spoken at a private meeting in 1887:

There are two ways of looking at the coming of the Lord. If I be in the constant spirit of worship within the veil, according to Hebrews, I shall see the future as does Christ. Over 1800 years ago He said, "I come quickly." And whereas, in point of desire, I put nothing whatever between that object and my soul, because Christ puts nothing; yet, on the other hand, if you ask whether the fervency of my love to the Lord and the brightness of that hope are diminished, because I see that He must take time to make that coming worthy of Himself, I say, No: He waits patiently and so do I.*

4. In the verse by R.C.C. quoted above are his lines

"Each moment list'ning for the voice,
Rise up and come away."

The words attributed to him by Mr. Tapson as recorded by J. K. McEwen were:

"I am waiting for the Lord to come at any moment." What if the real message to have been given, and perhaps actually given, was, "Each moment I am waiting for the Lord to come?" It would have been the easiest thing possible for a hearer to have taken that to mean what was in his own mind as his own view, even that the Lord might come at any moment; whereas actually the words suggested would have been in strict harmony with the hymn and with the testimony its Writer had always borne: "Each moment waiting, listening, longing;" as he said above, "in point of desire I put nothing between that object and my soul." This is the language of love, as of the heart of a virgin ever yearning for the return of her long-absent and far-off lover. What, I repeat, if *that* was what Mr. Tapson actually said, but which J. K. McEwen, by that subtle mental process suggested with regard to Mr. Vicary, unconsciously varied in harmony with his own settled opinion? This would explain why no one else at the Conference spread the matter abroad, seeing that what, on this supposition, was stated was only what it was generally known that R. C. Chapman taught and which would occasion no surprise.

And we may finally ask, and stress, why it was, if one of

* *Robert Cleaver Chapman of Barnstaple*, 66.

the Barnstaple leaders, Mr. Tapson, knew and declared publicly that Mr. Chapman had thus altered his life-long opinion, that no one else in Barnstaple seems ever to have heard of it? Why should he have kept silence there about what he had been commissioned by Mr. Chapman himself to announce publicly elsewhere?

If there are other facts and considerations not known to me they must be taken into account, but, as far as I have learned, the allegations of a change of mind in these two servants of God rest entirely in each case upon a statement by one solitary person, neither a particularly reliable hearer, however conscientious. In neither case does there seem to be the slightest corroboration, though abundance could reasonably be expected. And they are faced with the insuperable objection that those who, from closest association with these men of God, ought to have known of any such change of conviction did not know of it. It can only be regretted that allegations so wholly uncorroborated and highly improbable have been accepted and repeated as if certainly accurate. It were only just that any who have done this should now announce that the accuracy of the assertions is, to say the least, extremely doubtful.

THE DISCIPLE

VOL. 1, No. 5.

JUNE, 1954

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*“The opening of Thy words
giveth Light”*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

CRUCIFIED

(Gal. vi. 14)

*For all too long I lived, alas,
Myself to please and glorify;
Until the hour I saw the cross,
And on that cross my Saviour die.
I saw Him hanging there in shame,
His agony untold beheld,
And as I gazed my dreams of fame
Like morning mists were swift dispelled.
For what before was but a tale
I often read, yea, often told,
Was real now—I heard the wail
That through the brazen heavens rolled;
I saw with vision vivid, clear,
My Lord before me crucified;
I heard the bitter jibe and sneer
They cast upon Him ere He died.
And as they causeless Him reproached
Until His heart was broken down,
Love broke my heart, and I approached
And there abjured this world's renown.
Thus as the sunlight died at noon
As He hung dying on the cross,
My worldly life and projects soon
Had died, and withered into dross.*

*I cannot now the worldling please—
He crucified my gracious Lord:
I cannot now seek fame and ease
Where Christ, my God, is not adored.
I cannot now my self-life own—
Its sins were nails that held Him there;
His cross its wickedness has shown,
His shame has laid its foulness bare.
Since He for it was crucified,
It must be stripped and scourged and slain;
Through Him shall it be mortified,
His death o'er it shall victory gain.
For He alone must rule my heart,
The Man of sorrows reign supreme;
To share His shame my better part,
To show His praise my only theme.*

THE PERSONAL INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

A Practical Inquiry

IN the article "Inquire of the Former Age" in *The Disciple* for May 1953, pp. 18, 19, it was said:

. . . it is asserted that every believer of this age is a member of the body of Christ, because incorporation into that body is effected by the indwelling of the Spirit of God. Just as the many members of the human body are one living entity because the one spirit of the man pervades the whole organism, so are the members of the body of Christ made such by the indwelling of the one Spirit. Now many assert strongly, as if it were beyond dispute the plain teaching of Scripture, that every regenerate person, simply by the fact of his new birth by the Spirit, is automatically sealed, anointed, and indwelled by the Spirit of God. I have not been able to discover the source of this opinion, but as regards those early teachers, it is fact that leaders among them repudiated this notion.

In *On the Sealing with the Holy Spirit*, p. 18, Darby speaks expressly as follows: "that a person may be born again, and not have received the Holy Ghost, is perfectly certain according to the Scriptures." He refers to the fact that the first disciples were born of God while Jesus was with them, for they believed on Him, yet they did not receive the Spirit till the day of Pentecost. He cites also Acts viii, the believers at Samaria, and the case of Paul, who was converted on the way to Damascus, but was not filled with the Spirit till three days afterwards (Ac. ix. 9, 17).

In Vol. X of *Things New and Old* (1867), p. 198, C. H. Macintosh wrote, "We consider that Acts xix. 1-7 does most clearly show that persons may be 'disciples' and 'believers,' and yet not be sealed with the Holy Ghost."

Arguing at length to the same effect, in *The New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (1867), pp. 161, 162, and contrasting the reception of the Holy Spirit with belief and repentance, William Kelly wrote very strongly:

It is a subsequent operation; it is an additional separate blessing; it is a privilege founded upon faith already actively working in the heart. So far is it from being true that a man receives the gift of the Holy Ghost the moment that he believes, that it may well be doubted whether there ever was such a case since the world began. I do not mean to deny that the gift of the Holy Ghost may be practically on the same occasion, but never in the same moment . . .

It is to be noted that thus three of the very earliest students of these subjects in those years saw so clearly the teaching of Scripture on this matter.

The subject is of importance partly because of the subordinate inferences and arguments of those who affirm that the Spirit indwells every believer. They urge, for example, that every believer on Christ must of necessity be a member of His "body," the church, because, as they hold, His Spirit personally indwells each; and that therefore every believer must necessarily be raised in the first resurrection and share the kingdom and glory of Christ. If the fact is as they affirm their conclusions may seem justified; if it is not so, their scheme loses vital support. With so much at stake some contend very strongly for their opinion.

In the study of Biblical topics, as of all subjects, it is needful to observe first the facts of a subject, and also to weigh the relative importance given to each fact by the Holy Spirit. It is fact that the figure "body" is not the first figure employed to teach concerning the church of God, nor does it receive chief emphasis. The church is first of all a *building*: "I will *build* My church" (Mat. xvi. 18). The figure "body" was not employed by Christ, nor by any apostle but Paul. It therefore has not primary emphasis in the New Testament.

Paul used it first when writing to the Corinthians (x. 17; xii. 12-27), but already in the epistle he had twice used the figure "house" or "sanctuary" (iii. 16, 17; vi. 19). Writing to the Ephesians he again employs both figures (i. 22, 23; ii. 19-22; v. 22, 23). The Writer of *Hebrews* gives large place to the figure "house" (iii. 1-6; viii. 2; ix; x; xiii. 11). Peter also employs it (I Pet. ii. 5): but neither uses the figure "body." This is true of John also, but he uses the figure of a "building" in several connections, earthly and heavenly (Rev. iii. 12; vii. 15; xi. 1, 2, 19; xv. 5-8; xxi. 3, the "tabernacle" in this last passage expanding into the larger building, the "city").

When this picture of the house is examined with attention it is very noticeable how much truth is connected with it. (1) The Lord is the builder: (2) God dwells in the house: (3) therefore it is to be kept holy for His use: (4) to defile it brings judgment: and other important truths. These are not simply attached to the figure by the New Testament writers by way of explaining the type, but can all be learned from the Old Testament histories of the houses of God.

This renders invalid the notion that doctrine cannot be learned from types, but can only be illustrated by them. Some insist strongly upon this, apparently because types yield lessons that will not fit their theories. Doctrine is drawn directly from types. That redemption from the penalty of sin requires atoning blood can be seen in the history of the passover night in Egypt. This could be learned from that

history even were it not taught elsewhere in Scripture. That almost all cleansing is by blood, and that no remission of sins can be known apart from blood, the Writer of *Hebrews* draws directly from the facts in the Old Testament.

Doctrinal explanation of types, as given in the New Testament, is of course the standard as to how to use types; but the Spirit-taught mind can see the meaning of types nowhere explained: how otherwise should such types be useful? Andrew Jukes (*Types of Genesis*) points out that the histories of the seven chief persons given in Genesis are so narrated as to form together a complete consecutive picture of the development of every full Christian course. Thus:

Adam is man fallen through sin.

Abel is fallen man redeemed by sacrifice.

Noah is that redeemed man now regenerate, having passed through death into a new life and world.

Abraham is this new man walking with God by faith.

Isaac shows him enjoying the general quietness of faith.

Jacob is the same man but now shown in the conflicts, failures, and discipline of the life of faith, which both develops defects and removes them.

Joseph teaches the essential feature that the path of faith leads through suffering to glory.

This outline is manifestly accurate and instructive, and it is drawn direct from the typical histories by spiritual understanding, for nowhere in the New Testament is the sequence thus explained. That there has been a vast amount of fanciful and futile dealing with types, calls for soberness in their application, and for being guided by the New Testament use of types, but it does not lessen the propriety and value of such use of them as is here indicated.

In the New Testament the tabernacle and the temple are viewed as types of the dwelling of God by His Spirit in (a) a local community of believers (I Cor. iii. 16, 17, "ye are" twice), and (b) in the body of the individual believer (I Cor. vi. 19, "your body," the physical body, vv. 13, 15, 18). The histories throw clear light upon our immediate subject of whether the indwelling of the Spirit is simultaneous with justification and the new birth.

The Israelites in Egypt were delivered from judgment by the death of the passover lamb and the sprinkling of its blood. Forthwith they went out into freedom, and the new walk of faith in God, by crossing the Red Sea. This corresponds to baptism: "they were all baptized into [association with] Moses in the cloud and in the Sea." And they were spiritual enough to recognize that manna and water had spiritual counterparts: "they drank of a spiritual rock that went with them: and the rock was Christ" (I Cor. x. 1-4). Daily were they supplied by God, sheltered under His cloud, guided and protected: but He was not yet

dwelling personally in their midst.

Before this dwelling among them could come to pass much preparatory work was required, with much free-will dedication to God of their labour and valuable possessions, leading to the completion of a house for Him to inhabit. All this was in conformity with His word: "Let *them* make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Ex. xxv. 8). A whole year from their redemption passed before that sanctuary was ready and "the glory of Jehovah filled the tabernacle" (Ex. xl. 17, 34, 35), and "Judah became His sanctuary" (Psm. cxiv. 2). Up till that event they were His redeemed people but were not as a house to Him. Because He dwelled in that visible house in their midst they thereby became as a nation a spiritual house to Him, as the psalm just quoted shows.

After some three centuries the carnality of Israel brought about the captivity of the symbol of God's presence, the ark; its centre, Shiloh, was destroyed (Jer. vii. 12-15), and with the destruction of that centre God ceased to have a dwelling place in Israel and they ceased to be a house to Him. Yet they remained His people, called by His name.

Later David brought the ark to Jerusalem, where it stayed under a tent; but the glory did not descend again until some years later, when, once more after much preparation and dedication, the temple was completed by Solomon and God entered it as His dwelling on earth. Thus Israel became again His house. But after four centuries their renewed apostasy brought about the destruction of the temple and again Israel ceased to be a house for God, nor has His glory been seen again amongst them.

This typical history teaches (*a*) that the indwelling of God may not begin until some time later than redemption and regeneration; (*b*) that the condition on man's side for the indwelling is a wholehearted devotion and dedication to the Lord; and (*c*) that pronounced and persistent wickedness by the people of God may cause Him to withdraw His holy presence, whereupon a church or an individual may cease to be to Him a house. But (*d*) this fallen state is remediable, yet only upon due repentance and renewed dedication of all to God.

The spiritual mind could read these lessons in the Old Testament, and could profit by them, even did the New Testament not confirm them, but this it does quite plainly.

1. The apostles and others of the days of our Lord on earth were born of God and received eternal life as soon as they believed on Jesus as the Son of God (John iii. 14-18, 36; v. 24; x. 27-30). Moreover the Spirit who had wrought in them wrought with them so that they preached and also wrought great signs; but He did not come upon them and dwell in them until Pentecost, after the ascension of Christ.

The new birth, progressive sanctification, much service, can be effected by the Spirit, using truth imparted *ab extra* not necessarily *ab intra*, that is, acting from without the person and not as a Person dwelling within him. This had been the rule prior to Pentecost, as the Old Testament shows. On the occasion of His first meeting with the apostles after His resurrection the Lord did not say to them "receive ye *the Holy Spirit*" (John xx. 22). He used the same expression as when a good while earlier He had said "how much more shall your heavenly Father give spirit holy (*pneuma hagion*) to them that ask Him" (Luke xi. 13). Not the Person of the Spirit of God was in view, but rather the spiritual nourishment (bread, fish, egg) which He imparts, by virtue of which a new, a holy, spiritual life animates and energizes the believer. If this had meant the personal indwelling of the blessed Spirit, then for those who had asked and received there would have been no need of Pentecost, and the Lord would not still have told them to wait for the descent of the Spirit after some days. See further the footnote on p. 135.

2. Perhaps seven years after the Pentecostal outpouring Saul of Tarsus was brought to acknowledge Jesus as Lord by seeing His glory on the road to Damascus, but it was three days later before he received the Spirit (Ac. ix. 5, 9, 17). That interval was enough to preclude Paul from entertaining the notion that the indwelling of the Spirit is always simultaneous with conversion.

3. About the same time after Pentecost Philip was used by the Spirit to bring to faith in Christ the inhabitants of the city of Samaria, and "there was much joy in that city." But the Spirit did not fall upon them, and they did not receive Him, until Peter and John visited them, prayed for them, and laid their hands upon them (Ac. viii. 4-17).

4. Twenty-four years after Pentecost (A.D. 54) Paul reached the city of Ephesus (Ac. xix. 1-7). He found certain "disciples." He knew nothing more as to them: they were simply "disciples," but they *were that*, disciples. He asked the question, "Having believed did ye receive spirit holy" (again *pneuma hagion*), that is, "Were those spiritual gifts and powers imparted which indicate the Pentecostal outpouring?" They answered that they had not heard concerning "spirit holy" (again *pneuma hagion*). This did not mean that they had not heard of the Person of the Spirit of God, for being disciples of John they would have heard that he had said that one coming after him would baptize in the Spirit; but they had not heard of the fulfilment of this prophecy of John. Learning from Paul that the fulfilment had come in Jesus they were baptized in water in His name, and consequent upon this dedication of themselves, and Paul having associated them with himself by laying his hands upon them, "the Spirit the holy came upon them," that is, the Spirit in person, and He conferred the *pneuma hagion*, here certain spiritual and

supernatural powers that exhibited His presence, "they spake with tongues and prophesied."

Now had Paul held the doctrine that every believer receives the Spirit by and at conversion and faith he never could have raised the question he did. No one who so thinks would ask that question, but would rather say, "Ye know that ye did receive the Spirit when ye believed!" But, as noted above, Paul's own experience forbade this idea.

These instances establish that during the first generation after Christ the Spirit did not at conversion automatically take up in every believer His residence as a Person. He could and He did do much in and for and by each believer, but it was sometimes as a Person external and not indwelling.

Attempt to break the force of these instances, and to deprive Christians of their value, by the theory that the period in question was only "interim" or semi-Jewish, and the true Christian age did not set in until Paul's imprisonment in Rome, we reject without discussion here.

The main present point being thus established it is now to be acknowledged that the anointing with the Spirit *may* be granted by God on the same occasion as one first accepts the testimony of the gospel as to the Son of God. This is shown by the occurrence in the house of Cornelius (Ac. x. 44; xi. 15-17; xv. 7-9). Yet in these passages the kindling in the heart of faith in Christ and the gift of the Spirit are presented as distinct events, the one following the other.

There is no warrant for inserting in Ac. xi. 17 the word "when" and so making Peter say that they received the Spirit at the same time that they had first believed on Christ ("God gave unto them the like gift as He did also unto us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ"). The aorist participle *pisteusasín* simply states that the apostles had at some time put faith on Jesus, but it does not say that it was at the same time that God gave to them the Spirit, and the history shows that the two events were widely separated. This was noted above. Peter's later account of the events at Caesarea indicates the same distinction. He specifies three operations in the hearts of the company gathered: hearing the word, believing, the gift of the Spirit. Hearing and believing may be closely connected in point of time, as on that occasion, but they may be widely separated in time: and it may be thus with believing and being anointed, as on the other occasions mentioned. In either case the operations are distinct. The Spirit, using the word, had excited faith in the heart of the hearer before He came upon and indwelt him.

Another type displays this distinction. The public cleansing of a leper pictures the restoration of a backslidden child of God (Lev. xiv.). Part of the ceremony was that the

priest was to take of the blood of atonement and put it upon the ear, hand, and foot of the person. Following this he was to pour oil into the palm of his left hand, with his finger was to put oil upon the blood, and to pour the rest of the oil in his palm upon the head of the person being cleansed. Though all this took place upon the one occasion, the two applications were plainly consecutive, not simultaneous. The laying aside of the vessel with the blood, the taking up of that with the oil, the pouring oil into his palm, all required some interval between the use first of the blood, afterward of the oil. Now the oil pointed to the anointing of the cleansed believer with the Holy Spirit.

Some dependent features in the cases mentioned should be noted.

1. *It was a definite transaction at a definite time.* Plainly this was so at Pentecost, Samaria, Caesarea, and Ephesus, as well as in the case of Saul of Tarsus. It is taught equally clearly in the Epistles.

Eph. i. 13. The A.V. "after that ye believed ye were sealed" would support the contention that the believing and the sealing were not concurrent; but the translation is not accurate and *over-emphasizes* the point. The R.V. "having also believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise" is better, for though it amounts to the same thing, it does not unduly press the point that the sealing was subsequent to the believing. But the history of Ac. xix shows that the fact was so, for it was (a) "when they heard" Paul's announcement about Jesus that they were (b) "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus," and (c) "when Paul had laid his hands upon them the Holy Spirit came upon them" (vv. 5, 6).

The point of importance to be noted here is the use of the aorist *esphragistheete*, "were sealed," indicating a known event at a definite time.

I Cor. xii. 13. Here the A.V. is definitely wrong and misleading. By the rendering "in one Spirit *are* we all baptized into one body" the reader is almost compelled to think that the statement applies to all believers at all times; and by the last clause, "we have been all made to drink into one Spirit," that false impression is deepened; and by the perfect tense "have been" it is implied that that universal experience is continuous in the Christian circle.

The fact is that both "baptized" and "drink" are again aorists, which the R.V. renders correctly by "we *were* all baptized . . . *we were* all made to drink." The "all" here is explained in the verse itself to mean that Jews and Gentiles partook equally in the privilege mentioned; it does not assert that all believers everywhere in all times know the experience. As with the Ephesian believers so with those at Corinth, the aorist tense points back to a known and definite experience of the persons addressed.

From the action of Peter and John at Samaria (Ac. viii) and of Paul at Ephesus it appears that the apostles took steps to see that their converts did receive the anointing. To-day too many preachers and teachers assume the point, or they teach definitely that the anointing invariably co-exists with faith and conversion. Not so the apostles. They knew it might not be thus, so they taught and acted accordingly, as we have seen. The modern mistake in this matter is similar to that of those preachers who assume either that all men have in them a spark of divine life by natural birth, or that they have been born again in their sprinkling as infants. Although the results in the first case are not fatal, as in the two latter, they are sufficiently hurtful.

That the Corinthians had in fact received the baptism in the Spirit is clear, not only from this statement in xii. 13, but also from Paul's opening statement about them that they were "enriched," "confirmed" and "came behind in no gift" (i. 5-7). Ch. xiv amplifies this by showing that they spake in tongues and prophesied.

Thus these two main scriptures do not lay down general statements as to all believers at all times, but refer back to distinct and known experiences of the persons addressed. On the other hand, concerning the grant of eternal life there are unqualified statements, such as John iii. 36, "the one believing on the Son hath eternal life," or v. 24, "the one hearing My word, and believing Him that sent Me, hath eternal life." No statement in this general unrestricted form is made in regard to the anointing and indwelling of the Spirit of God. The statements are historical, referring to known experiences of the persons in view.

Rom. viii. 9. Difficulty is felt as to the words "But if any one hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." The strict rendering is, "But if any one has not spirit of Christ, this one is not of Him." There is no article before "spirit." In the Preface to his translation of the New Testament J. N. Darby says:

The use of a large or small "s" is of extreme difficulty in the case of the word "Spirit"; not in giving it when the Holy Spirit is simply spoken of personally. There it is simple enough. But as dwelling in us, our state by it, and the Holy Spirit itself, are so blended as to make it then very difficult; because it is spoken of as our state, and then as the Holy Ghost. If it be put large, we lose the first; if small, the Spirit personally.

In a footnote to the first clause of the verse before us he adds:

Another instance of the difficulty of putting a large or small "s." It is clearly the state and characteristic of the believer; but it is so by the presence of the Spirit. See too verse 15.

The absence of the article in verses 8 and 9 is to be noted:

“ and those in flesh existing (*ontes*) are not able to please God. But ye are not in flesh but in spirit, if at least spirit of God dwells in you. But if any one has not spirit of Christ, this one (*houtos*) is not of Him.”

(1) “ *in flesh* ” or “ *in spirit* ” are the two possible states of experience. The former being plainly impersonal, so will the latter be, and the person of the Spirit is not in view. Neither state is the person himself, but each a state in which the person may be. And that only a believer is in question is certain from the fact that an unbeliever cannot be “ *in spirit* ” but only “ *in flesh*.” A Christian may be in either. See I Cor. iii. 1, 3, where “ *carnal* ” is the adjective of the same noun “ *flesh* ” and equals “ *fleshly*.”

(2) “ *if at least spirit of God dwells in you.*” If this be taken to refer to the Spirit of God, it indicates the possibility that the Spirit of God may not personally indwell a believer, this being the force of *eiper* “ *if at least.*” Thus Hermann in Grimm’s Lexicon: “ It is used of a thing which is assumed to be, but whether rightly or wrongly is left in doubt.” Therefore upon this place Moule (*Cambridge Bible for Schools*) writes: “ The Greek particle is more than merely ‘ *if* ’ (which often equals ‘ *since* ’ or ‘ *as* ’), and suggests just such doubt and enquiry as would amount to self-examination.” So Alford. Doubt and enquiry upon this point can only arise as to the regenerate, for in the case of one unregenerate it is *quite certain* that the Spirit of God does *not* dwell in him, and the *eiper* would not apply.

It seems preferable, and is certainly allowable, to take “ *spirit* ” here in the sense in which a son may be said to have the same gracious or courageous or humble spirit as his father. Nor does it sound quite reverent for a man to speak of having or holding or possessing the Divine Spirit as a Person, as if He were an article one may take or hold. Rather is it He who owns and holds the believer in Whom He dwells. But there is no objection to the idea of a man possessing and being animated by the same spirit as was seen in Christ.

(3) “ *he is not of Him.*” The rendering “ *none of His* ” is certainly too wide.” In my *Firstfruits and Harvest*, 22 and 83-89, this genitive “ *of Him* ” is examined at length, including this passage, and it is seen that the force is that of being a member of an intimate and privileged circle attached to a sovereign, his *entourage*, as distinct from the larger body of his loyal subjects.

In the light of the other places considered this will mean that one not ruled by the same spirit that animated Christ is not of that company which He owns as His circle, His household. “ He is not His (belongs not to Him in the higher and blessed sense of being united to Him as a *member* of Him.” Alford *in loco*. Italics mine. *F. and H.* 89.

Thus this statement in Rom. viii. 9 cannot be rightly extended to mean that the person in question is unregenerate and lost; and whether it be taken to refer to the blessed Spirit as a Person, or to the generating by Him in the believer of the same spirit that animates Christ, in neither case does it teach that the anointing and indwelling of the Spirit necessarily coincides with conversion and the new birth.

2. *The experience of the baptism or anointing was known consciously by the subject of it.* Yet not always with equal dramatic force or supernatural signs. Not all the baptized spoke with a tongue or healed the sick or prophesied. This is settled by I Cor. xii. 28-30, where each of the series of questions requires a negative answer. But each knew that the event itself had taken place.

How could it be otherwise under the circumstances described? Could the leper be healed, washed, sprinkled, and anointed and not know it? Could the glory of God descend and fill tabernacle or temple and it not be known? Can the living God, the King of moral glory, enter and inhabit a house and His royal advent be unrecognized? Can one be immersed, or made to drink, or be copiously anointed with fragrant oil, and be unaware of it?

Indirectly the matter is established by the argument in Gal. iii. The question is whether righteousness is reckoned by God to one who works for salvation or to him who sets faith on Christ. Paul's argument comes to this:—Let the point be determined by one single consideration: Did you receive the Spirit as God's response to works of law or to faith in the message concerning Christ? Now if they had not known at what time or upon what ground they had received the Spirit the question would have been pointless, for they could not have answered it and the argument must have been without force.

The foregoing establishes that there may be subsequent to conversion a definite and known reception of the Spirit to indwell the believer. The question now arises whether such definite and known experience is indispensable to the indwelling, or whether this may become fact without such conscious reception at a given hour. Are the instances cited from *Acts* the necessary and only type, without which the anointing has not been known? or does Scripture admit other proof of the indwelling without the more striking accompaniments?

1. The principal purpose of the baptism and anointing as stated by the Lord was power to witness for Him (John xv. 26, 27: Ac. i. 8). Therefore if that power is working through a believer, so that by his witness men are convicted of sin and brought to faith in Christ, this would argue that the Spirit is upon him, as also if his ministry edifies and

sanctifies believers.

2. The discussion concerning the Spirit found in I Cor. xii-xiv. is governed by the words of ver. 7, ch. xii, "the manifestation of the Spirit is given." What makes manifest the presence of the Spirit? In ver. 3 it is the confession of Jesus as Lord. Of course this did not mean a mere verbal acknowledgment of the fact. To confess Jesus to be the LORD meant at that time a public renunciation of idol worship, an open repudiation of the gods as being demons, a withdrawal from the State religion with the dangers involved. For "Lord" was a title of the gods—"my lord Jupiter."

The confession meant also a refusal of the claim of the Emperor to receive worship, which was the keystone to the State religion. For "Lord" was an official title of the Emperor, as an embodiment of some god—"my lord Augustus."

Therefore to declare that Jesus was the only Lord meant, as the law construed it, both blasphemy and treason, and was legal ground for imposing on Christians the death penalty. The one who was faithful enough and brave enough thus to risk torture and death must have received such inward energy from the Holy Spirit Who had energized Christ to be the Faithful Witness.

3. In vv. 8-11 of ch. xii nine signal manifestations of the Spirit are detailed. The presence of any one or more of these will certify the indwelling of the Spirit. It has been a vast and hurtful mistake to take one of these ("speaking with tongues") as the indispensable evidence of the anointing. Any other one of these nine gifts is equal proof, for no one of them could be produced but by the Holy Spirit.

4. Then (ver. 31) the apostle says: "a still more excellent way [of manifesting the Spirit] shew I unto you," and there follows the necessity for and superiority of Divine love so perfectly described in ch. xiii. When *such* love dominates a child of God it is the highest of all proofs that a spirit other than the human spirit fills the believer, for only by the Spirit of God is the love of God shed abroad in the heart of man (Rom. v. 5).

Those who have experienced the anointing later than conversion listen with pain and pity to the dogmatic assertion that this is not possible because everything possible was received at conversion and only needs developing. I am among those who are amazed at positive assertions upon an experience the dogmatist admits he has not had. When the denial is made with heat of spirit it is also made evident that the speaker much needs the very experience he reprobates. I know the place and time when I accepted pardon and peace in Christ. It was in my eighth year. I know the time and place when I accepted the promise of God concerning the

anointing with the Spirit. It was in my thirtieth year. Why should my testimony on the one point be accepted, and on the other point be denied?

It is dangerous to tell the professor that he is regenerate when his conduct belies it: it is injurious to tell the regenerate that he has received the Spirit when carnality or feebleness deny it. Each is encouraged to go on as he is, instead of the former seeking life and the latter life abundant.

But many have no knowledge of when and where they first received pardon through Christ, but they know they are forgiven: they cannot say definitely when they were born again, but they know they are alive unto God. In the same way, it would seem, a believer may not know of a precise hour when the blessed Spirit took up His abode in him, yet character, life, and service may show His presence and power. Sometimes this proof begins at the very hour of conversion, sometimes at a later and known crisis, sometimes it is by quiet and gradual growth.

Yet even as there are certain definite advantages from knowing the time of one's conversion, so there are from a conscious reception of the Spirit. If one is in doubt of salvation, let him take no risks, but definitely accept Christ: if a believer is in doubt as to the anointing, sealing, and baptizing in the Spirit, let him take hold of the promises as to this distinct and advance experience.

For the method of reception is the same as for all heavenly bestowments: God promises, man accepts, God fulfils. The fulfilment may be immediate, with signs or with ecstasy of joy: it may not be so accompanied yet be equally real and effective. Even as the Spirit is sovereign in the new birth, like the wind not subject to the dictation of man (John iii. 8), so is He sovereign in the anointing and indwelling: "He divideth to each one severally even as He will" (I Cor. xii. 11). There is lack of submission and reverence when one insists that he must have this gift and not that as proof of the indwelling.

The assumption is not warranted that, because on three occasions the baptism was accompanied by speaking with tongues (Ac. ii; x; xix.), therefore it was so accompanied in every other case in the apostolic age. The assumption is not warranted that because, in the instances cited above, the anointing was known and conscious therefore it must always be so. Faith is always to rest assured of the fulfilment of the promise of God, but the circumstances must always be left to His ordering.

Neither is it warranted nor needful that, because the first disciples were told to tarry in Jerusalem until the Spirit descended, therefore believers now must hold "tarrying meetings": for then the Spirit had not been given and was not available, whereas now He is here and available, and it is for faith to appropriate and rest, leaving to the Lord the

manner and signs of the enduement. The law of reception of all things promised is, "According to your *faith* be it unto you," *not* according to your tarrying, weeping, groaning, striving, and emotion. God does not require to be press-ganged into bestowing His proffered benefits. If fond earthly parents know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much rather the Father Who out of heaven will give most readily every holy spiritual gift* to them that ask Him in faith (Luke xi. 13).

A fine Egyptian student in Cairo had just accepted Christ and had found peace and joy in believing. He then said: "But what am I to do in my home and school?" I knew what was in his mind. In both spheres language and conduct would be gross and defiling. I inquired how it was that he knew anything at all about Christ. He replied, "From the Bible." "Yes," I said, "the Bible it is that tells about the Son of God and His redeeming death and promises peace and joy to those who believe the message. You have believed and the promise of the Book has been fulfilled in your heart." He replied with emphasis, "Yes, it has been this evening."

"Now," I continued, "the same Book speaks of another Divine Person having come to the earth, the Holy Spirit of God. You will not see Him, but neither have you seen the Son of God, but the Book says He came, and that He came for certain definite purposes. He did not come to atone for sin, for the Son of God had completed that work; but the Spirit is here to dwell in our body and fill the soul with strength to be holy." This matter I explained sufficiently and then said: "If you will accept the promises of the Book regarding the Spirit of God as you have accepted those concerning the Son of God, the former will be fulfilled in your experience as definitely as the latter have been." He thought quietly for a time and then said: "Yes, *that meets my case*," and he went away to prove the reality.

It has been remarked above that twice in the history of Israel the visible house of God was destroyed and that thereupon Israel as a people ceased to have Him dwelling among them. Psa. lxxviii. 56-61, stresses that the idolatries of Israel angered their God, "so that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which He had placed among men, and delivered His strength into captivity, and His beauty into the adversary's hand," whereupon the people themselves were destroyed by fire and sword. The order is to be noted:

* *pneuma hagion*, no articles. This paper being practical, for the everyday reader, is non-technical and does not discuss the different expressions used in Greek such as "spirit," "holy spirit," "spirit holy" (as above, and see p. 127), "the Spirit the holy," etc. It suffices here to give the sense as understood by the writer. The learned can check this.

first God forsook the house, then followed its destruction and that of the people.

Four centuries later this terrible double event was used by Jeremiah to warn the then people that their sins would bring a like recompense of reward and wrath: "Go ye now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I caused My name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of My people Israel" (Jer. vii. 12; xxvi. 6). Though wicked they are still acknowledged by God as His people. Ezekiel saw the fulfilment of this warning (x. 18, 19; xi. 23). Reluctantly, by stages, the presence of God withdrew from the temple and the city, and destruction followed.

It were impossible, inconceivable, that Philistines could have destroyed the tabernacle or Chaldeans the temple so long as the God of glory was in residence. It is equally inconceivable that Satan could have destroyed the body of the incestuous brother at Corinth, or other carnal Christians there, so long as the Spirit of God was in residence in them (I Cor. v. 5; xi. 30). Types and histories agree to teach a withdrawal of the Spirit followed by the destruction deserved. Twice it is affirmed in the Epistles that covetousness is idolatry (Eph. v. 5; Col. iii. 5). Covetousness is simply the longing to have more, whether much or little more being immaterial to the nature of the sin. It implies dissatisfaction with the present ordering of God. Shall *this* idolatry be less offensive to the holy and loving Father than that other form of idolatry that provoked His anger against Israel?

Nor can it be questioned that upon many a once Spirit-energized life there stands the dread notice "Ichabod," the glory is departed (I Sam. iv. 21). As with an individual Christian so with a church. To the Laodiceans the Lord speaks as from outside the house knocking for admission (Rev. iii. 20). The Ephesians were warned of impending destruction as a church: "I come unto thee" (so that He was not then dwelling among them), "and will move thy lampstand out of its place, except thou repent" (Rev. ii. 5).

"Except thou repent":—therefore restoration was possible as it was to Israel of old, when national repentance warranted the return of the glory of God. As Israel was still owned by God as His people, so a decadent church is still addressed and chastened as being beloved: "As many as I love I reprove and chasten," which shows that it is real children of God who are thus reprovved and chastened in order that they may "become zealous and repent" (Rev. iii. 19). Carnal churches have been quickened and backslidden individuals have been restored, whereupon the Spirit of God has re-occupied the house and beautified it afresh.

All these features are facts, undeniable facts of both Scripture and experience. Woe is unto him who refuses facts to save a theory, such as a dispensational scheme concerning the "body" and the resurrection of the dead.

That comes true in theology which Huxley said of scientific notions, that many a beautiful theory has been killed by an ugly fact.

A note of caution must be sounded. The anointing and indwelling of the blessed Spirit does not guarantee sudden perfection of knowledge, character, or walk. It will lift the believer on to a far higher level of holiness and service, but nothing diminishes the need and duty to watch and pray. Peter was anointed in Jerusalem, but years later he failed badly at Antioch. But his sad lapse did not prove that he never had been indwelt by the Spirit. Thus had the Corinthian Christians been lifted out of the filth of heathendom (I Cor. vi. 11), but were in danger of returning to wallow in the mire (ch. v.). The Spirit had done much in them, but much fuller sanctification was required.

The holy Dove may be grieved, the heavenly lamp may be quenched (I Thes. v. 20). The disciple may be filled today and need to be filled again tomorrow (Ac. iv. 31). For each task and each battle he must drink of the Brook in the way, so as to press on with head erect (Psa. cx. 7). It is only he who *drinketh*, drinks repeatedly, of the Water of life that shall never thirst, but find his own being to become the well in which the heavenly Water springs up perpetually (John iv. 14). In that same word to the Galatians (ch. iii) Paul shows this very clearly. In ver. 2 he reminds them of the past: "received ye the Spirit?" In ver. 5 he brings them down to the present: "He therefore that *supplieth* to you the Spirit and *worketh* signs, etc."

The chief present work of the Spirit of God is to glorify Christ, even as the Lord said, "*He shall glorify Me*"* (John xvi. 14). Man glorifies himself, the Spirit glorifies Christ. Whoever, therefore, desires the fulness of the Spirit let him devote himself unreservedly to the work the Spirit is here to do, for then the effective co-operation of the Spirit is assured; that is, let him dedicate his body, mind, and spirit, his whole personality to the single all-inclusive end of living to the glory of Christ. This will carry with it the watchful use of time, the thoughtful use of words, the unrestricted dedication of all possessions, the ordering of business, of home, of children, the concentration of life entire to the honour of the Son of God.

If this dedication is deliberate and complete, so that the believer can use honestly Paul's words "For to me *to live* is Christ" (Phil. i. 21), then will the anointing, sealing, indwelling, empowering of the Spirit be the Father's response, for the honour of the Son is the governing principle of the

* This being His object He does not attract prayer and worship to Himself dwelling in the believer, but directs it to the Father and the Son in heaven.

Father (John v. 22, 23).

This unreserved dedication of all unto God brings to perfection the dedication by Israel of the vast possessions given willingly to the preparing of the house of God of old. The response of God was that He graciously made that house His dwelling. The same response is assured to the one who devotes himself wholly to the interests of Christ, by serving Him in the building of His church. Let such an one ask for this purpose and he shall receive, shall receive in such abundance that his joy shall be full; for that is true here which Evan Roberts said when asked the secret of the 1904 revival in Wales: "There is no secret: it is only, Ask and ye shall receive." To such an one this world shall indeed be more than ever a wilderness, but he shall know the power of that word, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose" (Isa. xxxv. 1); he shall share the deep dual experience of Paul, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Cor. vi. 10).

L.

PREVAILING PRAYER .

Abridged from Lecture iv. of *Revivals of Religion* by
CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY (1792-1875)*

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
Jas. v. 16.

(*The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working.*—R.V. Literally—*Much prevailing strength has the supplication of a righteous man energizing*).

There are two kinds of means requisite to promote a revival: the one to influence men, and prayer to move God. When I speak of moving God, I do not mean that God's mind is changed by prayer, or that His disposition or character is changed. But prayer produces such a change *in us* as renders it consistent for God to do as it would not be consistent for Him to do otherwise. When a sinner repents, that state of feeling makes it proper for God to forgive him. God has always been ready to forgive him on that condition, so that when the sinner changes his feelings and repents, it requires no change of feeling in God to pardon him. It is the sinner's repentance that renders His forgiveness proper, and is the occasion for God acting as He does. So that when Christians offer effectual prayer, their state of feelings renders it proper for God to answer them. He was never unwilling to bestow the blessing—on the condition that they felt aright, and offered the right kind of prayer.

Prayer is an essential link in the chain of causes that lead to a revival, as much so as truth is. Some have zealously used truth to convert men, and laid very little stress on prayer. They have preached, and talked, and distributed tracts with great zeal, and then wondered that they had so little success. And the reason was, that they forgot to use the other branch of the means, effectual prayer. They overlooked the fact that truth, by itself, will never produce the effect, without the Spirit of God, and that the Spirit is given in answer to prayer.

Sometimes it happens that those who are engaged in employing truth are not the most engaged in prayer. This is always unhappy. For unless they have the spirit of prayer (or unless some one else has), the truth, by itself, will do nothing but harden men in impenitence. Probably in the Day of Judgment it will be found that nothing is ever done

* "At a time when the American Church was well-nigh enwrapt in a dead orthodoxy, and vital godliness was in peril, this wonderful man swept like a flaming evangelist through the churches kindling into a fierce fire the smouldering embers on God's altars. Tens of thousands of formal Christians were quickened into life, and converts sprang up like willows along the water-courses. The power of that whole movement was the power of believing prayer" (A. T. Pierson, *The Divine Enterprise of Missions*, 314).

by the truth, used ever so zealously, unless there is a spirit of prayer somewhere in connection with the presentation of truth.

Others err in the reverse direction. Not that they lay too much stress on prayer. But they overlook the fact that prayer might be offered for ever, by itself, and nothing would be done. Because sinners are not converted by direct contact of the Holy Ghost, but by the truth, employed as a means. To expect the conversion of sinners by prayer alone, without the employment of truth, is to tempt God.

Our subject being Prevailing Prayer, I propose:—

I. To show what is effectual or prevailing prayer. II. To state some of the most essential attributes of prevailing prayer. III. To give some reasons why God requires this kind of prayer. IV. To show that such prayer will avail much.

I. WHAT PREVAILING PRAYER IS.

1. Effectual, prevailing prayer, does not consist in benevolent desires alone. Benevolent desires are doubtless pleasing to God. Such desires pervade heaven and are found in all *holy* beings. But *they are not prayer*. Men may have these desires as the angels and glorified spirits have them. But this is not the effectual, prevailing prayer spoken of in the text. Prevailing prayer is something more than this.

2. Prevailing, or effectual prayer, is that prayer which attains the blessing that it seeks. It is that prayer which effectually moves God. The very idea of *effectual* prayer is that it effects its object.

II. ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF PREVAILING PRAYER.

I cannot detail in full all the things that go to make up prevailing prayer. But I will mention some things that are essential to it; some things which a person must do in order to prevail in prayer.

1. *He must pray for a definite object*. He need not expect to offer such prayer if he *prays at random*, without any distinct or definite object. He must have an object distinctly before his mind. I speak now of secret prayer. Many people go away into their rooms alone “to pray,” simply because “they must say their prayers.” The time has come when they are in the habit of going by themselves for prayer—in the morning, or at noon, or whatever time of day it may be. But instead of having anything to say, any definite object before their mind, they fall down on their knees and pray for just what comes into their minds—for everything that floats in the imagination at the time, and when they have done they can hardly tell a word of what they have been praying for. This is not effectual prayer. What should we think of anybody who should try to move a Legislature so, and should say: “Now it is winter, and the Legislature is in session, and it is time to send up petitions,” and should go up to the Legislature and petition at random, without any

definite object? Do you think such petitions would move the Legislature?

A man must have some definite object before his mind. He cannot pray effectually for a variety of objects at once. The mind is so constituted that it cannot fasten its desires intensely upon many things at the same time. All the instances of effectual prayer recorded in the Bible are of this kind. Wherever you see that the blessing sought for in prayer was attained, you will find that the prayer which was offered was prayer for that definite object.

2. *Prayer, to be effectual, must be in accordance with the revealed will of God.* To pray for things contrary to the revealed will of God, is to tempt God. There are three ways in which God's will is revealed to men for guidance in prayer.

(a) By express promises or predictions in the Bible, that He will give or do certain things; promises in regard to particular things, or in general terms, so that we may apply them to particular things. For instance, there is this promise: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive [have received] them, and ye shall have them" (Mark xi. 24).

(b) Sometimes God reveals His will by His providence. When He makes it clear that such and such events are about to take place, it is as much a revelation as if He had written it in His Word. It would be impossible to reveal everything in the Bible. But God often makes it clear to those who have spiritual discernment that it is His will to grant such and such blessings.

(c) By His Spirit. When God's people are at a loss what to pray for, agreeable to His will, His Spirit often instructs them. Where there is no particular revelation, and Providence leaves it dark, and we know not what to pray for as we ought, we are expressly told that "the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities," and "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26). A great deal has been said on the subject of praying in faith for things not revealed. It is objected that this doctrine implies a new revelation. I answer that, new or old, it is the very revelation that Jehovah says He makes. It is just as plain here as if it were now revealed by a voice from heaven, that the Spirit of God helps the people of God to pray according to the will of God, when they themselves know not what they ought to pray for. "And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. viii. 27); and He leads Christians to pray for just those things, "with groanings which cannot be uttered." When neither the Word nor Providence enables them to decide, let them be "filled with the Spirit," as God commands them to be. He says: "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18). And *He* will lead their minds to such things as God is willing

to grant.

3. *To pray effectually you must pray with submission to the will of God.* Do not confound submission with indifference. No two things are more unlike. I once knew an individual come where there was a revival. He himself was cold, and did not enter into the spirit of it, and had no spirit of prayer; and when he heard the brethren pray as if they could not be denied, he was shocked at their boldness, and kept all the time insisting on the importance of praying with submission; when it was as plain as anything could be that he confounded submission with indifference.

Again, do not confound submission in prayer with a general confidence that God will do what is right. It is proper to have this confidence that God will do right in all things. But this is a different thing from submission. What I mean by submission in prayer is, acquiescence in the revealed will of God. To submit to any *command* of God is to obey it.

Take a case: David, when his child was sick, was distressed, and agonized in prayer, and refused to be comforted. He took it so much to heart that when the child died his servants were afraid to tell him. But as soon as he heard that the child was dead, he laid aside his grief, and arose, and asked for food, and ate and drank as usual. While the child was yet alive he did not know what was the will of God, and so he fasted and prayed, and said: "Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that my child may live?" He did not know but that his prayer, his agony, was the very thing on which it turned, whether the child was to live or not. He thought that if he humbled himself and entreated God, perhaps God would spare him this blow. But as soon as God's will appeared, and the child was dead, he bowed like a saint. He seemed not only to acquiesce, but actually to take a satisfaction in it. "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Sam. xii. 15-23). This was true submission. He reasoned correctly in the case. While he had no revelation of the will of God he did not know but that the child's recovery depended on his prayer. But when he had a revelation of the will of God he submitted. While the will of God is not known, to submit, without prayer, is tempting God. Perhaps, and for aught you know, the fact of your offering the right kind of prayer may be the thing on which the event turns. In the case of an impenitent friend, the very condition on which he is to be saved from hell may be the fervency and importunity of your prayer for that individual.

4. *Effectual prayer for an object implies a desire for that object commensurate with its importance.* If a person *truly* desires any blessing, his desires will bear some proportion to the greatness of the blessing. The desires of the Lord Jesus Christ for the blessing He prayed for were amazingly strong, amounting even to agony. If the desire for an object is strong, and is a

benevolent desire, and the thing is not contrary to the will and providence of God, the presumption is that it will be granted. There are two reasons for this presumption:—

(a) From the general benevolence of God. If it is a desirable object; if, as far as we can see, it would be an act of benevolence in God to grant it, His general benevolence is presumptive evidence that He will grant it.

(b) If you find yourself exercised with benevolent desires for any object, there is a strong presumption that the Spirit of God is exciting these very desires, and stirring you up to pray for that object, so that it may be granted in answer to prayer. In such a case no degree of desire or importunity in prayer is improper. A Christian may come up, as it were, and take hold of the hand of God.

Prevailing prayer is often offered in the present day, when Christians have been wrought up to such a pitch of importunity and such *holy* boldness that when they looked back upon it afterwards, they were frightened and amazed at themselves, to think they should have dared to exercise such importunity with God. And yet these prayers have prevailed, and obtained the blessing. And many of these persons, with whom I am acquainted, are among the holiest persons I know in the world.

5. *Prayer, to be effectual, must be offered from right motives.* Prayer should not be selfish, but should be dictated by a supreme regard for the glory of God. A great deal is offered from pure selfishness. Women sometimes pray for their husbands, that they may be converted, because, they say: “It would be so much more pleasant to have my husband go to church with me,” and all that. And they seem never to lift up their thought above self at all. They do not seem to think how their husbands are dishonouring God by their sins, nor how God would be glorified in their conversion. So it is very often with parents. They cannot bear to think that *their* children should be lost. They pray for them very earnestly indeed. But if you talk with them upon the subject they are very tender about it and tell you how good their children are—how they respect religion, and how they are indeed, “almost Christians now”; and so they talk as if they were afraid you would hurt their children by simply telling them the truth. They do not think how such amiable and lovely children are dishonouring God by their sins; they are only thinking what a dreadful thing it will be for them to go to hell. Unless their thoughts rise higher than this, their prayers will never prevail with a holy God.

The temptation to selfish motives is so strong that there is reason to fear a great many parental prayers never rise above the yearnings of parental tenderness. And that is the reason why so many prayers are not answered and why so many pious, praying parents have ungodly children. Much of the prayer for the heathen world seems to be based on no

higher principle than sympathy. Missionary agents and others are dwelling almost exclusively upon the six hundred millions of heathens going to hell, while little is said of their dishonouring God. This is a great evil, and until the church learns to have higher motives for prayer and missionary effort than sympathy for the heathen, her prayers and efforts will never amount to much.

6. *Prayer, to be effectual, must be by the intercession of the Spirit.* You can never expect to offer prayer according to the will of God without the Spirit. In the first two cases, it is not because Christians are unable to offer such prayer, where the will of God is revealed in His Word or indicated by His providence. They are able to do it, just as they are able to be holy. But the fact is, that they are so wicked that they never offer such prayer, unless they are influenced by the Spirit of God. There must be a faith, such as is produced by the effectual operation of the Holy Ghost.

7. *It must be persevering prayer.* As a general thing, Christians who have backslidden and lost the spirit of prayer, will not get at once into the *habit* of persevering prayer. Their minds are not in a right state, and they cannot fix their thoughts so as to hold on till the blessing comes.

Most Christians come up to prevailing prayer by a protracted process. Their minds gradually become filled with anxiety about an object, so that they even go about their business sighing out their desires to God. Just as the mother whose child is sick goes round her house sighing as if her heart would break. This is the state of mind in which Christians offer prevailing prayer.

Now, do not deceive yourselves with thinking that you offer effectual prayer, unless you have this intense desire for the blessing. Prayer is not effectual unless it is offered up with an agony of desire. The apostle Paul speaks of it as a travail of the soul (Gal. iv. 19). Jesus Christ, when He was praying in the garden, was in such agony that "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke xxii. 44). I have never known a person sweat blood; but I have known a person pray until the blood started from his nose. And I have known persons pray till they were all wet with perspiration, in the coldest weather in winter. I have known persons pray for hours, till their strength was all exhausted with the agony of their minds. Such prayers prevailed with God.

8. *If you mean to pray effectually, you must pray a great deal.* It was said of the apostle James that after he was dead it was found that his knees were callous, like a camel's knees, by praying so much. Ah, here was the secret of the success of those primitive ministers! They had callous knees!

9. *If you intend prayer to be effectual, you must offer it in the name of Christ.* You cannot come to God in your own name. You cannot plead your own merits. But you can come in a

Name that is always acceptable. You all know what it is to *use the name* of a man. If you should go to the bank with a draft or note, endorsed by John Jacob Astor, that would be giving you his name, and you know you would get the money from the bank just as well as he could himself. Now, Jesus Christ gives you the use of His name. And when you pray in the name of Christ the meaning of it is, that you can prevail just as well as He could Himself, and receive just as much as God's well-beloved Son would if He were to pray Himself for the same things. But you must pray in faith.

10. *You cannot prevail in prayer without renouncing all your sins.* You must not only recall them to mind and repent of them, but you must actually renounce them, and leave them off, and in the purpose of your heart renounce them for ever.

11. *You must pray in faith.* You must expect to obtain the things for which you ask. You need not look for an answer to prayer, if you pray without any expectation of obtaining it. You are not to form such expectations without any reason for them. In the cases I have supposed, there is a reason for the expectation. In case the thing is revealed in God's Word, if you pray without an expectation of receiving the blessings, you just make God a liar. If the will of God is indicated by His providence, you ought to depend on it, according to the clearness of the indication, so far as to expect the blessing if you pray for it. And if you are led by His Spirit to pray for certain things, you have as much reason to expect those things to be done as if God had revealed it in His Word.

But some say: "Will not this view of the leadings of the Spirit of God lead people into fanaticism?" I answer that I know not but many may deceive themselves in respect to this matter. Multitudes have deceived themselves in regard to all the other points of religion. And if some people should think they are led by the Spirit of God, when it is nothing but their own imagination, is that any reason why those who know that they are led by the Spirit should not follow the Spirit? Many people suppose themselves to be converted when they are not. Is that any reason why we should not cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ? Suppose some people are deceived into thinking they love God, is that any reason why the pious saint who knows he has the love of God shed abroad in his heart should not give vent to his feelings in songs of praise? Some may deceive themselves into thinking they are led by the Spirit of God. But there is no need of being deceived. If people follow impulses, it is their own fault. I do not want you to follow impulses. I want you to be sober-minded, and follow the sober, rational leadings of the Spirit of God. There *are those* who understand what I mean, and who know very well what it is to give themselves up to the Spirit of God in prayer.

III. WHY GOD REQUIRES SUCH PRAYER.

I will state some of the reasons why these things are

essential to effectual prayer. Why does God require such prayer, such strong desires, such agonizing supplications?

1. These strong desires strongly illustrate the strength of God's feelings. They are like the real feelings of God for impenitent sinners. When I have seen, as I sometimes have, the amazing strength of love for souls that has been felt by Christians, I have been wonderfully impressed with the amazing love of God, and His desires for their salvation. The case of a certain woman, of whom I read, in a revival, made the greatest impression on my mind. She had such an unutterable compassion and love for souls, that she actually panted for breath. What must be the strength of the desire which God feels, when His Spirit produces in Christians such amazing agony, such throes of soul, such *travail*—God has chosen the best word to express it: it is *travail*—*travail* of soul.

I have seen a man of as much strength of intellect and muscle as any man in the community fall down prostrate, absolutely overpowered by his unutterable desire for sinners. I know this is a stumbling-block to many; and it always will be as long as there remain in the church so many blind and stupid professors of religion. But I cannot doubt that these things are the work of the Spirit of God. Oh, that the whole church could be so filled with the Spirit as to *travail* in prayer, till a nation should be born in a day!

2. These strong desires that I have described are the natural results of great benevolence and clear views regarding the danger of sinners. It is perfectly reasonable that it should be so. If the women who are present should look up yonder and see a family burning to death in a fire, and hear their shrieks, and behold their agony, they would feel distressed, and it is very likely that many would faint away with agony. And nobody would wonder at it, or say they were fools, or crazy people, to feel so much distressed at such an awful sight. It would be thought strange if there were not some expressions of powerful feeling. Why is it any wonder, then, if Christians should feel as I have described when they have clear views of the state of sinners, and the awful danger they are in? The fact is, that those individuals who never have felt so have never felt much real benevolence, and their piety must be of a very superficial character. I do not mean to judge harshly, or to speak unkindly, but I state it as a simple matter of fact; and people may talk about it as they please, but I know that such piety is superficial. This is not censoriousness, but plain truth.

3. The soul of a Christian, when it is thus burdened, must have relief. God rolls this weight upon the soul of a Christian, for the purpose of bringing him nearer to Himself. Christians are often so unbelieving that they will not exercise proper faith in God till He rolls this burden upon them so heavily that they cannot live under it, but must go to Him for relief.

It is like the case of many a convicted sinner. God is willing to receive him at once, if he will come right to Him, with faith in Jesus Christ. But the sinner will not come. He hangs back, and struggles, and groans under the burden of his sins, and will not throw himself upon God, till his burden of conviction becomes so great that he can live no longer; and when he is driven to desperation, as it were, and feels as if he were ready to sink into hell, he makes a mighty plunge, and throws himself upon God's mercy as his only hope. It was his duty to come before. God has no delight in his distress, for its own sake.

So, when professors of religion get loaded down with the weight of souls, they often pray again and again, and yet the burden is not gone, nor their distress abated, because they have never thrown it all upon God in faith. But they cannot get rid of the burden. So long as their benevolence continues, it will remain and increase; and unless they resist and quench the Holy Ghost, they can get no relief, until, at length, when they are driven to extremity, they make a desperate effort, roll the burden upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and exercise a child-like confidence in Him. Then they feel relieved; then they feel as if the soul they were praying for would be saved. The burden is gone, and God seems in kindness to soothe the mind with a sweet assurance that the blessing will be granted. Often, after a Christian has had this struggle, this agony in prayer, and has obtained relief in this way, you will find the sweetest and most heavenly affections flow out—the soul rests sweetly and gloriously in God, and “rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Pet. i. 8).

4. These effects of the spirit of prayer upon the body are themselves no part of religion. It is only that the body is so weak that the feelings of the soul overpower it. These bodily effects are not at all essential to prevailing prayer; but are only a natural or physical result of highly excited emotions of the mind. It is not at all unusual for the body to be weakened, and even overcome, by any powerful emotion of the mind, on other subjects besides religion.

5. Doubtless one great reason why God requires the exercise of such agonizing prayer is, that it forms such a bond of union between Christ and the church. It creates such a sympathy between them. It is as if Christ came and poured the overflowings of His own benevolent heart into His people, and led them to sympathize and co-operate with Him as they never do in any other way. They feel just as Christ feels—so full of compassion for sinners that they cannot contain themselves.

6. This travailing in birth for souls creates also a remarkable bond of union between warm-hearted Christians and the young converts. Those who are converted appear very dear to the hearts that have had this spirit of prayer for them. The feeling is like that of a mother for her first-born. Paul

expresses it beautifully when he says: " My little children! " His heart was warm and tender to them. " My little children, of whom I travail in birth *again* "—they had backslidden, and he has all the agonies of a parent over a wandering child—" I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you " (Gal. iv. 19); " Christ, the hope of glory " (Col. i. 27).

7. Another reason why God requires this sort of prayer is, that it is the only way in which the church can be properly prepared to receive great blessings without being injured by them. When the church is thus prostrated in the dust before God, and is in the depth of agony in prayer, the blessing does them good. While at the same time, if they had received the blessing without this deep prostration of soul, it would have puffed them up with pride. But as it is, it increases their holiness, their love, their humility.

IV. SUCH PRAYER WILL AVAIL MUCH.

The prophet Elijah mourned over the declensions of the house of Israel, and when he saw that no other means were likely to be effectual, to prevent a perpetual going away into idolatry, he prayed that the judgments of God might come upon the guilty nation. He prayed that it might not rain, and God shut up the heavens for three years and six months, till the people were driven to the last extremity. And when he sees that it is time to relent what does he do? See him go up to the mountain and bow down in prayer. He wished to be alone; and he told his servant to go seven times, while he was agonizing in prayer. The *last* time, the servant told him that a little cloud had appeared, like a man's hand, and he instantly arose from his knees—the blessing was obtained. The time had come for the calamity to be turned back. " Ah, but," you say, " Elijah was a prophet." Now, do not make this objection. They made it in the apostle's days, and what does the apostle say? Why, he brought forward this very instance, and the fact that Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves, as a case of prevailing prayer, and insisted that they should pray too (I Kings xvii. 1; xviii. 41-45: Jas. v. 16-18).

John Knox was a man famous for his power in prayer, so that the Queen Regent Mary, of Scotland, used to say that she feared his prayers more than [an army of ten thousand men].* And events showed that she had reason to do it. He used to be in such an agony for the deliverance of his country, that he could not sleep. He had a place in his garden where he used to go and pray. One night he and several friends were praying together, and as they prayed, Knox spoke and said that deliverance had come. He could not tell what had happened, but he felt that something had taken place, for God had heard their prayers. What was

* See *The Scots Worthies*, Sect. John Knox. (L.).

it? Why, the next news they had was, that Mary was dead!

Take a fact which was related in my hearing by a minister. He said that in a certain town there had been no revival for many years; the church was nearly extinct, the youth were all unconverted, and desolation reigned unbroken. There lived, in a retired part of the town, an aged man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so stammering a tongue that it was painful to hear him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in his shop, alone, his mind became greatly exercised about the state of the church and of the impenitent. His agony became so great that he was induced to lay by his work, lock the shop door, and spend the afternoon in prayer.

He prevailed, and on the sabbath called on the minister and desired him to appoint a "conference meeting." After some hesitation, the minister consented; observing however, that he feared but few would attend. He appointed it the same evening at a large private house. When evening came, more assembled than could be accommodated in the house. All were silent for a time, until one sinner broke out in tears, and said, if any one could pray, would he pray for *him*? Another followed, and another, and still another, until it was found that persons from every quarter of the town were under deep conviction. And what was remarkable was, that they all dated their conviction at the hour that the old man was praying in his shop. A powerful revival followed. Thus this stammering old man prevailed, and as a prince had power with God.

REMARKS

1. A great deal of prayer is lost, and many people never prevail in prayer, because, when they have *desires* for particular blessings, they do not follow them up. They may have desires, benevolent and pure, which are excited by the Spirit of God; and when they have them, they should persevere in prayer; for if they turn off their attention, they will quench the Spirit. When you find these holy desires in your minds: (a) Do not quench the Spirit; (b) Do not be diverted to other objects. Follow the leadings of the Spirit till you have offered that "effectual fervent prayer" that "availeth much" (Jas. v. 16).

2. Without the spirit of prayer, ministers will do but little good. A minister need not expect much success unless he prays for it. *Sometimes* others may have the spirit of prayer and obtain a blessing on his labours. Generally, however, those preachers are the most successful who have most of the spirit of prayer themselves.

3. Not only must ministers have the spirit of prayer, but it is necessary that the church should unite in offering that effectual fervent prayer which can prevail with God. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37).

Now I have only to ask you in regard to what I have set forth: "Will you do it?" Have you done what I said to you at the last Lecture? Have you gone over your sins, and confessed them, and got them all out of the way? Can you pray now? And will you join and offer prevailing prayer that the Spirit of God may come down here?

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (2)

(Romans viii. 17)

If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him.

Long years ago C. F. Hogg pointed out to me that the second clause of this verse contains in Greek the untranslated particles *men . . . de*, and should be rendered "heirs *indeed* of God, *but* joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him." Upon these particles that excellent classic W. H. Isaacs says that it is "a construction which in normal Greek has no purpose but to express an antithesis" (*The Epistle to the Hebrews* 73). All children indeed inherit from the father—his life, love, care, training; but not all share the larger portion of the first-born son.

Forty years ago there circulated in the West of England a small magazine entitled *Counties Quarterly*. Being asked to contribute an article I sent a paper on John ix. 4, "We must work the works of Him that sent Me *while it is day*," which stressed various things which must be done in this life or not at all, such as, to trust Christ for salvation, be baptized, remember the Lord in the breaking of bread, witness for Him, win souls, and finally, suffer with Him if we would be glorified with Him. The above passage was cited in the translation and sense just mentioned.

It transpired that the magazine was owned by the Editors of *Echoes of Service* and the matter proposed for insertion was submitted to them. Mr. W. E. Vine wrote to the Editor a courteous note that, as this use of the passage was matter of dispute, perhaps it were better to omit the sentence. He added that the Greek construction in this place (*eiper* "if" with the indicative of the verb) does not create a condition but means "since we suffer with Him we shall be glorified with Him."

The difference is momentous. The latter sense implies that all the children of God will share the glory of Christ, the former that this honour is contingent upon sharing His sufferings. The sense adopted here will govern our understanding of many other passages.

I readily altered my paper but said to myself, "Mr. Vine is a Greek scholar, which I am not; but I will look into this." There was then living in Bristol a classical scholar, a Cambridge M.A., who had been classical master at Derby

College, and was at this time a coach of university students. Men like C. F. Hogg used to consult him. His name was F. W. Reynolds.

I mentioned to him this passage and what Mr. Vine had said as to the force of "if" with the indicative of the verb. He replied; "That is what we were always taught on the blackboard at Cheltenham College." I agreed that this was the rule in classical Greek but suggested that it did not always hold in New Testament Greek and asked him to look at II Tim. ii. 11, 12:

If we died with Him,
we shall also live with Him:
If we endure,
we shall also reign with Him:
If we shall deny Him,
He also will deny us:
If we are faithless,
He abideth faithful;
for He cannot deny Himself.

Now, I said, here are four parallel poetic clauses, and having all the same grammatical construction they must all be construed alike, and it is the same construction as in Rom. viii. 17. It is impossible to take the "if" here as meaning "since," for it were contrary to fact to say "since we deny Him . . . since we are faithless," for not all believers deny Him or are faithless to Him. So that the same writer, writing later on the same subject, uses the same construction to express a condition upon which depends the realization of the hope stated, and this must govern his earlier statement in Rom. viii. 17 or he will be made to contradict himself.

For a while Mr. Reynolds looked steadily at his Greek Testament, and said, "You are certainly right." I added: Is not this an example of what scholars now know, that the New Testament was not written in classical Greek, but in the everyday speech of the people? To which he assented.

The sense "since we suffer we shall therefore be glorified" robs the *eiper* "if" of any real weight. The particle is rendered by scholars in this place, and in verse 9 preceding, "if indeed," "if at least," "provided that" (Darby, Alford). E. H. Gifford (*Speaker's Commentary*) says: "*eiper* . . . represents the 'fellowship of His sufferings' (Phil. iii. 10) as an indispensable condition of sharing His glory." Obviously this is the plain and simple force of the English Versions "if so be." On these verses 9 and 17 Fritz Reinicker says: "*eiper*, if in reality (*wenn wirklich*)—expresses an expectation the justness of which must first be tested" (*Sprachlicher Schlüssel zum Griechischen N.T.* 412).

Further, the unconditional sense nullifies the final clause “if so be that we suffer *that we may be* also glorified,” where *hina* with the subjunctive of the verb cannot but have the conditional force “*in order that we may be glorified.*” “If so be . . . in order that” cannot have the meaning “since . . . therefore.”

NOTE.—Upon *eiper* comp. I Cor. xv. 15: “Whom He raised not up, if indeed [*eiper ara*] dead men are not raised”: and Moulton and Milligan (*Vocab. of Gk. Test.* 182): “For the emphatic *eiper* ‘if indeed,’ cf. ‘please return to the city, unless indeed [*eiper me*] something most pressing occupies you’.”

L.

THE WORKER MORE THAN THE WORK

By DR. F. L. CHAPPELL

God's purpose in calling us to be labourers together with Him during this present age is not simply that the apparent work which He sets before us may be accomplished. It is rather, that, in the accomplishment of this work, we may be prepared for our chief and ultimate service in the age to come.

But too often men, judging simply from the narrow view of the present time, suppose that the present conquest of evil and the immediate establishment of righteousness in the earth are the main objects God now has in calling us into His service. This they conceive is the work He has given us to do. But if this work were the chief thing in view He could more easily accomplish it by other and better agents. He could set His own hand to do it more vigorously, and call in more supernatural agents than He now does.

All power is in His hand, and He has but to use it to bring about the result. There is a time coming when He will arise in His might and make short work in the earth. And if the immediate rooting out of sin and the establishment of righteousness were the chief things to be accomplished, He might thus arise at once and speedily work this short and radical work. But evidently this is not His chief aim at present. And unless we discern what the real end is, which He has in view, we wonder as we behold the long and dreary reign of sin, and survey the vast extent of the misery and sorrow that abound in the earth. We are ready to cry, "How long, O Lord!" We wonder why He that hath the keys of death and hell does not turn them in the lock—why He that hath the residue of the Spirit does not pour it out upon the earth. Or, looking at our great Example we ask: if work were the chief thing, why did He spend the greater part of His life on earth without working? Why did He give only about three of His thirty-three years to work; and why did He allow Himself to be cut off at so early an age, when, apparently, He was best fitted to work? Or, further yet, following the history of the church, why was Stephen, when full of faith and the Holy Ghost, and doing wonderful works, cut off so soon, and why have so many of the rarest workers been cut down so prematurely? Why, then, are all these things as they are?

We do not presume to give all the reasons of God's administration, when He Himself does not give account of His matters. But one evident reason we can see. And this one is that

THE WORKER IS MORE THAN THE WORK

—that character is more than mere deeds—that the doer is

more than the things done. It is the character more than the deeds of the church that God now contemplates, since her chief sphere of service is to be in the ages to come. The present age is disciplinary rather than executive. *We are disciples, that is learners, more than we are workers, at present.* Is it not modern self-importance that has set the name "workers" above that of "disciples"? To be sure we are workers, but this is largely because the work may be necessary to learning, since there are some lessons that can best be learned in work. We are workers in order that we may be learners, in order that we may be fully equipped for the age to come. When our character is perfected our present age work is largely done, even though we may seem to have accomplished so little in the way of pulling down the strongholds of Satan or in building up the cause of God. The Saviour could say, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do," even when His whole nation was rejecting Him, and His own chosen apostles were forsaking and denying Him. He was One in whom the Father was well pleased, notwithstanding the world was not won to God. So also, Paul could rejoice when nearly all his fellow-labourers had forsaken him, and apostasy was creeping into all the Churches he had founded, for he had *kept the faith. His boast was not what he had achieved in the way of work, but what he had come to be in the way of character.*

If, now, we inquire what are the elements that God is seeking in the worker, we may say that

THE FIRST IS GODLINESS,

that is, a proper appreciation of God—such a vivid apprehension of Him as will keep us constantly thoughtful of Him and reverent toward Him. Ungodliness—that is, inappreciation of God, is the marked manifestation of the wicked, especially in the last days. Of the wicked the psalmist said, "God is not in all their thoughts." *But the true disciple learns to realize and recognize God in all things and at all times. He prays without ceasing because God is such a constant reality to him.* The prayerfulness of Jesus is a marked witness to this fact. His prayer at the tomb of Lazarus is eloquent in this regard, showing not only His own constant communion with the Father, but also His desire that the bystanders should learn to recognize God as the source of the power about to be so signally displayed. And if our work gives us a vivid apprehension of God, and brings us into communion with Him, it largely accomplishes its end, whether it seems to be largely "successful" in the eyes of the world or not. The high priestly prayer of Jesus just as He was being rejected by the world illustrates this point. He knew God most thoroughly, whether He had led the world to know Him or not. Blessed is that work, however appearing to the public, that makes us know God.

Another element in the character of the worker is

SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.

This, perhaps, is a greater acquisition than the mere appreciation of God. It is blessed to have the mighty God bend to aid us in our work; but if He shall will that we suffer rather than that we achieve, we must be very closely attached to Him if we say with sweet submission, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." This, apparently, was the finishing touch in the career of Jesus when He bowed in Gethsemane and uttered this supreme submissive petition. Often in the exigencies of our work, we are brought into the holy hush of profound submission.

But there is another sense in which the worker needs to become submissive to the will of God, not so much passively as actively. The will or the purpose of God is sometimes far beyond what we ask or think. *He purposes larger than we plan*, and we must be led to comply with His purposes rather than with our plans. *It has ever been the vice of God's people that they have not accepted the whole of His purposed salvation.* Christ has continually something against His church, because she does not accept the fulness of His salvation. We are frequently stopping with some partial, local, temporary phase of blessing instead of reaching out to the complete and final prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. How many are putting their best energies on superficial "reform" instead of grasping the will of God concerning holy, immortalized humanity as revealed in the Scriptures and illustrated in the career of Jesus! Paul, in speaking of his desire that mortality might be swallowed up of life—that is, that he might be transfigured while living—says, "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." This is God's will or purpose concerning humanity. But how few submit their wills to God's will in this respect! *And yet are not the failures of works of reform and of various endeavours of man's devising teaching mankind that they must finally submit to and accept God's wonderful salvation?* Would we ever really learn God's purposes unless driven to them by the exigencies of our work? Was not the futile attempt of Moses to deliver Israel by his own might when forty years of age, and his consequent sojourn in Midian, one thing that prepared the way for the sublime deliverance that God finally brought about? The final Moses was infinitely superior to the incipient Moses, by reason of the work and the consequent acquaintance with God that lay between. Oh, may God cause us to cease going about to establish our own righteousness and lead us to submit to the righteousness of God by faith!

Yet another element in the character of the worker is

SURRENDER TO THE PERSON OF GOD.

Not only must we appreciate God, and submit to His will passively and actively, but we must surrender ourselves to Himself. Very intimate is the relation into which God finally brings His chosen. It is not only that of Master and servant, or merely that of Teacher and disciple, but it is also that of

Bridegroom and bride, where the very self is surrendered in the closest and holiest of ties, so that they become one. Now, this blessed end is never reached if the thought is ever centred on the outward world, or things done in the present state of human society. But if "work," as such, is found to be hollow and unsatisfying, so that the soul cries out for God, it may do its work in leading the worker into personal union with God Himself.

Let us, then, accept the providencies of God as they come to us, sometimes so disappointing, realizing that it is the worker more than the work that God now has His eye upon. *And, at the same time, let us look over to the coming age where, when fully conformed to God, we shall find our true sphere of service. Let us remember that we are coming again.* Elijah did not turn his people from Baal worship, but he is coming again to do what he did not then. Jesus did not turn His people from their Pharisaism and unbelief, but He is coming again to do what He did not then. We may not have converted all our own generation, but we are coming again to do what we do not now do. The *work* will chiefly be done *then*. The *worker* is chiefly perfected *now*.

NOTE.—Dr. Chapell was associated in the last century with A. J. Gordon of Boston, U.S.A. This paper first came before me about forty years ago, in an American reprint. It has been re-issued by The Keswick Fellowship, 92 Gordon Road, Ealing, London, W.13. 1/- per dozen.

L.

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE
G. H. LANG

I have lost count of the requests to give others the benefit of the dealings of God with me through a pilgrimage of almost eighty years.

The only authentic information concerning my family in earlier times is that its original head was tenant of a particularly attractive property on a large and well-ordered estate and was especially favoured by the noble owner. But being discovered in alliance with an implacable enemy of his landlord, detected in fact, as the lawyers would say, *in flagrante delicto*, in the very act, he was summarily ejected, together with his wife, who, in truth, it was had led him open-eyed into this folly. He was thus reduced to the level of a common field labourer; and the ill effects of his ingratitude and misconduct have dogged the footsteps of each and all of his descendants until this day. It may seem singular, but their names were—Adam and Eve.

A certain person was foolishly boasting of his ancient pedigree, whereupon a nauseated listener remarked that such a lineage was of no consequence: that in a remote spot he was shown a genealogical tree of truly remarkable age, for being only half unrolled it had in the margin the note, about this time the world was created! It will be gathered that I have been very happily preserved from such conceit and its deserved reproof.

I was born in south east London on November 20th, 1874. My mother died eight days after my birth. I had a sister nineteen months older than myself. Second marriages, like first, can be disastrous. My father's was prospered with the abundant blessing of the Lord. We were given four other sisters and one brother, and such was the quality of our home under our new mother that, if my sister and I had not been told, I believe we should not have known that we were not her children as much as the others. We were all trained to obey our parents, and the promised blessing attended, in that our days were long upon the earth. We remained an unbroken circle of seven for sixty-four years.

My father had much spiritual service in Bermondsey, on the south east of London, in addition to long hours of office work in the City. For some years we lived at No. 11 St. James's Road, one of a row of tall houses of the type mentioned in Lord Brougham's caustic comparison of a certain very tall man to those high houses the upper stories of which are the least well furnished. But to all eternity No. 11 will be memorable to me. When I was about seven and a half years

of age I was there converted, born again, from above, born of God. The experience was so real, so thorough, and its effects so enduring, that after over seventy years it is as vivid as if it had just happened.

I was recovering from an illness. My mother sat by my bed and talked with me, quietly and simply; and as she spoke the Spirit of truth spoke by her and made the truth effective. She said nothing more than I had heard from infancy, but what new and powerful influence it exerted! She spoke of sin: I felt myself the veriest sinner under the sun. No particular sins were mentioned, but there rose before me childish falsehoods, petty pilferings such as would scarcely have been reproved if discovered, anger, disobedience. I saw these as *guilt*, as wickedness, as making me obnoxious to the holy God and His holy wrath. Now I had not been brought up in a morbid, prudish, restrained manner, constantly checked, reproved, restricted, but in a simple healthy, happy atmosphere. There can be no accounting for this sudden, intelligent, overwhelming perception of the true nature of sin by a child of seven but as being a fulfilment of the words of the Son of God that "When He, the Spirit of truth, is come He shall convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8).

My mother spoke of God, His holiness, His anger against sin, and the coming judgment. Her words were few, but oh the solemnity they caused to settle upon my heart. I knew that if I grew up as I was I should become a wicked man and must end in hell, and of that I had a dread. But she went on to remind me of God's infinite love, love so mighty that He sent into the world His only and beloved Son on purpose to save sinners, for though He hates sin He loves the sinner. I thought and felt what a wonderful, most wonderful thing it is that the great and holy God, Who made the stars and this great earth, loved a naughty, sinful little boy like me. If I but shut my eyes, and lean back in my chair in thought, I feel again the hot tears that trickled down my cheeks as the sense of this overwhelming love of God melted my heart.

A little was said about the cross of Christ: how the Son of God in love to me took my place and bore my sin and its divinely appointed punishment, death. I *saw* this CLEARLY. It was made spiritually plain to my mind, as by a Divine illumination. In the intervening years I have reflected upon the doctrine of the atonement, have read Anselm, Dale, Denny, and others; have theorized somewhat and precisionised some ideas, and, as a consequence, can talk about the subject as naturally would have been impossible that day on my bed; but as regards *spiritual apprehension* of the death of Christ and its value to the sinner I have learned nothing further, for I learned then all one needs to know, perhaps all a finite being can know, and it is all in this word: "Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures . . . He loved me,

and gave Himself up [to justice] for me ” (I Cor. xv. 3: Gal. ii. 20).

My mother added that if only I was truly sorry that I had sinned God would forgive me for Christ's sake. I could not doubt this; I saw the worthiness of Christ and the sufficiency of His death as the meritorious cause, the only cause, the adequate cause, why God should pardon me. As a little child can do, I accepted gratefully the promised pardon. I knew I was truly sorry, and I was only too thankful to think that the dreadful doom of the sinner, which I so richly deserved, would never be my fate; for God had loved me, Christ had delivered me by dying for me, I was saved!

Yes, I was saved, and I knew it. There stole over my troubled heart a quiet, solemn, happy peace: I had “ peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ” (Rom. v. 1); my heart had been “ sprinkled from a consciousness of evil ” (Heb. x. 22); that is to say, the Holy Spirit had enabled me, by faith in what God says on the matter, to see that the blood Christ shed, the life He surrendered, had met fully the claims of the law of God against me on account of my sins. God was satisfied: I was satisfied.

In the long intervening years I have met many spiritual dangers and had many spiritual vicissitudes. It was years before I learned that Christ saves His people *from* their *sins*, not only from the punishment of them. My experience of heart holiness came long after, and my moral life was long a secret sorrow to me. Also I have faced atheistic and other doubts by meeting with infidels, higher critics, and the like, and by reading their writings, so as to master their position, and be able to help them. But not for even one moment has that deep, settled peace through the blood of Christ been disturbed. I have grown in intelligence, but not in confidence. At that first moment I rested the whole weight of my salvation from wrath upon Christ, and therefore found complete rest: I am still doing this at this moment, and therefore still have that complete rest. Our bed says, Come unto me and I will give you rest; but the rest is only found when the entire weight of the body is put upon the bed. Christ said, “ Come unto Me and I will rest you ” (Mat. xi. 28). Blessed be God, on that day, in earliest life,

*I came to Jesus, as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
And He has made me glad.* (H. Bonar).

Happy indeed is the grown man who still sleeps as sweetly as a little child. This I do in Christ as regards my salvation, and all other concerns of time and eternity. A weary woman said, Blessed be the man that invented beds! The Christian says: “ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

And it all took place in fifteen minutes. I was brought through conviction, illumination, faith, unto assurance; a rational, logical, indispensable process in the divine miracle of regeneration. Nor need the suddenness and completeness of the transaction be a wonder. GOD was the worker, and He does wonders; and "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be for ever" (Eccl. iii. 14). His work endured.

In due time I rose from my bed and went my way as a natural, healthy boy, getting into mischief, enjoying fun and games and lessons, outwardly little different to other boys. Not for years did I say anything about that momentous hour. But I knew a real event had happened; and if it was at all true, as my fond mother used to say, that "George never gave her any trouble," this can be attributed only to that renewing of his inner man which God then commenced.

A foremost agnostic of that period said that to him the doctrines which Christians believe were incomprehensible. How then came it to pass that they suddenly became comprehensible to a tiny child of seven, and permanently and beneficially effective through a long life? The infidel can give no explanation. Human skill could not effect this miracle. It is a divine work wrought by the Spirit of God Himself, and every such case is an irrefutable confirmation of the Book which alone is the channel for man of these doctrines, and which promises that the Spirit shall use them in just this manner.

Of course I believe wholeheartedly in the conversion of children. Thank God a thousand times for Sunday Schools; but *Christian* parents should so live with God in the home, should so pray, so speak with their little ones, that *these* may not need any outside agent or agency to lead them to Christ. It is their parents own peculiar duty and joy, and if they cannot render this blessed service, let them inquire seriously *why* they cannot.

Shortly after my conversion we removed to Sidcup, about ten miles from the City in Kent. When about ten years old I was sent to a school kept by a Mr. Swan at Milton Villa, Church Road, Bexley Heath. This was four miles from Sidcup. I walked there through the lovely lanes, had a midday meal, and walked home, all weathers. What would the ordinary boy of today say were it proposed that he should walk four miles to school? But in those bad old Victorian days boys in decent homes did what their parents directed, and were all the happier for the discipline.

Bexley Heath is on a ridge, Bexley lies two miles below in a valley. A number of Bexley boys came to the school. They had a standing war with a number of street lads from Bexley Heath. When the two armies met in the fields between the two villages there was much flinging of bad words and

stones. Sometimes I was wanted home early, when I walked to Bexley station and took train to Sidcup. Going one day with the Bexley boys I got mixed up in a battle and barely escaped serious injury, if not death. A stone from the enemy battery knocked off my cap without touching my head. Had it come an inch lower I might have ended my days as did Goliath. Spurgeon explained that the stone sank into his forehead because his head was empty!

On another occasion I was walking alone to Bexley. The way from the Broadway, Bexley Heath to the fields led then through a narrow path bounded on the right by the churchyard wall and on the left by a high iron fence. When about the middle of this path (now Oaklands Road) I saw three or four of the street gang enter the path. Oh, I thought, I am in for trouble; they will think I am a Bexley boy. So I screwed up my courage, determined to talk cheekily, take what pommelling I must, and slip through when possible. This done I knew none of them could overtake me. The biggest of them stopped me with the words, "There's a chap back there wants to speak to you." Looking back I saw that their leader had come into the path behind me. I was ambushed. Just as I was about to talk "bravely" something arresting happened. As clearly as if spoken by a voice there rang in my heart words I had no recollection of having heard or read, but which from their style and tone I knew must come from the Bible. The Bible is a big book. I have read it through and through scores of times, and there is nothing else in it so exactly appropriate to my situation at that moment. The words I heard were those of Proverbs xv. 1:

*A soft answer turneth away wrath,
But grievous words stir up anger.*

That reverence for the Word of God which had characterized my home and training caused me at once to change my "tactics." I said quietly that they had made a mistake, that I was not from Bexley but Sidcup, and was for once going to the Station instead of walking home. They spoke together, and, honour among thieves, the leader said: "He don't belong to that set: let the bloke go." I went home, not only with no bruises to mourn or explain, but with the lesson fixed indelibly in my heart that it is as wise as it is right to obey the Word of God.

In ancient times a lad of about fifteen years was dying of thirst under a shrub in the desert south of Palestine. We read that "God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is" and sent guidance and deliverance (Gen. xxi. 12-19). Three thousand and seven hundred years pass; but what is that to the Eternal Who changes not? Again he looked down on a small lad in trouble and gave guidance and deliverance. I know not whether it was His own good Spirit who spoke

those words into my mind or whether He spoke through an angel, as to Hagar that day in the desert; but I know that that experience has been a determining factor throughout my subsequent seventy years. It has been with me a ceaseless expectation, something that I have simply and without effort taken for granted, that the God of Abraham will work, will speak, will guide, will help, and that the Bible is His favourite medium to use for His messages. Further illustrations will be given in these pages. I have met many sceptics, honest or dishonest, and have read much infidel literature, by avowed opponents of the faith or by less candid modernists posing as Christians; but their subtleties and sophistries have never deceived or troubled my soul. *I know* the God Whom some of them say does not exist; *I have heard His voice* in the Book they decry, and not once but many, many times.

It was nearly fifty years after I left that school before I was again in Bexley Heath. Standing on that sacred spot I gave thanks to God for that memorable moment, and related the incident to an ancient gravedigger who was in the churchyard and who remembered when the road was the path described. He listened with real interest. I wait to learn that the God of all grace made the account a means of grace to his soul.

(To be continued)

BOOKS OF VALUE

(Theological)

AN EXPOSITION OF THE CREED, by John Pearson, D.D., Lord Bishop of Chester. The first edition was dated 1659. It has been often re-issued, but is now to be had only second-hand. Whoever will study this masterly treatise will have attended a course of lectures in evangelical theology not to be surpassed in value.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THEOLOGY, by W. G. Griffith Thomas, D.D., Church Book Room, London, 1945, 540 pages. This is an important "Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles," and therefore is a general opening of Christian theology. The Articles being the doctrinal standard of the Church of England the treatise is written by a Churchman from the point of view of that Church. It is strongly evangelical in outlook.

OUTLINES OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, by H. C. G. Moule, D.D., Bishop of Durham. First edition 1889. Hodder and Stoughton, London. 288 pages. A smaller treatise, learned and lucid, evangelical; of great value to the beginner in theological study.

IN UNDERSTANDING BE MEN, by T. C. Hammond, M.A., March 1936; 255 pages; often reprinted. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, London. A still simpler treatment for early study; firmly evangelical.

THE DISCIPLE

VOL. 1, No. 6.

OCTOBER, 1954

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A Note on the

TWENTY-THIRD PSALM

in the Bible of D. L. Moody



With me—THE LORD

Beneath me—GREEN PASTURES

Beside me—STILL WATERS

Before me—A TABLE

Around me—MINE ENEMIES

After me—GOODNESS AND MERCY

Ahead of me—THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

BOOKS OF VALUE (2)

A GENERAL HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION AND CHURCH from the German of Dr. Augustus Neander, Second German edition, Berlin, 1842. An able reliable and comprehensive history. English edition, Bohn, 1850.

LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN DOGMAS, by the above Author. London, 1872.

THE PILGRIM CHURCH, by E. H. Broadbent. Pickering & Inglis, Glasgow and London.

This accurate and edifying treatise has the unique feature that it rightly regards the true church of God, not as formed of the ecclesiastical bodies that fill the vision of men and the pages of historians, but as being those real believers in all centuries whose principle and endeavour has been to follow the New Testament. It is quite invaluable.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, by Edwin Hatch, D.D., Reader in Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford. The Bampton Lectures 1880. Second edition revised, Oxford, 1882.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREEK IDEAS AND USAGES UPON THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, by the same Author. These two treatises form an illuminating account of the process by which apostolic churches degenerated into worldly corporations, that is, of how "Jezebel" came to be entrenched in the church.

THE TWO BABYLONS by Alexander Hislop. This is a proof that "The Papal Worship is the Worship of Nimrod and His Wife." Chapters 1-6 are remarkable. Chapter 7 is misleading by following the "historical" interpretation of prophecy.

MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT AND THE MYSTERIES AND CATHOLICISM, edited from the works of G. H. Pember, M.A., by G. H. Lang. Second-hand only. A shorter and convincing treatise on the same theme.

THE DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY, THE GROWING DAY, LIGHT IN THE WEST. Three recent and shorter histories by a modern scholar, F. F. Bruce, M.A. They cover from A.D. 50 to 754. The Paternoster Press, London.

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY to the Death of Constantine, by Edward Backhouse and Charles Tylor. Simply written, interesting and informative. Various editions. The second edition, 1885 (Hamilton, Adams & Co.) has many excellent illustrative plates.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Abridged from Lecture V. of *Revivals of Religion* by
Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875)*

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive (have received) them, and ye shall have them. Mark xi. 24.

I PROPOSE to show: I. That faith is an indispensable condition of prevailing prayer. II. What it is that we are to believe when we pray. III. When we are bound to exercise this faith, or to believe that we are to receive the thing we ask for. IV. That this kind of faith in prayer always does obtain the blessing sought. I also propose, V., to explain how we are to come into the state of mind in which we can exercise such faith; and VI., to answer several objections, which are sometimes alleged against these views of prayer.

I. FAITH IS AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION.

That this is so will not be seriously doubted. There is such a thing as offering benevolent desires, which are acceptable to God as such, that do not include the exercise of faith in regard to the actual reception of those blessings. But such desires are not prevailing prayer, the prayer of faith. God may see fit to grant the things desired, as an act of kindness and love, but it would not be properly in answer to prayer. I am speaking now of the kind of faith that *ensures* the blessing. Do not understand me as saying that there is nothing in prayer that is acceptable to God, or that even obtains the blessing sometimes, without *this* kind of faith. But I am speaking of the faith that secures the very blessing it seeks.

II. WHAT WE ARE TO BELIEVE WHEN WE PRAY

1. *We are to believe in the existence of God.* "He that cometh to God must believe that He is"—and in His willingness to answer prayer—"that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). There are many who believe in the existence of God, but do not believe in the efficacy of prayer. They profess to believe in God but deny the necessity or influence of prayer.

2. *We are to believe that we shall receive*—something—what? Not something, or anything, as may happen; but the particular thing we ask for. We are not to think that God is such a Being, that if we ask a fish He will give us a serpent. But He says: "*What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*" With respect to the faith of miracles, it is plain that the disciples were bound to believe they should receive just what they

* "The autobiography of Charles G. Finney is confessedly one of the most remarkable narratives in the English tongue . . . Mr. Finney himself, from the very hour of conversion, had his hand on the throne of God" (A. T. Pierson, *The Divine Enterprise of Missions*, 314).

asked for—that the very thing itself should come to pass. That is what they were to believe. Now, what ought men to believe in regard to other blessings? Is it a mere loose idea, that if a man prays for a specific blessing, God will by some mysterious Sovereignty give something or other to him, or something to somebody else, somewhere? When a man prays for his children's conversion, is he to believe that either his children will be converted, or somebody else's children—it is altogether uncertain which? No, this is utter nonsense, and highly dishonouring to God. We are to believe that we shall receive the *very things* that we ask for.

III. WHEN ARE WE BOUND TO MAKE THIS PRAYER?

When are we bound to believe that we shall have the very things we pray for? I answer: "When we have evidence of it." Faith must always have evidence. A man cannot believe a thing unless he sees something which he supposes to be evidence. He is under no obligation to believe, and has no right to believe a thing will be done, unless he has evidence. It is the height of fanaticism to believe without evidence. The kinds of evidence a man may have are the following:

1. Suppose that God has *especially promised* the thing. As, for instance, when God says He is more ready to give His Holy Spirit to them that *ask* Him, than parents are to give bread to their children. Here we are bound to believe that we shall receive it when we pray for it. You have no right to put an *if*, and say, "Lord, *if it be Thy holy will*, give us Thy Holy Spirit." This is to insult God. To put an *if* into God's promise, where God has put none, is tantamount to charging God with being insincere. It is like saying: "O God, if Thou art in earnest in making these promises, grant us the blessing we pray for."

I heard of a case where a young convert was the means of teaching a minister a solemn truth on the subject of prayer. She was from a very wicked family, but went to live at a minister's house. While there she was hopefully converted. One day she went to the minister's study while he was there—a thing she was not in the habit of doing; and he thought there must be something the matter with her. So he asked her to sit down, and kindly inquired into the state of her religious feelings. She then told him that she was distressed at the manner in which the older church members prayed for the Spirit. They would pray for the Holy Spirit to come, and would seem to be very much in earnest, and plead the promises of God, and then say: "O Lord, *if it be Thy will*, grant us these blessings for Christ's sake." She thought that saying: "If it be Thy will," when God had expressly promised it, was questioning whether God was sincere in His promises. The minister tried to reason her out of it, and he succeeded in confounding her. But she was distressed and filled with grief, and said: "I cannot argue the point with

you, Sir, but it is impressed on my mind that it is wrong, and dishonouring to God." And she went away weeping with anguish. The minister saw she was not satisfied, and it led him to look at the matter again; and finally he saw that it was putting in an *if* where God had put none, but where He had revealed His will expressly; and he saw that it was an insult to God. Thereupon he went and told his people they were bound to believe that God was in earnest when He made them a promise. And the spirit of prayer came down upon that church, and a most powerful revival followed.

2. Where there is a *general promise* in the Scriptures which you may reasonably apply to the particular case before you. If its real meaning includes the particular thing for which you pray, or if you can reasonably apply the principle of the promise to the case, there you have evidence.

There are general promises and principles laid down in the Bible which Christians might make use of, if they would only *think*. Whenever you are in circumstances to which the promises or principles apply, there you are to use them. A parent finds this promise: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them" (Ps. ciii. 17, 18). Now, here is a promise made to those who possess a certain character. If any parent is conscious that this is his character, he has a rightful ground to apply it to himself and his family. If you have this character, you are bound to make use of this promise in prayer, and believe it, even to your children's children.

The manner in which the apostles applied the promises, and prophecies, and declarations of the Old Testament, places in a strong light the breadth of meaning, and fulness, and richness of the Word of God. He that walks in the light of God's countenance, and is filled with the Spirit of God as he ought to be, will often make an appropriation of promises to himself, and an application of them to his own circumstances, and the circumstances of those for whom he prays, that a blind professor of religion would never dream of making.

3. Where there is any *prophetic declaration* that the thing prayed for is agreeable to the will of God. When it is plain from prophecy that the event is certainly to come, you are bound to believe it, and to make it the ground for your special faith in prayer. If the time is not specified in the Bible, and there is no evidence from other sources, you are not bound to believe that it shall take place now, or immediately. But if the time is specified, or if the time may be learned from the study of the prophecies, and it appears to have arrived, then Christians are under obligation to understand and apply it, by offering the prayer of faith. For instance, take the case of Daniel, in regard to the return of the Jews from captivity.

What does he say? "I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem" (Dan. ix. 2). Here he learned from books; that is, he studied the Bible, and in that way understood that the length of the captivity was to be seventy years.

What does he then do? Does he sit down upon the promise, and say: "God has pledged Himself to put an end to the captivity in seventy years, and the time has expired, and there is no need of doing anything?" Oh, no. He says: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes" (ver. 3). He set himself at once to pray that the thing might be accomplished. He prayed in faith. But what was he to believe? What he had learned from the prophecy. There are many prophecies yet unfulfilled, in the Bible, which Christians are bound to understand, as far as they are capable of understanding them, and then make them the basis of believing prayer. Do not think, as some seem to do, that because a thing is foretold in prophecy it is not necessary to pray for it, or that it will come whether Christians pray for it or not. God says, in regard to this very class of events, which are revealed in prophecy: "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel" (Ezek. xxxvi. 37).

4. When the signs of the times, or the providence of God, indicate that *a particular blessing* is about to be bestowed, we are bound to believe it. The Lord Jesus Christ blamed the Jews, and called them hypocrites, because they did not understand the indications of Providence. They could understand the signs of the weather, and see when it was about to rain, and when it would be fair weather; but they could not see, from the signs of the times, that the time had come for the Messiah to appear, and build up the house of God. There are many professors of religion who are always stumbling and hanging back whenever anything is proposed to be done. They always say: "The time has not come—the time has not come"; when there are others who pay attention to the signs of the times, and who have spiritual discernment to understand them. These pray in faith for the blessing, and it comes.

5. When *the Spirit of God is upon you*, and excites strong desires for any blessing, you are bound to pray for it in faith. You are bound to infer, from the fact that you find yourself drawn to desire such a thing while in the exercise of such holy affections as the Spirit of God produces, that these desires are the work of the Spirit. People are not apt to desire with the right kind of desires, unless they are excited by the Spirit of God. The apostle refers to these desires, excited by the Spirit, in his epistle to the Romans, where he says: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not what

we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Rom. viii. 26, 27). Here, then, if you find yourself strongly drawn to desire a blessing, you are to understand it is an intimation that God is willing to bestow that particular blessing, and so you are bound to believe it. God does not trifle with His children. He does not go and excite in them a desire for one blessing, to turn them off with something else. But He excites the very desires He is willing to gratify. And when they feel such desires, they are bound to follow them out till they get the blessing.

IV. THIS KIND OF FAITH ALWAYS OBTAINS THE OBJECT.

The text is plain here, to show you that you will receive the very thing prayed for. It does not say: "Believe that ye shall receive, and ye shall either have that or something else equivalent to it." To prove that this faith obtains the very blessing that is asked, I observe:

1. That otherwise we could never know whether our prayers were answered. We might continue praying and praying, long after the prayer was answered by some other blessing equivalent to the one for which we asked.

2. If we are not bound to expect the very thing we ask for, it must be that the Spirit of God deceives us. Why should He excite us to desire a certain blessing when He means to grant something else?

3. What is the meaning of this passage: "If his son ask bread, will he give him a stone"? (Matt. vii. 9). Does not our Saviour rebuke the idea that prayer may be answered by giving something else? What encouragement have we to pray for any thing in particular, if we are to ask for one thing and receive another? Suppose a Christian should pray for a revival here—he would be answered by a revival in China! Or he might pray for a revival, and God would send the cholera or an earthquake! All the history of the church shows that when God answers prayer He gives His people the very thing for which their prayers are offered. God confers other blessings, on both saints and sinners, which they do not pray for at all. He sends His rain both upon the just and the unjust. But when He *answers prayer*, it is by doing what they ask Him to do. To be sure, He often *more* than answers prayer. He grants them not only what they ask, but often connects other blessings with it.

5. It is evident that the prayer of faith will obtain the blessing, from the fact that our faith rests on evidence that to grant *that* thing is the will of God. Not evidence that something else will be granted, but that this particular thing will be. But how, then, can we have evidence that *this* thing will be granted, if *another* thing is to be granted? People often receive

more than they pray for. Solomon prayed for wisdom, and God granted him riches and honour in addition. So, a wife sometimes prays for the conversion of her husband, and if she offers the prayer of faith, God may not only grant that blessing, but convert her child and her whole family. Blessings seem sometimes to "hang together," so that if a Christian gains one he gets them all.

V. HOW WE ARE TO COME INTO THIS STATE OF MIND:

That is to say, the state of mind in which we can offer such prayer? People often ask: "How shall I offer such prayer? Shall I say: 'Now I will pray in faith for such and such blessings'?" No, the human mind is not moved in this way. You might just as well say: "Now I will call up a spirit from the bottomless pit."

1. You must first obtain *evidence* that God will bestow the blessing. How did Daniel set out to offer the prayer of faith? He searched the Scriptures. Now, you need not let your Bible lie on a shelf, and expect God to reveal His promises to you. "Search the Scriptures," and see where you can get either a general or special promise, or a prophecy, on which you can plant your feet. Go through your Bible, and you will find it full of such precious promises, which you may plead in faith.

I could name many individuals who have set themselves to examine the Bible on this subject, who, before they got half way through it, have been filled with the spirit of prayer. They found that God meant by His promises just what a plain, common-sense man would understand them to mean. I advise you to try it. You have Bibles; look them over, and whenever you find a promise that you can use, fasten it in your mind before you go on; and you will not get through the Book without finding out that God's promises mean just what they say.

2. Cherish the *good desires you have*. Christians very often lose their good desires by not attending to this; and then their prayers are mere words, without any desire or earnestness at all. The least longing of desire must be cherished. If your body were likely to freeze, and you had even the least spark of fire, how you would cherish it! So, if you have the least desire for a blessing, let it be ever so small, do not trifle it away. Do not lose good desires by levity, by censoriousness, by worldly-mindedness. Watch and pray.

3. *Entire consecration to God is indispensable to the prayer of faith*. You must live a holy life, and consecrate all to God—your time, talents, influence—all you have, and all you are, to be His entirely. Read the lives of pious men, and you will be struck with this fact, that they used to set apart times to renew their covenant, and dedicate themselves anew to God; and whenever they had done so, a blessing has always followed immediately.

4. *You must persevere.* You are not to pray for a thing once and then cease, and call that the prayer of faith. Look at Daniel. He prayed twenty-one days, and did not cease till he had obtained the blessing. He set his heart and his face unto the Lord, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes; and he held on three weeks, and then the answer came. And why did it not come before? God sent an angel to bear the message, but the devil hindered him (Dan. x. 11-14). See what Christ says in the parable of the Unjust Judge, and the parable of the Loaves. What does He teach us by them? Why, that God will grant answers to prayer when it is importunate. "Shall not God avenge [do justice for] His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him?" (Luke xviii. 7).

5. If you would pray in faith, be sure to *walk every day with God*. If you do, He will tell you what to pray for. Be filled with His Spirit, and He will give you objects enough to pray for. He will give you as much of the spirit of prayer as you have strength of body to bear.

Said a good man to me: "Oh, I am dying for the want of strength to pray! My body is crushed, the world is on me, and how can I forbear praying?" I have known that man go to bed absolutely sick, for weakness and faintness, under the pressure. And I have known him to pray as if he would do violence to heaven, and then have seen the blessing come as plainly in answer to his prayer as if it were revealed, so that no person would doubt it any more than if God had spoken from heaven. Shall I tell you how he died? He prayed more and more; he used to take the map of the world before him, and pray, and look over the different countries and pray for them, till he absolutely expired in his room, praying. Blessed man! He was the reproach of the ungodly, and of carnal, unbelieving professors; but he was the favourite of heaven, and a prevailing prince in prayer.

VI. OBJECTIONS BROUGHT AGAINST THIS DOCTRINE.

1. "It leads to fanaticism and amounts to a new revelation." Why should this be a stumbling-block? They must have evidence to believe, before they can offer the prayer of faith. And if God should give other evidence besides the senses, where is the objection? True, there is a sense in which this is a new revelation; it is making known a thing by His Spirit. But it is the very revelation which God has promised to give. It is just the one we are to expect, if the Bible is true; that when we know not what we ought to pray for, according to the will of God, His Spirit helps our infirmities, and teaches us. Shall we deny the teaching of the Spirit?

2. It is often asked: "Is it our duty to offer the prayer of faith for the salvation of all men?" I answer: "No," for that is not a thing according to the will of God. It is directly contrary to His revealed will. We have no evidence that all

will be saved. We would feel benevolent to all, and, in itself considered, desire their salvation. But God has revealed that many of the human race shall be damned, and it cannot be a duty to *believe* that all shall be saved, in the face of a revelation to the contrary.

3. But some ask: "If we were to offer this prayer for all men, would not all be saved?" I answer: "Yes, and so they would be saved, if they would all repent. But they will not." Neither will Christians offer the prayer of faith for all men, because there is no evidence on which to ground a belief.

4. But you ask: "For whom are we to pray this prayer? We want to know in what cases, for what persons, and places, and at what times, we are to make the prayer of faith." I answer, as I have already answered: "When you have evidence—from promises, or prophecies, or providences, or the leadings of the Spirit—that God will do the things for which you pray."

5. "Did you not say that there was a promise which pious parents may apply to their children? Why is it, then, that so many pious parents have had impenitent children, who died in their sins?" Granted that it is so, what does it prove? "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom. iii. 4). Which shall we believe, that God's promise has failed, or that these parents did not do their duty? Perhaps they did not believe the promise, or did not believe there was any such thing as the prayer of faith. Wherever you find a professor who does not believe in any such prayer, you find, as a general thing, that he has children and domestics yet in their sins.

6. "Will not these views lead to fanaticism. Will not many people think they are offering the prayer of faith when they are not?" That is the same objection that Unitarians make against the doctrine of regeneration—that many people think they have been born again when they have not. It is an argument against all spiritual religion whatever. Some think they have it when they have not, and are fanatics. But there are those who *know* what the prayer of faith is, just as there are those who know what spiritual experience is, though it may stumble cold-hearted professors who know it not. Even ministers often lay themselves open to the rebuke which Christ gave to Nicodemus: "Art thou a teacher in Israel, and knowest not these things?" (John iii. 10).

REMARKS.

1. Persons who have not known by experience what the prayer of faith is, have great reason to doubt their own piety. This is by no means uncharitable. Let them examine themselves. It is to be feared that they understand prayer as little as Nicodemus did the New Birth. They have not walked with God, and you cannot describe it to them, any

more than you can describe a beautiful painting to a blind man.

2. Many professors of religion live so far from God, that to talk to them about the prayer of faith, is to be unintelligible. Very often the greatest offence possible to them, is to preach about this kind of prayer.

3. I now want to ask professors a few questions. Do you know what it is to pray in faith? Did you ever pray this way? Have you ever prayed till your mind was assured the blessing would come—till you felt that rest in God, that confidence, as if you saw God come down from heaven to give it to you? If not, you ought to examine your foundation. How can you live without praying in faith? How do you live in view of your children, while you have no assurance whatever that they will be saved? One would think you would go deranged. I knew a father who was a good man, but had erroneous views respecting the prayer of faith; and his whole family of children were grown up, without one of them being converted. At length his son sickened, and seemed about to die. The father prayed, but the son grew worse, and seemed sinking into the grave without hope. He went at last and prayed (there seemed no prospect of his son surviving) so that he poured out his soul as if he would not be denied, till at length he got an assurance that his son would not only live but be converted; and that not only this one, but his whole family would be converted to God. He came into the house, and told his family his son would not die. They were astonished at him. "I tell you," said he, "he will not die. And no child of mine will ever die in his sins." That man's children were all converted, years ago.

What do you think of that? Was that fanaticism? If you believe so, it is because you know nothing about the matter. Do you pray so? Do you live in such a manner that you can offer such prayer for your children? I know that the children of professors may sometimes be converted in answer to the prayers of somebody else. But ought you to live so? Dare you trust to the prayers of others, when God calls *you* to sustain this important relation to your children?

Finally: see what combined effort is made to dispose of the Bible. The wicked are for throwing away the threatenings of the Bible, and the church the promises. And what is there left? Between them, they leave the Bible a blank. I ask it in love: "What is our Bible good for, if we do not lay hold of its precious promises, and use them as the ground of our faith when we pray for the blessing of God?" You had better send your Bibles to the heathen, where they will do some good, if you are not going to believe and use them. I have no evidence that there is much of this prayer now in this church, or in this City. And what will become of them? What will become of your children?—your neighbours—the wicked?

DIVORCE AND RE-MARRIAGE according to Scripture

EVERY effort to maintain the sacredness of marriage is to be commended, especially in a day when the law of man increases the grounds of divorce and public opinion and practice continually degenerate. On the other hand, if any law be *over-strict* and its enforcement *over-severe* it defeats its own end by provoking resentment, defiance, and laxity. From both these sides of the matter it is needful to understand precisely what the law of God requires and by what measures and to what degree it is to be enforced.

The position maintained by one writer is stated with commendable clarity in these words:

“it can be clearly shown that what He [the Lord Jesus] said amounted to this, that divorce on any ground whatsoever is a defiance of the law of God.”

To this the writer admits of no exception, though he adds:

“He [the Lord] did indeed permit the annulment, forthwith, of a marriage, if it became evident that the contract had been brought about by the concealment of essential facts: but that is something quite different from the breaking up by divorce of an established marriage partnership.”

In his view this does not form an exception to his absolute rule stated, for he regards the special case in view as not creating “an established marriage partnership.” Therefore his paper concludes by quoting Christ’s words from Mark x, 11, 12: “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her; and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery”; and he adds the final comment: “*To this there is, for us, no exception.*”

The instance in question is that found in Deut. xxii, 13—21, of a maiden who had committed fornication before marriage but had not disclosed the fact to her betrothed. On what ground can this be regarded as not “an established marriage partnership”? The parties had gone through the recognized legal marriage ceremonies and had consummated the union. What more is required to establish marriage partnership? Surely in the sight of God they were at once one flesh, as much as if they had lived together many years. That the offender was to die, put the offence upon precisely the same level with adultery as condemned in the very next verse to the same penalty (v. 22). Divorce and death was the joint penalty in both cases. There was no question of “putting away” or of divorce, for death was the immediate penalty in

both cases. Therefore these instances do not enter the discussion as to *divorce* under the law of Moses. The injured party did not ask for divorce or annulment: if he raised the matter at all he virtually asked for the culprit to be executed.

There would seem, indeed, to be no exception to our Lord's words in Mark x did two conditions hold: first, that this were the only statement by Christ, and, second, were the case here stated the only case possible. But neither is fact.

Take first the second point. As Matthew's fuller account of the same conversation shows (Mat. xix, 3), the Lord was answering the question "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife *for every cause?*" The views of man in Israel then (as the law of man now) sanctioned the putting away of a wife on many grounds. The Lord pointed out that in the beginning God had joined together the man and the woman and that therefore man ought not to part them.

From the point of view of the Divine law this makes it illegal for husband or wife to "put away" the other. But notice that the verb is *active* (*apolusai, apoluses, apolusasa*): the one party dismisses the other; whether by a mere "writing of divorcement," as in Israel, or by a modern action in court is not here material. In Israel, because of stubbornness of men's heart, this was tolerated of old under the Mosaic law. Christ annulled this permission, and no sanction by God can now be claimed for a married person to "put away" his or her partner, and one who does so and marries another commits adultery, because, as regards the law of God, the former marriage bond still exists.

But what is meant by "put away?" It seems seldom noticed that the term covers three distinct ideas and actions.

First. Under the law of Moses an Israelite might simply send his wife out of the house no longer his wife in law (Deut. xxiv. 1, 2). The action was of his initiation and his performance. Only he had to give her a written statement that he had done this. This set her free to marry again as being no longer a married woman. Thus he could not treat her so wholly arbitrarily as can a Mohammedan, for the latter has only to say three times "I divorce thee" and she is in law divorced and he sends her out of the house. It is to be observed that the duty of giving the woman a written statement was eminently calculated to modify the ease of dismissal. It was one thing for a man to act hastily in a moment perhaps of ill-will; it was another when he had to sit down and put it in black and white for everybody to see; more particularly if, as was common, he could not himself write and had to call in a neighbour or possibly a professional scribe. The time demanded for this would give opportunity for passion to subside, for reflection and reason to influence him, and it may be believed that many a separation was thus averted. Still, a man could "put away"

his wife solely by his own act and deed and include banishment from his house.

Secondly. By the time of Christ, and in some Gentile spheres (though not then in Israel), a woman could "put away" her husband. Yet because the dwelling house would most usually be his and not hers she could not in most cases turn him out of doors, as he could her, but she could only leave, and in addition, "Under the influence of alien customs, and with the support of Roman law, the practice came into vogue in New Testament times whereby the wife directly repudiated the husband by sending him a 'bill of divorcement'" (Hasting's *Dictionary of the Bible*, III, 276). In this second case the sense of "putting away" is modified and the method weaker in character than in the first case, inasmuch as "leaving" and "sending" are not so sudden or forcible an action as the arbitrary thrusting of a wife on to the street.

Thirdly. But what is often not observed is that these are not the only cases, or perhaps the most common, but only such cases as were raised by the questioners. When a married person has committed adultery, and the injured party refuses to live again with the guilty party, the injured person does not, as if he or she were the initiator of the separation, "put away" the guilty in the above sense, because the guilty has already *gone away* from the other. In such case a "writing of divorcement" was not available under the law of Moses, for the guilty person had to be stoned to death; that is, the law confirmed by death the actual cessation of the marriage by the act of adultery (Deut xxii 22). Similarly, in a modern action for divorce on the ground of adultery, it is not the law that annuls the actual union; it merely gives legal effect to the annulment already effected *ipso facto* by the adultery. By the consummation of the marriage the parties had become "one flesh"; by the act of adultery that oneness had *ceased to exist*: any subsequent legal steps do not create the divorce, but only regularize it before the law. In such case the innocent has not "put away" the guilty in the same full sense of the term as when a man divorced his wife without her having gone with another man, but only in the restricted sense that he has ratified the break already effected by the adultery. Consequently the dictum of Christ as stated in Mark x. and Luke xvi. 18 does not apply, for he deals here with the matter of dismissal as the act of the man or woman *without* the warrant of adultery. Surely this must have been the area of the question the Lord was answering, namely, whether a man might put away his wife "for every cause." The questioners knew the law of God, and had no idea but that the union was cancelled by adultery: that was not their point; it was whether any other causes were admissible for putting away, and it was with this that Christ dealt in His answer.

Here 1 Cor. vi. 15 is material and helpful. By the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in the body of the believer that *body* becomes a "member of Christ": "Know ye not that your *bodies* are members of Christ." The question which follows is rendered in the A.V. by: "Shall I then *take* the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot?" This is most inadequate. The R.V. and others rightly render "Shall I then take *away* (*airo*) the members of Christ, etc.?"*

It is an aorist participle (*aras*), which means: Having in fact taken away my body from union with Christ by the act of union with a harlot. The oneness of the body with Christ ceases to exist when the believer makes his body one flesh with one not a member of Christ. Hence, for the Christian, marriage is to be "only in the Lord" (1 Cor. vii. 39). By consequence, if a woman finds it impossible to live with her husband and departs from him she must remain unmarried (1 Cor. vii. 11). The oneness of flesh established by marriage continues; she is still the man's wife though not living with him.

From the opinion that illicit intercourse does *not* break the first union it will follow that the body of a Christian continues to be a member of Christ even while locked in the embrace of a harlot. This shocking conception would wholly annul the apostle's word that one must "take *away*" the member of Christ to make it the member of a harlot.

To "put away" is, therefore, not exactly the same as to go away by joining oneself in an unlawful union. This latter case also, so sadly frequent in all times and lands, was contemplated by Christ, only it must be remarked that Mark x. does not record the complete statement the Lord made. On this occasion, as on an earlier occasion (Matt. v. 31, 32), He created an exception to the rule against "putting away," by saying "every one that putteth away his wife, *saving for the cause of fornication*, etc." and, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except for fornication*, etc." (Matt. xix. 9).† The Lord's teaching being always consistent the earliest statement on any subject must rule later statements. Therefore the later statement recorded in Mark x. must be read in harmony with the former statement recorded in Matt. v., and the exception already declared in the first statement must be remembered when considering the later statements. Thus the accounts of Christ's words by Mark and Luke must be construed in harmony with the fuller report by Matthew, and for two conclusive reasons: If Mark's statement be taken solitarily and as absolute then the exception recorded by

* Of its 102 occurrences the A.V. renders 35 by "take away," 10 by "take from." The word has always the idea of separation of place, and is twice rendered by "remove."

† The Greek text of these clauses is here accepted without discussion.

Matthew is automatically cancelled, with the second consequence that Christ and the Scriptures are made to contradict themselves.

Actually there is no disharmony. By the omission of the words in the question of the Pharisees "for every cause" and the words in Christ's answer "except for fornication," Mark restricted the subject to the first and second forms of "putting away," and as to this the words above quoted do apply: "To this there is, for us, no exception."

But the inclusion of the two clauses by Matthew extends the teaching to the third case, that of "putting away" on the ground of adultery, and here the Lord announces the exception and permits divorce. By the time of Christ summary execution of the death penalty was no longer allowed, for the Roman authority reserved that penalty to itself (John xviii. 31: "it is not lawful for us to put any man to death"). Therefore the injured party was now granted by the Lord the relief afforded by divorce, which is the effect of the exception which He made. It is pertinent to ask why any words which make an exception were used if in fact no exception was to be made?

Some deal with and limit this exception in two ways; first by contending that the Lord used "fornicatoin" in the narrower sense of sexual indulgence by the unmarried, so excluding from the exception sin by the married and therefore excluding adultery as a ground of divorce. Thus the statement in Mark is left absolute as against the married.

It is further proposed to limit "fornication" in these places to the sin by an unmarried girl before considered, that is, to the case regarded in Deut. xxii.

The writer first quoted says:

"Should there be any lingering doubt that the use of this phrase was indeed a reference to the custom in question, it should be remembered that the Lord Himself spoke a form of Hebrew. Therefore the word which in Deut. xxii is translated "played the whore" would be the *very word* which he would use on this occasion. Thus, Moses: 'She has wrought folly in Israel to PLAY THE WHORE in her father's house.' And thus the Lord Jesus: 'And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for PLAYING THE WHORE, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.'"

But the conclusion drawn is not valid, for others besides an unmarried virgin can "play the whore" and therefore it is by no means certain that the Lord had only that one example in mind.

Treatment of the word "fornication" (*porneia*) is sometimes equally unconvincing, but equally necessary to the conclusion cited as to the teaching of Christ. The word meant

originally the common prostitution of the streets. But inasmuch as not only unmarried but also *married* men consorted with harlots the word came unavoidably to cover adultery, as well as indulgence by the unmarried.

Speakers and writers therefore sometimes distinguished between adultery and fornication by putting the two words side by side, as Christ in Matt. xv. 19; Mark vii. 21, 22; and so in Heb. xiii. 4. As regards 1 Thes. iv. 3 ("that ye abstain from fornication"), the reference in ver. 6 to "wronging his brother" seems to make ver. 3 mean defiling his wife; and in 1 Cor. v. 1 ("It is actually reported that there is fornication among you"), this is obviously the case, for the fornication is defined as "one of you hath his father's wife": not his father's widow, as if the father were dead; and 2 Cor. vii. 12 implies that the father was living: "I wrote not . . . for his cause that suffered the wrong." So that the incest was also adultery and the term "fornication" covered all aspects of the sin.

Where the distinction is not thus made the word commonly in the New Testament covers both senses, as in Acts xv. 20, 29; xxi. 25: 1 Cor. vi. 13, 16; vii. 2: 2 Cor. xii. 21: Eph. v. 3: Col. iii. 5: 1 Thes. iv. 3: Rev. ix. 21. In all these places the word must include adultery, or sinful indulgence by the married would pass unproved and unforbidden.*

There seems therefore no certainty that our Lord, in Matt. v. 32 and xix. 9, was referring specifically, not to say only, to Deut. xxii, nor that He then employed the word "fornication" only of indulgence by the married. Seeing that on other occasions He distinguished fornication from adultery by mentioning both, the fairer presumption is that when He spoke of "fornication" only He followed the common usage by employing it in the general wider sense to include adultery.

This common usage of *porneia* can be illustrated from later Greek writings. In the LXX of Jeremiah iii. idolatrous Israel is pictured (ver. 1) as the "wife" of Jehovah that has sinned against Him and gone after other lovers, that is, heathen gods. In ver. 3 she is termed a fornicatrix (*pornes*) and in ver. 6 and 7 her adulterous conduct is fornication (*porneuo*). Ezekiel xvi. employs the same picture and Israel's faithless consorting with the world is first described as fornication (ver. 28 *exeporneusas*, twice), while in ver. 39 her judgment is to be that of an adulteress (*moichalidos*). The same usage is in Hos. iii. In ver. 1 the woman the prophet was to marry is first described as an adulteress (*moichalin*), and then the prophet requires that she shall be faithful to him and not

* In John viii. 41 and Rev. ii. 21, with chs. xiv.; xvii.; xxiii.; and xix., the word has a figurative sense not here in question.

commit fornication (ver. 3, *porneuo*). Again, in the Apocrypha at Ecclesiasticus xxiii. 23, a wife who has had children by another than her husband is said "in fornication to have committed adultery" (*en porneia emiocheulthe*). These instances establish that *porneia*, "fornication," often covered adultery.

Nor was Christ then speaking to His hearers as Jews only or especially, but as "disciples" (Matt. v. 1). The contrast in v. 47 and vi. 7, 32 is not between Jews and Gentiles but between disciples and Gentiles, the former being all those who can cry "our Father" (vi. 5-15). His words in vii. 24 and 26, "Every one that heareth those words," intimate that He was looking forward to the widest possible audience to which His teachings might reach. It is the same in ch. xix. 4-9. He took the whole matter of marital relationship right off Jewish ground by stating the case as it stood "from the beginning," not from Moses, and then laid down His rule upon divorce as applying to "whosoever."

It is important to observe this universality of our Lord's teaching upon divorce, as stated in Matthew's Gospel, because it has been suggested that in His words in Matt. v. 32 and xix. 9, "except for fornication," the last word, *porneia*, denotes marital relations contrary to the degrees of affinity sanctioned by the laws of Moses in Lev. xviii. Even if this were so, and Gentile conduct was to be regulated by Jewish law, and therefore "fornication" meant any union contrary to that law, our Lord's exception would still permit "putting away" on the ground of such fornication, thus denying that the absolute prohibition of all divorce is His rule.

It seems unwarranted to allege a distinction between union within those prohibited degrees and marriage, so as then to argue that our Lord did not sanction divorce of the married but only the regarding of such unions as nullities. For both the terms "marriage" and "divorce" have regard firstly to the actual physical union of the parties, not to the legality or otherwise of the union or to the changing ceremonies that give local legal sanction to it. Any actual union is susceptible of "divorce." But in any case what the Lord dealt with was "putting away," whether by legal process or without, and He put the question and its decision back before Moses and his rules for Israel, by appealing to the "beginning."

It is further argued that the same laws of affinity were in view when the conference at Jerusalem (Acts xv.) called upon Gentile Christians to abstain from *porneia*. But this is pure assumption. Neither in Matthew's report of our Lord's words nor in Luke's report of the conference is there anything to suggest this limiting of the Greek word to a Hebrew context. It is to be noted that the evils here bracketed with

porneia, namely, association with idolatry and eating of blood, were existent long before Lev. xviii, and were unlawful. Gen. ix. 4 carries back the prohibition of eating blood as far as to the Flood. Why then should fornication be limited to the later Hebrew rules?

Moreover, upon what ground are we entitled to presume that converts from heathendom, speaking Greek, would know infringement of the Mosaic rules of affinity to be meant by *porneia* unless this were distinctly intimated? No hint to this effect is given in the passages cited. And there was good reason that they should take the word in its widest possible sense, seeing that the common pagan laxity as to sexual indulgence was almost unlimited. Lev. xviii. does not deal, for example, with common prostitution, but there was every reason why converts from heathendom should be taught that such fornication was wrong in the sight of God, for their mind would be biased in exactly the opposite direction.

On all grounds it would seem that Greek readers would take *porneia* in its common meaning of all fornication, and would understand Matthew to mean that their Lord sanctioned divorce, but on the one and only ground of unfaithfulness.

And we may not take for granted that converts in heathen lands of later times could think of the limited sense suggested, for scarcely any of them would have heard of the laws of Moses, and for long ages they had not the Old Testament in their languages. Yet the teaching of Christ and His apostles was, and is, for such, which requires that it can be learned from the New Testament as it stands.

Some would read Christ's words as having in mind the differing views upon divorce of Shammai and Hillel, the chief Rabbis of the time. But here again what such men held would neither be known nor be of interest save to Israelites of that time. This again would impair the full permanent value of the New Testament. Moreover, the Lord so set Himself against the rabbinical subtleties and traditional perversions of the scribes, that it is hard to think that He sought to distinguish and decide upon their opinions. He carried this very subject back from their day first to Moses and then to the beginning of the human race. From the start of His ministry His practice was to put on one side what had been "said" and to set forth distinctly what were His own teachings (Matt. v.).

It follows that the clause "except for fornication" is the Lord's sanction of a man "putting away" his wife on the ground of her adultery; that is, he may give legal effect in human law to the breaking of the union which adultery has already effected. Mark x. regards the woman as on the same status as the man in this matter. Yet neither is *obliged* by

the law of God to do this; either may forgive and re-create the union; and perhaps the wronged party, if a Christian, ought to forgive, or be ever ready to forgive, in harmony with the teachings of Christ to His disciples upon unlimited forgiveness of wrongs (Matt. xviii. 21, 22, etc.).

Yet it must be remembered that forgiveness does not of itself *demand* reunion. A partner may defraud his partner in business and the partnership be dissolved. The injured party may forgive, and take no steps against the guilty, but this forgiveness does not of itself compel a new partnership. He may take another partner. Similarly a wronged husband or wife ought to fulfil the rule of Christ and freely forgive, but this does not *compel* resumption of marital life. Circumstances may forbid, as when by the fornication disease has been contracted, incurable and inescapable, so that reunion would infect the innocent party and children that might be born.

Desertion

There remains to be considered the question of DESERTION. This was not dealt with by our Lord but it is opened up in 1 Cor. vii. 10-17.

The following are major points.

1. Verses 10, 11. The governing rule is that married Christians are not to separate: "that the wife depart not from her husband . . . that the husband leave not the wife." But an exception is contemplated as possible, even that a wife may feel unequal to continuing with the husband and may leave him. In this event she must remain unmarried or resume life with him.

2. No such exception is permitted to the husband: "I give charge, yea, not I, but the Lord . . . that the husband leave not his wife."

The A.V., followed by many, twice translates *aphiemi* here by "put away," when the action of the husband is in view. This is on the supposition that Paul, in saying that it is not he but the Lord Who gives this charge, is referring to Christ's dictum forbidding divorce. It is to be observed that neither of the Evangelists gives this word as the equivalent in Greek of the Lord's statement, but the word *apoluo*. *Aphiemi*, as I count, is found in the Received Text 145 times; some 25 in the sense of *to permit, suffer* an action; 48 times *to forgive*; and about 72 times in the sense of *to leave, forsake*. I have not noticed any other place where it has the meaning *to put away*, nor does the A.V. so translate it save here and in Matt. xiii. 36 and Mark iv. 36, where the R.V. renders consistently by "leave." Also in our passage A.V. gives "leave" in the same verse when it applies to the wife, and R.V. renders by "leave" in each of the three occurrences. Thus here, as in the whole context, Paul is dealing with the matter of desertion, not of "putting away."

The exhortation to continue together assumes that the

parties being Christians have Divine grace available to make possible what to unaided human nature may be impossible. Hence "husbands love your wives, *even as Christ also loved the church.*" Divine love loves the unlovable until it is lovable. Christ loved the church thus, redeemed her, is her Saviour, Sanctifier, and will be her Perfecter. Thus is the husband to nourish and cherish his wife, and she is to subject herself to him *as unto the Lord* (Eph. v. 22-23).

3. Verses 12, 13. "But to the rest." As no believer was allowed to marry an unbeliever (ver. 39; 2 Cor. vi. 14) "the rest" [of the married] must be those married before conversion and now having an unbelieving partner, husband or wife. To these two injunctions are given:

(a) If the unbeliever is willing to continue the union, let it be so; for which course three reasons are advanced: (1) Verse 14. That the unbeliever and the children derive present positional advantage Godward by the association with the believer. (2) Verse 16. The possibility that this advantage may develop unto the true salvation of the unbelieving partner. (3) Verses 17-24. That the general principle involved is that a believer should abide in whatever status he holds in life at the time he is called of God unto salvation, whether married, circumcised or uncircumcised, or a slave. This holds good so long as the status in question is one in which he can abide "with God" and therefore God with him.

(b) On the other hand, "if the unbelieving depart, let him depart"; that is, if the unbeliever deliberately, of his or her own will alone, and against the willingness of the believer to continue their married life, breaks off the union by deserting the spouse, then the believer may simply accept the situation and is not bound to regard the union as continuing; "the brother or the sister has not [*dedoulotai* perf. pass.] been put under bondage in such a case," that is, neither by the marriage tie, nor by any rule of God or of human law.

In this instance again the man and the woman are on equality, there is one status and principle for them both. Over long periods and in vast areas this is revolutionary, since human custom and law has commonly given to the man license refused to the woman.

The additional remark (ver. 15) "But *in peace* [emphatic] God has called us" points to another principle of Christian conduct expressed elsewhere by "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth [that is, on your side of every matter], be at peace with all men . . . So then let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may build up one another" (Rom. xii. 18; xiv. 19). Thus the believer married to an unbeliever is sedulously to endeavour to preserve peace in the home; but the "if it be possible" implies that sometimes the ideal may not be possible, in which case, if the unbeliever departs this will make for peace not otherwise

attainable and the believer is free to accept the situation thus brought about by the other.

The matter of the after conduct of the one who departs, whether a new marital association is or is not formed, is not here raised. In all times and places such a connexion will commonly follow and then the Lord's rule as to adultery will apply; but here the matter is left simply at the desertion, and, if the above is the true sense of the passage, as certainly seems the force of the curt, definite "let him depart," then the forsaken believer is under no obligation to attempt to recall the deserter nor is bound to regard himself or herself as still married.

Re-Marriage

Now as adultery *ipso facto* breaks the union, and as resolute desertion is regarded as doing so, the parties are thereupon unmarried, save technically before the law. When this status has been ratified legally, either party may marry another without being guilty of adultery before God or man. Christ's dictum in Mark x. 11, 12, says nothing to the contrary, for it is not aimed at this case but at the case of a man or a woman putting away the partner without adultery or desertion having already snapped the marriage tie.

Being thus unmarried the question of marrying or not is to be settled on its own grounds. Surely those who have actually become one by sinful intercourse do the honourable thing towards each other and towards society by establishing the union on a public legal basis. This is generally agreed as regards persons who have had intercourse before marriage and it was enforced by the law of God (Deut. xxii. 28, 29); why should it not apply to those who have become unmarried by desertion or adultery? To forbid marriage is to place on both the man and the woman a strain that may prove intolerable and lead either of them to worse fornication. Here apply the apostle's words: "But I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them that they abide as I [that is unmarried.] But if they have not continency let them marry: *for it is better to marry than to burn*" (1 Cor. vii. 8, 9).

The claim of "the church" that an union that it, by its clergy, has sanctioned and blessed is inviolable and cannot be dissolved, is contrary to fact, for the true union *has been* dissolved by the adulterous intercourse or the persistent desertion; and it is equally contrary to Scripture as well as to sound morality. Even in the case of a woman divorced legally, though without the justification of her having committed adultery, the law of Moses specifically sanctioned her re-marriage: "she may go and be another man's wife" (Deut. xxiv. 2).

There is shown in the Word of God a principle of Divine toleration of evils that cannot be completely cured because of existing conditions. The ideal ought indeed to be striven

after. God aims at it, man ought to do so. But until this can be attained God tolerates much that is as yet irremovable. Walking on the lower level does indeed involve its due recompense of reward, but the full penal consequences are not always enforced.

Polygamy is an example. It brought its own sorrow and strain into family life, but God did not peremptorily forbid it in Israel or elsewhere, though it was contrary to His original order for man. This tolerance was continued in the Christian society. A convert with more than one wife was not compelled to put away all but the first wife. In the conditions of heathen society in the first era of the church, as in heathendom today, to do this would commonly make the dismissed women common property, and the resulting immorality would be a far worse evil than the man keeping them until they died or chose to depart. The condition was put under the stigma that it disqualified for office in the church, for the overseer or deacon must be "of *one* wife husband" (1 Tim. iii. 2, 12; Tit. i. 6), and the rising generation of Christians were not allowed to take more than one wife at a time, and so the situation rectified itself in the second generation.

Thus with the matter of marriage itself. The ideal is the condition of the angels in heaven, who neither marry nor are given in marriage, and to this the sons of the first resurrection will attain (Matt. xxii. 30; etc.). But this ideal is not yet attainable by all: as Christ said to His disciples: "Not all men can receive this saying, but they to whom it is given . . . He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. xix. 11, 12). To the rest comes the merciful and morality-inducing counsel: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. But, *because of fornications*, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband" (1 Cor. vii. 1, 2).

This principle of toleration is simply unavoidable. God as the Governor of the universe is no mere theorist or idealist but the supreme and perfect Realist, taking full account of existing conditions and facts. And it is fact that social conditions become so highly complicated, that no general law or rule can be devised to cover all cases or resolve all problems. It was thus in the time of Christ and so it is still. Anyone who has looked with attention into heathendom or Mohammedanism must recognize this. One who had spent a long life in a region occupied by both pagans and Moslems said to me there that the social system of Islam is the vilest thing on earth. It is nothing unusual for a still young woman to have lived with several husbands in succession, each having divorced her.* Suppose she should be truly converted to God, how can her marital position be regularized? The subsequent unions have effectively annulled the first marriage,

* Gibbon (ch. XXIV., Sect. I) shows that this laxity existed in the Roman world; a woman being married to eight husbands in five years is cited.

and in any case it would be extremely unlikely that the first husband would take her back, and even if he did she would be liable again to divorce. The problems are insoluble. The past has to be ignored, being irremediable.

Even in England conditions arise which cannot be rectified. A man and his wife were truly saved at a hall which I attended. For quite a time they ran well and then declined spiritually. Presently she brought a case against him for maintenance of herself and their child. A third party came forward and proved to the court that she was not in law the wife of the other. He himself had married her; had sold her to another man for seven and sixpence; she had lived with the second until his death, and then had married this third man. Naturally, the legal husband, an ungodly man, was not willing to take her again and her child. How was this tangle to be put straight from the Christian point of view?

A man I knew went home and caught another man with his wife. She left her husband and lived with the other. Presently he joined with another woman and they had several children. Their home life was orderly. Then the parents were both soundly converted. What was to be done? They could not marry legally because the legal wife was still alive and living with the other man. The situation had simply to be tolerated, for any different course would have involved other and worse evils and difficulties.

Christ stated the ideal, but allowed for stubborn facts by acknowledging that not all could receive and act upon the ideal (Matt. xix. 11, 12). As shown above, Paul followed the spirit and method of his Lord, stating the ideal, celibacy, but allowing for the facts of human nature as it is (1 Cor. vii. 1-9). It had been beneficial if ecclesiastical law had likewise followed Christ and Paul, for no law can be drafted which will helpfully cover all the varied and complicated cases which arise.

Discipline must indeed be maintained in the house of God, for holiness becometh that house, and it may have to be severe. But only the humble and broken in heart can exercise it. The hard, unmerciful ecclesiastical rule that the fallen must not marry can but promote fornications and defeat morality. Roman Catholic lands are sadly notorious for immorality.* The Christian, indeed, in the strength of the Spirit of Christ, should himself walk by the ideal; but let him show the mercy which God shows to the weak and erring, considering himself lest he also be tempted (Gal. vi. 1), and remembering the overwhelming, humiliating dictum of his own Saviour and Judge, that he who has committed the sin in his heart has committed it in act, as God reckons. Who, then, dare throw a stone? But "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. v. 7).

* Eire is said to be the happy exception. It is the exception also in having a long-standing and strong Biblical and Protestant influence.

THE INABILITY OF CHRIST

A Letter

MY DEAR BROTHER,

It was a great pleasure to see you here and to learn more of your matters. I trust that you see the Lord opening your way in His service. He is well able to do this, and He does it: "I have set before thee a door opened" (Rev. iii. 8). Thus Paul prayed that *the Lord* would prosper his way to go to Rome. The Lord did this; but the time and route were other than Paul would have planned or could have brought to pass. This is noteworthy.

I am afresh impressed by what I may boldly call the inability of Christ: as He Himself said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but [only] what He seeth the Father doing" (John v. 19). "The Son is not able to do anything from Himself," i.e., by His own independent, initiative or energy. What a lesson for us! The Father must act first; the son can only follow in co-operation: "we are workers together with God." By consequence Jesus would not act an hour before the Father; "My hour is not yet come" (John ii. 4; vii. 6). Nor did He fret against this, as if it were delay; nor did He strive to "get a move on," as we say. He waited during four thousand years of human history and need before He came to the earth; He has waited nearly two thousand further years to return. He does not find this irksome. The Father took seemingly strange ways for the ordering of the life of Jesus; but the Son said, "Yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight" (Matt. xi. 26).

It is also observable how restricted Christ and the apostles were as to ways and means for getting things done. They had neither wealth, nor influential friends, nor organization behind them. John had influence enough at the high priest's house to get Peter let in, to the undoing of the latter, which is a warning as to the use of personal social influence; but he had no influence to help Jesus. Yet without what men call resources these men, like their Master, saw wonderful things accomplished.

All this has a direct bearing today. Organizations in missionary work secure facilities, smooth the way with officials, distribute monies, enable various things to be done; and yet the essential spiritual work of the kingdom of God is less effective than of old, when His servants laboured under similar difficulties as today but without these human measures to circumvent them.

One blessed result of waiting for the Father was that the Lord never had to regret in the sequel that things had been brought about which remained unblessed, or, on the other hand, that any part of the purpose of God remained unfulfilled.

At the close of his life of restrictions, harassment, and opposition He could reflect with satisfaction that He had accomplished the work that the Father had given Him to do (John xvii. 4).

I put this to you for your reflection. The manner of life of Christ and the apostles demands an attitude of heart toward God which is rare today; a constant quiet inward intercourse with Him, which does not diminish intensity and zeal, but which preserves from fret and anxiety and feverish haste. It preserves also from disappointment when our plans miscarry, when things we had thought desirable, even seemingly indispensable, are unobtainable, or when men are allowed to frustrate us. Such a heart rests assured that *God's* plans cannot be frustrated, and it is heartily content that only His will shall be done.

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (3)
THE CONDITIONAL FORCE OF I JOHN I. 7

If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Ean is a conditional particle, from *ei*, if, and *an* which emphasizes the conditional element. This force of the three particles continues in modern Greek. The conditional force is the more distinct with the subjunctive of the verb, as here. In this second paragraph John uses this construction seven times:

Chapter i. 6, if we say: verse 7, if we walk: verse 8, if we say: verse 9, if we confess: verse 10, if we say: chapter ii. 1, if any one sin: verse 5, but whoever may keep (hos d'an tere).

In all these instances the strict sense is "suppose we should say, walk, etc." Darby, *New Translation*, in note "e" to these verses in ch. i., says: "In all these cases the verb is in the subjunctive, and puts the case of so doing. I should have translated them 'if we should say' etc. but that it is the case in verse 9 also, where it cannot be done." But he offers no reason why it cannot be done in verse 9, nor does there seem to be any reason. To all these places his German version gives the note "Gesetzt den Fall, dass," which means, Let us suppose that, and no exception is mentioned. In the 1939 edition of his English Translation the exception is no longer found.

Young's *Literal* gives: "If we may say"; Rotherham renders: "If perchance we should say, walk, etc." Of ten standard commentaries examined all accept or assert the

conditional element. Alford terms the fellowship and the cleansing "results" of our "walking in the light." So also W. E. Vine on this place speaks of the cleansing as "the second result of walking in the light," the first being the fellowship mentioned.

Darby's earlier exception involves forgetfulness of the difference between justification and forgiveness. Upon faith in Christ the sinner is given a new standing in grace and before the law of God, and he becomes a child of God. This status is irreversible; being a child of God he can never be otherwise than His child. This is forensic justification. But obviously a child that does wrong needs forgiveness, and this can only be rightly and helpfully extended by the father upon the child being sorry and confessing the fault. To continue in disobedience to God is to go into the darkness of forfeited communion, for God cannot come out into the darkness with the disobedient child and give him His fellowship there. The child must return to the light, the prodigal son must come home, if he is to be forgiven. "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper: but who so confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy" (Prov. xxviii. 13). Thus does Israel's reception again in grace tarry for their acknowledgment of their offence, until when God holds aloof and chastens them (Hos. v. 16). God is ever ready to pardon, He delights to do so; but His forgiveness cannot be actually extended prior to repentance and confession. This is a moral necessity and therefore it is "if we confess our sins" that God forgives us His children. John includes himself in this with all believers, saying "if we confess," we Christians, the circle of whom I am one.

Does not Lev. xvi., the Day of atonement, lie behind this passage in John? On that day the High Priest, as the religious representative of the whole nation made a general confession of and offered a plenary atonement for "all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins" (vs. 21, 22). This removed ceremonially the guilt of all their unrecognised sins, which however God recognized and which would have restrained His grace. But if an Israelite had sinned consciously he had to repent, desist, confess, and offer the appointed personal sacrifice: then he was forgiven. He could not say in his heart, Next week is the great atonement when all our sins are put away, so I need not fear or offer my own sacrifice. That general atonement was for all the offences unrecognized by men but known to God. If a man was not walking in what light he had as to the law of God, but in the darkness of selfwill, that Day availed him nothing. But while he walked in what light he had all other transgressions were held covered and did not debar fellowship with God or the godly. In our passage also the emphasis is on the word "all," and covers not only those sins of which the believer is aware and of which he has repented, but all

other failures and sins of which he does not know, but which are known to God and which would debar fellowship but for the plenary virtue of the blood of Christ.

In this connection the force of *ean* with the subjunctive is seen clearly in Matt. vi. 14, 15: "If ye forgive . . . your Father will forgive you. If ye do not forgive . . . neither will your Father forgive." Here also it is not a matter of justification but of forgiveness. And it *must* be thus. God's holiness demands it. An unforgiving spirit is itself sin, being utterly contrary to God, and He *cannot* condone sin in His children, nor forgive them until they repent and return to the light.

In his *Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (1005 f.) A. T. Robertson points out that in John xiii. 17 two uses of *ei* and *ean* are distinguished: "If ye know" (*ei* with the indicative) assumes that they do know as a fact; "happy are ye if ye should do" (*ean* with the subjunctive) leaves the fulfilment uncertain and therefore conditional. It is this last construction that is found in the passage in John here considered.

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (2)

G. H. LANG

WHEN I was about twelve years of age the Rev. Gilbert McCall, a Congregational minister, opened a school in Sidcup, to which I was sent. His boys had the special advantage of being under a man who had the art of teaching us to teach ourselves. This has proved valuable to one whose advance in knowledge, as it proved, was to be almost wholly self-acquired. He took us into the playground with a looking glass and a triangle and showed us how to take the elevation of the schoolhouse. He then repeated the workings on the blackboard and we had to reproduce them to scale on paper and colour the picture. A local builder acted as judge. A boy named Henri took second prize for colouring, but my drawing was given first place for accuracy. This proved a determining factor in my life. I still use the book won, *Every Man His Own Mechanic*.

We had a mathematical master of some quality. His name was Widdeson. He would work on the blackboard a long problem in algebra. When the board was full, he would rub all out and continue the working without the earlier figures. Not being myself specially good at figures I watched this feat with due reverence. That he could teach was shown by the fact that by the time I was thirteen I had turned into algebra all the forty odd problems of Euclid's first book, and so proved the geometry by algebra. But I now see that, though I had learned *how* to do it, I did not really understand *what* I was doing, with the inevitable consequence that, not

having occasion later to use algebra, I shortly forgot completely how to do this. It is an example of our Lord's words on vastly more important matters, that "when anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and *understandeth* it not" such knowledge can be quickly lost (Matt. xiii. 19),

This early taught me a most important lesson for a preacher, even that the truth must be made *thoroughly intelligible* to the mind of the hearer. To some care in this is to be attributed the fact that it is a quite frequent thing for persons to say that they heard me on this or that passage or subject twenty, thirty, even forty years before and repeat what was then learned. C. G. Finney has told us that he never put any pressure on the will of hearers to obey the call of the gospel until he felt assured that they *clearly understood* the message, with the nature and results of the step of trusting the Saviour. Only then did he seek to persuade to action and to bow the will to obey the command of God to believe on His Son. Had this been the regular practice of evangelists there would have been fewer weak converts and less back-sliding. A lawyer, an infidel, was persuaded to hear Finney because the latter was a lawyer. Asked his opinion of the preaching he gave the illuminating reply, "The man does not preach: he *explains* what other people preach." To do this the preacher must first himself *understand* what he is preaching.

A second local builder saw the drawing of the schoolhouse mentioned and at once offered to take me into his office. It had not been intended that I should leave school when only thirteen, but the family was growing, my father consented, and God was over it.

The small boy now sat at an office desk instead of a school desk. We worked nine hours a day, which did not hurt me or anyone of whom I heard. Life at this time furthered habits of diligence, routine, exactness, and punctuality. But the chief purpose of God in the next two and a half years is clear. My sole office companion was the clerk of the yard, a gentlemanly man named Hunt, of perhaps thirty years of age. He was very kind and considerate to his boyish junior and did all he could to help me gain proficiency. But he was an atheist and a, for those days, pretty advanced Socialist. Almost daily we discussed religion. He was, I think, rather interested that a boy of fourteen could face up to his arguments, and even offer some that he could not refute.

Christian parents often have a natural fear for their children when these must pass out into the world. It declares the soundness of my conversion, the illumination of my mind by the Spirit of truth, and the profound value of children being early saturated with the words of the Bible, that my faith was not in the least weakened by these discussions, while my knowledge was greatly extended as to the arguments of infidels and the views of Socialists. This proved of value when,

a little later, I was serving in the gospel in working-class districts and had to encounter such at open-air meetings and privately.

When the career of even a youth is ordered by God he will be safe. "The way of Jehovah is a stronghold to the upright" (Prov. x. 29). Here is a singular combination of ideas: the open road is a castle: it is as safe to the upright as a fortress, if it be the way appointed by God. He knew that His previous training had informed my mind and fortified my spirit to profit by this contact with unbelief.

All through life I have marked another gracious and very exact working of God. Without my having sought them, or even known of their existence, books have come to me exactly to my spiritual state or service. At this time I found on my father's shelves a work by a former atheist named Thomas Ragg. It was entitled *Creation's Testimony to its God*, and it was a well written marshalling of the arguments for the existence and nature of the Creator. By my sixteenth year I had mastered all its arguments save one, and was pretty well primed to meet the common objections to the Christian faith and some of the philosophical arguments.

The book was valued. It went to its seventh edition. But there was one paragraph (page 147) which I could not master. It read:

It was no *dream* of Cudworth, or of Drew, that the *necessary* existence of Deity might be inferred from His *possible* existence. Imperfect beings, who are *contingently* possible, may be, or may not be. But this is not the case with that perfect Being, who, if He exists, exists by necessity. If God, or a perfect Being, in whose essence necessary existence is contained, be possible, or in no way impossible, even to have been—then of strict and simple consequence HE IS; because, if He exist at all, He exists of necessity; and, on the supposition of His non-existence, it would be utterly impossible that He ever should have been.

Perhaps a youth may be forgiven for finding this baffling. But I was not content to be baffled and therefore memorized the passage. For many years I turned over the argument in my mind, and suddenly its cogency came to me by emphasizing the words "GOD" and the "His" and "He" of the last sentence. *Eternal* being is of the essence of Deity: if therefore God does not exist at this present moment *He* never can have existed; so that it being admitted that He *may* exist it follows that He *must* exist.

When sixteen I took work with The Traveller's Accident Insurance Company, Limited, a new and small Company in London. I was the junior clerk and ran errands and licked stamps. But shortly the Assistant Manager said that if I would learn shorthand quickly he would suggest that I should take the place of the corresponding clerk who was leaving.

This came to pass. In the year 1893 this Company was bought up by The Crown Accident Insurance Company, Limited, of Bristol. I was now in charge of the claims department and the buying Company offered me a post at Bristol. My salary was £40 a year, which they increased to £60. I believed this to be the will of God, my father concurred, I packed a bag and a box, mostly with books, said goodbye to my boyhood's home, and took my first long journey by rail (long as I then felt). I reached Bristol on Saturday afternoon, April 16th, 1893, being eighteen years of age.

A new chapter in life had opened, and its first lesson was one of the gracious provision and care of God. I knew not a soul in this great city. The first necessity was to find a lodging. One who knew Bristol had given me a small map and had pointed out one or two districts where lodgings would be within my means. He specially warned me against Clifton as being the area of high-class residents and very expensive. Being still an Exclusive Brother I went first to the one who kept their book depot, not far from the top of Park Street. This is on the way to Clifton, and he sent me to another of the fraternity, an assistant in a shop in the Mall, at the very heart of Clifton. He at once introduced me to Mr. Sims, another assistant in the same business, who sent me to his wife. They lived right against the Parish Church. Mrs. Sims offered me a small bedroom at the modest charge of 5s. a week, and thus in two hours from reaching the City I found myself the occupant of a quiet room, in the most aristocratic and beautiful part of Bristol, and with kind Christian people, members of a Baptist church. This was the first of several occasions of the goodness of God in providing rooms or houses. Nothing concerning His children in Christ is beyond His care and power.

The "Crown" Company brought wider experience. We transacted accident, sickness, employer's liability, burglary, and fidelity guarantee insurances. This afforded insight into many branches of commercial life as well as into human nature. The claims department is naturally the principal spending department of an insurance company, and also the most contentious. It was not long before I was in charge of this with my new Company. It involved trustworthiness in handling considerable money, honesty in seeing that the Company paid all that was due under its policies, and also valuable practice in drafting legal documents, such as proposal forms, policies, claim forms, and agreements. I was often in consultations with Solicitors, had to prepare for them cases that were to be taken to the Courts, and occasionally to attend the proceedings. It was my part to ascertain accurately the facts of every claim, and to prepare the first summary of matters that could not be settled promptly.

Grace has law as its background, for its kindly office is

to mitigate the severity of law or even to deliver the culprit entirely from the action of law. Yet this must be done in full harmony with justice. Therefore he who is to be a herald of grace ought to know at least the elements of the essential principles of law, so as to show how grace can act without dishonour to law. My daily duties brought me such knowledge, which was to serve me well as a preacher of God's, message of mercy. And other real advantages accrued to further my preparation for later work. God prepares in advance the work for each servant: "good works which God hath afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). He also prepares the servant for the works. My preparation included such elements as these:

1. *Great care in collecting facts.* We lost an action in the High Court through our Liverpool agent being aware of a single fact which he had not communicated to us at Head Office. The rule held that the knowledge of the agent is in law the knowledge of the principal for whom he acts. A seemingly good exegesis of Scripture may be wrong through only one relevant passage or fact having been overlooked. It is a sound canon that any hypothesis which is true will cover all the facts of the case. Let the teacher of Divine truth be very careful that he has gathered and considered all that the Bible has to say upon a subject before he deals with that subject.

2. *Care in weighing facts.* All facts are important but not all are of equal importance. In presenting a case stress must be laid upon the really determining factors. Exposition and preaching may have very little effect, or even an injurious effect, by secondary points being over-emphasized. A bigot may wreck a friendship or a church by obstinately insisting upon an opinion or a usage which may be quite secondary.

3. *Accuracy in stating facts.* The statement should represent exactly both the nature and the value of each fact. It should neither misrepresent it, nor under-emphasize it, nor over-state it. The whole statement also should present a balanced view of the whole case. In preparing a case for Court, especially for the highly-trained judges of the High Court, the final, if not the sole, determining factor is how the Court will view the matter. The servant of the Judge of all the earth has to study to show himself approved unto God, and a severe study it is. In presenting the gospel case to men the preacher should aim at exactness of statement of each fact and truth, as well as at due proportion and due emphasis. Our message is neither wholly law nor wholly grace: neither mercy nor wrath should be pressed in isolation; neither salvation nor damnation is the whole message, and neither should be stressed at the expense of the other.

4. *Accuracy in reading documents.* The first point in reading is to note precisely what the document *says*: not what I think it *means*, nor what I think the writer *wished* to say, but just

exactly what it does say. One may then go on to read each statement in the light of what the same document says elsewhere, or of what the same writer says in some other document, and thus each statement may illuminate the whole and the whole may illuminate each separate statement. But first each sentence, yea, each word must be pondered to get its personal sense and force.

Were Bible students to treat thus the Sacred Writings much foolish and hurtful talk would cease. Too much supposed exegesis is like that of the boy in class, who being asked to name the most merciful man in the Bible replied "Please sir, Og king of Bashan, for his mercy endureth for ever" (Ps. cxxxvi. 20). In so large a book as the Word of God, covering such vast and varied subjects, and so immense a mass of detail, perfect accuracy may remain an ideal only, yet let us aim at the ideal. This is due to the Author, as also to our hearer or reader. And since such minute pains are taken in affairs temporal, much more should matters eternal be so treated.

My office life had other useful elements. It developed the art of co-operating pleasantly with the varied types of men always at one's elbow. This is most useful for him who would *win* men for Christ. A. T. Pierson said that the first matter in winning a man was to get a footing in his confidence, and the second was to keep that footing when gained; for which purpose sacrifice must be made of ought that would impair that confidence. Then also working in a room with a dozen others fostered power of concentration on one's own matters in disregard of surroundings. This is an invaluable preparation for serious reading in trains, or for withdrawing the mind into itself to commune with God though other people are around. Thus is gained control of one's thoughts. Gladstone said that when he shut his bedroom door he shut politics outside. His mind did not remain in the House of Commons while his body was in bed. Such control of the mental machinery requires severe and ceaseless discipline. In my case some dozens of different claims might have to be dealt with each day. One gained the habit of dealing with each, putting its papers away and at the same moment putting the case wholly out of mind, so as to concentrate on the next. Desultory thinking is wasteful and inexact, a fruitful cause of mistakes. Satan finds idle thoughts for idle minds.

The first fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians v. 22, is love, the last is self-control. Without the latter the former may be sadly ill-balanced and impaired. Self-control should begin where all activities begin, in the thoughts. The brain should not be like an engine over-running because the governor is out of action. When such control has been gained the engineer can stop the engine at will and let it rest. An overworked engine becomes overheated. A mind never in repose easily induces heated feelings, anger, and other states

injurious to itself and to others. This ability to stop thinking at will is the chief secret of the priceless health-restoring boon of being able to sleep at will. It may be supposed that it was in this manner that Tersteegen advanced to the experience described in his lines,

*Oft comes to me a blessed hour,
A wondrous hour and still:
With empty hands I lay me down
No more to work or will;
An hour when wearied thought has ceased,
The eyes are closed to rest,
And hushed in heaven's untroubled peace
I lie upon Thy breast.*

But self-control should extend over all activities. It is an excellent plan to stop reading a book in the middle of some fascinating passage. Not to be able to stop reading is as injurious a state of slavery as not to be able to stop talking, or smoking, or drinking liquor or tea. I found that that exquisite story *Lorna Doone* was thus exciting my mind and hurrying it beyond control, so I closed the book in the middle of the attack on Jan Ridd's farmhouse and did not open it again for many years. That most intellectual of all games, chess, became so absorbing and exacting that the mind went on working on problems when its attention was required for other matters, so I stopped playing. Soon after I went to Bristol I was made welcome in a home with four young children. They filled the gap caused by having left behind four younger sisters and a brother. Presently I found that I could not easily pass the door of that house, so I ceased to enter until I found I could go by as easily as go in.

These are instances of self-control in matters innocent and right. Whoever will practice it in *such* matters will the more readily gain the help of the Spirit of God to control the habits of mind and of body which are sinful. While self-control thus dominates the inner and outer man Self does not obtrude as the object of life; this leaves the soul free to serve others, which is the life of love; thus the first and the last fruit of the Spirit conjoin to produce and encircle and vivify all other graces.

This mental and moral education went forward without any idea on my part of the work for which God was thus preparing me. I had no schemes or ambitions for my future but was simply diligent in present duties, doing the duty of the day in its day, and continually becoming more proficient. Let the many who are compelled to stick at routine tasks reflect that drudgery is a famous disciplinarian and turns out first-class pupils. The greatest master of men known to history was subjected for forty years to the severe discipline needful for a prince of the reigning house, and for forty more years to the severer discipline of being a desert shepherd doing nothing spectacular. It was while Moses was thus

quietly doing his daily job that he was granted a vision of God and given a high and noble commission (Ex. ii. and iii.). And the Greater than even Moses pleased His Father through thirty years of obscurity before He was sent out into the privileges and dangers of publicity. Nazareth was the humble school in which the man Christ Jesus was prepared for Calvary and the throne of the universe. There He learned obedience.

My Managing Director and I were discussing a claim. He said, "We'll write so and so, Lang," and he dictated what he knew very well was a lie. What was I as a Christian to do? It was one of those tense and decisive moments when the roaring lion suddenly springs out of a thicket; a moment when a young man can make or lose a spiritual fortune. It would have been easy to have juggled with conscience, by the specious plea that he, not I, would sign the letter and be responsible or that I was only doing the work for which I was paid. But my hand had been redeemed from iniquity by the precious blood of Christ and must not be prostituted to writing a lie. I found grace to be faithful. Of course, I did not say, "That is a lie, Sir!" That would have been rude from a younger man to his senior, from a clerk to his employer. But I said, "I think, Sir, it would hardly do to say that; the case does not really stand so." For a few moments he rapped his desk with his knuckles, but he altered the letter, which was all that mattered. He was a shrewd man of affairs and knew very well that a clerk who would not tell a lie for him would not tell a lie to him. From that day he trusted me fully, left the department wholly to me, and I took to him only matters the responsibility for which I did not care to carry. For me as for him the saving of time and discussion was worth while. In the long run it is always best to do the right, though it is well to remember the principles in Whateley's shrewd remark that, while it is true that honesty is the best policy, he who is honest *because* it is the best policy is no better than a thief. One must do right even though he must in this life suffer for it.

(To be continued)

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