

THE DISCIPLE

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*"The opening of Thy words
giveth Light"*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

*The world passeth away,
and the desire thereof,*
But
*he that doeth the will of God
abideth for ever.*
1 John ii. 17

Earth and Heaven shall perish,
But
*Thou continuest . . .
They shall be changed:*

But
*Thou art the same,
And thy years shall not fail.*
Heb. i. 10-12

THERE REIGNS A KING

There reigns a KING triumphant
Before Whom all things bend;
Whose radiant life abundant
Can know nor change nor end;
Oh, it is bliss supernal
To leave earth's transient lot,
And share the life eternal
With Him Who faileth not.

Life's sands are ever shifting,
No foothold is secure;
The clouds are ever drifting,
No day can long endure;
But there the ROCK of Ages
Is firm for evermore;
The tempest no more rages,
Eternal peace is sure.

Oh, grant us this great treasure—
To love the LORD on high,
To do His will with pleasure,
To feel Him ever nigh;
That in that life abundant
Our poverty be o'er,
And Thy true life triumphant
May triumph evermore.

With the Editor's Hearty Greetings for 1956.

EDITORIAL

I desire the special attention of readers to the Reprints announced at the back of this issue and to invite their earnest co-operation in placing and recommending them. Each deals with a special and important line of truth. It is my privileged service from God to write pamphlets and to issue them at or under cost ; but for making them known I am mostly dependent, under Him, upon the good offices of readers who have been helped. For all such help in the past I am truly grateful. But more than one publisher of smaller Christian literature has to observe a decline in the zeal of believers in spreading truth by this means. The end of this must needs be at last a famine of such books, for if they are not circulated it will be to no purpose to produce them. Let each Christian ponder what this may mean to his own soul and those of others, and to the cause of Christ. At present the English-speaking world is open to literature : it may not be always so. Public disorder may hinder. Let us pray more for quiet among nations and use our opportunity more diligently.

THE SABBATH

I. THE SABBATH INSTITUTED

And the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Gen. ii. 1-3).

How beautifully Moses wrote! "The heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." What a simple statement of so colossal a work. In the total and in the detail all was complete. "And God rested." What a profound and question-provoking assertion concerning One who cannot weary. "And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." So the seventh day is blessed and hallowed, and for a reason that can never lose its force, nor can that reason ever apply to any other day of the week. The fact abides that God rested on that seventh day, nor can it ever be fact that He rested on any other day from this work of creating and making.

II. THE REASON FOR THE SABBATH

The day was not, however, hallowed on account of any necessity for or advantage of a weekly rest-day to God. It is nowhere suggested that God thereafter regularly rested, or rests, on the sabbath. The Creator Himself when on earth gave His own explanation why this day was hallowed. He said: "The sabbath was made for man" (Mark ii. 27): it was that man and beast may be refreshed (Ex. xxiii. 12). Even as it is not possible for man to make a machine that can run ceaselessly without injury, so it would seem to be inherent in the less-than-divine nature of creation that its parts must be renewed if they are not to wear out. Nothing finite is able to contain within it an infinite reserve of energy so as not to need renewal. That is a feature belonging of necessity only to the Eternal. Philosophy would seem to have sound reason for thinking that even a sun must at last exhaust itself by ceaselessly shining, though the Christian will add the proviso, Unless the Creator recharges it with energy.

So man needs a recurring rest; and his beneficent Creator provided for this need, instituted the day of rest, and Himself graciously set an initial example for His creature to follow.

III. THE SABBATH UNIVERSAL AND PERMANENT

Thus the day of rest is for man, not for Jews only. All men need it. It was instituted at the creation of man, not at the formation of the nation of Israel. And it was instituted for man while still sinless. It differs from the other nine commandments in that it was not imposed to restrain a sin-begotten lawlessness. It anteceded not only Sinai but the

Fall, and it will obtain still in the Millennial days for regenerated men under Messiah's benign and righteous rule (Isa. lxvi. 22, 23). And whenever and wherever man does not observe a sabbath he pays the inevitable penalty of excessive, and at last of irreparable, injury to body, brain, and soul.

The sabbath, and the union of one man with one woman, are facts and laws commencing with the creation of man. They are therefore of application to all beings that derive existence from that creation of man. They show God's thought and purpose for man universally as dwelling on earth. That both of these institutions—the sabbath and monogamy—have been forsaken and destroyed by man does not alter the purpose of God in them; it only loads man with guilt and misery through his odious and foolish infringement of his Creator's will.

IV. THE SABBATH IMPOSED ON ISRAEL

Mankind, as part of its rebellious, treasonable rejection of God, from the first corrupted marriage and neglected the day of rest. But this did not lessen the obligation to keep these laws. Hence when God chose one of the nations of the earth (Israel) that He might make it an example to all the other nations of both the duty and the blessedness of giving Him His due, He said to them, among other weighty things, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore Jehovah blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it (Ex. xx. 8-11: Deut. v. 12-15).

The duty had been enjoined before in connection with not seeking the manna on the seventh day (Ex. xvi. 21-30), so at Sinai the call is to *remember* the day. Remember what others have forgotten; practice what the rest of mankind neglect; and observe that all men, high or low, male or female, Jew or foreigner are to rest this day.

The reason given is as before: that on this day God rested from the work of creation and was refreshed (Ex. xxxi. 17). But the reason is not given as that God was still so resting on the seventh day. Again we note that the statement is that He did so rest on that day long past.

And the penalty of disobedience was death, and an instance of the execution thereof is recorded (Ex. xxxi. 12-17; xxxv. 2: Num. xv. 32-36).

V. THE LAW OF THE SABBATH UNIQUE

There is an essential difference between the law of the sabbath, the fourth command of the Decalogue, and the other nine commandments. To have any other object of worship

than God (command 1); to make or worship idols (2); to blaspheme (3); to dishonour one's parents (5); to murder (6); as also adultery (7); theft (8); bearing false witness (9), and the desire to do wrong (10)—these all are *inherently wrong*, wrong in themselves, in their very nature, and can never be permissible. These all involve invariably an infringement of the essential rights of God or my neighbour. The principle of theft is included in each of the other prohibitions, even the depriving of God or man of something due.

To illustrate and prove that these laws are *eternal* in nature we will take an extreme and impossible case, and say that theft is necessarily wrong from all eternity. It would have been wrong for any one of the three persons of the Godhead to have deprived Another of the honour due to Him, and wrong even to have desired to do so. But as to keeping a sabbath day as to its outward form, that is not eternal, for it did not commence till the creation of man, and it is not *essentially* right or wrong in its nature. It is not essentially wicked to do on that day what one does on other days. It is wrong simply because God has forbidden it; but the ground of the prohibition lies not in any inherent nature of the act, as in the other cases, but because it is for the advantage of man himself not to work continuously.

From this it follows that this commandment, is not, as are the rest, inflexible, nor is it insusceptible of variation as to the time and manner of observance. It will be seen that there are recognized variations as to observance, and even suspension of the law.

VI. THE MANNER AND DEGREE OF OBSERVANCE

The general command was, "Thou shalt not do any work." Not even the pressure of ploughing time or harvest was an excuse for working (Ex. xxxiv. 21). Trading was to cease (Neh. x. 31; xiii. 15; Jer. xvii. 21). God complained severely that Israel profaned His sabbaths, and it was one ground of the terrible judgments inflicted (Ezek. xx. 10-26).

Israel was required to observe every seventh year as a sabbath as regards husbandry (Lev. xxv. 1-7). That it was excellent for the land that it should lie fallow, and calculated to prevent chemical exhaustion of the soil, is well known; but it suggests that even under the law faith was necessary for obedience: it was no small test of faith in their God for an almost entirely agricultural people to trust that they would have enough food in the sixth year to last till the eighth year. It still requires faith for a child of God to refrain from business in lands where no sabbath is observed. Obedience to God was, and is always, "obedience of faith," as it is termed in Rom. xvi. 26.

This is important; for it is useless to endeavour to enforce obedience legally upon one without confidence in God, nor were such obedience acceptable to Him, being not rendered

from the heart. The law of Moses indeed commanded obedience under penalty; the result, however, was disobedience through unbelief and hardness of heart. But the gospel, by the Spirit, first engenders a true working faith in God, and then faith can and does bring forth obedience out of love to God. This is service acceptable to Him, and none other is so (Heb. xi. 6: I Cor. xiii. 1-3).

Here lies the mistake and futility of, for example, the notion that obedience to the Sermon on the Mount is to be forced upon *nations*, or of enforcing the duty of observing the sabbath upon Christians without light upon or faith for such observance. It has been well said: Never run before your faith, and never lag behind your conscience. And it may be added: Do not force upon others as an obligation that to which yourself may have attained as a privilege; for that is law not grace, and it is only by grace that the heart is established and enabled to please God (Heb. xiii. 9).

At a public dinner a sucking pig was served with its savoury accompaniments. A rabbi whispered to his neighbour (C. H. Spurgeon): "Moses very hard! Moses very hard!" He kept the letter of the law outwardly, but broke it in his heart by the desire to eat, which state of heart nullified the outward obedience. He received the suitable reply: "Yes; there is a yoke upon your necks that neither ye, nor your fathers are able to bear" (Acts xv. 10).

It is contrary to the very genius of the gospel, to the spirit of grace, and to apostolic precept and practice, to make a general legal obligation of what must be free individual service if it is to please God. It can produce in many only the unacceptable service of slaves or hypocrites. And here enters the profound importance of the difference before observed in the moral nature of the fourth commandment in contrast with the other nine commands. *They* cannot be neglected without actual moral evil; therefore the enforcement of them is rigid: *this* command of the sabbath differs in this respect, that its enforcement is variable on occasion, as we shall see.

Two other sabbath days were the first and the seventh days of the feast of unleavened bread, connected with the Passover (Ex. xii. 16). Here the command was "no manner of work shall be done," which is stricter than the later general law at Sinai, "thou shalt not do any work" (Ex. xx. 10). Yet even so an exception is at once stated: "save that which every man may eat, that only may be done of you." It was therefore expressly allowed that necessary food might be prepared; and as this merciful provision obtained when the command was more strict, surely it did so when the command was more general.

Another sabbath day was the tenth day of the seventh month, the day of annual atonement. It was to be a "sabbath of *solemn* rest," and on this occasion also the restriction on work was expressed in the stricter form, "ye shall do no

(manner of) work; ” [Darby: “ ye shall do no work at all ”]: and as the solemnity of this day was greater they were “ *to afflict their souls* ” (Lev. xvi. 29-31). This would imply that the weekly sabbath was not to be a day of affliction of soul, but rather of rest and refreshment, according to its expressed intention: and as on that special day it was laid down distinctly that “ *no manner of work at all* ” was allowed, it is similarly implied that on ordinary sabbaths some forms of work were permissible, for if the severer rule had applied to all sabbaths it would not have been needful to express it for any particular sabbaths.

VII. CHRIST AND THE SABBATH

It is always helpful to those who are required to obey a law that the authority enacting should explain in detail how it is to be obeyed.

Jehovah who instituted the sabbath at creation, and enacted it as statute at Sinai, graciously condescended Himself to come under the provision as man, and to show by example and to explain by words how He meant it to be observed. Christ, the Son of God, was “ born under law ” (Gal. iv. 4).

Man is so perverse that he will readily make the observance of law more difficult than God meant it to be if he thinks that he can thus better work out his own righteousness, or if thereby he can acquire power over his fellows by increasing their obligations and difficulties. For these reasons the Pharisees and rabbis had overladen the Mosaic laws with their own interpretations and additions, and had made a heavy burden of what was intended to be a blessing.

A similar tendency may arise in persons who have a sincere desire to please God, but whose obedience is still the legal duty of the slave or the subject, rather than the evangelical free service of a son. Such persons through scrupulousness may overload the Divine command with traditions, their own or of others.

The evangelists wrote for the generation of disciples that immediately followed our Lord’s days on earth, and, guided by the Spirit, they took pains to make known the mind and ways of their Master upon this matter of the sabbath. It is significant that Luke also, writing to a Gentile disciple was careful to include this part of our Lord’s teaching and practice. Jewish believers were still in a good deal of bondage (Acts xi. 2: Gal. ii. 11-13), and strenuous attempts had not been wanting to entangle Gentile converts in this snare (Acts xv). The writers of the Gospels guarded against this by displaying the mind and ways of Christ (Matt. xii. 1-14: Mark ii. 23: Luke vi. 1-11).

It was Christ who declared the central idea of the sabbath, even that it was made for man, not man for the sabbath. Man was not created that he might at all costs, at all times, under all circumstances, keep a sabbath. Nay, on the contrary, it was appointed for his good and for that of the creatures which

serve him; so that as Son of *man* Christ was lord of the sabbath.

Now it is a vital principle of all statute law that it should be directed to the general good of the people. From this it follows that, if at any time, or under special circumstances, the enforcement of a law would not serve but frustrate this purpose, at such times authority does not enforce the law, or modifies the enforcement to meet the circumstances. Enforcement, suspension, or modification should be all directed to the true intent of the law, the good of the subject. This is a necessary outcome of the supreme fact that God, the fountain of all existence and all law, is LOVE, and therefore has ever before Him, in law or exception, the good of His creatures.

Christ walked on the sabbath day through the cornfields. To walk amidst the quiet and beauties of nature is refreshing to mind and body. The incident fell, therefore, within the intent of the sabbath, "that ye may be refreshed" (Ex. xxiii. 12), and to this not even the Pharisees objected.

But the disciples plucked the ears of corn, which in principle was reaping; and they rubbed the grain out of the husks by their hands, which was threshing. To this the Pharisees took strong exception as being contrary to the law. The reply to this might well have been that the law expressly allowed the preparation of necessary food, but our Lord, with perfect insight into the whole law of God, dealt with the deepest elements involved by citing a case under another law, and lifting into relief a principle of the administration of Divine law. This appeal to another of the laws of religion to settle a point under the law of the sabbath shows that the latter is of the same class as the former, and not in a class by itself among religious laws. Important consequences follow from this, and the point should be pondered by those who deal with the law of the sabbath as different from all other religious laws, and who seek to reimpose one law, but not the whole law. Of the distinction of the sabbath law from *moral* law we have before spoken.

The shewbread in the Tabernacle was specially consecrated to God; it was "most holy," and only Aaron and his sons, the priests, might eat of it, and they only in a holy place (Lev. xxiv. 5-9). This law had been completely disregarded by the then high priest himself, as well as by David and his men, when these, being hard-pressed and hungry, ate the holy food. And in the process David had transgressed yet another rule of law by entering into the house of God, which only priests might do. Yet all the parties concerned had been treated by God as guiltless.

The simple question was: Whether of the two was more vital, that some of God's people, driven by hard necessity to a state of hunger, should starve, *or* should a law touching holy food be for once violated in wholly exceptional circumstances? The answer was a *just* application of a saying that is indeed capable of great abuse, Necessity knows no law; and the

principle before stated was involved, that when the strict enforcement of a law would work injuriously to man it would defeat the purpose of the law to enforce it.

The principle of the administration of law here illustrated is that there are recognized exceptions possible, in order that a law may not work injuriously in individual cases. A considerable number of instances illustrate in Scripture this principle. We will notice two more of similar nature to the rules regarding the sabbath.

The law of the Passover, as laid down repeatedly and distinctly, was that it should be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month. But an exception was afterward sanctioned. If a man was at that time ceremonially unclean, or was on a journey, he could observe the feast a month later (Num. ix. 9-11). There was very good reason for keeping it on the appointed day, that being the day of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, just as there is good reason for the sabbath being on the seventh day of the week, that being the day when the work of creation was finished; yet after all, the more important matter was that the Passover should be kept, not that it should be kept on a particular day, and for this reason the exception was allowed.

Again, the laws as to ceremonial cleansing were detail and strict (Lev. xi and Num. xix). The death penalty attached to wilful violation, as in the case of the Passover, and thus gave to these laws precisely the same legal sanction as to the law of the sabbath, since the greatest penalty possible applied to all. Yet in II Chron. xxx. 18-20 we read that "a *multitude* of the people had *not* cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover *otherwise than it is written*. For Hezekiah had prayed for them saying, The good Jehovah pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek God, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. And Jehovah hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people."

These instances make clear that such of the laws of God as are not concerned with matters of *essential* right and wrong are susceptible of variation as to observance, or even of entire suspension, as in the last instance, because as regards the Passover of that year the people in question never could fulfil the prescribed preparatory cleansing.

These principles the Lord used to justify the disciples from the charge of having broken the sabbath law. He would not admit that their action was even a technical offence, but declared that they were *guiltless*. The expressed design of a day of rest and refreshment would be defeated if men on that day must go hungry and weak rather than prepare food in the simple manner in question.

But Christ pressed His critics further. He pointed out that every sabbath the whole year round, and on all the sabbaths in the past, the priests did on the sabbath their customary work of the other days, and did it in the very

temple of God itself, immediately under His eye, and in His service. A higher law demands the suspension of the lower law, which is another important principle of law. Whether was more necessary for God and man—that the priests should not work as usual on the sabbath, or that the public worship of God should continue, and the blessings of His grace, the pardon, reconciliation, restoration of sinners, should be available on that day? Must all worship of God and all grace from God be suspended so that priests should observe the letter of the sabbath law? The question answered itself.

Therefore said the Lord to the Pharisees, You do not recognize the higher law out of which the law of the sabbath itself arose: “If ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.” It was mercy, seeking the good of man, that instituted the sabbath; it must therefore be with mercy that the law is construed and applied, or its very end will be defeated.

The result is that whatever is *necessary* for man’s welfare may be done on the sabbath, and whatever *mercy* directs is also to be done. And accordingly the Lord habitually did on the sabbath His wondrous works of healing. What sabbatarian, however rigid, would assert that ambulance and hospital service must be suspended on the sabbath? Yet in Christ’s day there were sorry folk, rigid, overscrupulous, legalistic men, who did complain that the Saviour thus worked on the sabbath. Christ denounced this openly as sheer hypocrisy (Lk. xiii. 15-17), and pointed out that these very men would themselves obey the law of mercy and necessity by leading their beasts from the stable to the fountain that they might drink, or by lifting them out of a pit on the sabbath (Luke xiv. 5).

Thus the worship of God and all service properly connected therewith, also spiritual efforts for the spiritual good of men, and also all works of mercy necessary for man and beast, are distinctly declared by the Lord of the sabbath to be within His mind as to its observance.

On a different occasion when meeting a complaint against His work of healing on the sabbath, the Lord pointed out another example of the suspension of one law in order that another, deemed more imperative, might be kept, namely, that children were circumcised on the sabbath “that the law of Moses may not be broken” that the boy must be circumcised on the eighth day (John vii 22-24).

And at the time of healing in question (John v) the Lord had justified His working thus on the highest possible ground, namely, that He was co-working with God His Father. He said: “My Father worketh even until now, and I work” (John v. 17). It has been twice remarked above that the Old Testament passages do not say that God rests regularly on the sabbath, but assert no more than that He so

rested on that first sabbath. Here is now direct proof that He does not keep a sabbath regularly, for the Son of God justifies Himself for working on that day on the ground that His Father does so. The expression *heos arti* implies continuity of action down to the time in question. The sabbath was made for man, not for God, for the earth, not the heavens. It is not needed there, nor by Him, and no needless laws are imposed by the all-wise, all-perfect Ruler. God carries on in unbroken continuity the whole of His proper and indispensable work of maintaining and governing His vast universe, with all the innumerable activities of providence and administration involved. It is unthinkable that God should cease on the sabbath day to employ His energy in the operations of nature. Nature would cease to function and even to exist.

Seeing that the devil ceases not to accuse us on the sabbath (Rev. xii. 10), we may be thankful that our Advocate intercedes for us on that day ; and as Satan's attacks continue on the sabbath we may praise God that His holy angels do not cease their protective service on that day.

All this teaches that, blessed and obligatory as the sabbath was, (1) its scope was limited to man and his realm ; and (2) its administration was flexible, not rigid, to be tempered and regulated by mercy, not enforced with severity ; and therefore (3) variations, exceptions, and even suspensions of this, as of other laws of this class, may be required to meet particular times and cases.

But Christ equally guarded against *unjustifiable* latitude, against an abuse in practice of this flexibility. The three Synoptic Gospels *ALL* add to the incident in the cornfields that of the healing in the synagogue on the sabbath of the withered hand of a man. This incident both enforces and balances the teaching of the former incident.

For although the law of mercy demanded that the man should be healed on the sabbath, since it would have been lacking in mercy to have allowed him to remain crippled even to the next day, yet as to the manner of his being healed, for this no more was required of him than what every other man had done that same day, to stretch forth his arm. That is, he was to do *the least that was necessary*.

We may walk in the fields, but that does not justify pleasure outings such as are now common. No one can say that these are *necessary*. Nor does a walk on the sabbath involve that others labour at their usual tasks for my convenience—a very important consideration. In the period when letters were delivered on Sunday, the English day of rest, the writer saw no *necessity* for it, and for many years it was his custom not to post letters at a time that they would be delivered on the Lord's day. This was also mercy to the men in question. He sought also that his letters should not be brought to his house, but the postmen themselves assured him

that the special sorting thus involved would actually be more trouble to them than delivery. So on the same principles that he would not cause delivery he yielded his preference and allowed delivery. He could not control the Post Office, and he followed in both directions the principles of the least amount of work being done, out of mercy to the persons involved. But had the question involved a matter in its essence morally wrong he would not have been justified in yielding.

To enforce a rigid application in such matters is contrary to Christ's teaching and the Scriptures. The sabbatarian may be able to see these principles in another connection. In consistency with a preference to pay cash for all things, it was the writer's wish to pay daily for milk, but the dealer informed him that it entailed more work and took more time than a weekly account, and also that it made it more difficult to check the honesty of the milkman. Of course there being here also no question of essential right or wrong, he yielded. The principle of mercy required that he should make things as easy and as safe for his neighbours as possible.

Again, whereas it is lawful to prepare needful food, this does not justify that feasting that spoils the day of rest for many. I knew a Christian whose wife could never be at the Sunday morning meeting because he selfishly insisted upon having a heavy, cooked mid-day meal. In due time he paid the deserved penalty of having his old age made miserable by chronic dyspepsia.

Christ's practice and principles upon this question are models of accuracy and balance in relation to the law. In healing a blind man on the sabbath (John ix) He bade him to go to the pool of Siloam and wash. Both of these actions, walking and washing, were permissible on the sabbath, and of course all men performed them both. But the making of a small amount of clay by spittle and smearing it on his eyes was apparently not an absolute necessity, for the Lord healed other blind folk without this. What then could have been His object if not to provoke a direct challenge to the excessive and burdensome scrupulousness with which the rabbis had overlaid the observance of the sabbath, and made of it an intolerable burden instead of a day of refreshment? It did provoke such a conflict, and gave Christ occasion to tell His opponents that it was because they were spiritually blind that they deemed such an act to be contrary to the meaning and intention of the fourth commandment (John ix. 39-41). His action justifies the preparing on the sabbath of healing ointment.

On an earlier occasion the Lord directed a cripple of thirty-eight years to take up his bed (mattress) and walk. The Jews remonstrated with him upon carrying about his bed on the sabbath, declaring it unlawful. Yet what were the alternatives? (1) That he should not have been healed till the next day, which would not have been according to

mercy. (2) That being healed, and walking away, he should leave his bed to be stolen, a moral certainty in a land of Jewish beggars. (3) The other alternative was that, being healed, he should remain by his bed till the next day. The law of the sabbath as applied by the Lawgiver did not demand any of these courses. Most Christians today find it difficult to conceive how such scruples could enter the minds of men, but there are not wanting still good Christian people whose minds are more or less held in such needless bondage as held scribes and rabbis among the Jews.

VIII. APOSTOLIC PRACTICE

It is a fundamental principle of law that a statute remains in force until it has been formally annulled by the competent authority. When enacted by the supreme authority it cannot be abrogated by a lower authority. God has never repealed the law of the sabbath as instituted at creation : it is therefore still in force, and *should be observed by all to whom it applies*, in the manner He has indicated.

Among the earliest declarations of Christ concerning the kingdom of which He is Sovereign is this (Matt. v. 18) : " Verily, I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished." It may be presumed that when heaven and earth pass away, and the new heaven and earth take their place, seeing that the conditions will then be perfect the laws suitable to the present less than perfect and preparatory conditions will also pass away. But till then every law remains in force until it has accomplished the purpose for which it was enacted.

This principle, thus formally announced by Authority, simplifies greatly the question as to what ancient laws are still binding.

There were certain rules regulating the life of Israel as nomads in the wilderness, such as the pitching and removing of the camp (Num. ii). These fulfilled their end and lapsed when Israel became a settled folk in their land. There were numerous laws to regulate the life of the people in the land, such as the whole peculiar system of land tenure (Lev. xxv., etc.). These laws were never imposed on another people or in another land. There was the whole typical, ceremonial law, of which the tabernacle or temple was the centre, and which also was imposed on Israel only, though one of another race could bring himself under it if he wished. For believers in Christ all this " vanished away " (Heb. viii. 13), having reached its end in Christ and accomplished its purpose (Rom., Gal., Heb.).

But the law of the sabbath has not yet fulfilled its purpose. Man still needs the prescribed rest. The law therefore remains in force. This is the general position.

(1) The first fact as regards apostolic practice is that the first generation of Jewish Christians continued zealously to

observe the law of Moses, including of necessity the sabbath. Nor was any attempt made to divert this zeal for the law (Acts xxi. 20-26). Paul himself, though the great champion of Christian freedom, was ready to accommodate himself to their practice when he was among them. Thus he circumcized Timothy "because of the Jews that were in those parts" (Acts xvi. 3), and at Jerusalem later he fell in with the suggestions of the other apostles that he should disabuse the minds of the brethren of the notion that he taught Jewish Christians to forsake Moses (Acts xxi. 21). To him personally circumcision or uncircumcision was a matter of no spiritual importance (Gal. vi. 15): but what was of very great importance was not to be a cause of stumbling to Jew, or Greek, or Christian, but to seek their profit, not his own, that they might be saved (I Cor. x. 32-xi. 1). And whoever gains any adequate sense of the awfulness of eternal damnation and the greatness of eternal salvation will agree heartily with Paul that it is not to be put in jeopardy for any man for the sake of ceremonies or scruples. Paul therefore readily became a Jew to Jews, submitting willingly to law, though knowing himself in Christ to be not under law, save to Christ (I Cor. ix. 19-22).

His call that we should imitate him as he imitated Christ means that when we come among children of God who feel themselves under the law and bound, for example, to observe the seventh day, or to pay tithes, or to practice the rite of feet-washing, it is our privilege to accommodate ourselves to their practice, rather than stumble them by our own liberty. In view of the situation and practice above indicated, in no case can it be apostolic to refuse such our fellowship. I have met such believers.

(2) A second fact to be noticed is that there is nothing in Scripture to show that converts from Judaism later than that first generation continued so to observe the law. It must be presumed that the result to be expected was seen, and that the fuller Christian liberty, as represented by Paul, prevailed. But it would have been less likely to have done so had any attempt been made to force that first generation to abandon legal observances before their hearts and their faith were ready to do this. It is good to set forth the truth of liberty in Christ, and to illustrate it by happy and loving practice; yet must the fundamental principle of individual freedom of conscience be fully respected.

(3) The third fact of apostolic practice is that no attempt was made by apostolic authority to enforce the law of Moses upon Gentile converts. This included the law of the sabbath.

An attempt was made—though with no authority from the apostles—to enforce upon them the whole law by demanding fulfilment of its first provision, circumcision (Acts xv. 1: Gal. v. 3). The question was so fundamental that it was referred to the apostles. The unanimous judgment reached by them, by their fellow-elders at Jerusalem, and by the

whole church there, was against the imposition of the law of Moses upon Gentile Christians (Acts xv) It is significant that those of the church at Jerusalem who at first urged that the Gentile converts ought to be circumcised became fully persuaded to the contrary, and also that the authority of the Holy Spirit of God was claimed for the decision in favour of freedom. Perhaps that day was the most momentous in the history of Christianity after the day of Pentecost. Eight years afterwards the apostles again affirmed to Paul their continued adherence to the decision reached (Acts xxi. 25).

Yet while preserving this freedom it was deemed necessary to impose upon Gentile Christians three positive restrictions, namely, separation from idolatry, from fornication, and from eating blood, whether as blood or in the flesh of an unbled animal.

Now it is to be observed carefully that these three restrictions, though included in the law of Moses and so binding upon Israelites, were actually of obligation before that law was promulgated. They were original duties of man universally (Gen. ix. 4 ; xxxv. 22 and xlix. 4 ; xx. 3 : etc.).

(1) It never had been right, it never could be right, for any man in any time to give to the creature the glory and worship due only and absolutely to the Creator. It stood in the forefront of human guilt after the Flood that men did this (Rom. i. 22, 23).

(2) The original institution of marriage—one man united to one woman so intimately as to become one flesh—prohibited all fornication, whatever form it might take. It is the second count in the terrible indictment of the race after the Flood that this law of marriage was utterly flouted (Rom. i. 24-28).

(3) Before the Flood God had not given to man liberty to eat flesh, nor therefore blood. Permission to eat flesh was given directly after the Flood, but with the strict injunction that the flesh with the life in it, that is, the blood, was not to be eaten (Gen. ix. 4). The ground of this prohibition was afterwards explained more fully to Israel (Lev. xvii. 10-16). And as part of that explanation it is shown that the law in question, like the law of the sabbath, applied to all men, not to Israelites only : “ the strangers (foreigners, non-Jews) that sojourned among them ” were expressly included, for they were already under it through the earlier prohibition.

Two results follow : (a) The law as to eating flesh was permissive, not compulsory. They who prefer not to eat flesh need not do so. But the Jew could not be a vegetarian, for he was obliged by the law of Moses to eat the passover lamb, and parts of other victims sacrificed. (b) The permission being from God, to compel abstinence from flesh food is ungodly, whether imposed for certain days or periods by ecclesiastical systems, or by demons as in spiritism.

It is interesting here to observe that the original law

as binding on all men remains so, but the additions made by the Mosaic code were never binding on any but Jews, for on them alone that code was imposed. Instances are the compulsory eating of flesh in the sacrifices, and the limiting of kinds of flesh that might be eaten. It is no doubt true that all men might be the better in health by observing the hygienic laws of Moses, especially if they live in the hot lands for which Moses legislated, but this does not make the Mosaic code obligatory upon them. Englishmen may wisely profit by laws passed in other lands, but they are not bound by these laws, save while in those lands.

(c) The drinking of blood, practised in some forms of idolatry, is strictly prohibited, but equally so is the eating of blood in the undrained or insufficiently drained flesh of an animal. They who claim liberty to eat blood because they are not under the law of Moses cannot make good their claim by reason of the fact that the law against eating blood was imposed upon all mankind after the Flood, nine hundred years before Moses. Moreover, the reason for the abstinence commanded applies equally to Gentiles as to Jews ; and the apostolic, yea, the Divine re-application of the law to men who had recently emerged from heathenism, where the eating of blood was common, shows clearly that no man is exempted from this law by becoming a Christian. Paul himself so fully endorsed the decision that he spread the decree throughout the Gentile churches which he himself had founded (Acts xvi. 4).

But now as regards the sabbath, this also was a pre-Mosaic law of universal application, but it is not mentioned by the Holy Spirit or the apostles as binding upon Gentile Christians, and there must be sufficient ground for the omission. If those who today assert it to be a bounden duty to observe the seventh day sabbath will put themselves in the place of those who acted at Jerusalem they must surely feel that, upon their present principles, they would have included, and emphasized, that the sabbath must be observed even more than the other three duties mentioned in Acts xv. 29 ; but the apostles did not so include it. What, then, is it that does not weigh with the modern sabbatarian, which did weigh with the apostles, and weighed so much as to cause the omission ?

IX. THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SUSPENSION OF LAW

Two things have been before shown : first, that the law of the sabbath not having been abrogated by God who gave it, and not having fulfilled its purpose and become unnecessary for man, it remains in force ; but second, that there are seasons and circumstances when its enforcement would defeat its end, by working injury to man and not good, and so the law is not enforced.

So long as the Christian must live in this world he cannot wholly escape from the general conditions of life which Satan and sin have created. Morally he can escape, through union

by faith with Christ in His death and resurrection ; as to outward circumstances he cannot always escape, for often these are beyond his control.

In the early churches there were very many of the slave class. It was wholly out of the question for these to say to their heathen masters, we decline to do our ordinary work on the seventh day. It would have meant usually terrible and perpetual ill-treatment and often death. Slaves, in non-Jewish law, had no legal existence as persons and therefore had no redress. Hence to have imposed upon these the observance of the sabbath would have been useless and disastrous, and moreover would have brought the conscience into a cruel and inescapable bondage by demanding a duty towards God which in no way could have been discharged. Thus their peace and their communion with God would have been destroyed and their Christian experience and testimony would have been ruined.

Again, the Christian with an unconverted heathen wife, of the usual type of heathen woman, would have found it all but impossible to secure the observance of the sabbath in his home. Anyone at all acquainted with heathen home life will know how seldom the most sterling Christian man could bring it about. This was another very common situation, and still is so. Special counsel to meet it was given by Paul (I Cor. vii).

Or the reverse would often happen, and a Christian wife would have a heathen husband. Here again it would result in an impossible situation if the wife insisted upon disorganizing the family life by a due observance of the sabbath. Almost certainly she would have been ill-treated or divorced or killed. It still so works, and in circumstances not so difficult. I met in India an English lady of social position, but who was living in a boarding house. She was a sincere believer, I am sure ; but later her daughter said to me : “ Mother need not have been living where you met her if she had not wrecked our home by insisting upon us all keeping Saturday as a sabbath. Father at last grew so tired of the trouble it caused that he sold up our home.” She was a Seventh Day Adventist, and the rest of the family were worldly. How much better it would have been if this dear woman had acted upon the plain precepts enforced upon Christian wives that they should obey their husbands, herself understanding the principle of suspension of law here applicable and being relieved in conscience by it.

With more or less severity in its working this remains a very usual and practical situation. For example, in a land where by general public opinion, and perhaps by law, the first day of the week is the day of the common suspension of business it is usually impracticable, and often impossible, for a Christian to abstain from business on the seventh day. How can a servant in a home insist upon keeping the seventh day if

the family keep the first day? How can a young man in an office say that he will not come on Saturday, but will work on Sunday? He cannot carry on the business by himself on Sunday, nor can he with fairness to others refuse to be there on Saturday. Especially would this apply to apprentices. The attribute of mercy, so resplendent and so constant in God, has taken note of the difficulty and allowed for the suspension of the law when in given circumstances it *cannot* be strictly observed. Hence no mention was made of it in the Jerusalem decree (Acts xv), nor is there the least hint in Scripture that Gentile believers kept the seventh day.

There are other instances of this principle of suspension.

Polygamy is contrary to the original institution of marriage, namely, monogamy. Yet in how many instances, and over how lengthy a period, was it tolerated by God, even in men who walked with Him, such as Abraham and David. But by the time of Christ it seems to have died out in Israel, and the original institution prevailed.

Thus also it was with the early Christian church. Converts from heathenism must often have had more than one wife, polygamy being a common feature among the other corruptions of the pagan world. Yet there was no injunction against it. It was tolerated, and the matter was either left to individual action or to be cured by time: for of course no unmarried Christian was allowed to take two wives, nor the married man with one wife to take a second.

By friendly consent a man might separate from all but one wife; but arbitrarily to have sent them away would have been unfair to the women; and it would have grossly and needlessly outraged and alienated their relatives and public opinion. Also it would in most instances have led to the women being regarded as public property, bringing worse moral degradation than for them to remain with the husband. The question of the children also was serious; if the mother took them they lost the care of the father; if he kept them they lost that of their mother.

Yet the institution was quietly but distinctly stigmatized as unchristian by the provision that a man with more than one wife might not be an elder or a deacon in the church, which is the unquestionable force of the order of the Greek sentence that these must be "of *one* wife the husband" (I Tim. iii. 2, 12: Tit. i. 6). Not that they must be married, or Paul and Timothy could not have ruled in the churches, but that being married it must be to only one wife.

Here again is a situation not infrequent in the church in non-Christian lands, and so the principle of toleration remains in force throughout this long time.

The principle may be seen also in the more dreadful matter of slavery. This also is contrary to the original natural rights of man. But Moses did not summarily suppress it. The disorganization of the whole social system would have been

too severe, and such radical action was not attempted. The laws passed were calculated to ameliorate from the first the lot of the slaves, and in process of time this evil also disappeared in Israel.

The apostles followed this Divinely set example. No rules against slavery were passed. They were rather exhorted to godly behaviour as slaves. Paul even constrained a converted slave to go back to his Christian master (Philemon), which was actually contrary in principle to the law of Moses, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a servant that is escaped from his master unto thee" (Deut. xxiii. 15, 16). This is much to be observed as an indication of how completely Paul felt Christians to be relieved from all this class of Mosaic regulations, and to be at liberty to act contrary thereto when true advantage was to be gained thereby. But he wrote to the master in such wise that the lot of the slave would become at least equal to that of the free servant, indeed much better, for he was to be regarded as a *brother* of the master.

All this is very noteworthy. It reveals the true Christian spirit and principles in application to very difficult and general social personal conditions, a spirit of freedom from bondage to the letter of God's law, yet the more powerful spirit of love gradually producing a fulfilment of the law, even as it is written that "the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit" (Rom. viii. 4). This end is not reached by attempts to make the law binding by rules and penalties, for these tend, now as of old, to produce a constrained obedience, which not being an offering of pure love to God is of no value and brings only bondage of soul rather than blessing.

(To be continued)

THE WAY BACK (4)

by J. L. STANLEY

Chapter V

RECEIVE HIM. ETERNAL LIFE

"*The free gift of God is eternal life.*"—Rom. vi. 23.

"*As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God.*"—John i. 12.

"*As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.*"—Col. ii. 6.

A SINGLE action has sometimes various sides to it, and appears differently, according to the way in which it is viewed. It is thus with faith. In the previous chapter we looked at it as an exercise of confidence in Christ; in this chapter we shall regard it as a reception of Christ. "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name" (John i. 12). From this we

perceive that the believing and receiving are the same thing, and yet the term "receive" conveys an idea in advance of the thought of simple confidence or trust. The poor woman who came behind Christ and touched His clothes had a certain amount of confidence in Him; but how different is her action from that of Martha and Mary, who received Christ into their house! There may be a bare, timid, hesitating trust; and there may also be a joyful reception of the Saviour and all the blessings which He brings. Christ does not offer to us a bare deliverance from guilt and misery. He comes to put us in possession of substantial benefits. His attitude to the church at Laodicea is also His attitude to every poor sinner. He presents Himself as a friend, and waits admittance. He comes laden with the wealth of heaven to enrich any who will receive Him.

We cannot find a better illustration of what is meant by receiving Christ than that which is furnished by the Scripture emblem of the Bride and Bridegroom, as a picture of the union of Christ and believers. When Eliezer was seeking a wife for Isaac he said to the friends of Rebekah concerning Isaac, "Unto him hath he [Abraham] given all that he hath." When Rebekah received Isaac as her husband, she became sharer of all his wealth. So it is with every poor sinner who by faith receives Christ. Such become joined to Him by an eternal union, and are made sharers of His possessions. "Ye are all sons of God, by faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him" (Rom. viii. 17). Faith in Christ, therefore, not merely secures for us the help of His gracious mediation, but makes us partakers of all His riches and glory, for He is ours, and we are His.

Receive Him as your Saviour. When Christ saw Zaccheus in the tree He said to him, "Make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house;" and it is written, "He made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully" (Luke xix. 6). Our Lord's comment on that action was, "This day is salvation come to this house." To receive Christ is to receive salvation and every blessing included in that term.

Receive Him as your King. To receive Christ is to welcome Him to the heart, to give Him the throne of our being, and to have Him with us at all times, a constant, loving, powerful Friend.

Our nature is like a kingdom in miniature. Sin is a revolution in that kingdom. Conscience and reason are dethroned, and base passions and lusts usurp authority. When we receive Christ He restores order, He takes the dominion Himself, and by establishing His government within subdues the revolt.

Receive Him as the Life-Giver. The great gift which Christ came to impart to men is *life*. This He distinctly affirms in

John x. 10, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." But how does He impart this gift? Is it something which He bestows distinct and apart from Himself? No, He is Himself the life. "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John xi. 25). "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John xiv. 6). We receive life by receiving Christ. Death departs at His presence. "And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life" (I John v. 11, 12). From this it is clear that eternal life is ours by union with Christ who is the life. Just as the branches receive their life from the vine, so do we receive our life from Christ.

"Because I live," says Christ, "ye shall live also."

But what is this blessing—eternal life. Who can tell what it is? It has been well remarked that "the word life still goes wandering through the world without a definition." We know many things about it; but what *it* is, who can say? We are acquainted with many of its forms and manifestations and effects; but these are not the life itself. That subtle, invisible, imponderable thing still eludes the search of the biologist who would fain give an account of it.

And if it be thus impossible to define life, what shall we say of "eternal life"? Yet, though we cannot fully explore its sacred mysteries, reverent inquiry may obtain ample knowledge of the blessing. Our Lord Himself has given us a description of it in John xvii. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee the only true God and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." By knowledge here, we understand more than mere intelligence about God. The knowledge here spoken of is surely such as we mean when we speak of knowing some beloved friend: that is, a close and intimate acquaintance, a warm admiration, a tender affection. This knowledge of God includes all the blessings of redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation, communion, likeness; these are some of the features of the life eternal.

In Scripture life is set in sharp contrast to death. As death does not mean cessation of existence, so life does not mean a mere existence. Spiritual death consists in a state of alienation from God: the severance from holiness and all spiritual good. As one who is blind or deaf is to a certain extent intellectually dead, so one in his sins, though possessing physical and intellectual life, is destitute of spiritual life.

The life which Christ imparts to those who receive Him consists in the establishment and maintenance of perfect harmony between God and the soul. Moral soundness takes the place of disease, and all the powers of the renewed nature are directed to, and ever employed upon, the highest, noblest, purest, and most lovable of all beings.

Life natural is of various kinds, and a reflection upon the lower forms may aid us in framing some ideas of the higher. Animal life has its set of organs, faculties, and instincts,

together with the surroundings appropriate to its constitution. The perfection of *animal* life would consist in the full possession of these powers, with their free and happy exercise in their proper sphere. The same in principle is true of intellectual life. The mere possession of a set of mental faculties is not life. For this it is necessary there should be a suitable field for their activity and their healthy exercise therein. In all God's works a perfect fitness and correspondence may be observed, adapting and placing the various forms of life in the circumstances exactly suited to each.

By carrying this thought a step higher we may approach in some degree the conception of spiritual and eternal life.

To have the whole nature renewed, all discord removed, everything that could cause defilement, shame, pain, or sorrow completely banished ; to be brought into a relationship of peace and love towards God ; to be ever growing in acquaintance with Him, and finding an increasing delight in the enlargement of this intelligence—what is this but to have life in its highest, purest, and most enduring condition, even eternal life ?

This life is the present possession of all believers, as the result of their union with Christ. " I give unto them," says Christ, " eternal life." Again, " He that hath the Son hath the life." The perfection of the blessing will not be enjoyed until this mortal puts on immortality ; but in germ, in principle, it is possessed now.

It is here that the gospel provision differs so completely from all human devices. In all the religions of men one characteristic feature appears : life is set before men as the final reward of meritorious toil. God's plan, on the contrary, is to begin with life. From this new and vital principle a holy life flows as naturally as the fruit from the living vine. Good works, instead of being the price paid for life, are the outcome of life.

The change wrought in the soul is so great, so radical, that it is termed in Scripture a being " born again." It is as though the man had terminated his old life, and had begun to live afresh. And thus it really is in God's account. He is henceforth to " walk in newness of life."

The foundation of this work was laid by our Lord Jesus Christ, but the application of it is the work of the Holy Spirit. " It is the Spirit that giveth life." In obedience to the command of God, Ezekiel had prophesied to the dry bones, saying, " O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." In response to this there was a shaking, and the bones came together, and the flesh came upon them ; yet the work was incomplete. The forms of men were there, but they were lifeless. Then the prophet cries, " Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live ; " and in response to that cry the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and " they stood upon their feet, an exceeding

great army" (Ezek. xxxvii. 10).

This is a vivid picture of the new-creating work which takes place in the souls of men. Under the preaching of the word a great change may be and often is wrought. From a condition of utter ungodliness, in which there is no profession of religion at all, men may be brought into subjection to a certain "form of godliness," just as the scattered bones were arranged into the order of the human body; but still there is no life. There is the outward appearance of goodness, but the most essential thing is lacking. The most symmetrical body is not a man, and the most orthodox creed combined with a moral behaviour does not constitute a Christian. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. viii. 9). The most complete state of mere moral reformation is but death in a refined and more beautiful form. But where the life-giving Spirit enters, there death departs, and the reign of life begins.

It is this that makes the vast difference between the moralist and the Christian. The righteousness of the former, such as it is, is the result of painful and laborious effort; that of the other is the spontaneous production of the living energies of the Spirit of God in the soul.

The greatness of this difference can only be appreciated by those who have experienced the work of the Spirit in their hearts; but by them it is appreciated most thoroughly, especially if they have for a time known what it is to toil along the wearisome path of legality and self-righteousness.

The reality and efficacy of the work of the blessed Spirit are illustrated by various apt and impressive emblems. He is symbolized as the *Wind*. Our Lord in His discourse to Nicodemus employs this figure, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; . . . so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John iii. 8); and on the day of Pentecost the descent of the Holy Spirit was signaled by "a sound from heaven as of the rushing of a mighty wind" (Acts ii. 2). Beautiful and expressive sign this is of the Spirit's work in its powerful impulse, invigorating breath, and purifying energy. The souls touched thereby are awakened into life, purified from sin, and sent forward in the ways of God with a might derived from heaven. And like the wind, too, the operations of the Spirit are screened from human gaze.

But though the operations are hidden, the effects are manifest in those movements of life which appear in all who are truly regenerated.

Again the Spirit is figured forth as *Fire*: "He shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit, and in fire" (Matt. iii. 11). As the fire which was of old kindled upon the altar of Israel, and which was to be ever burning, so does the Spirit of God kindle upon the altar of the redeemed heart the flame of an undying love and zeal. Hearts that were dead and cold and hard, touched by that fire from heaven are melted into love,

and warm affections flow forth to God from those who were once ice-bound like an arctic sea. Fire not only imparts heat, but also gives light ; and this finds its analogy in the spiritual truth. The same Holy Spirit not only kindles devout affections in the soul, but also scatters darkness by His glorious light.

This is not a work done once and for all at some particular time in the soul's experience, but carried on perpetually by the Spirit's agency. The more we yield ourselves obediently to His control, the more shall we know of His vitalizing power.

Again, the Spirit is represented by *Water*. " Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God " (John iii. 5). Here water is evidently the symbol of the Spirit, as the fire in the passage already quoted (Matt. iii. 11). Then our Lord says : " If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink " (John vii. 37) ; and it is added (ver. 39) ; " but this spake He of the Spirit," etc. As water nourishes, revives, satisfies, cleanses, so does the Spirit of God accomplish all these operations in the souls that He inhabits.

Once more, the Holy Spirit is shadowed forth by another expressive sign—*Oil*. To Eastern minds, this would convey a more vivid idea perhaps, than it does to ours, but we may yet perceive much of its appropriateness. Its abundant use in Bible lands as a means of comfort and invigoration render it an apt figure of the Spirit's work and its effects. To be " anointed with fresh oil " was a synonym for freshness and vigour ; and for the face to shine with oil was synonymous with joy and gladness. And thus it is with those on whom the Spirit rests. As the oil poured upon the high priest descended to the skirts of his robes, so the Spirit which rested upon our Lord descends to His people. We " have an unction from the Holy One," we are made partakers of the same life, the same joy and gladness. He has put " gladness in our hearts, more than in the time when their corn and wine increased."

Thus from Christ our risen Lord, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, life is sent forth to us who are dead in trespasses and sins ; and abiding in Him, and He in us, that life shall deepen and expand till, in the world to come, it reaches the boundless ocean of THE LIFE EVERLASTING.

THE RANGE OF DIVINE LOVE

by S. ALEXANDER

... *The Worldwide Witness of the Church* ...

God is infinitely great : His greatness is unsearchable : He is great in wisdom, great in power, but oh, let our hearts believe it despite every seeming contradiction, He is supremely great in love. His nature and His name is love. " God is love," and because of what He is essentially, His heart goes out to the whole creation. His love embraces all. The familiar word

in John iii. 16, is most revealing. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." The love of God is the limitless spring and source from which all His redeeming activity flows ; it is the basis and cause of everything He does, even when He deals in judgment. It was divine love beating in the heart of our Lord which led Him to commission His disciples to "go into ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel to THE WHOLE CREATION." For the world which God so loves, and into which His servants must carry the glad tidings, is the same world which the apostle John says "lieth in the Evil One." The heart of God can never rest content while the world which He created for His own glory is in captivity to the Devil. He yearns with a love that is infinite over lost mankind. It was a vision of this that caused Faber to sing so sweetly :—

*There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea ;
There's a kindness in His justice
Which is more than liberty.
For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind,
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.*

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

Within the range of this mighty truth there is another and complementary truth ; "Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself up for it." This is not something different, but is an essential part of the whole. It is related to the great question of instrumentality. The church is an elect vessel, chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, to manifest His grace and glory to created intelligences in every realm. Even now it is being used in the education of angelic powers, and in the ages to come it will have great and glorious functions in relation to God's eternal purpose in Christ (Eph. iii. 10, and ii. 7). Its present mission, so far as the earth is concerned, is to carry the glad tidings of the love of God to every creature. All the world must know that despite its rebellion, and the malignity of Satan, the love of God is the overmastering fact ; and that He has, at the cost of infinite suffering to Himself, provided a way of salvation open to every soul of man. "None need perish, all may live, for Christ hath died."

THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD

From the earliest period of human history God has had the blessing of the whole of mankind in view. When He appeared to Abram and called him to a life of separation, His promise, seemingly incredible, was "in thee shall ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH be blessed" (Gen. xxxii. 3). God was even then moving in human history to prepare for the coming of Christ. The motive inspiring the whole course of

events thus initiated was His love for the world. When in His providential government the nation of Israel came into being "high above all nations, in praise, and in name, and in honour," it was that they might be "a kingdom of priests," exercising a priestly ministry on behalf of all the Gentile nations. They were to be God's testimony in the earth, manifesting the grace and glory of the Divine government to mankind as a whole. While they were true to Him God dealt with them in such a way as to cause the events of their national life to constitute a witness to His power and glory. Think, for instance, of their entry into the land of promise. They had come through the great and terrible wilderness to the very borders of the land. But the river Jordan, overflowing all its banks, ran swiftly between them and their inheritance, presenting an impassable barrier. So God wrought a great miracle. The waters were cut off and Israel passed over on dry ground. This act of Divine power was indeed necessary if they were to enter the land ; but it is surely significant that the sacred record states the reason in quite other terms. It was in order "that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of Jehovah that it is mighty ; that they may fear Jehovah your God for ever" (Josh. iv. 24, R.V.). God was working in, and for, and through His people with the world in view.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

Or again, think of the magnificent Temple built by Solomon when the kingdom was established in the land. How his wonderful dedicatory prayer recorded in I Kings viii stirs the heart. He prays for God's people, pleading many aspects of their need. But he remembers that this "habitation of God" was also to be "a house of prayer FOR ALL PEOPLES." So he prays, "hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place . . . that all peoples of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee" (vers. 43). See also verse 60. This intercessory ministry is, in the present dispensation, to be exercised by the church. Each local church must be both a dwelling place for God and a house of prayer for all peoples. Every living church does fulfil those functions. Paul therefore, instructing Timothy as to behaviour in the house of God, exhorts that "first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men" (I Tim. ii. 1).

THE DEVIL'S DETERMINED OPPOSITION

It is of great importance to recognise that the Devil is determinedly set against the realization of this Divine purpose in the church. By any and every means he seeks to prevent both the ministry of intercession and a vital and world wide testimony to the love, grace, power, and glory of God. How sadly he succeeded in destroying Israel's testimony to the nations. The Temple was burned with fire and the people carried into captivity in Babylon. Today he works with great power and subtlety. Not alone as "a roaring lion," though our brethren in some lands are experiencing the fierceness of

his wrath, but more often as a master of "wiles," "craftiness," and manifold "devices." Paul was able to say "we are not ignorant of his devices," but sadly we have to confess that many of the Lord's people have fallen into his snares. To accomplish his end he stops at nothing.

The priestly ministry of the house of God must be frustrated, prayer must be hindered, prayer meetings be considered as "old-fashioned," or, if that effort fails, the Lord's people who seek to be faithful must be turned in upon themselves and become absorbed with their own spiritual growth : it matters not what the means employed provided the mighty stream of divine love does not flow out to the nations through the church.

UNITY AND LOVE

There are two matters on which the enemy concentrates his attention as the focal points of the battle, knowing that if he can succeed in them he has won a great strategic victory. These are "the unity of the Spirit" and "love of the brethren." It is therefore in relation to these that we need to watch and pray continually. Unity and love. Recall our Lord's petition in His wonderful prayer on the very night of His betrayal : "That they may all be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us : that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (John xvii. 21). The world does not so believe because it sees in the church not a divine unity but sad brokenness and manifold division. And as to "love of the brethren" how often the very reverse has been manifested, especially in those who are zealous for the truth. "By this shall all men know that ye are *My* disciples, if ye have love one for another" (John xiii. 35). Truth must not be sacrificed, but we must learn the holy art of "speaking truth in love" (Eph. iv. 15). "See that ye love one another from the heart fervently" (I Pet. i. 22).

The Devil knows the importance of these things all too well. Let us therefore watch and pray, keeping the channels clear so that the Divine love may flow out both to "all saints" and to "all men."



ISRAEL'S INALIENABLE POSSESSIONS

by DAVID BARON

David Baron was a learned Hebrew Christian, born in Lithuania, but brought as a young man to faith in Christ. Russian was the language of the country, but Hebrew of his home. He told me that in his sphere a boy of eight years was expected to have done the Old Testament in Hebrew and be ready to go on to the Talmud. By the time he was twelve he knew the whole book of Psalms by heart in Hebrew. When asked a question upon the Old Testament he would commonly mutter the verse to himself in Hebrew. He was perhaps one of the most reliable expositors of the Old Testament of modern times. Each of his many books is of value. Such as are now in print may be obtained from The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, 189 Whitechapel Road, London, E.1, of which he was the Founder.

Chapter VI

THE PROMISES. (Rom. ix. 4)

“Now I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises given unto the fathers.”—Rom. xv. 8.

“And the Promises.” This constitutes another of God's great and irrevocable “gifts” to Israel. Perhaps the great Abrahamic promises with regard to the land and the promised seed, in whom *all* families of the earth should be blessed, are uppermost in the Apostle's mind—the promises which are unfolded and amplified in the words of God subsequently spoken to Isaac and Jacob, and, later, to the whole people, through Moses and the prophets, and which are wonderful and comprehensive in their scope ; and are God's guarantees for the blessing of Israel, and through Israel for all the nations of the earth.

Now, on this point, especially professing Christendom, and many true Christians even in Protestant countries, have through ignorance been at variance with the Apostle and with the clearly revealed mind of God. The general belief of Christians for many centuries has been that the promises made to Israel have, in consequence of their rejection of Christ, been either annulled or bodily transferred to the church. This has arisen from the erroneous belief that God hath utterly cast off His people which He had foreknown, and that there is no more a national future for the Jewish nation.

“The attitude of such Christians in relation to the Jews has been humorously illustrated by that prominent Jewish witness for Christ, the late Joseph Rabinowitch, in the following story : During the last Russo-Turkish war, after a great battle, a certain number of men in a particular regiment were returned in the list as dead, and an officer with a company

of soldiers was commissioned to attend to the sad duty of seeing them decently buried.

“ While engaged in this task, they came across a poor man who was badly wounded, and left on the field for dead, but who had life enough in him to refuse to be buried. But the amusing part of the business was that the officer in command seemed very much perplexed. He asked the poor man’s name, looked at his list, and then said, ‘ Well, I do not know what to do with you ; in my list you are put down as dead.’ This, Mr. Rabinowitch said, is the attitude of many Christians in relation to the Jew.

In their political and religious creeds, the Jews as a nation are put down as *dead*, and even many true Christians, when reading in the Scriptures the exceeding great and precious promises which God made to Israel, say, ‘ Oh yes, *Israel*—that is a nation that once lived, but died some nineteen centuries ago, when they rejected Christ, and now “ Israel ” means no longer Israel, but the Church which has entered into their inheritance.’ But Israel, though seriously wounded, is not dead, and refuses to be buried ; and the remarkable signs of vitality which as a people they are now manifesting are in themselves sufficient to show that they are not merely a nation of the past, but pre-eminently the nation of the future.” *

When the Apostle Paul wrote these words, Israel had already rejected Christ, and it was on that account that he pours out the great sorrow and uninterrupted pain of his heart, yet—and this is one great purpose he had in writing these three chapters (Rom. ix-xi.)—he proceeds to show how that, though all men *be* liars, God abides faithful, and that His gifts and calling of Israel (in spite of all that has happened) are “ without repentance ” or a change of mind on His part.

Therefore, it is with design that he says, not that they *were* Israelites, and that to them *belonged* the adoption, and the glory and the covenants, and the service of God, and the promises : but who *are* Israelites, and that theirs *are* all these gifts which constitute their high calling, for God hath *not* cast off the people which He had foreknown ; and though the majority of many generations of Israel may exclude themselves through unbelief from the *enjoyment* of these great privileges, they are reserved in the purpose of God against the time when “ all Israel shall be saved,” and when, through Christ, they shall experience nationally what we now experience individually, that *all* the promises of God, “ how many soever they be,” and whether relating to spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, or to national and “ temporal ” blessings in earthly places in Canaan—“ *in Him is the yea* ” of

Quoted from my (D. Baron’s) book, “ The Ancient Scriptures and the Modern Jew.”

verification, “ *and through Him also is the Amen* ” of response and of experience “ to the glory of God through us ” (II Cor. i. 20).

Meanwhile, far from the death of our Lord Jesus being occasion for the cancelling or annulling of the promises made to Israel, the Apostle assures us that “ Christ was made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God *that He might confirm* the promises made unto the fathers ” (Rom. xv. 8) ; and since they have been ratified with His own precious blood, they have been made doubly sure, and can never fail.

I am speaking to Christians, and do not want to be misunderstood. I believe that there is not a promise in reference to spiritual blessing which the least and weakest believer in Christ may not apply and enjoy as if uttered to himself, and (as I said elsewhere) remember that in all His words and acts to Israel the heart of Israel’s God is opened up to you, whoever you may be, who have learned to put your trust under the shadow of His wings. For this God is your God for ever and ever—the Father of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who wants you to learn from His infinite grace and faithfulness to His unworthy Israel that His faithfulness to you, too, can never fail.

But what I want you to know is that your inclusion into promises made to Israel in no way alters the meaning and force of the words as primarily uttered to that nation, and that you can be no gainer, but rather much of a loser, by the so-called spiritualizing, or *phantomizing*, method of interpreting Scripture, by which “ Zion,” “ Israel,” “ Jerusalem,” etc., are explained to mean the “ Church,” or “ heaven ”—a method which is largely responsible for the fact that the Bible, especially the prophetic Scriptures, has become a sealed book to the majority of professing Christians, who in consequence become an easy prey to every wind of false doctrine, or to the specious rationalism in relation to God’s Word which now, alas, permeates the Churches !

“ Theirs are the promises,” and not one thing that God spake will ever fail—“ For thus saith Jehovah, like as I brought all this great evil upon this people [and so *literally* fulfilling all the threatenings and curses which He had uttered against them], so will I bring upon them *all the good that I* promised them.” “ He will turn again, He will have compassion upon us ; He will subdue our iniquities, and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.” And then, when Jehovah “ hath remembered His mercy and His truth toward the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God ” (Jer. xxxii. 42 : Mic. vii. 19 20 : Ps. xcvi. 3).

A FAMOUS HYMN

In *The British Weekly* for April 3rd, 1947, some particulars were given concerning the well known hymn writer Rev. H. F. Lyte. In his later years he was vicar of Brixham, Devon. The account mentioned that at the end his heart was saddened by dissensions in his congregation, some of whom joined the Plymouth Brethren. It will be of interest to put on record some facts as to this last matter.

Among the Exclusive Brethren of my youth a much esteemed evangelist and writer of tracts was the late Dr. W. T. P. Wolston, a physician of Edinburgh. Our families were well acquainted, and when he came to spend the last years of his life at Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, we lived near each other and I had the privilege to visit him. After his death Mrs. Wolston gave me the following interesting information.

Her husband's grandfather had property near Newton Abbott in Devon. His son, the Doctor's father, lived at Brixham and he and his wife were members of Mr. Lyte's congregation. They were pious but without personal experience of salvation, as is so often the case with religious persons in the Established Church. By the grace of God Mrs. Wolston was brought, in meetings of the Brethren, to personal knowledge of Christ and to assurance of eternal life. Her new enthusiasm puzzled and alarmed her husband. He thought her overwrought and sent her for a long change to his sister in Scotland, and after some while he went to see her.

At dinner that evening there was at table a gentleman to whom he had not been introduced and who directly after the meal retired to his room. He inquired of his sister as to this guest, saying he had been very impressed with his polished courtly manners. He was told that he was a Mr. J. G. Deck, who had been a naval officer but on religious grounds had abandoned that calling. Seeing her brother's interest the sister added that Mr. Deck was to speak in the village the next evening, and she would be grateful if he would escort her to the meeting. It was still the days when ladies did not go out alone at night. They went, and that night Mr. Wolston also found peace with God through faith in His Son. Then he better understood his wife. Naturally they associated from that time with the believers among whom they had been born again.

These and other losses were of course a great grief to the godly clergyman, but they moved him to write the hymn :

Abide with me : fast falls the eventide :

The darkness deepens ; Lord, with me abide !

*When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, Oh, abide with me.*

Thus did the devout man turn his loss to gain, and the whole church of God has been enriched. J. G. Deck also had poetic gift and many of his hymns are still in use. His descendants are well-known in Australia.

IMPORTANT TEXTS (8)

II Cor. v. 1-10 : Phil. i. 23

To be read in the R.V. with their contexts.

1. *The Present.* (a) "Our outward man decays" (ch. iv. 16)—a perpetual process, which even our strenuous labour in the work of the Lord accelerates. Consequently while in this body "we groan being burdened" (vs. 3, 4).

(b) Yet "we faint not" (iv. 16), for "our inward man is renewed continuously," and "the spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity" (Prov. xviii. 14). This renewing operates while faith animates the heart; for faith makes real a world which the senses cannot discern (v. 7), a heavenly realm free from all weakness and burdens, a system of life which is eternal, not, as this, temporary, insufficient.

The present physical house in which man dwells is "of the earth," suited to the business of living on earth, but not to the higher life of the realm above: "flesh and blood [even had it remained sinless] is not capable of inheriting the kingdom of God" (I Cor. xv. 50), and obviously "corruption cannot inherit incorruption." Therefore the present body is like a tent, frail and transitory. It is happily true that the rents in an old and worn tent let in the sunshine; yet it is decaying, and must presently be taken down and destroyed.

2. *The State after Death.* Man by constitution is a *soul* clothed with a material *body* which is kept in life by the *spirit* (Gen. ii. 7). At death God recalls this spirit-element, thereupon the body turns to dust (Eccl. xii. 7), and the soul, the man, without the external body, is "unclothed, naked." This incomplete condition is not to be desired (vs. 3, 4). It entirely forbids that the person should in that naked state reach the final and supreme goal of being presented before the presence of God's glory in heaven, as surely as no naked man would be presented before a king in his throne room.

Nevertheless the intermediate state has this unique advantage over this earth life, that freed from the limitations that the body of flesh puts upon our faculties, the saint can enjoy the presence of the Lord more acutely. Therefore "to depart and to be with Christ" would have been "very far better" for Paul personally than to be chained day and night to a pagan ruffian (Phil. i. 21-26). He was torn between the two possibilities, that of his personal advantage of departing to be with Christ, and that of further serving Christ by

helping His people on earth. He chose the latter.

Being "with Christ" in the sense Paul had in view did not imply ascent to the heavens where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Not even the Lord ascended there, far above all heavens, while in the death state. Even on the morning of His resurrection He had not yet gone thither to the Father (John xx. 17). At death He had gone to Paradise, in Hades, in the lower parts of the earth (Luke xxiii. 43 : Acts ii. 27, 31 : Eph. iv. 9). Thither His people go at death, and they are there with Him : for His journeys hither and thither in His kingdom, descending and ascending, were that "He might fill all things," might occupy, take complete personal possession as man, of His whole dominions.

Therefore He is (a) on earth with His servants personally (John xiv. 21, 23 : Acts xxii. 6-10 ; xxiii. 11 : II Tim. iv. 16, 17) ; He is (b) with them when assembled (Mat. xviii. 19, 20) ; He is (c) with them and they with Him in the realm of the dead (Phil. i. 23 : Rev. vi. 9-11) ; and they will (d) be with Him when rapt to meet Him in the clouds and by resurrection (I Thes. iv. 17) ; and (e) those who conquered in His battles in this life shall walk with Him in white and shall sit down with Him on His throne in His glory (Rev. ii. 4, 5, 21). It was in sense (e) that Paul thought of being "with Christ" should he die. But while living and active in the noble service of the gospel his wish was *not* to be unclothed, disembodied (II Cor. v. 4). The difference in his circumstances, now while free for his active, blessed ministry, later when chained and restricted, explains his different outlook and desire.

3. *The Eternal State.* But blessed as was his active service, and yet better to depart and be with Christ, neither is the true goal of the disciple. In neither sphere is he "at home." Home for the child of God can only be the Father's house, and thither we do not arrive at death, but only by the coming of the Son to take us there. He made this so clear that it argues a definite blinding of the mind that the church for fifteen centuries has thought that the Christian goes to heaven at death. Scripture is against it ; the idea was not entertained for the first centuries, and obtained acceptance only when, under Constantine, the church joined the world, abandoned its only true hope, the return of the Lord, and accepted this erroneous notion in place of the prospect of rapture and resurrection.

If believers go to the glory of God at death, they have already reached the summit, the goal, and there is no need of resurrection or rapture. But, as just stated, the Lord showed distinctly that only by His return can we reach the Father's house, our "home" : "In My Father's house are many abiding places . . . I go to prepare a place for you . . . And if I go and prepare a place for you, *I come again*, and will receive you unto Myself ; in order that where I am, there

ye may be also ” (John xiv. 2, 3 : I Thes. iv. 16, 17).

As flesh and blood cannot rise to that realm there must needs be given a body capable of life there (I Cor. xv. 50-58). Thus had Paul shortly before written to these Corinthians. Now (II Cor. v. 1) he tells them that this body will be permanent, a “ building,” not a tent, a “ house ; ” and that it will be a direct creation of God, not something which lesser beings had made out of heavenly materials. Gnostics were already inculcating their false philosophy of creation, that the supreme God had left to lesser beings the work of manipulating the created matter or its basis. This is tacitly rebuked by the assertion that the coming body of glory, immortality, and incorruption will not be made “ with hands,” but will be God’s own handiwork.

As to duration, it will be eternal ; as to location, it will be “ in the heavens ; ” not of the earth for the earth, but of heavenly substance suitable to life in the heavens. The present body exhibits the activities of man’s *soul* ; it is a psychical or soulish vehicle : the heavenly body will be the vehicle of the movements of his spirit ; a pneumatical or spiritual body (I Cor. xv. 44-46).

Changing the figure from a house to a garment, the apostle now (ver. 4) speaks of this heavenly body as a robe to be put on, either to cover and conceal our nakedness wrought by death, or to take the place of the corrupted body of those to be changed by rapture. For the intermediate state he was not now longing : “ not that we would be unclothed ” (ver. 4) ; but for this final great change he was *most* desirous. He will gladly be disrobed of the frail earthly robe, to be worn only till death or till the Lord shall descend, which garment shows that the wearer is “ absent from the Lord ” as regards visible presence ; and he longs to be clothed upon with that heavenly body which will enable him to be “ at home with the Lord ” in the full felicity of the Father’s house.

4. *The Occasion* of this momentous event is shown distinctly. Writing in the former letter the apostle said that this change will take place “ at the last trump ” (xv. 52). I Thes. iv. 16 tells that this will be at the descent of the Lord from heaven to the clouds of this earth. Paul adds that this putting on by the mortal of immortality will be the fulfilment of the ancient prophesy (Isa. xxv. 8) that “ Death is *swallowed up* in victory.” He now repeats (ver. 4) that the putting on of the eternal heavenly garment is in order “ that what is mortal may be *swallowed up* of life.” Obviously these two statements refer to the one event, at the coming of Christ. This forbids two erroneous errors :

(a) That it is the hour of a believer’s death of which he speaks, or

(b) That he has in mind some supposed conferment of a

temporary heavenly "house," or robe, to cover in measure the believer's nakedness during the intermediary condition between death and resurrection. For such a covering there is in fact no need. There is already an outer form, answering to the material form dropped at death but much less substantial, rare not coarse, yet real. Thus Samuel when called back to speak with Saul had on a robe (I Sam. xxviii. 14), and Dives and Abraham could recognize each other in Hades (Luke xvi. 23). See also Isa. xiv. 15, 16. But by comparison with the earthly body this covering is so attenuated that the soul feels uncovered, naked.

It is to the coming of the Lord that Paul points and the supreme and permanent change to be wrought then.

5. *The Moral Effects.* The believer is liable to become weary and discouraged by the burdens that make him groan ; but the steadfast contemplation of those grand eternal verities will give a ceaseless invigoration of the inner man. He will not faint, but will experience daily inward renewing ; his present burden will seem but light and momentary, as compared with the weight of eternal glory. As Paul wrote to the Romans (viii. 18), " the sufferings of the present will be counted insignificant " in comparison with the eternal glory. The term " light " is the word of the Lord used when He said, " My burden is light " (Matt. xi. 30). It is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. This so heavily burdened disciple and pilgrim assures us that Christ's word is true in experience.

Therefore the apostle says twice " we are always of good courage " (vs. 6, 7). When God wrought in us His good work of the new birth, He had in view this final glorious development ; to this end He directs all His ways and discipline. As assurance that all this prospect is real, not visionary, He has granted us the Spirit of life that animates that heavenly world. In heavenly emotions and energies, which the Spirit already imparts, we have in advance the " earnest " of that coming inheritance.

But this demands that we live in correspondence with the heavenly realm to which we now belong and toward which we urge our way. Only what is drawn from Christ, the Lord from heaven, by the Spirit, will pass the scrutiny of His judgment seat. We shall receive back then exactly what we do here by the use of our present body, whether good or bad (ver. 10). The light and energy of these weighty considerations induces " the fear of the Lord." This urges the believer to " persuade men " to embrace this noble prospect and walk humbly with God, as men who have died with the crucified Redeemer and now live as new-born creatures devoted to Him risen from the dead (vs. 11-vi. 10).

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (7)

SOUTH INDIA

DURING the eight months I was at Ooty the Union Church, at my request, had suspended the plan of paying a salary, but they had been faithful and generous, my needs had been met, and I had even been able to send sums to my wife in wealthy England.

Fruitful and happy as was service on the Hills it was not to be prolonged. On 11th December 1909, Mrs. Keary, of Shoreham Hotel, gave me a card with these lines copied from an old manuscript :

Though scoffers ask " Where is your gain ? "
And mocking, say you work in vain ;
Whate'er the works that be forgot,
Work done for God *it* dieth not.
Work on, work on, nor doubt nor fear :
From age to age this Voice shall cheer,
Whate'er shall die and be forgot
Work done for God *it* dieth not.

I left on December 13th, and, after a few days saying farewells at Conoor, was in Coimbatore on the 18th. This note is from my diary :

This afternoon my host had to tea six young men from the Agricultural College near. It was deeply interesting to learn that these, and two other Indian Christian students, had this week unitedly objected to attend a field demonstration tomorrow on the ground of its being the Lord's day. After some objection the Principal, an Englishman, exempted them from attendance. This is a Government College and senior officials from Madras are coming to give this instruction on the Sunday. Here therefore is the spectacle of English officials disregarding the fourth commandment in their dealings with Hindus, and native young men under them setting them an example in fearing God.

On December 20th I reached the town of Cochin on the Malabar coast to visit Ernest Winter, before mentioned, and his wife. As the day cooled they took me to a district where lived an ancient community of some hundred families of " white " Jews, who claim to be descended from those of the Babylonian captivity. They are really quite fair. They kept to themselves, were mostly poor, and devoutly attended the synagogue. This was an unusually interesting building. It had a pavement of large, patterned, blue Chinese tiles, brought

thence by a former Rajah of Cochin, and given to the synagogue as a token of respect for his Jewish subjects. The brass work was handsome, and there was a very old clock with enormous weights. They courteously showed us the five or six rolls of the Pentateuch (one having part of the prophets) well written in Hebrew, and two having silver crowns at the head of the rollers.

There is something striking and solemn about this age-long witness of scattered Israel to the true God ; but the veil is upon their darkened mind ; they have the letter of the law but miss its spirit, and, for want of knowing Him of Whom Moses and the prophets spoke, they still grope for the wall like the blind. Yet " Israel shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation . . . I, Jehovah, will hasten it in its time " (Isa. xlv. 17 ; lx. 22). "Amen, come Lord Jesus " (Rev. xxii. 20).

Leaving Cochin on December 21st, the next journey was by boat down the very lovely backwater which runs about a hundred miles southward, a little inland from the sea. Having to change boat at Aleppi, on the coast, I met on the little wooden pier a young Englishman and his wife. There were thirteen Europeans, with five children, in the business colony, and no spiritual provision for them. The C.M.S. missionary who visited them at times was in England, as his wife was ill, and there was no certainty of his return. When these friends saw me coming down the pier they wondered if I was a new padre come to them. " Sheep having no shepherd."

The next day I reached Quilon, the railhead of that part, and was soon at Kottarakara, welcomed by P. E. Marmen, a native evangelist. Handley Bird and I had come for a conference. Many hundreds attended. A brother of the land named Thomas interpreted for us and did it well. During the three days, with all-day meetings, he hesitated but once. Mr. Bird was speaking of Satan as a roaring lion persecuting the early Christians. He intended to explain that this method of opposing the gospel failed, and that the enemy turned to that of corrupting the church, by joining it to the world, Constantine making it the State religion. Mr. Bird exclaimed, " But the Devil found the roaring lion did not pay." The idea of a roaring lion paying something was baffling, and the interpreter hesitated and said, " I beg your pardon." It was a useful lesson to me as a novice in speaking for interpretation. Each sentence should be a complete grammatical entity, and curious English idioms be omitted.

Life here was purely Indian, as to food and quarters. I slept in a tiny lean-to, with a leaf roof and sides. The litter of straw was a comfortable bed. An old time Welsh itinerant said that, as he traversed the mountains, sometimes he was lodged like a bishop, sometimes like an apostle. When the squire gave him a sumptuous meal and a feather bed, it was the former ; when a goatherd gave him black bread and a

pallet of straw, he was lodged like an apostle. That hardened and iron-nerved traveller, F. S. Arnot, told me that one night, lying in the dark in such a lean-to, in Central Africa, he heard a gentle rustle and purr and knew that a snake, attracted by the warmth, was making its way to his side. Had he moved, the creature would probably have struck him. It could see and he could not. His comment was : “ *When I woke in the morning* I remembered my bed-fellow and cleared from my blankets at a bound.” The snake was then killed. At Kottarakara I was spared any such test of nerves and fortitude.

On Christmas Day the train took me over the mountains and plains to Palamcottah in Tinnevely. My late host had kindly provisioned me for the journey. To a friend in England I wrote that for breakfast I had had bread and water and bananas, and for lunch, by way of a change, I had had bananas and water and bread, and that probably my Christmas fare had done me more good than much that had been eaten that day in England.

An ox cart took me by the afternoon the fifteen miles to Dohnavur, where Thomas Walker, Miss Carmichael, and Muttumal gave a warm welcome. It was partly to see the child for whom I had prayed much that I came. Dohnavur was a fairyland, with its hundred or more dark brown sprites, in greens and pinks, chasing each other in and out of the shrubs and flowers. These girls were the choicest for beauty, for the heathen give to their gods their best, and these would have been dedicated to a life of shame as temple girls.

Children in the days of innocence are alike in all lands. As Mr. Walker took me over the compound to my room Chellalu (whose portrait at that age is in *Lotus Buds*) hauled along one of my smaller bags and prattled in Tamil. Mr. Walker checked her quietly and said to me : “ She is saying, ‘ I wonder what you have got in this bag ? ’ ”

Dohnavur was, firstly, a place surcharged with the prayer-spirit : therefore, it was filled with the presence of the Hearer of prayer ; and therefore, thirdly, it was a home of miracle. I wrote thus forty-six years ago, and I hope earnestly that it is still all true.

Thomas Walker was a rare man of God, a saint and a scholar. We met at Ooty, then at Dohnavur, and lastly at Keswick. His sudden death from cholera when far from home was a loss to the work of God far over India. I wrote a line of sympathy to Miss Carmichael. She replied that she did indeed miss him sorely, but added characteristically that she would not so write to one who would say, “ How strange ! I cannot bear to hear our heavenly Father’s will called strange. It is good and acceptable and perfect. Our little children should teach us better. They give us pleasure by looking up into our faces and trusting us. I want to give Him pleasure.” Then she added : “ Mrs. Walker is wonderful. ‘ And now shall my

head be lifted up.' That is so much better than 'keeping up' ”.

The night I left Dohnavur a long procession of helpers and children, with lanterns and songs, followed my bandy down the drive to the entrance gate. The last sound that gradually died away was sweet voices crying “ Goodbye, goodbye.” The angels can see in the dark, and knew that eyes that seldom wept were wet that night, as the bulls stumbled on in the darkness and Dohnavur became but a happy memory.

There followed six days and five nights in trains. I slept well on the bare boards of 3rd class carriages, with a leather Bible bag for a pillow. Visits were paid to Gunjur and Bangalore, and a few days at Hyderabad City in the Deccan. This was to visit the head of the municipality of that city of half a million Moslems. It was an insight into life to go round the city with him on a tour of inspection. The poverty, dirt, and misery in which most lived was pitiful, though a capable Englishman, with a native staff of 500, had done something to improve conditions. It was in shocking contrast to the luxury of the wealthy. The Nizam was said to be one of the richest rulers in India. It was interesting to watch proceedings as my friend investigated disputes regarding buildings. This man wanted to put a window in a wall. The neighbour protested that then his women could be seen. And so on. When he gave his decision the parties salaamed and seemed satisfied. But when he told his clerk that the matter would be referred to the native Committee then all faces fell, for now must begin what is called expressively the “ oiling of palms,” and he who could give the larger bribe would be favoured.

His wife was the daughter of an invalid in Bristol who used the enforced leisure to compile the first birthday autograph book. She was a Christian and it was strongly against her father's wish that she married one then an unbeliever. She paid the price of thirty or more years of spiritual loneliness in her home, her husband being wholly worldly. Then God answered the prayers of herself and a converted son. The husband was brought to the gates of death with very severe typhoid. He bethought himself that, big and strong as he had been, he would not live for ever, and what then ? But he did not know the way of salvation, had no Bible, and was too proud to inquire of his wife. In misery of heart he thought he would look around her room in case he might find help. He even turned over some dresses and there fell out a book she had brought from England. It was Andrew Murray's *The New Life*. He said to himself, “ That is what I want. I am heartily tired of my old life.” Now the book did not so much quote Scripture as put the references in the margin ; so he could make little of it, being without a Bible. He was then commissioned to build the camp when George V, as Prince of Wales, went to India for the Durbar. This took him to

Bombay, where he bought a Bible, and between the book and the book he found Christ.

His conversion was thorough. Race horses, liquors, tobacco, novels, theatres were all discarded. The gramophone was converted and played "Rock of Ages." His stand in the city was fine. But a high church cleric misled him, and, upon his retirement, turned him from the simplicity of the Spirit to the deceits of formal religion. I visited him more than once, in his parish in England, but he made no progress in grace and his end was sorrowful. A fine start, good running, but a poor ending; this is not how the racer wins the prize. But how painfully frequent it is. "Let us press on."

On Friday, 7th January 1910, I reached Chettapetta, Mr. E. S. Bowden's home in the Godaveri Delta. This was the region opened by the earlier Messrs. Bowden and Beer, the first from England to follow A. N. Groves to India to spread the good news on apostolic lines. It was deeply interesting to visit most of the centres of work. During the more than seventy years God had wrought blessedly in saving souls. Yet there was manifest weakness as regards the churches. There were few men ready or fit to shoulder responsibility in the house of God. Practically everything depended upon the "missionary" and his money. This was sad after so many years. Yet it is scarcely to be avoided where the foreigner who starts the work remains permanently at hand, a feature unknown in the apostolic age. And the practice of paying a salary to native workers in the gospel is baneful. It makes them dependent upon him and not on God, prevents a working faith that can surmount difficulties, and keeps the foreigner in the dangerous position of being the employer and master. It is difficult for him not to be lord over God's heritage. This is discussed at length in my life of Anthony Norris Groves. It is good that of late years some English workers have laboured on better lines, studying to bring on Indian leaders.

Oh, how dark and evil is a land without the truth of Christ! Sailing with E. B. Bromley up the Godaveri I saw the whole situation epitomized in one horrid scene. A dark and naked corpse was floating down the stream, and when it touched the bank savage dogs rushed at it and tore fiercely at the limbs. Thus is man, dead in spirit, carried ever downward on the stream of sin, with evil spirits gratifying their cruel delight in his destruction. But this is a dependable saying, and worthy of the fullest acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (I Tim. i. 15). And He does this, as the Godaveri Delta showed.

At Tatipaka, one beautiful moonlit night, E. C. Adams had gathered under the palms perhaps thirty educated English-speaking Hindus to hear an address. The subject was the plan of God to elevate some from the sons of men to share the throne and glory of His Son, in a coming kingdom

which should fill heaven and earth with peace. The audience listened long and carefully as this scheme was unfolded step by step. As shown above, the cultured Hindu has his mind filled with vast, though purely imaginary, philosophical conceptions of time and the universe. It is not enough to tell him only of the forgiveness of sins, essential as this is. To displace from his heart his false scheme it is necessary to unfold to him the far nobler plans of God and to show that these centre in Christ Jesus, His Son. This the apostles did. They preached the *kingdom* of God, and the place in it of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts xx. 25 ; xxviii. 31). Even to young converts they explained the "*mystery of God.*" that is, His secret counsels, in general (Col. i. 24-29), and in details, such as the part in that programme of the visible return to the earth of Christ (I Thes. iv. 13-v. 11 and II Thes. ii. 1-12, especially verse 5).

I explained to that company the steps by which men of the earth would be fitted for the honour of reigning with Christ. The resurrection of the dead, the rapture of the living, the removal bodily from earth to the upper realms, at the descent of the Lord, were mentioned. Suddenly I stopped and said : " I wonder what you gentlemen are thinking about this programme ? " An elderly hearer blurted out the single word " Impossible ! " " No, sir," I replied, " it is not impossible ; it has already taken place in one instance, and therefore can take place in other instances, if the same Power chooses to exert itself, and this is promised." I then pressed the fact and meaning of the bodily resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is seen the absolute necessity of the real bodily resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of the body of Christ is central and vital to the Christian scheme of things, as Paul showed to the lately converted Corinthians, whose minds were still darkened in measure by the same philosophies which still darken minds. Hence the Athenian philosophers mocked when they heard of the resurrection (I Cor. v : Acts xvii 32). Here is the explanation of why Satan labours still to deny that bodily resurrection, as when Leslie Wetherhead asserts as his opinion that the body of Christ evaporated into gases as does another dead body, only more quickly (*His Life and Ours*, page 303). It is destructive of the gospel, thoroughly and completely anti-Christian.

It had been pleasant to see my sister-in-law in her sphere of service and the dear Bowdens in their home, but the road lay northward and on January 22nd 1910, I reached Calcutta. It was a privilege to stand in Carey's Baptist chapel, erected in 1809, where Adoniram Judson was baptized in 1812, proceeding the next year to his heroic labours in Burma.

Before going to Burma myself I stayed for three days in a second-class boarding house in Daramtolla. An Exclusive

brother was there, so we sat together at meals and talked quietly of the things of God. Next to me sat an English lady, who presently expressed her surprise and pleasure to hear Englishmen speaking of things divine and carrying Bibles in their pockets. She proved to be a real believer and she asked me to try and help her daughter and son in Rangoon. This I did.

The daughter remarked that her mother need not have lived in Daramtolla. They had had a lovely home, but her mother had fallen under the spell of Seventh Day Adventism and had made life unbearable by insisting that Saturday must be kept rigidly as a sabbath. After long patience the father, an unconverted man, could endure it no more, had broken up the home, and was making his wife an allowance.

How much more pleasing to God it would have been had this devoted Christian remembered the plain and emphatic command of God that the wife is to be subject to the husband, not to domineer over him. Various circumstances call for the humility and trust expressed in Faber's lines,

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do
And *leave the rest to Thee.*

(To be continued)



THE DISCIPLE

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GOD HATH SHINED IN OUR HEARTS

II Cor. iv, 6, 7

*God in heaven hath a treasure,
Riches none may count or tell;
Hath a deep eternal pleasure—
Christ, the Son He loveth well.
God hath here on earth a treasure,
None but He its price may know,
Deep unfathomable pleasure—
Christ revealed in saints below.
Christ, the light that fills the heavens
Shining forth on earth beneath,
Through His Spirit freely given,
Light of light midst shades of death:
Down from heaven's unclouded glory
God Himself the treasure brought,
Closing thus His love's sweet story
With His sweetest, deepest thought.*

*Thus, though worn, and tried, and tempted,
Glorious calling, saint, is thine;
Can the Lord but find thee emptied,
That is all He seeks to find.
Vessels of the world's despising,
Vessels weak, and poor, and base,
Bearing wealth God's heart is prizing—
Glory from Christ's blessed face.
Oh to be but emptier, lowlier,
Mean, unnoticed, and unknown,
And to God a vessel holier,
Filled with Christ, and Christ alone!
Nought of earth to cloud the glory,
Nought of self the light to dim,
Telling forth His wondrous story,
Emptied—to be filled with Him!*

PAUL GERHARDT.

THE SABBATH (2)

X. THE LAW IS ONLY SUSPENDED—NOT CANCELLED

That the law of the sabbath is only in suspense, when and where required, and is not annulled, may be seen in those prophecies which simply presume its continuance in the coming Millennial age (Isa. lvi. 2-8 ; lviii. 13 ; lxvi. 23 : Ezek. xlvi. 4, 12). There is no suggestion of re-enactment, for there has been no cancellation of the law. It cannot be pleaded that its observance lapsed because it was Jewish and will revive when the Jews come again into fellowship with God, because (a) the law applies to all men, not Jews only, for the non-Israelites are named as observing it in that coming age. And (b) at that time Israel will not come into fellowship with God under the covenant of Sinai but under the new covenant, that of Abraham, yet under this new covenant the sabbath will continue. This is no slight proof that it is in force now for us who in advance have entered the kingdom of God under this new covenant. Its enforcement in that coming age will revive automatically because outward conditions will no longer hinder fulfilment.

The term *necessary* work should be construed strictly, in favour of observance not exemption, so as to limit work, not to justify extension thereof. If some further instances are given this is not as if legislating for others, but only to illuminate what is here advocated.

If the boiler fires of a factory were allowed to go out over the week-end, then all the work-people would lose time on Monday while they were restarted and steam generated. There would result a serious loss of output, and of wages. The alternative is that the few stokers work a short time on the day of rest. But this would not justify the whole factory being kept running seven days a week.

In a great city we often invited tram conductors to a Bible class or to the gospel service. The common reply was that three Sundays out of four they had to take other people to classes and services. I ceased travelling in public vehicles on the Lord's day so as to be able to reply that I was not one who caused my neighbour's labour to be in demand. This secured at once a hearing of the gospel, and also the reception of a gospel booklet.

For fifty-five years I have failed to see *necessity* for preachers using trains, or hiring other means, for holding meetings. Younger men could often go away for the week-end ; others could walk or cycle or use their own car, as many do. But the

Divine remedy is that the Holy Spirit is able and ready to raise up adequate and spiritually efficient ministry in each local group of believers ; so that it is really not a *necessity* that Sunday labour should be employed for this purpose. This solution is in operation in places where public conveyances are unknown, as I myself have seen in various lands.

Before my heart had become exercised as to the will of God in these matters I went on one occasion by train from Bristol to take the Sunday services in a village near Trowbridge. The old deacon of the chapel told me that they were holding that year their two hundred and forty-fifth anniversary of the church. I said : That takes your church back into persecuting times. Yes, he said, and our fathers used to meet then in the wood over there, and the preachers used to walk out from Bristol over Saturday night ! Thought I to myself, You are a member of a degenerate race, to be sure. Your ancestors walked twenty-eight miles through the night for the privilege of preaching the truth, and with the risk of being put in prison or run through with a pike, whereas you have travelled comfortably by train on the Lord's day, in the company of dozens of worldlings on their way to spend the day on pleasure !

If it be said, But the train will run in any case, so why not use it ? the argument is the same in principle as saying, if *I* don't steal this article (or do some other wrong) somebody else will, so why should not I ?

It is not a *necessity* for a Christian to go to his office or warehouse on the Lord's day merely because the employer demands it. Pressed upon a point of Christian duty one said to Spurgeon, " But a man must live ! " The reply was, " I do not admit the necessity. A man must please God ! " Dr. A. T. Pierson related the case of a young Christian who served in an American store which was open seven days a week. Becoming troubled in conscience he explained his difficulty to the head of the firm, and said that he was willing to work late each week-night in order to keep the work in hand, but he would be glad to be relieved of Sunday work. He was told that if he could not fall in with the ways of the business he must leave, and he left immediately.

The next morning he received a letter from another large firm in the same trade saying that they understood that he was seeking employment and inviting him to call. They appointed him at a better salary than he had been receiving, and there was no Sunday work. Later, when he had become a partner he asked the head of the firm to tell him how he came to send for him at the first. " Oh," was the reply, " that is quite simple. When Mr. A. had dismissed you he came straight round to me, told me what had happened, and said that of course he could not have a young man talking to him like that, but if I wanted a thoroughly reliable man I had better secure you before any one else did so ! "

As Dr. Pierson then said : “ The Almighty has not yet vacated His throne ! ” Or as the apostle Peter says : “ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of trial ” (II Pet. ii. 9) ; and if He does not always do so as promptly as in this case it is not because He is not able, but because a continuance of the test of faith is for our good, and our final glory (I Pet. i. 6, 7).

When days come when the law does not allow a day of rest, they who had employed others to work thereon, as on trains or trams, at the phone or radio, will not be able to plead a conscientious objection when compelled themselves to work on that day.

XI. THE PRINCIPLE OF PERSONAL LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY

But who is to decide what is a *necessity* or what is properly allowable on the sabbath ? Both the law and the gospel show that in many cases it must be the individual himself.

The law did indeed prescribe as to some matters, as that on the day of atonement “ no manner of work ” was permitted. Gathering fuel (Num. xv. 32) and lighting a fire were prohibited (Ex. xxxv. 3). But as to just how much was allowable in the preparation of food on ordinary sabbaths no rule could possibly be formulated. In a larger family more work must have been involved, as also when sickness might be in the house. There was no direction by Moses as to how long the walk in the cornfields might or might not be. Rabbis prescribed that later.

In the observance of other laws it was of necessity the same. It was ordained that all the men should go to Jerusalem for the three chief feasts. When it was a question whether a man was just well enough or just too unwell to take the journey, or whether the illness of a wife or child was so serious as rightly to forbid his absence from home, plainly no strict rule could settle such items with fairness and mercy.

It is therefore only to be expected that under the gospel this liberty should be vastly enlarged and emphasized. How very few were the items upon which the apostolic decree at Jerusalem gave directions ! (Acts xv). And the wording of that decree expressly excluded *all* other matters as not being *obligatory* : “ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you *no* greater burden than *these* necessary things,” namely, those before noticed. In all other matters, therefore, save of course essentially *moral* questions—theft, murder, and the like—believers were not put under bondage. Therefore when sabbath keeping, tithing, or other such matters are made *obligatory* it is definitely against this ruling of the Holy Spirit. No church, no council, no secular government has Divine authority to prescribe in such questions.

Thus in giving money to the work of God no proportion was fixed. “As he may prosper” was the indication (I Cor.

xvi. 2), but the individual had to determine how much he had been prospered. Had there been a rule that each Christian must give a tenth that must in this place have been stated. As against the very principle of communism, Peter distinctly allowed the fullest right of private ownership, saying to Ananias, "Whilst [the land] remained [unsold] did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thy power?" (Acts v. 4). Ananias was not *obliged* to give *any* part of it to the common fund. Peter could not have so spoken had it been compulsory to give a tenth. And this was in the case of one who, being a Jew, had been compelled formerly to begin by giving a tenth.

The Scripture commands positively that a church must put out of its circle persons persisting in certain offences (I Cor. v. 11-13). These are all acts *essentially* immoral, and are gross. A church has no right from its Head to put out or to keep out believers on other grounds. If a church extends its list of excommunicable matters it does so without warrant or guidance. Hence the sabbath, or tithing, or such questions cannot be made tests for fellowship according to Scripture.

Other communities of Christians make tests of such questions as the use of alcohol or tobacco. Through eighty years of life the writer has never used either; partly to be able to help and to exhort those who are enslaved thereby, and partly because it is certain that these and similar fleshly indulgences cannot make the body, the temple and the tool of the Holy Spirit, more clean for His presence and efficient for His use. We greatly wish that, for the Lord's sake, and their testimony, all our fellow-believers would so abstain. But in such matters no legislative right is given to the church of God; our authority over one another in such things is purely moral, not legal and coercive.

It is on this principle of individual liberty that the Scripture reasons in similar matters that in their time were burning questions, and still are so in places (Rom. xiv. 1-xv. 7).

Is it lawful to eat flesh? Is it allowable to drink wine? Is it necessary to keep one day more honourable than another day, or are all days alike? The Spirit of God did not guide Paul to lay down a rule, or even to give a direct answer to such questions. He said: (1) No Christian is to set at nought or to judge his brother in such matters, ver. 3. (2) No one has a right to judge the servant of another; he is responsible to the Master only, ver. 4. (3) Each man is to be fully persuaded in his own mind, but is not to impose his mind upon his neighbour, ver. 5. (4) God alone is judge, and no one has to give account of his brother's conduct, but only of his own, ver. 10-12. (5) *The guiding principle is love, and love gladly refrains, at personal cost, from stumbling another*, ver. 13-15. (6) *He who pleases himself and stumbles his brother is fighting against Christ and God*, ver. 15, 20. (7) The kingdom of God, into which believers have been brought, does not consist in external

observances but in internal conditions, ver. 16. (8) It is sinful to do what one cannot do without assurance that it pleases God, for one is risking displeasing Him, which is wrong, ver. 23. (9) But it is not godly to do what one may have faith to do if thereby another is stumbled, ver. 21. (10) It is Christ-like to forego one's own pleasure thereby to establish another, ch. xv. 1-3. (11) A leading rule for the house of God is unity, ch. xv. 5-7 ; it is the work of the Enemy to divide the people of God over such questions. (12) Finally, since God and His Son have received all of us, in spite of these differences of judgment and practice, we are to receive one another, and to bear with one another, ch. xiv. 3 ; xv. 7.

When these principles are understood and practised liberty prevents bondage, while love prevents licence.

The statement : "One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth every day alike," cannot fairly be held not to include the sabbath. In the church at Rome there were Jewish as well as Gentile believers (xvi. 3, 7, 11), and if any of these continued to regard the seventh day as more honourable than the rest, plainly he would come under this word as esteeming one day above another, nor could the others have denied to him its protection as allowing his practice. Indeed, it is difficult to think to what other case it could apply, for genuine converts from heathenism would hardly continue to deem the old vile heathen festivals as sacred days, and, on the other hand, no Jew would deem other Jewish festivals as to be observed but the sabbath not to be. With God-given wisdom the apostle makes the statement wide to cover any other possible case, but it seems clear that the sabbath was the most likely question to arise, and in any event cannot be excluded.

At the Reformation the claim to personal liberty in conscience and religion was a vital matter, and the Reformers won it against the Papal claim to enslave men. But the Reformers shortly denied such liberty to believers who could not in conscience join the Protestant State Churches or admit infant baptism, and they severely persecuted such. This disastrous tendency to deny to others the right of personal freedom constantly reappears amongst Protestants.

XII. THE LORD'S DAY IS NOT THE SABBATH

There is no ground for the idea that the apostles or the early church regarded the first day of the week as taking the place of the seventh day sabbath. Nothing in the New Testament suggests it, nor in the first post-apostolic writers. What has been before said upon Gentile liberty as to the sabbath negatives the suggestion.

The early Christians used the first day of the week for Christian worship, though not that day exclusively. At the very first they worshipped daily in the temple and also held daily in their homes the Christian feast of the breaking of

bread (Acts ii. 46). But it was on the first day of the week that their Lord had risen from the dead ; on that day He had manifested Himself to them as risen ; and it was on the next following first day that He had again appeared to them (John xx. 1, 19, 26). The event was so stupendous, as a fact and in its import, that on that day of the week they met to remember Him as He had appointed (Acts xx. 7). But there is no suggestion that in their minds they regarded this as a substitute for the seventh day sabbath.

That in the time of Constantine, the great and by then apostate Church secured the legal appointment of the first day as a public holiday does not at all affect the question for believers who wish to follow the Word of God only. Much else was at that time imposed by law which all enlightened Christians heartily repudiate.

Of course, the reasoning of extreme Seventh Day Adventists upon this matter is wholly unreasonable. It runs thus : The Pope is the Antichrist, the Beast of Revelation 13. The Pope changed the sabbath to the first of the week. This is the dominant sin of the Papacy and therefore is " the mark of the Beast " (Rev. xiii. 16, 17). Whoever keeps the first of the week as sacred, thereby accepts the mark of the Beast and is damned (Rev. xiv. 9-12).

But that the Papacy is the Beast is not according to Scripture. The Beast will avowedly suppress all worship of every god save himself (II Thes. ii. 3, 4 : Rev. xiii. 8, 15-17). In particular he will deny the God of the Christian, the Father and the Son (I John ii. 22). The Papacy is indeed an awful institution and will reach an awful end (Rev. 17), but so far is it from denying the Father and the Son that it officially avows the orthodox Christian belief as to the Trinity and worships the Father and the Son. Moreover, it is merely an opinion that keeping the first day is the most characteristic sin of the Papal system and therefore is the " mark of the Beast." Most Christians do not agree.

To assert that the appointment of the Sunday as a public holiday and day of worship is the chief offence of the Papacy, and that tolerance thereof secures eternal damnation, betrays an obsession as to the sabbath ; and all obsessions distort vision and judgment upon the particular matter in question.

If the Christian feels bound in conscience to observe a *sabbath* he should keep the seventh day, subject to what has been before shown as to exceptions, to suspension of the law, and as to the spirit and detail of observance.

XIII. THE SABBATH AND SALVATION

The extreme Adventist position just mentioned is a thorough perversion of the gospel, for it makes the keeping of the sabbath according to the law of Moses a condition of salvation. Against this principle of intertwining the law with the work of redemption wrought by the Redeemer, *Galatians* and *Hebrews*

are expressly directed, and indeed, the whole Word of God unitedly protests, negatively or positively.

Salvation thus ceases to be a gift of grace received by faith and is made conditional upon a work of law. To adopt this position is to be "severed from Christ" and to "fall from grace" (Gal. v. 4), and he who so teaches puts himself under the awful and repeated anathema, "if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema" (Gal. i. 8, 9).

So long as sabbatarians contend only for a duty, as they believe, to observe the seventh day, the Scripture, as before shown, plainly directs that this is to be allowed; but whenever they go further by asserting that damnation is the penalty of non-observance, they forfeit their right to liberty by denying liberty to others, and they put themselves in a *fundamentally* false position as to the gospel. This attitude must be as strenuously opposed as the former should be readily conceded, and those who so pervert the gospel cannot rightly claim to be regarded as Christians.

XIV. THE POSITION AND PRIVILEGES OF THE SONS OF GOD

There remains one aspect of this and all similar questions which is higher, final, and determining. It was introduced by the Son of God in the days of His flesh and was expanded and applied by His Spirit through Paul in his letter to the Galatian believers. It is thus an example of a feature vital to right exposition of the New Testament, namely, that all the matters treated in the Epistles are rooted in germinal sayings by Christ. This binds together indissolubly the Gospels and all the Epistles, including those written by Paul.

Matthew had been a tax collector, and he narrates an incident in connexion with tribute (Matt. xvii. 24-27). Peter was asked by tax collectors whether the Rabbi whom he followed paid a certain tax or claimed exemption. He, knowing the facts, answered that Christ paid it.

Now this again was not a question of Mosaic law merely. The duty and right of some men to execute justice among their fellows was imposed by God directly after the Flood (Gen. ix. 6): "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed." As the race multiplied, and the administration of justice became ever more and more complicated and detailed, there grew up of necessity an ever more elaborate system of government. Whatever abuses may have come thereinto by the frailty or wickedness of rulers, and they are great, the fact of government is in itself of God, and in spite of all the terrible abuse of power throughout the ages, it still is better, for the public and private weal, to have rule than anarchy.

God can at any hour remove a ruler, or destroy any given government, or overturn the whole present system and substitute another. This last He will do at the coming of the

Lord Jesus to reign over the earth and the heavens. It is therefore evident that "there is no authority but of God ; the actual existing authorities are of God," though not, of course, all their acts (Rom. xiii. 1-7 : I Pet. ii. 13-17). It follows therefore that such as revere God will honour rulers as of His appointment, and will obey them in all things, save only when such rulers require ought contrary to the declared will of God for all men, or of Christ for His followers (Acts v. 29).

Now the maintenance of this administration of justice of necessity involves expense ; and it is equitable, and is the express command of God, that this expense should be met by the contributions of all those who, in the intention of God in appointing rulers, benefit by the order and safety thus provided. So that from the Flood and onward paying tribute has been a moral duty and a God-imposed duty.

The tax which was here particularly in question had also a religious sanction. It was imposed by the proper authority in the matter and it appears to have been used for the support of the temple worship in Jerusalem.

But the Lord had something very exceptional to say upon this subject, something of deep and wide application to all questions of authority, legal duties, and tributes. He emphasized what He would say by revealing to Peter that He knew of the conversation with the tax collectors without Peter having mentioned it. "When Peter came into the house Jesus spake first to him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon ? the kings of the earth, from whom do they receive toll or tribute ? from their sons, or from strangers [persons not of the royal family] ? And when he said, From strangers, Jesus said unto him, *Therefore the sons are free !*" (Matt. xvii. 25, 26).

In the human sphere this is well understood. Tax collectors do not call upon princes of the royal blood. In the kingdom of God there are such persons as, by great grace, are *sons* of God. In Ephesians iii. 15 we read of "the Father from whom *every fatherhood* in heaven and on earth is named." There are many branches in the family of God, angelic and human. For example, angels are called sons of God (Job xxxviii. 7 ; i. 6 ; ii. 1 : Gen. vi. 2). All men are the children of God in the sense of being His "offspring" by creation (Acts xvii. 28, 29), for their natural life is His creative gift, even though spiritually they are dead to Him. Israel as a people are termed His sons and daughters (Deut. xxxii. 19). But as it was Israelites who claimed this tax from Israelites it is evident that not in this national sense, in which the tax officers themselves shared, but in some distinctive sense Christ spoke of Himself and Peter as "sons" and therefore properly exempt.

As to the Lord Himself personally, He being uniquely the Son of God it is easy to admit the position. Had He

suddenly and visibly irradiated His humanity with the glory of His deity, as He did for a brief time on the mount of transfiguration, no tax officer would have thought of claiming a tax from Him, no Pharisee would have challenged His right to do on the sabbath whatever He thought proper. As Son of God, therefore, He was plainly free from taxation and all that system of law of which taxation is a crucial example and test, for one who may rightly refuse taxes is evidently above the whole legal system of which taxes are a chief acknowledgement.

But Christ neither claimed to be nor acted as being the solitary instance of this position. He spoke in the plural : " Therefore the *sons* are free . . . take and give unto them for me *and thee* " (Matt. xvii. 26, 27). Here is hinted the highest display of the grace of God that ever will be possible to all eternity. It is the purpose of that grace not simply to have a multitude of sons and daughters possessing eternal life, but to bring many of these, as *firstborn* sons (Heb. xii. 23), *unto glory* (Heb. ii. 10).

How often are words read thoughtlessly which reveal most astounding matters ! " The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them . . . I desire that they may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory " (John xvii. 22, 24). The Lord desires that the honour that the three had on the holy mount may be shared by many, yea, be transcended, in that they shall not only behold His glory, and on earth, but partake of it, and in the heavenly part of the universe, the native realm of that glory, themselves being made radiant in heavenly splendour, " conformed to the body of Christ's glory " (Phil. iii. 21). For the city that shall come down from heaven, that is, the saints who shall be accounted worthy to share the joy and honour of being the wife of the Lamb, wears no created glory but has the very glory of God (Rev. xxi. 11).

This will be the highest development of that fact which is common to all believers termed in general " salvation." But not all the saved will rise so high in the kingdom of God. In that universal realm there are the lesser and the greater (Matt. v. 19) ; " one star differeth from another star in *glory* " (I Cor. xv. 41).

The Son of God disrobed Himself of that glory which He had with the Father before the creation (John xvii. 5), and thenceforth being man He had no claim thereto, for not even a perfect man has a claim to share the glory of Deity. But that very glory which He surrendered has been restored to Him in resurrection, by the gift of His Father, as recompense for His fidelity and sufferings as man on earth (Phil. ii. 5-11, " wherefore " : Isa. liii. 12, " therefore " : Heb. ii. 9, " because of " : Rev. v. 9, " worthy . . . for ").

This recovered glory He desires in wondrous grace to share with others of the human race, to which He still belongs : but of necessity it is to be obtained by them upon the same

terms upon which He regained it : and so it is written that “ *if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him,* ” which is not the same as the truth *Since He died for us we have life in Him.* The latter is the fact for every believer, the former is an advance upon it : and so it is added, “ *if we endure we shall also reign with Him* ” (II Tim. ii. 11, 12). And again, while all children are indeed heirs of God their Father, and receive His love, His care as to food and clothing and education, and other common benefits, yet we shall be also “ joint-heirs with Messiah [the King] *if so be that we suffer with Him,* that we may be also glorified with Him ” (Rom. viii. 17).

It is these who shall at last live, not upon the new earth under the favour and love of the one God and Father of all, but in the heavens above, sharing the glory of the Son, and so in the highest conceivable degree and display being *sons* of God. It was to these that the Lord spoke when He set His most difficult lessons, such as, “ Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may *become (genesthe) sons* [not merely children, for they were such already] of your Father who is in the heavens ” (Matt. v. 44, 45) : and again, “ Love your enemies . . . and ye *shall* be [future] *sons* of the Most High ” (Luke vi. 35) : and yet again, “ Blessed are [those who are characterized as] the peacemakers ; for they shall be called *sons* of God ” (Matt. v. 9).

In these places Christ was not telling sinners how to obtain forgiveness, or the dead how to be born again into a new, eternal life : He was telling such as were already *children* of God, by faith in Himself, how they might become *sons* of God, by the working of His Spirit in them in power. And the outcome of so living in fellowship with Him, and of sharing His sufferings as so living in this evil world, He revealed when He said that “ they that are accounted worthy to attain to that [Millennial] age, and the resurrection out from among the dead . . . are *sons* of God, being sons of the resurrection ” (Luke xx. 35, 36). For such as are so accounted worthy to attain to that first resurrection will *reign* with Christ, and so share in His *glory* (Rev. xx. 4, 6).

Thus to be a *son* of God in this fullest sense is

(a) to partake of the nature of a mature son, knowing God as *father* consciously and intelligently. Many fear God as their Creator, praise Him as Preserver, own Him as Judge, acknowledge Him as their Saviour through the work of Christ, and are even thankful to be His children, without being in the enjoyment of the relationship of *son*. For it is possible to be a believer and not to have received the spirit of sonship. It was thus with the disciples before Pentecost ; it is evidently thus with many today. For example, believers who remain in fellowship with unbelievers, or return thereto, do not know in power the promise, “ Come ye out . . . be separate, and I will receive you and will be to you a *father* . . . saith the Lord Almighty ” (II Cor. vi. 17, 18). How much peace under trial,

comfort in sorrow, joy in tribulation is thus foregone ; for how could one be anxious and cast down who knows his father to be almighty ?

(b) The sons of God in Christ have in Him a position in the heavens. As God sees them they are even now “ seated with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus ” (Eph. ii. 6). They are a part of that woman who, though actually in travail on earth, persecuted by the dragon, is seen by God, and by the eye of faith, as already in heaven, arrayed with the glories of heaven (Rev. xii).

(c) In consequence they are no more citizens of the earth, but aliens, foreigners among the nations ; sojourners, not residents, seeking their own country : and therefore, while doing by the way all the good they can to all men, they have neither right nor heart to interfere in the affairs of the countries through which they pass.

(d) Nevertheless, because the Supreme Ruler has given to His Son possession of all the universe, and because these are *sons* of God in the Son, He and they are properly and actually the lords, the sovereigns of the earth, as it is written : “ All things are yours . . . 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 ” (I Cor. iii. 21-23). And included in the “ things to come ” which are theirs is the dignity of being sovereigns and judges of men and angels (I Cor. vi. 2, 3 : Rev. ii. 26-28 ; iii. 21) : and therefore when Christ, who is already their real life, shall be manifested to mankind, then shall they also with Him be manifested in glory, His glory (Col. iii. 4).

Hence it is obvious that these, as ruling princes, are by natural right properly free from taxation and from the administrative system of which taxation is an integral, essential part. And it is exactly thus that the argument in Galatians iii and iv proceeds. In former ages believers in God were children under age, needing rules for their correction and training, “ thou shalt . . . thou shalt not,” they were under stewards and governors, though by title of relationship lords of all. Thus the law of Moses was a tutor, a pedagogue, that is a head servant entrusted with the high responsibility of training the *children* to grow to be *sons*. “ But now that faith is come, we are no longer under a tutor. For we are all *sons* of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus ” (Gal. iii. 25, 26). “ So we also, when we were children, were held in bondage under the rudiments of the world : but when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under law, that He might redeem them that were under law, that we might receive the adoption of *sons*. And because ye are *sons* God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bond-servant, but a *son* ; and if a son then an heir through God ”

(Gal. iv. 3-7). " But now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how turn ye back again to the weak and beggarly rudiments, whereunto ye desire to be in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons and years " (Gal. iv. 9, 10).

Is it not evident that many true children of God have not received this spirit of sonship, or having received it have turned back from its instincts and privileges? For there are those today who observe " days," including sabbath days, and other legal ordinances, because they feel in their souls they are *bound* to do so, and their conscience therefore drives them thereto.

And this brings forward the crux and conclusion of the whole matter.

Christ was bound by *moral* law. His sonship gave Him no freedom to steal or to kill or to blaspheme. Thus it is with all the sons of God.

But Christ as the Son of God, and Peter as a son of God, were not *bound* to pay tribute : *yet the Son of God paid it* : and by His order Peter paid it : and taught by His Spirit Peter and Paul directed all the sons of God to pay it, and therefore to submit in civil matters to all other righteous administrative rules of the various governments imposing tribute (I Pet. ii. 11-17 : Rom. xiii. 1-10).

The reason which moved the Son of God to pay a tax for which before God He was not liable is a noble illustration of that royal law of love by which God Himself and all His sons are eternally bound, and which law of itself secures the fulfilment of all other duties.

Had Christ declared to the tax gatherers that He would not pay, nor permit His followers to pay, because He and they enjoyed such a special relationship to God as princes do to the king their father, it would have seemed to those men incomprehensible, a mere evasion of a legal duty. It would have been to them a stumbling block, a hindrance to trusting Christ at all, and therefore a hindrance to them in the matter of their own salvation by faith in Christ. And He would have forthwith been suspect before the authorities as a teacher of dangerous doctrine subversive of public order, and His enemies would have had fair ground of complaint against Him before the Roman rulers.

In truth, Christ's whole mission was at stake, which indicates that great care and divine wisdom are needed for dealing with any passing incident. The principles involved should be considered, and invariably the law of love will be found to be an infallible guide. The Son of God was entitled to do as He liked, but " Christ pleased not Himself " (Rom. xv. 3), and by acting out of love to others He was preserved from the pitfalls of that hour. *Love readily foregoes its rights rather than stumble another by asserting them.*

Therefore said Christ to Peter, For their sake we will pay the tax, “lest we should cause them to stumble ;” and He deeply impressed upon Peter this course by working a special miracle to provide the money needful.

Moreover, a prince travelling in his father’s dominions, and especially if travelling *incognito* as a private person, will give due honour to all officials appointed by his father, and will submit cheerfully to all proper regulations made by such officials, even though made for subjects, not for princes. To act otherwise would be to challenge his father’s kingly authority and to set a bad example to his subjects. Thus did Pilate’s Lord submit to His servant Pilate, as having authority from above (John xix. 11), and similarly Paul submitted to Festus (Acts xxv. 11), though in each case life itself was at stake. And therefore Paul wrote : “he that resisteth the power withstandeth the ordinance of God . . . wherefore ye must needs be in subjection for conscience sake” (Rom. xiii. 2, 5). The true follower of Christ will never be a revolutionary, not even though he be living under a monster and tyrant such as Nero, who was reigning when Paul wrote.

The situation may now be summarized as follows :

There are four classes of laws.

1. Moral law, of ceaseless authority.
2. Laws for preserving welfare and happiness for man, even when sinless, such as the sabbath and marriage.
3. Laws for preventing and punishing evil : “law is not made for the righteous man, but for the lawless and unruly” (I Tim. i. 9, 10).
4. Religious and ceremonial laws for promoting and regulating man’s dealings with God, such as those relating to atonement and worship. In this sphere, it may be remarked, the civil authority has no rights given it by God.

Now it is evident that the last three classes can and do apply to the earth only, and to man in connection with the earth. 1. In the heavenly world there is neither marriage nor a weekly sabbath. 2. There, because the inclusive law of love has perfect sway, preventive and repressive laws have no place, for no law forbids the manifestation of love (Gal. v. 18, 23). 3. In the world of holy spirits worship is also spiritual, the spontaneous outpouring of loving adoration, which rules and forms can never help, but rather hinder. “God is spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth . . . for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers” (John iv. 21-24). And therefore Jerusalem could no longer be the appointed centre of worship : but when Jerusalem lost its place by the will of God all the ceremonial religion lapsed, for only there did the law of Moses permit those ceremonies to be performed (Deut. xii). And therefore believers today, who understand their spiritual position, “worship God by the

Spirit” without human arrangements for “conducting Divine service” (Phil. iii. 3 : I Cor. xii. 7-11 ; xiv. 26).

So long as the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus have no higher sense of their standing in Christ than to feel themselves Jews, Englishmen, Chinese, or as the case may be, in short as men who still belong to the earth, they will deem themselves as still under law, and *bound* by whatever laws they consider to apply to their case. It is to such that the foregoing exposition of Scripture that precedes this present chapter applies.

But this is not the position of the *sons* of God according to the mind of God. The Son of God came forth in grace from the heavenly world to live awhile on earth, and then to return whence He had come. Yet not that He should abide for ever the only one of the human race in that upper world, but rather that He should bring many sons of God unto that heavenly glory. Such of the children of God as understand, and from the heart respond to, this “high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. iii. 14), know why one of this fellowship wrote that God in Christ becomes “the centre of all ; and the Christian, if consistent, declares plainly that he seeks a heavenly country. His affections, his ties, his citizenship are above.” And as to the affairs of this world he added : “as a Christian I believe and feel myself to be outside all ; these things move me no more.”

It has been expressed thus :

“Called from above, and men of heavenly birth,
Who once were but the citizens of earth,
We seek above our new, our heavenly place,
Where now we dwell before the Father’s face.”

Strikingly did the aristocratic Viscountess Powerscourt say that a Christian is not a man who looks up to heaven from earth, but a man who looks down upon earth from heaven.

When the heart, by faith and in the elevating energy of the Holy Spirit, does in very deed dwell daily with the Father in that heavenly place, naturally it “knows and feels itself outside of” this earth’s affairs. The consciousness of being a prince royal of heaven forbids that one should deem oneself, or one’s fellows in this heavenly rank, to be *bound* by rules, even Divinely appointed rules, made for the earth, except such as are of the moral order as expressed chiefly in the nine commands of the Decalogue before noticed.

Yet as being, as it were, a visitor on earth by the will of God, involved temporarily in various earthly contacts and relationships, such a son of God follows thankfully the example left by the Son of God in the days of His flesh, and “subjects himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake” (I Pet. ii. 13), and also in the hope that thus he may save some men of the earth from the doom of sin and may lead them to Him who can bring them also to that heavenly glory.

With so great an object in view he will naturally avoid

being a stumbling-block to any, thus defeating the noble end in view, and will readily sacrifice his rights and preferences if thereby he can save men and glorify his God and Father. Thus did the Son of God live here, for He had come "to seek and to save that which was lost." Thus did He teach Paul to live, "if by any means he might save some" (I Cor. ix. 19-23). And all of this holy, heavenly fellowship will say,

"O God, may grace to us be given
To follow in their train!"

Such an one is free in heart from bondage to any law, save the law of love, but in the enabling power of that law he is free to submit to any law when love constrains. To serve the supreme end he will bring himself into bondage to all men; he will become a Jew to win a Jew and conform to their customs, a Gentile to Gentiles, he will be all things morally allowable to all men. He will respect the sabbath day, the seventh day among such as respect it, or another day, if by so doing he can best serve the Divine end, knowing all the time that as a *son* of God he is not *bound* in such a matter, as if he were a citizen of earth. Free in his spirit from laws for this lower world, yet he will support on earth his heavenly Father's rights over His subjects on earth, by both conforming to the will of God and teaching others to do so (Matt. v. 19). This is the full freedom wherewith Christ makes free the sons of God, and "if the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed" (John viii. 36). "Stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage . . . but through love be servants one of another . . . For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God and approved of men" (Gal. v. 1, 13 : Rom. xiv. 18).

"In service that Thy love appoints
There are no bonds for me :
My secret heart is taught the truth
That sets Thy people free :
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a life of liberty."

(A. L. Waring.)

Therefore in the same spirit, on the same grounds, and to the same extent that Christ paid taxes and observed the day of rest so will and should His followers do likewise. It is not for *sons* of God, by precept or example, to encourage their Divine Father's *subjects* to disregard His good laws. The latter are under obligation to those laws : the former should encourage obedience thereto, as Christ did when here.

THE WAY BACK (5)

by J. L. STANLEY

Chapter VI

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN HIM—ASSURANCE

“*I know Him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day.*”—II Tim. i. 12.

“*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.*”—I John v. 13.

To have eternal life is one thing, to know that you have it is quite another. A man may possess a fortune, and yet not know it ; but his ignorance would not alter the fact of possession. Or again, he might know that he had the fortune, and yet be disturbed by tormenting fear that in some way or other he should lose it. Both these conditions would materially interfere with his enjoyment of his possessions. To have eternal life and know it, is assurance.

Here let us observe the

Difference between Faith and Assurance. The one may exist without the other. One is essential to salvation ; the other is not. But it will be obvious that while faith may exist without assurance, it can be only in a weak and unhealthy state. In the one case there is faith embarrassed by a certain measure of doubt, in the other there is faith free from all admixture of fear and misgiving.

Assurance is just another term for a settled, unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Experience is constantly bringing to light the fact that there are many earnest and sincere souls, about whom there can be little doubt that they are not only truly penitent, but that they are, almost imperceptibly to themselves, resting in Christ for salvation. When questioned as to the ground of their hope, it invariably appears that, discarding all personal merit, they are fearfully and timidly looking for the mercy of God through Jesus Christ. There is faith, but it is lacking in strength and confidence. Now, let it be remembered that salvation is promised, not to any quality or degree of faith, but to *faith* ; and where that exists, no matter how confused or defective, God will honour it by the gift of life.

The causes of this disturbed condition are various. Sometimes it arises from unsound teaching, and this is probably the chief cause. Sometimes it is the result of a peculiar mental constitution, a shrinking from all responsibility, and the dread of coming to a definite conclusion in any matter of importance. Again, it is sometimes due to the disproportionate attention to the subject of human depravity, producing such an overwhelming sense of personal unworthiness, as, for the time, to exclude the view of the Saviour's fulness and sufficiency.

ency.

Assurance is not Presumption. These are sometimes confused, but they are widely different. There are many who regard a confident belief in the present forgiveness of sins as an act of presumption on the part of any one who professes it. What is presumption? It is an exercise of confidence without sufficient ground or authority. Now, if the Word of God did not warrant a firm belief in present forgiveness, then undoubtedly to profess it would be an act of presumption. The Scriptures clearly announce that Christ will come again. To believe that is simply an act of faith in God's Word. But some men undertake to specify the particular date of the event, although the Word distinctly states, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man." Now, to make such a statement is one act of presumption, and to believe it is another.

In regard to our salvation the terms of Scripture are clear, strong, and numerous, to the effect that those who believe "come not into judgment, but *have passed* out of death into life." To believe these statements is no act of presumption, but of childlike faith, and to rest the soul constantly and calmly upon them is to enjoy the blessing of assurance. Here, the presumption evidently lies in the other direction, in refusing to believe where God has plainly spoken.

Assurance is necessary to Joy. We have remarked that assurance is not essential to salvation, but it is essential to *joy*. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit, and one of the prominent characteristics of healthy Christian life. It is clear that where assurance is lacking there can be no deep and abiding joy. The opening verses of the First Epistle of John are characterized by a tone of lofty confidence concerning the ground of our faith, and in connexion therewith the Apostle says, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." This is the echo of our Saviour's own desire for His people, and it is an experience which we naturally covet. But where any doubt of forgiveness and acceptance is entertained it is fatal to this heavenly joy. On the other hand, where there is a clear perception of the person and work of Christ, and a humble trust therein, combined with a comforting sense of reconciliation to God and the possession of His favour, joy springs up as a natural fruit.

Assurance is a source of strength. Spiritual life has its conditions in the same way as natural life. It may exist in weakness and sickness, or in health and vigour. It is a good thing to have spiritual life at all, but it is better to have it, as God intends we should have it, in full power. To the possession of this strength, assurance is essential. Faith in God lies at the basis of a sound spiritual constitution. Faith gives courage; doubt produces fear, and fear paralyses all the energies of the soul. The man who has assurance is strong, because he has a firm hold on God: he takes hold of His strength. Assurance gives him confidence in the battle with sin, in the duties of

life, in the service of God. All the resources of infinite power lie open to him, and he daily proves the truth of the words, "My grace is sufficient for thee : for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Assurance is not a question of attainment. It may be thought by some that assurance is a privilege reserved for those well advanced in holiness and Christian experience. This is not so. Assurance is often possessed by those who are young in the Divine life, while some more advanced in other respects are lacking in this. Knowledge of truth, wisdom, power over sin, practical holiness are matters of attainment, and there is room in these virtues for great diversity of progress. But the assurance of salvation may be, and ought to be, possessed by those whom the Apostle John calls "little children." A youth becomes heir to an estate, and enters upon possession of it. The estate may be vast, and it may be long before he becomes acquainted with the extent of his property ; but the assurance that it is his is in no wise affected by his lack of knowledge. So with the Christian. When born again he becomes a joint-heir with Christ, and enters into the possession of the unsearchable riches of Christ. His acquaintance with these is capable of indefinite growth and enlargement, but the knowledge of his own interest in them may be clear and certain.

The ground of assurance is the Word of God. Is it not because this is forgotten that so many lack assurance ? They are looking for it in the wrong place, and therefore no wonder they never find it. They are looking for it in themselves ; they are expecting that in some mysterious way a certain conviction will seize their souls, and that joy will suddenly spring up. How does the heir of an estate know his right of ownership ? Not by any feelings in his mind, but by the title-deeds in which his relationship is set forth. So is it with the Christian. Look at the very name of the Book in which our title is writ—"The New Testament" or "Covenant." Does not that word alone carry assurance with it ? God has promised eternal life to those who trust in Christ, and "He is faithful that promised." Assurance is just the result of a simple belief of God's Word ; a resting assured that He is able to do what He has promised, and being convinced that His faithfulness will never fail. His own word is, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips" (Psalm lxxxix. 34).

The witness of the Spirit. While assurance is grounded upon the Word of God, and is dependent on our exercise of faith therein, it is the work of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (I John v. 10). "Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. iv. 6). All these passages afford distinct

evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in begetting assurance in the hearts of the people of God. Again, it is written that God "sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Cor. i. 22). As the Lord Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father in heaven, so the blessed Spirit is our Advocate within us. By His unseen, mysterious, but real presence and operation in our hearts He produces a deep conviction of the truth, and establishes our confidence in God.

The evidence thus given to those who believe of their own personal interest in Christ is such as fills the soul with holy peace and rest. It is superior to and independent of all that is known as external evidence of the truth, and it can be known only by experience. Those who possess it may know nothing of Christian apologetics, and may be even incapable of weighing the evidence which can be adduced for the Divine authority of the Scriptures, but they possess an assurance firmer than any which can be arrived at by the exercise of the strongest reasoning powers. Like the blind man in the Gospel of John (ch. ix), they can say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." "It is a knowledge or experience that can never go before faith, but must always follow it. It is the difference between Christ standing at the door and knocking, and Christ, when you hear His voice and open to Him, coming in to sup with you and you with Him." (Candlish).

Examples of Assurance. Scripture furnishes us with some striking instances of this assurance. The language employed by some of the apostles of our Lord is indicative of the strongest confidence. When all sorts of opinions were prevailing, and some of those who had for a time followed our Lord were turning away, Peter expressed his firm attachment and unwavering faith in the memorable words, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and *are sure* that Thou art the Holy One of God" (John vi. 68, 69).

Paul had no hesitating trust. He could say, "I know Him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (II Tim. i. 12). He knew that he was the recipient of God's mercy, for in speaking of his conversion he says, "I obtained mercy;" not that he had some faint hope of obtaining it hereafter, but he had the benefits of it *now*,

Note one other example—the Apostle John. The whole of his First Epistle is characterized by the firmest confidence. Thus he speaks, "We know that we have passed out of death into life" (ch. iii. 14); "We know that we are of God" (ch. v. 19); "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ" (ch. v. 20); "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us" (ch. iv. 16). Now, all these expressions show not only the assurance possessed by the

Apostles, but that which is possible to every child of God. The footing on which we are placed is the same as theirs, and their object in proclaiming the truths of the gospel was that we might have partnership with them in their joy.

In closing, let us call attention to some *hindrances to assurance*. We have already noticed some of the principal causes of the lack of assurance at the beginning of the Christian life, but there are certain serious and positive hindrances which effectually bar the way to peace on the part of those who are more advanced.

One of these is *half-heartedness*, the lack of a full surrender of self to God. Wherever this is allowed, it will be fatal to an assured interest in Christ. The Spirit is grieved, and does not bear witness ; the spiritual vision is dimmed, and cannot see Divine things clearly. "With my whole heart have I sought Thee," says the Psalmist ; and it is only to the whole-hearted that God fully manifests Himself. If we make reserves toward God, we must not be surprised if He makes reserves toward us.

Another hindrance is *worldliness*. Any attempt to serve God and mammon is certain to rob the soul of rest. Assurance means a firm grasp of heavenly things ; but for this we need both hands. If we attempt to grip the world, then our grip of Divine realities will be but feeble. Like Pharaoh, many want to make a compromise with God, and would say to the world, as he did to Israel, "Only ye shall not go very far away." This will not do : there must be complete renunciation, and then there will be complete satisfaction.

One other hindrance is *indulged sin*. Where this is allowed, it is impossible to have a comfortable knowledge of our security. We might as well expect to have a sense of health with a poisoned wound, as a sense of spiritual joy while sin is consciously permitted to have power over us. The conscience is defiled, and therefore uneasy, and where this is the case assurance can never dwell. Let the soul clear itself from all guilty complicity with evil ; let it eschew all worldliness, and yield the whole heart to the Redeemer, then the clouds of gloom will disappear, the Sun of righteousness will shine forth in splendour, melting away all the mists of doubt, and bathing the spirit in that perfect love which casts out all fear.

WALKING BY FAITH

"*We walk by faith, not by sight.*"

(II Cor. v. 7)

In his sermon on The Danger of Riches, given in our last issue, Wesley emphasized that our Lord has forbidden His followers to lay up treasure on earth. He pointed out, from his own example, that a Christian may gain much (as he did from his books), save much, by just economy, and then give much to others and so lay up nothing of treasure. The following is an instance of this in a man of business.

As a young man this personal friend of mine, with his wife,

sold small items in a small shop. Shortly after his conversion, which was thorough, he asked the Lord to prosper him in business enough to enable him to give £100 a year to His cause. Thus he adopted the right policy of running his business firstly for the glory of God. He soon trebled his gifts to the work of the Lord. As business increased so did his current liabilities to wholesale houses from whom he purchased, and it struck him that he ought always to have at hand monies enough to cover all debts, so that if, say, he should die unexpectedly all creditors could be paid without delay. He therefore created a reserve fund for this purpose, which obviously was not laying up *treasure* but only providing things honest in the sight of men.

In due time this fund was such that the interest on it provided all he needed for his household, for educating his four children, and such like personal requirements. From that time he avoided the danger of becoming rich by giving away the whole of his annual income year by year. He told his two sons that he would educate them for any profession they chose, or, if they preferred they could qualify to take over his business, but they must expect nothing more from him. They did the latter, and the one that survived walked the godly ways of his father. They were thus put on their mettle, and were saved from the deadly danger of being rich without effort.

We were driving past a house of a Christian who had lately died and left £30,000, a large fortune at the time in question. My friend shook his whip at the house and said, "I would think the Lord had a controversy with me if I was going to leave thirty thousands of pounds." He might easily have done so, but his estate was £9,000, merely, I suppose, the value of a house, business premises, and goodwill.

It requires a working faith to walk steadily in such a path, faith that God can be trusted as to the practical affairs of life and especially as to the days ahead. It demands a faith that trusts God to keep his promises. Thus did he take hold of the life that is life indeed ; he stored up a good foundation against the *time* to come (not only against eternity) ; he secured that in the realm directly after death there would be many friends to welcome him whom he made on earth (Luke xvi. 9) ; and he moreover assured to himself a recompence at the resurrection of the righteous (Luke xiv. 14), that is, the first resurrection.

This disciple lived in Bristol during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the beginning of this century. At this latter period a youth was turned unto the Lord in Bristol whose job required seven days a week at work. His heart began to trouble him because he was never able to get to meetings on the Lord's day. He took counsel of a Christian who was simply a working carpenter with a small shop of his own. This

friend showed him the true path of faith by telling him that, as his conscience troubled him, he should leave his job ; but, said he, do not wait until you find some other work, but trust God and give notice without delay. How few Christians would give such counsel. Too many would fear to take such a step, not to say to take the responsibility of so advising another.

The young believer took his advice, and when he left his place on Saturday he went and told the carpenter. " Oh," said he, " now we can ask our heavenly Father to work for you," and they prayed together that God would act. " But," said the carpenter, " you have committed the matter to your God and Father, so don't go acting for yourself but wait to see what He will do." The youth went his way to his place, which took him through the two Arcades which at that time led toward north Bristol. When he reached the top of the upper Arcade, for no reason that he knew he turned and went back to the bottom of that Arcade, and then turned to the right along the street that separated the Arcades. He had no object in mind but just walked along. In front of him was a young man. They quickly reached a warehouse in the door of which a man stood who said to the young man in front, " Are you looking for work ? " " No," he replied, " I have a job," and walked on. But our young friend said to the man, " But I am looking for a place." The man eyed him up and down for a moment and said " Come in and see the Guv'ner." He was taken on at once and continued there for many years. The time came when his employer lay dying. Our friend went to see him and had the joy to lead his master to Christ. The business had then to be sold. The solicitor proposed that he should buy it, which was arranged, and it continued his to the end of a long life.

At about the same time in Bristol I was connected with one of the Assemblies. It was needful to rebuild the schoolroom and the cost was to be £300, in those days a considerable sum, especially for a church of almost all poor people. But I showed them that if each member would give sixpence a week for six months the money would be found, and that, as we could do it ourselves it was our business to do it ourselves, and not to ask others to help us. Ultimately this was done, though not in six months.

One day I found at the hall an anonymous letter which said that the writer was a seamstress ; that work was short and health was poor ; but that she had always felt a sense of security because she had £12 in the Savings' Bank. But the Lord had showed her that He wished that £12 to be given to the Renovation fund. The writer then described the concern that filled her heart. What would she do if taken ill and the £12 was not there ? But she said, " I felt that I could never again tell my Sunday School girls that it is safe to trust

God if I could not trust Him without that £12." So the golden coins were there in the envelope.

I knew all the church personally and decided in my mind who was the writer, and I watched her Class. Within two months she saw seven or eight girls converted, and I knew my surmise was right. Perhaps thirty years passed. The sister had married comfortably, so now she had a pleasant home, and, what to her was far more, she had means at disposal for helping many. We met again when I was visiting Bristol, having ceased to live there for over twenty years. She asked if I remembered the incident, and added that she did not think it mattered if she told me that she was the writer of the letter. She smiled when I said that I had made up my mind at the time that it was so. And she added, "I look on my present circumstances as part of my heavenly Father's recompence that I took that step. If I had not found grace to do so, my spiritual life would have been spoiled."

At that period such simple, practical confidence in God seemed natural in Bristol, more than in any other place I ever knew. The reason I judge was that we were in the good of the sixty years of the testimony and example of George Müller and the Orphan Homes. He lived on till 1898, and the vigour of his faith had proved infectious. In an earlier chapter of "Pages from an Ordered Life" I have told the effect his life had on myself. It is a great loss that the present generation has not grown up with such a living example before them, and that the middle generation that has trained them has not had many leaders who learned from such as George Müller how to trust God in daily affairs. Yet the Bible itself, from which Müller learned, gives abundant proofs from human experience that God is trustworthy.

When any reader is suddenly faced by such a test as those here mentioned, may this brief narration strengthen him to walk by faith. Walking is a process of taking step after step, one at a time. It means that the child of God brings God into each step that he has to take ; and that therefore he will take no step until he is sure that it is the will of God, but then he will take it without fear as to the consequences. These he will leave to God. It may be that deliverance will not always come at the moment as with the young man mentioned, but faith will rest in the assurance that God will certainly be faithful. "O Jehovah of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee" (Psalm lxxxiv. 12).

THE SOLEMN ALTERNATIVE

by ARTHUR WALLIS

*“ For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God ;
and if it begin first at us, what shall be the end of them that
obey not the gospel of God ? ”* (I Pet. iv. 17).

THE DIVINE PURPOSE

God has a grander and greater purpose for this age than simply saving souls from hell, He is bringing “ sons unto glory ” (Heb. ii. 10). He is not now concerned with improving the world but with gathering out of it a people for His Name. He is forging an instrument, glorious and holy, that shall rule and administer the world in the coming age under the sovereignty of His Son. In this age it is the angels, “ sons of God ” by creation, who govern the universe. In the age to come it will be the saints, “ sons of God ” by redemption, who shall judge the world and angels (I Cor. vi. 2, 3 : Heb. ii. 5). Thus God is now displaying through the church His manifold wisdom to those heavenly powers soon to be replaced by the church (Eph. iii. 10). We can hardly contemplate these tremendous events without realizing that something radical must take place in the church as we see it today, if it is ever to be worthy of association with the Son of God in such a capacity, if in fact it is to be “ a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing ; but . . . holy and without blemish ” (Eph. v. 27).

If an exiled monarch had hopes of returning in power to judge the usurper, claim his throne, and set up again his kingdom, he would surely choose his ministers and administrators from among those who had shown unswerving loyalty towards him, and where possible he would train them in advance to fulfil their future functions. How could he promote to such executive positions those whose devotion to his cause had been lukewarm, who had been ashamed to side openly with him in his rejection, or who had been more concerned in his absence to serve their own selfish interests than his ? It is such a picture that Christ paints in the parable of the pounds (Luke xix. 11), in which He teaches us that His servants are on probation in this age, being trained and fitted for their function in the age to come. With Christ “ the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom ” (Dan. vii. 18, 22). But how are they to be made fit ? There must of necessity be a purifying, a making white, a refining, as Daniel also foretold (Dan. xii. 10). In the larger scheme of things, God has commonly effected this purifying by

REVIVAL OR JUDGMENT.

Strange though it may seem there are distinct similarities between the ways of God in revival and in judgment. Throughout the prophets the thought of a *divine visitation* is used to describe blessing and revival on the one hand (Jer. xxvii. 22) and a season of judgment on the other (Jer. l. 31). Likewise *the overflowing rain* could picture a time of spiritual revival (Ezek. xxxiv. 26) or of divine judgment (Gen. vi. 17). Another figure used of the mighty operation of the Spirit in revival is *fire from heaven* (I Kings xviii. 38 : Acts ii. 3), but it is also typical of the judgment of God (II Kings i. 10). All this may be partly explained by the fact that there is an element of judgment present in every revival. But it is also true that judgment is the solemn alternative to revival. The purifying and quickening of the people of God is a moral and spiritual necessity. Because of His very nature God cannot and will not permit spiritual decline to continue unchecked. He is ever halting and reversing the trend of the times by means of revival—or judgment. Where His people are not prepared for the one, they shut themselves up to the other.

Some may wonder whether there can be any question of divine judgment upon a true child of God or a true church of God, since the Saviour declared that a believer “hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life” (John v. 24). There can certainly be no question of judgment as regards being dead in trespasses and sins, because those who believe have passed once for all out of the realm of death into that of life, and there is “no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. viii. 1). Subsequent unbelief and disobedience is another matter, and if persisted in must sooner or later evoke the chastisement of the Father.

The Egyptians did not hear Moses’ word, nor did they believe on Him who sent him, therefore they came into judgment culminating in the death of the firstborn. The Israelites who heard and believed did not come into judgment but passed out of death into life. Once redeemed, however, God began to deal with them as a father with his children, and thereafter they suffered at His hands chastisements and judgments, some of them severe. The apostles drew valuable lessons from this for the warning of the church (Jude 5. : I Cor. x). Paul showed that not only the sins of redeemed Israel (I Cor. x. 6) but the judgments that befell them were “by way of example ; and they were written for our admonition” (verse 11). There are also New Testament illustrations of the truth that “the Lord shall judge His people” (Heb. x. 30).

We see from the history of Israel, in Canaan as well as in the wilderness, that God has always worked in His people through revival and through judgment. A time came, however, when there was no remedy and God could revive

them no longer as a nation, but shut them up to the overwhelming judgments of the captivities. Even in the midst of these desolations of Zion we hear the cry of the faithful remnant, "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south" (Ps. cxxvi. 4), and we witness the mercy of God in granting to a few under Ezra and Nehemiah "a little reviving in [their] bondage" (Ezra ix. 8).

The close of the New Testament revelation brings again the message of revival or judgment. Before Paul laid down his pen and sealed his faith with his blood, that great sweep of the Spirit that began at Pentecost had begun to wane, with accompanying signs of spiritual decline. John, writing at the close of the first century, conveys to a small circle of seven churches a personal message from the risen Christ (Rev. ii and iii). Five of them are charged by the Head of the Church with sins of departure and commanded to repent. The "germs" which Paul had diagnosed years before, and about which he had faithfully warned the churches (Acts xx. 29), were now an epidemic. The Lord showed these five churches that there could be no reviving without repentance, and if they were unwilling for this the alternative was judgment. Doubtless then, as now, the Lord longed to pour out His Spirit, but how could He do this greater thing until they were willing for personal reviving? In these five letters the need of this reviving is laid bare, the way to it is marked out, and the solemn alternative is set forth; it is only these points in the letters we need now consider. If ever there was a message to the churches it is here in Revelation ii and iii.

LOVE

"I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love" (Rev. ii. 4). The Lord's contention with His people at Ephesus centred in this terse and pointed accusation.

The life of God that comes into the centre of a newborn soul does not always, or at once, influence, as it should, the whole circumference of the outer life; hence the exhortations to true believers not to lie, steal, commit fornication, or bite and devour one another, etc. Conversely, spiritual decay may be at work in the heart of a believer or a church without the signs of decline being at once manifest. The rosy apple with unblemished skin may be rotting at the core. It was so with Ephesus. The glowing commendation of verses 2 and 3 might lead one to suppose that here was a church that left nothing to be desired. This may have been man's verdict, but it was not God's; "for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Sam. xvi. 7). Those eyes which were as a flame of fire, piercing through every veneer and searching the hidden depths, had perceived in this church, despite its orthodoxy and its activity, the symptoms of spiritual decline. Ephesus, to whom Paul had declared "the whole counsel of God" (Acts xx. 27), to whom had been committed the sublimest truths in the New Testa-

ment regarding the church as the bride-to-be of Christ (Eph. v. 22-23), had declined in that very relationship : she had left her first love.

How true is the saying, " Christianity is a religion of the heart." It is not a religion of the head, though it is essentially practical. It is a religion of the heart : for what a man is in his heart that is he in the sight of God. Christ taught that the thoughts, words, and actions that go to make up the life, proceed from the heart (Matt. xii. 34 ; xv. 19). Since the heart is the very fountain of man's personality, it is ever the object of Satan's attack. If he can but corrupt the heart he will soon defile the whole life. Solomon was wise to warn us, " Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life " (Prov. iv. 23). He would have been wiser still had he practised what he preached. Implicit in this heart condition of Ephesus were solemn possibilities that only Christ could see. He had diagnosed in the heart of this church that deadly germ which is responsible for all spiritual decline. Such a condition, threatening as it did the very life of the body, called for drastic action by the Surgeon. Hence the sternness and solemnity of Christ's words to these believers.

What is this " first love " that Ephesus had forsaken ? It is the love of her whose every fear and prejudice and reserve have been broken down ; whose heart has been utterly captured, she knows not how ; and who presents herself to her beloved as his, and his for ever. It is the love of betrothal. It was this love that drew Israel out of the bondage of Egypt into a covenant relationship with the Lord, anticipating a day when He should say to them, " thy Maker is thine husband ; the Lord of hosts is His name " (Isa. liv. 5). Alas, they too left their first love, and sorrowfully God had to remind them of it : " I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals ; how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown . . . My people have committed two evils ; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water . . . My people have forgotten Me days without number " (Jer. ii. 2, 13, 32). Thus this church of the New Testament, heedless of that which had been recorded for her admonition, was repeating the sin of " the church in the wilderness."

Not only is a first love toward Christ one of the most precious and sacred and beautiful things under heaven, but it is vital to a deeper life and growth in the things of God. When the love wanes the life will soon decline. Is this the reason why the life of the church is so low today, and the need for its reviving so great ? As we consider some of the characteristics of " first love," let us ask ourselves whether the church, whether we ourselves, are guilty of the sin of having left it, or the greater sin of never having had it.

It is *pure* love, without the taint of worldly attraction, and unweakened by ulterior motive. It is the love of the "pure virgin," uncorrupted "from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ" (II Cor. xi. 2, 3). It is a *tender* love, sensitive to the smallest thing that might bring grief or displeasure to the Beloved, ever seeking to be well-pleasing unto Him who said, "If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments" (John xiv. 15). It is a *supreme* love that has conquered all other loves and brought them into subjection, according to His own word, "He that loveth father or mother, etc. . . . more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. x. 37). It is a *sacrificial* love, because it partakes of the very nature of the love of God and of Christ. "God so loved . . . that He gave His only begotten Son" . . . "Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for it." And this "first love" is but the offspring of the Divine love, which ever brings forth after its own kind. It is a love that gives itself up and pours itself out. This had once been the love of the Ephesian church. This was the love she had forsaken.

These are not so much the words of an offended Lord as of a wounded Lover, "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." The toil, the zeal, and the orthodoxy of this church could never compensate for the loss of that first love. Her need, more desperate and urgent than she could know, was for a *revived love*. Is it not the need of the church today? Is it that many believers have lost, or is it that they have never known the freshness and fervency of "first love?" How easy it is to be deceived over this matter. One may perform the same exercises, pray with the same words, sing the same hymns, as one has always done, and yet the whole be no longer an exercise of the heart, but simply a matter of form or of duty. Said Christ, "This people honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. xv. 8).

John in his first epistle brings the matter of love for the Lord down to a very practical issue by showing that the measure of a believer's love for God is the measure of his love for his brother, that much and no more (I John iv. 11-21). The Saviour said that His disciples were to be known by their love for each other (John xiii. 35); instead they have become marked before the world by their strifes and divisions. What need is there for further evidence that the first love of the early church, who were of "one heart and one soul," and of whom men had to exclaim, "Behold how they love one another," has been largely lost by the church of today? Compassion for the perishing is another expression of this first love. Most are prepared to pay lip-service to the need of the lost, but with how many is there practical indifference? How few, comparatively, are the churches today with a heart like the church of the Thessalonians to whom Paul said, "From you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord . . . in every place . . . so that we need not to speak anything"

(I Thes. i. 8). Is it not evident that we need a revived love ?

The One who still walks in the midst of the lampstands, and before whose eyes every heart is laid bare, not only reveals the condition, but also the cure. Here are the three steps to a revived love : “ Remember . . . repent . . . do the first works ” (ver. 5). “ Remember from whence thou art fallen.” Christ is not addressing the individual : He is addressing the church. There had been corporate failure, and the Lord calls for corporate action. As a church they had lost their first love ; as a church they had fallen ; and therefore as a church they needed to *remember*, that is, to go back in thought to their beginning, and realize how great their fall was. The church of today must do the same. Only through an honest comparison of the love of the early church with the love of the church today, can we appreciate the greatness of our fall. Then “ *Repent.*” Long have we urged the sinner to do it : now the Lord commands us to do it ourselves. This involves a change of attitude, a change of heart, a humbling before God, who has promised to revive the heart of the contrite ones. Finally, “ *do the first works.*”

The church must go back to the beginning, and tread again the pathway of the first love. Of the Macedonian churches we read, “ First they gave their own selves to the Lord ” (II Cor. viii. 5). This in a phrase is doing the first works. There must be a renewed dedication, presenting ourselves afresh to our Beloved as “ in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the gladness of His heart ” (Song iii. 11).

If the church was not willing to pay the price of a revived love, there could be but little alternative—He would visit them in judgment : “ or else I come to thee, and will move thy lampstand out of its place, except thou repent.” The lampstand is the proper place for the light. “ Neither do they light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on the lampstand [same word] : and it shineth unto all that are in the house.” The threatened judgment upon Ephesus was that of having the lampstand removed, so that the lamp of corporate testimony would cease to shine. Its organization, its activities, and even its form of witness might continue, but there would be no light there. Can any greater tragedy overtake a church than to lose its testimony ? Souls would stumble and perish in the darkness because the light was not shining where it ought to be. Ships that might have found the haven of this church would make shipwreck because the harbour light was not in its place. They shall perish in their iniquity, but their blood God will require at the church’s hands—the church that lost her light because she lost her love.

“ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches ” today. If the church is not willing to return to her first love, can we expect God to pour out His Spirit ? Can we expect Him to withhold His judgment ? Let the people of God face the alternatives, and then let them pray

as never before.

Note.—This article is an extract, by permission, from the Writer's book on Revival entitled "In the Day of Thy Power." This will be issued on May 21st by The Christian Literature Crusade, 39 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4. Place your order early. Price 12/6d.

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (9)
Romans viii. 28-30

And we know, that to them that love God, all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren: and whom He foreordained, them also He called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.

This passage is an instance of how profound doctrine is introduced with practical purpose. The assertion that "all things work together for good" is bold and startling, being apparently contradicted by innumerable experiences of the godly. Only a little earlier the apostle has reminded us of present sufferings and the groanings they cause. How can he, and we, be so confident that all things, without exception, work together for good?

The ground of his assurance and comfort lies in the facts covered by his word "For." He points to a sequence of factors in the plan and working of God: He foreknew—foreordained—called—justified—glorified certain persons. How can it be otherwise than that He shall cause all conditions and circumstances to co-operate to the fulfilling of His purpose concerning them? He cannot suffer any external agency to frustrate His sublime intention.

There was an ancient philosophy that regarded all the universe as wholly unregulated, all is the plaything of chance. Solomon glanced at this misreading of history when he said "time and chance happeneth to them all" (Eccl. ix. 11). A distinguished modern scholar and historian has given this as his view of history.†

Another philosophy conceived of certain unapproachable goddesses, the Fates, issuing purely arbitrary and unchangeable decrees, which not even the supreme deity, Zeus, could vary or escape. This conception rules hundreds of millions today. It dominates, for example, Islamic, Hindu, and Bhuddistic

† H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, Preface, v, one vol. ed.

thought, and is the root of moral corruption. The Moslem excuses his vices by pleading that it is his *kismet*, fate.

Seven centuries before Christ, God expressly condemned both these notions, "Fortune" and "Destiny," and pointed to their origin as being a result of refusing to heed His call because men loved evil (Isa. lxxv. 11, 12. Comp. Rom. i. 18 ff.). From this it follows that God Himself cannot act haphazard, but by purpose; and equally that there can be no fatalistic element in His purpose and action. It is in the light of this His declaration as to Himself that Romans viii, and all Scripture, must be understood.

Close scrutiny of the words of our passage will confirm this view of God and His ways.

1. A *Purpose* is that which one sets before one's heart to see accomplished. God does not work casually. There is a purpose that He pursues through all the ages of time (Eph. iii. 11). This purpose was not formed on the basis of man's sinful works, but on the principle of showing favour to the undeserving. Nor was it an after-thought to meet human need, but it was formed before the ages of time began, and its ground design was to associate us with Christ Jesus (II Tim. i. 9).

In furthering this purpose God acts as He sees fit and according to His own choice (Rom. ix. 11). But it is wrong to conceive His actions as being purely arbitrary, a mere fiat, an act of the will but not governed by reason; for though it is His own will that directs, yet it is "according to the *counsel* of His will" that He acts in all things (Eph. i. 11). This is seen in His first step manward: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion" (Gen. i. 26). The creation of man was not a mere fiat, but the persons of the Godhead took counsel together as to this step towards the purpose God had in view.

2. *Called*. But how shall man, darkened in his understanding, alienated, and at enmity with God, get to know of God's purpose and be drawn into its orbit of grace? As soon as Adam and Eve had sinned and wandered "Jehovah God called unto the man" (Gen. iii. 9). The purpose and grace of God concerning the man turned on whether he would respond to that gracious call.

There was no fatalistic element involved. The last time that Christ is said to have referred to the call of God (Matt. xxii. 14) it was to warn aspirants to a place at His wedding feast that "many are called but few chosen." And the last time but one that God's call is mentioned in the New Testament (Rev. xvii. 14) shows that those who attain to heavenly fellowship with the Lord are not only called but are also "chosen and faithful."

This "call" is directed first that sinners shall repent (Matt. ix. 13); but that there is no compulsion is seen in the fact that the majority who hear the call do not repent. The call then extends to inviting men to a feast, but here again many

make light of it and are accounted unworthy (Matt. xxii. 8). Sharing a wedding feast is not equivalent to a criminal escaping the gallows, but is something far beyond it. This privilege also may be forfeited, as Christ showed in the parable. God's severe complaint against man is "I have called, and ye refused" (Prov. i. 24).

3. *Foreknew*. The call of God was so far from being arbitrary that it was guided by somewhat that He foreknew. *What* He foreknew is not told here, but the fact shows that His purpose and call follow knowledge on His part.

Some light on the matter is given in connexion with that covenant with Abraham through which all grace flows to Abraham's spiritual descendants (Gen. xv : Rom. iv. 16-18 : Gal. iii). It is most material that God did not make this covenant with Abraham with a view to him being justified, as Gen. xv. 6 shows. It was with him *as justified* that the covenant was made. When God renewed His covenant with Isaac He said expressly that He would fulfil its promises "because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws" (Gen. xxvi. 2-5). This shows something that God had foreknown that Abraham would do and which would justify God in covenanting to bless him.

Scripture knows of no covenant made with the unjustified and unregenerate or with a view to their justification. Nor does Scripture use the term "covenant of grace," as if it had been possible, consistently with morality, that God could enter into covenant to bless Abraham irrespective of His foreknowledge and irrespective of the fact that Abraham would keep His commandments. It was truly of grace that He called an idolator into fellowship with Himself, but that grace had to reign through righteousness, not in disregard of whether Abraham would or would not walk righteously.

4. *Foreordain (pro-horizo)*. The root of this word meant chiefly to settle a boundary, as of an estate or a country. Obviously no such boundary was ever unalterable. The word comes in the statement in Acts xvii. 26 that God has "determined the appointed seasons of the nations and the bounds of their habitation." This settling of the times and areas of nations was not by unchangeable decree, for it allows of the extension of the period of national prosperity if a people repents of sin and its curtailment if they persist in evil. This was declared by God explicitly at the time of mighty international changes forced by the conquests of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Jer. xviii. 7-10, and consider Nineveh (Jonah iii. 10 ; iv. 11).

The word takes on a firmer meaning when applied to other acts of God : "the Son of man indeed goeth, as it hath been determined" (Luke xxii. 22) ; but even the stupendous matter of the sacrifice of the Son of God as Redeemer did not

result from some arbitrary compact between the Father and the Son, but it was by "the determinate *counsel* and *foreknowledge* of God" that Christ was delivered up.

The same thought is shown in the first place where the compound word used in Romans viii is found: "to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy *counsel foreordained* to come to pass" (Acts iv. 28).

In all the six places where *prohorizo* comes the R.V. has properly used *foreordain*. The word *predestinate* has a harder sound and sense than the Greek word warrants, and there was no justification for it being used in the A.V. If the Translators had considered the passage cited from Isaiah, where God distinctly condemns the notion of destiny, they would have avoided the word and have retained the dominant usage of the earlier English Versions.

In Romans viii. 28, Wyclif had "before ordained," and Tyndale "ordained before," followed by Cranmer and the Geneva Versions. In verse 29 Tyndale read "before appointed," followed by Cranmer and Geneva. In I Cor. ii. 7 Wyclif, Tyndale, Cranmer and Geneva had "ordained before," which A.V. followed, feeling presumably that it would not do to render "the wisdom which God predestinated before the worlds unto our glory."

In these places it was the Catholic Version, the Rheims, following the Latin Vulgate, which continued the use of "predestinate," and it is regrettable that A.V. turned from the earlier English to follow the Vulgate.

In Eph. i. 5 Wyclif, Tyndale, and Cranmer read "having *foreordained* us unto adoption as sons." In verse 11 Wyclif had "*foreordained* according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will," but inconsistently and regrettably Tyndale turned to the word "predestinate" and was followed by Cranmer, Geneva, Rheims, and A.V.

It is against Scripture and morality to say that God had determined irreversibly the eternal *destiny* of any being. He does not cancel but rather respects the grant He made of freedom of will. But He has *foreordained* the feature that some of the saved should share with Christ in His heavenly kingdom and glory. This, not the question of exemption from deserved perdition, is the matter affected by foreordination. Now a thing which is *ordained* may be ordained subject to conditions which God, according to His foreknowledge, foresaw would arise and be right. Whereas that which has been fixed as a *destiny*, and which *must* therefore come to pass, cannot be affected by any possibility or condition. In this latter case God would have fixed unalterably that certain of the saved shall share the glory of His Son even though in practice they should be beguiled by the Tempter and walk in sin. Thus is the grace that creates the noble prospect made the minister of sin in its subjects. God forbid! Grace must not be turned into lasciviousness.

That which God's foreknowledge foresaw and which foreordination purposed, is that saints should be "conformed to the image of His Son." An image is an external resemblance of some other visible form. Certain of the saved are to live on a new earth (Rev. xxi. 1-4, 24, 25), which is lower than being removed to God's immediate and upper realm. To be outwardly like the glorified body of the Son of God in heaven is far higher than being saved from hell beneath. This supreme dignity the Lord mentioned when He said to the Father, "the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them" (John xvii. 22). Paul refers to it in I Cor. ii. 7 above mentioned, and in Col. iii. 4 : I Thes. ii. 12 : II Thes. ii. 14 : II Tim. ii. 10 ; iv. 18. Peter speaks of it in I Ep. v. 10, and John in I Ep. iii. 2. The climax is shown in Rev. xxi. 10, 11, where the Bride, the wife of the Lamb, has the glory of God.

This unique honour looks beyond the ennobling of the saints to the still higher purpose that "the Son shall be the Firstborn among many brethren," as it says at Heb. ii. 10 that God "is bringing many sons unto glory."

Nothing more blinding and hurtful can be supposed than the false, yet almost universal teaching that "being saved" and "going to heaven" are equivalent terms ; for thus the unique privileges of "the church of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven" (Heb. xii. 23), have been offered as the common, universal, and unforfeitable possessions of all believers, even though they should live as worldlings or lapse into wicked ways.

Those who in His foreknowledge God thus foreordained unto such a heavenly status and glory in His universal kingdom, He in due time *called* by the gospel. On this see 2 above, and upon these responding to the call in repentance and faith He thereupon

5. *Justified* them. Their guilt and defilement blocked the way to the realization of God's purpose, but this obstacle He in grace removed by the atoning death of His Son, so that the righteousness of God thus displayed could be reckoned their property upon faith. And finally, in steadfast pursuance of His royal purpose, those called and justified, He

6. *Glorified*, that is, by the purpose that they shall share the glory of His exalted Son.

It is to be heavily stressed that each of the chief words of this declaration is in the Greek aorist tense, which regards the whole transaction as accomplished. And accomplished it is in the purpose and willingness of God. From His standpoint He sees it as already done. But this does not warrant the assertion that therefore each and every person involved must inevitably be at last glorified with Christ in heaven. Other Scriptural considerations must have weight.

In the closely preceding context (ver. 17) the apostle has

just stated a condition that attaches to being thus a sharer of the glory of Christ : “ But if children, then heirs, heirs indeed (*men*) of God, but (*de*) joint-heirs with Christ, *if so be (eiper)* that we suffer together that we may be also glorified together.” Years later, in his last Epistle (II Tim. ii. 11-13), he emphasized the same condition, and made his statement the more impressive by saying

“ *Faithful is the word :*

For if we died together [with Christ Jesus],
we shall also live together :

If we endure,
we shall also reign together ;

If we shall deny Him,
He also will deny us ;

If we are faithless,
He abideth faithful ;

For He cannot deny Himself.”

All Scripture agrees, of course, with these unequivocal assertions. So far is this Divine calling from being absolutely guaranteed that Peter, in turn, balances his statement quoted, that “ the God of all grace has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ,” by the exhortation (II Ep. i. 10, 11), “ Wherefore, brethren, *give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure* : for *if ye do* these things, ye shall never stumble : for *thus* shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Here the calling is viewed from our side, and what is definite enough on God’s side, has to be made secure on ours, and be made sure by our own works and diligence. Evidently this cannot be applied to justification, for from *this* our works are most peremptorily and completely excluded (Rom. iii. 27, 28 : Titus iii. 4-6 : etc., etc.).

Further, the Lord from heaven, speaking to His people now on earth, refers to the prospect of being His companions in His glory, and shows that the same conditions obtain : “ But thou hast a *few* names in Sardis which *did not defile* their garments : and they shall walk [about, *i.e.* habitually] with Me in white ; *for they are worthy*. The one overcoming shall *thus* be arrayed in white garments . . . and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels,” in fulfilment of His promises to this effect (Matt. x. 32, 33 : Luke xii. 8, 9). He cannot go back on His word, whether it be to own us or to deny us, and it is our own conduct toward Him that must determine His attitude and action toward us.

And when at last we are shown in vision the Bride on the bridal day, we are told that, for this supreme occasion, she “ hath *made herself ready*. And it was given unto her that she should *array herself* in fine linen, bright, pure : for the fine linen is the righteous acts *of the saints* ” (Rev. xix. 7, 8). “ It was *given* to her,” for all is of grace to the defiled, according to

the foreknowledge and foreordination of God ; but that foreordination included that she should on her part *exercise* the grace granted to walk with undefiled garments, not to be careless as to this.

The crossing of the Red Sea by Israel, their journey through the desert, their settlement in the land of promise, are used powerfully to instruct and warn Christians, as in I Cor. x, and Heb. iii, iv, and vi. In the song they sang on the resurrection shore of the Sea their future entrance upon their inheritance was celebrated in advance as if it had already taken place (Ex. xv. 13-18). There is used a series of past tenses, in exact conformity with the past tenses in Rom. viii. 28, 29, the former instructing us how to understand the latter.

Thou in Thy mercy *hast led* the people which Thou hast redeemed :

Thou *hast guided* them in Thy strength to Thy holy habitation.

The peoples *have heard*, they tremble :

Pangs *have taken hold* on the inhabitants of Philistia.

Then were the dukes of Edom amazed ;

The mighty men of Moab, trembling taketh hold upon them :

All the inhabitants of Canaan *are melted* away.

Terror and dread falleth upon them :

By the greatness of Thine arm they *are* as still as a stone :

Till Thy people pass over, O Jehovah [*i.e.* over Jordan],

Till Thy people pass over which Thou hast gotten.

Thou *shalt bring them* in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance,

The place, O Jehovah, which Thou *hast made* for Thee to dwell in,

The sanctuary, O Jehovah, which Thy hands *have established*.

Jehovah shall reign for ever and ever.†

In the fact the people had not yet taken a step from the Sea, the inhabitants of Canaan had not heard of the crossing of the Sea. Of Zion and its sanctuary God had as yet said nothing and done nothing : it was still in the hands of the Jebusites and would remain so for five hundreds of years. But in the foreknowledge and foreordination of God all this had been already accomplished, and is thus celebrated in advance. Every person singing that triumph song was regarded as already in Canaan, for such was the call and willingness of God. Yet the lamentable fact was to be that of the 600,000 men who stood on the shore, heirs to the land, only two secured their God-given prospects (Joshua and Caleb).

This is the solemn reality pressed upon us in the New

† The passage must be read as above from the R.V. The A.V., as often, renders the various tenses irregularly.

Testament passages mentioned. It is of men redeemed by blood and set free by their baptism in the Sea that the history speaks : it is upon Christians redeemed and baptized into Christ that the warning is pressed.

There is here an example of the feature that, when a purpose of God is viewed from *His* side, it is declared in terms definite and certain ; but when viewed from *man's* side the uncertain element comes into view. The foreknowledge of God took account of this latter feature and He foreordained accordingly. Fatalism there is none, and the term " predestinate " goes beyond the truth.

God is " able to guard you from stumbling and to set you before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy " (Jude 24) ; but they only shall not stumble who " give the more diligence to make our calling and election sure " (II Pet. i. 10).

Finally, it should be noted how they are described in whose case all things work together for good. The changed order of the sentence in the R.V. follows the Greek and gives the emphasis intended by the Spirit : " We know that *to them that love God* all things work together for good."

Henry Drummond's celebrated paper *The Greatest Thing in the World* (*i.e.* love) taught the fatal error that *salvation* depends upon our *love*, whereas Scripture attaches it to *faith*. But justification and eternal life having been secured by faith, the subsequent privileges of the person thus " saved " depend largely upon *love*. *The Kingdom* is promised to them that *love* God (Jas. ii. 5). Daily enjoyment of the presence and love of the Father and Son is the recompense of *obedient love* (John xiv. 21-24), for our love to God consists in and is proved by keeping His commandments (I John v. 3).

The believer who can daily face this practical and searching test may rejoice in the assurance that what God in grace has purposed and foreordained will be accomplished and that justification will end in the honour of being conformed in outward glory to the body of Christ's glory. For obedient love conforms the inner life to the character of Christ in this life, and upon Christ in His servant the glory of Christ shall be put in that day of glory. Christ alone is worthy of glory, and therefore Christ must be developed in us in order to give us the hope of being glorified, even as it is written " Christ *in* you the hope of glory " (Col. i. 27).

Note.—In the first article in this issue there is mentioned the distinction between " children " and " sons " of God. It is purposed to examine this more fully.

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (8)

BURMA AND INDIA, 1909, 1910

While on the Nilgiri Hills a plan had formed in my mind to visit China, and a number of circumstances seemed to confirm it. I was to meet John McCarthy, of the China Inland Mission, at Bhamo in Upper Burma, cross the mountains with him to Yunnan Fu in Western China, and thence to work my way to the northern province of Shansi, where lived my esteemed friends Mr. and Mrs. Albert Lutley.

I was not yet sufficiently versed in the matter of divine guidance, either from Scripture or experience, and had yet to learn caution in accepting coincidences as being by themselves the leading of God. The south wind blowing softly may mislead. Looking back I see that the project to traverse China was not of God. What was in His mind was that I should get as far as Rangoon, and the anticipated road to China lay through that city.

I arrived at Rangoon on Friday, January 28th, 1910. The voyage up the Irrawady in the early morning was charming, with the rays of the rising sun glinting on the golden bell-shaped dome of the Shwe Dagon pagoda. The preceding year Handley Bird and his wife had visited there a young Englishman in business. His name was Benjamin Sayer from Ipswich. He was worshipping with a group of Burmese Christians with a history. The senior was a man of God named Maung Maung. He was a spiritual grandchild of Adoniram Judson, his father in the faith having been led to Christ by him. The assembly met in his house, the apostolic practice.

There had been a division in the Baptist church in Rangoon when several had seceded. This new circle also had divided. The group in Maung Maung's house was visited by an English Exclusive brother, who had instructed them more fully in Scripture. He had passed on further. The meeting welcomed Benjamin Sayer, were glad of his help, for he was spiritually minded, and they were happy when the Birds added their aid. But two British soldiers who were stationed in Rangoon joined them who, alas, were rigid Exclusives. They were shocked that one from Bethesda Chapel, Bristol, was allowed to break bread, and through their graceless insistence Sayer and the Birds were excluded. The latter returned to India.

But the soldiers were shortly transferred, and the little group was bereft, whereupon the sisters of the assembly saved the situation. They urged that it could not be the mind of the Head of the church that they should be starved for want of the food which the English shepherds could supply to the sheep. After deep and wholesome exercise of heart the brothers concurred, Benjamin Sayer was invited back, and thus when I came among them I was heartily welcomed by a

chastened, warm-hearted, and hungry circle.

But it was no intention of mine to remain with them. The following Wednesday I was to leave for Bhamo. Mr. Johnson of the American Baptist Mission kindly found me a room at the Y.M.C.A. hostel. This good brother told me that he had lately conversed with a Burmese recently returned from the Middle East where he had met Abbas Baha, the founder and leader of the Bahai sect. He was thoroughly convinced that the claim of the Baha to be Jesus Christ returned in the flesh was true. Mr. Johnson had said that in that case Abbas had of course shown to him the wound prints in his hands and feet as proof that he was Jesus. But equally of course Abbas had *not* done so.

In these days I found kind friends in Mr. and Mrs. Testro. He too was in business. His wife had been formerly a worker with the China Inland Mission. The evening before I was to start on the long journey to Bhamo, which would take some days, first by train and then by steamer on the upper stretches of the Irrawady, I went to say farewell to them. Money in hand was sufficient for the actual fare to Bhamo, but not for food on the journey. This did not distress me, for the Lord has called His servants not to be anxious as to daily bread, assuring them that those things shall be supplied to such as seek first the kingdom of God. But I was secretly wondering that He was sending me to so out of the way a part as Upper Burma and Western China with no funds. Yet the apostles had taken such ventures and had proved God to be faithful.

Mrs. Testro knew nothing of my circumstances ; no one but the Lord knew ; but she told me of some former experiences of hers when, having to take journeys, God had more than once supplied the need at the railway station itself. I pondered why she was telling me these things, and wondered if the Lord proposed to work for me at the station the next morning. He did so work, but not in the same way. I reached the station an hour and a half before the departure time, a precaution commonly advisable in the East, but found that the time had been suddenly changed, and the daily train had left an hour before.

That was answer enough for that day and I returned to the hostel. I could have gone the next day (Thursday) but it would have involved travelling on the Lord's day, which I had long ceased to do ; and there being no necessity to depart from principle, I decided to stay till the following Monday. This was well, for on the next night I developed a sharp attack of Rangoon fever and was deeply thankful not to be on a train or an up-country river boat.

That night, 4th February, 1910, will be for ever memorable. I lay in my tiny cubicle, in the damp heat of that unhealthy district, feeling terribly ill, with but one or two newly made acquaintances in the vast city, practically moneyless. The sense of isolation rushed upon me as an enemy

bent on destruction. But in that hour the One Who stood by Paul that dark night, after the flogging in the temple, and the excited meeting of the Council (Acts xxiii. 11), drew near to me in personal presence, a presence which for one ecstatic moment I felt physically, as if He touched me with His hand. The sense of loneliness was gone, for I was *not* alone, nor has my spirit felt so but once through the over forty and five years since that blessed night, though many times in equally trying circumstances.

On March 17th my sister Ella wrote as follows :

I am so glad you have got over the fever so well. I wonder what date you were bad, because on Friday, February 4th, I had come off duty and was very tired, so quickly went to sleep, but waked again about 11 p.m. with terrible neuralgia which prevented more sleep, and yet I hardly thought about it, as my whole self seemed concentrated in thought on you, and I had to pray desperately for nothing in particular, as I did not know what you were needing at the minute, but felt most vividly you were in need of Divine help and succour. Of course, I imagined you in some mountain pass with Mr. McCarthy.

Flo sent me a copy of your paper *Prayer, Focused and Fighting*. It is very good. I think I "prayed through" that night for you. There seemed quite a black wall round me at first. It was an awful feeling, and all the time I was thinking of you. After a long time, a real battle, Psalm xci came to me, especially verses 4-7, and I went to sleep.

Such Spirit-wrought prayer it is that has prevailing strength (Jas. v. 16)—this Paul earnestly asked from brethren who could not know his exact circumstances, saying : " Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive [agonize] together with me in your prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered " (Rom. xv. 30). Thus did I strive that night, and thus did my sister, by the Spirit, strive together with me, and I was delivered, being brought through the fire and water into a wealthier place than I had before reached.

This effectual prayer differs radically from the routine mention of names found on a prayer list : for the latter has the distinct element of routine, and therefore the definite peril of formality, both wholly foreign to the former ; and this routine is determined by the human mind, that is, of the compiler, whereas the former intercession is by the immediate impulse of the Spirit of God (Rom. viii. 26, 27).

That advanced experience of Christ had its effect upon those I was to serve in Rangoon. The Lord took His own measures for keeping me among them, without my planning it. The money that I had thought to spend on the journey to Bhamo was soon spent at the hostel and on postages. My

native "common sense" and human prudence had caused me to give an address in Yunnan Fu, Western China, for letters and thither they were sent from England and none reached me for two months. Thus possible supplies from that direction did not come. I re-sold an English saddle purchased for the journey, and when this sum was gone there occurred a touching token of the love of God and of a native brother, a poor man, an evangelist. While I was in bed with a second turn of fever, a month after the first, he kindly visited me though we had not met, and when departing he said he felt it of God to leave two rupees, then 2/8d. It was very rarely that such ever thought of helping an Englishman. It seemed the common notion that every Englishman was in perpetual contact with the Bank of England and had only to turn a tap and gold would flow. It may be that the style and ways of many missionaries encouraged this idea.

A week or so further and the wet season on the mountains was due, Mr. McCarthy had to leave Bhamo, and it was clear that I could not join him. But meanwhile the work of the Lord in the group of Burmese Christians went forward. The exact ecclesiastical problems and heart-searchings which they had lately known I had experienced in earlier years and so was the more fitted to serve them at that juncture. Nor have I ever seen the word of the Lord have freer course or be more glorified. Their united sorrows having softened their hearts it but needed the mind of the Lord be shown from the Word and at once they acted upon it.

Thus an address upon the value and power of prayer was followed immediately by the commencing, at their own suggestion, of a weekly meeting for prayer. The duty of every disciple to witness for Christ having been pointed out led one to take a weekly service at a native Y.M.C.A., which before he had refused to do. Younger men were provoked to spend the Easter holiday preaching in the villages, and later to get time off from daily duties to go as a band to preach for three days in the jungle. They left in fine weather in cotton clothing and returned drenched from heavy rains, but simply radiant with heavenly joy.

The right of all godly persons to come to the Lord's table being shown, a believer from the Baptist Mission was welcomed, which formerly would not have been the case. Without any ministry upon the subject (which I did not give lest a personal reason might be suspected), the Lord Himself showed them the privilege of giving of their means to His work. They had exercised their Oriental memories upon the New Testament and had a great command of its letter. This was particularly the case with young men, and specially with two who had been converted from Romanism only two years. One of these went on with the Lord and after forty years is still a leader in the church, the other lost his way in what Earl Rosebery, Gladstone's successor as Premier, called the "evil

bog” of politics. He became the Japanese Quisling in Burma in the late war, and only escaped with his life by the clemency of the British.

Behind Rangoon there had been formerly low swampy ground. A British engineer raised a long and winding mound across the lower side and caused the stream that made the morass to form a lake. Planted with glorious, flowering shrubs—giant croton lilies, far-stretching banks of brilliant bouguanvillæ, and the like—and noble palms and tropical trees, it was a paradise of beauty. One morning at dawn, while the fairy mist still lingered over the blue water, shimmering under the first glints of sunlight, old Maung Maung led a young woman, lately come to faith in Christ, down the marble boating steps into the water, lifted his hand above her head in patriarchal style, blessed her, and immersed her in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. The brilliant garments of the Christians gathered, with the lovely setting, made it a charming outward scene ; but more beautiful to heaven must have been the sight of a soul escaped from the kingdom of darkness and sin passing in symbol through death, burial, and resurrection into the kingdom of God, the realm of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

I was asked to visit the leading barrister of Rangoon, a Parsee, also a member of the English bar. His wife was a Christian, himself a Theosophist. He was courteous, but wary, excused himself from religious discussion, and referred me to the Brahmin Secretary of the Rangoon Theosophical Society, a learned Sanscrit scholar. This gentleman lent me books and we had conversation. I pressed for a definition of sin, he was driven to assert that there is no essential difference between right and wrong. It is right to do a thing if you think it right, wrong if you think it wrong. This applied to, say, adultery or murder. “So then,” I said, “if an anarchist thinks it right to throw a bomb under an emperor’s carriage, it is right.” “Yes,” he said, “if he thinks it to be right.” “Well then,” I added, “suppose I draw a pistol and shoot you on the spot, will that be right or wrong from your point of view?” He started, as if wondering what the sahib might intend to do, but answered, “Oh, it would be wrong from my point of view, but it might be right from your point of view.”

This is Theosophy stripped of its theory and verbiage and exposed naked in its native immorality.

The barrister threw a lurid light upon the moral impotence of Bhuddism, as compared with the influence of Christian teaching upon public life. He said : “The difference between our practice and that in England is, that you believe a witness unless you are prepared to prove that he is lying : here we disbelieve him unless he can prove that he is telling the truth.” This low condition was confirmed by a leader I read just then

in the Rangoon *Law Times*, edited by two Burmese barristers. It described the bribery which corrupted the whole legal administration from the senior judges downward, and said that the system could never be purged until the High Court judges were appointed direct from England and so not be subservient to local pressure. It was parallel to what an English magistrate had said to me in South India a few months earlier, that they never believed a witness unless he was incriminating himself, and not always then, because someone might have made it worth his while to go to prison for a time.

Yet we are assured by certain deceivers that heathendom is good enough for the heathen—why disturb them? For the same reason that night needs to be disturbed by sunrise.

There was a young Englishman sick. I found him naturally intelligent, but wholly beclouded and muddled by Bhuddism, Hinduism, Theosophy, and other cults with which he had dabbled. When I quoted the Bible he said that it was no use quoting that book because he did not look at it in the same way as myself. But I remembered what Dr. Torrey had said—that were he attacked by a robber, and threatened him with his sword; and should the robber say he did not believe it was a sword; “I should not,” said Dr. Torrey, “discuss that but should push it into him and let him find out that it was a sword.” So I kept quoting the Bible.

I said that such as he did not approach the Bible with fairness. If it were a book on any other subject they would read it as being true until they found it false, but they assumed the Bible to be false and demanded proof that it is a message from God. A time-table they would assume to tell the trains correctly unless they found errors. I had lately taken a cycling tour of 500 miles in a part of England I did not know, and bought a cycling map. But I did not ask the bookseller to prove that the roads were shown accurately or I could not be expected to buy it: I bought it for what it professed to be and went away to test it. If they would accept the Bible as being God’s Word, as it claimed to be, and would test it honestly, its truthfulness would be felt.

I further pressed that God had provided a way of salvation for all men and was not going to make a special way for his private benefit. To his demand that God should prove the Word to be true and then he would believe it, God gave only a refusal and required that he should believe the Bible and then He would prove it to be true by fulfilling it. “Well then,” said he, “tell me something I must believe.”

The critical moment had come. Lifting my heart to God for the exact answer needed, I said: “Here is something you can believe: ‘If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins,’ and he finished the quotation, ‘and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness’” (I John i. 9).

“ This verse,” I continued, “ says that, if a man confesses his sins, God forgives them ; but you must understand on what ground God does this. It is for the sake of Christ, His Son, Who paid the legal penalty of our sins by dying for them ; even as it says in verse 12 of the next chapter, “ Your sins are forgiven you *for His Name’s sake.*” “ Yes,” he answered, “ I know that is what the Bible teaches.”

“ Well, then, the question is, are you a sinner ? ”

“ Yes, there is no doubt about that.”

“ Now do not say that just because I have led the conversation to this point. God reads your heart as you lie there, and knows whether you really are honest in owning that you are a sinner.”

“ Oh, yes, there is no doubt at all that I am a sinner.”

“ Then God sees that you confess to Him your sinfulness. Now, what does the verse say He does when a man confesses his sins ? ”

“ It says that God forgives him.”

“ Then are your sins forgiven ? ”

“ Well, but ——— ”

“ Excuse me, there can be no ‘ but ’ about it. The verse either tells the truth or does not tell the truth. Either God has forgiven your sins, or He has not forgiven them : which is it ? ”

“ But ——— ”

“ Pardon me, I will allow no ‘ but ’ in the matter. God says that, for Christ’s sake, He forgives him who honestly confesses his sins, and He expects you to believe Him. If I owed a grocer half a crown, went into the shop in a hurry, put down the coin, and said, ‘ I won’t wait for the receipt ; just mark off your book ’ : and if later I went in again and said, ‘ You marked off that half crown I paid ? ’ and he replied, ‘ Yes, you won’t hear any more of that half crown ; ’ I should not ask him to show me his ledger but should believe his word. Exactly so does God expect you to believe His word that He has forgiven your sins.”

“ But is this all there really is to it ? ”

“ Well, the Bible speaks about a great many other matters, but upon this subject of the forgiveness of sins this is all that counts.”

He turned his white face away on the pillow and I saw a tear trickle down his cheek. Then he looked at me and said, “ I suppose it isn’t the way to speak about these things, but I feel I could dance a hornpipe.”

“ Now,” I asked, “ what has happened to change your feelings so suddenly ? Just now you were doubting and distressed ; now you are relieved and happy. But I have not been working on your feelings but speaking only quietly and unemotionally. What has happened ? ”

“ I don’t know.”

“ What has taken place is this—that you have at last accepted what God says as true and He by His Spirit has

proved it to be true by giving you peace and joy as He has promised to do.”

Another day I learned that he was indeed a sinner, even as men reckon. Having a wife in England he was entangled with a woman in Rangoon. When he asked what could be done I confessed that I did not see any way out of the situation, but I assured him that his newly-found Saviour could solve the problem, and together we asked His intervention. Immediately thereafter the woman herself set him free, without action on his side, by writing to say she declined to have any more to do with him.

But he did not go on to confess Christ to others. I asked why? He replied that he was manager of a large bookshop; that they sold certain French novels that as a Christian he could not sell, and he felt it better not to talk much about the Saviour until he had cleared the shop of such books. And he added that the proprietor would not like this step, for that line of books was very profitable. It was proof that the new life had at once produced a quickened conscience and a determination to be holy in walk. The proprietor was the Parsee lawyer mentioned, which partly explains why he had preferred Theosophy to Christ.

When my time came to leave he much wanted to give me a token of gratitude, and was amused to have met a man who found it hard to think of anything he wanted. At last we thought of binoculars, which I still treasure.

While I was in Rangoon an event occurred which will not be repeated. There was an ancient tradition that at the death of Gautama Buddha (483 B.C.), the king of Peshawar, north west India, caused some pieces of his bones to be inclosed in a golden casket and placed in a vault beneath his palace. A Government archaeologist discovered this casket and now it was brought to Rangoon on its way to the great temple at Mandalay. Rangoon went on holiday; there were vast processions, headed by vicious, arrogant priests, most repulsive objects, borne on men's shoulders (as is the Pope on certain occasions); with every sign of rapturous excitement because these relics had come among them.

The following Sunday evening, at the Y.M.C.A., an English speaker, whose name I have not preserved, emphasized the radical difference between Bhuddism and Christianity, pointing out that were any authentic relics of the body of our Lord discovered, Christianity, so far from exulting, would go into mourning, and close down as an age-long fraud based on the deception of the bodily resurrection of its Founder.

When Burmans visit one another it is customary for the host to bring forth a lacquered box containing long green

leaves, hard areca nuts, and a tool for cutting chips off the nuts. Lime is spread on the leaves and the chipped nut is spread on this. Then the leaf is rolled, and they chew, chew the hard nut, much as Yankees chew gum. The result is a good deal of expectorating. I asked one of my friends why they indulged in this habit? He replied: "Oh, just for the same reason that you people drink tea!" I was pleased that the keen shaft missed me, since I do not drink tea.

After a third attack of fever it seemed clear that I ought not to face the dangerous climate longer, especially as the intense heat of summer was at hand. But how shall one take a journey, and a long journey, who has no money and no human likelihood of receiving any? About this I looked much unto God, and there formed in my mind a clear conviction that it was His good pleasure that I should return to "Brooklands," Coonoor, for the coming hot season. One morning therefore I wrote to my sister-in-law, who would be already there, to say that I expected to leave Rangoon for Madras by a weekly boat, leaving in ten days' time, and that I hoped to reach Coonoor on a given date. After having written the letter I spent some four hours still seeking the face of God, and, feeling sure of His mind, about noon I went downstairs to post the letter. In the hall of the hostel there lay a letter which had only just arrived. It was from Miss Bishop to say that, if I had no other guidance, would I return to "Brooklands" as her guest and minister the word to the household during the hot season. That letter had come 500 miles by land and 1,200 miles by sea and had been delivered exactly as I was writing to say I thought to go to that very house. Later I learned that, after writing, Miss Bishop had deferred the posting for ten days until fully assured of the mind of the Lord. Thus perfectly does God dispose minds and co-ordinate actions.

As to monies needed, the beloved Burmese friends at once gave a loving gift, Mr. E. S. Bowden sent from India £7 10s., and a cheque arrived from England for £10, for which the bank gave £10 3s. 6d., such being the value set on English money. This last letter had been sent from England via Siberia to Shanghai, had travelled some 3,000 miles up the Yangtze valley to Yunnan Fu, had then crossed the Burmese mountains to Rangoon, some 700 or more miles, and reached me precisely when needed and in conjunction of time with the other gifts. All charges at the hostel were cleared off, the ticket taken, and I sailed on the date announced, April 29th, 1910.

The voyage to Madras was very delightful, one of my most pleasant trips at sea. The ship was crowded below with 1,700 Tamil coolies. They sat at nights in small groups back to back while they slept, there being insufficient space for all to stretch out. There was plague among them and they crossed from one deck to another past the second class cabin I used.

On board there was an English railway driver fleeing from Burma. Poor fellow, he was a heavy drinker. But he seemed to sense that I might help him morally, and inquired how I found it possible to keep from wine and women. It gave opportunity to tell him of the One Who saves His people from their sins. But the last I saw of him as we left the ship was lying under a bench dead drunk. Such is too often the servitude of the Devil.

On May 4th, 1910, I reached Coonoor, enriched in personal knowledge of God and praising Him for the mercy that endureth forever.

The next two and a half months were occupied with similar service to that of the year before, only mainly among the Lord's servants gathered at "Brooklands."

On arrival I had an experience not known before or since. In spite of the abundant grace lately enjoyed, my soul seemed dry and barren, destitute of heavenly emotions and largely so of earthly. The subtle temptation was pressed upon me that it would be needful to defer helping others until my own heart was refreshed. But this was of the Devil. I recalled that, in his *Narrative*, George Müller had mentioned that he gave an address with no comfort to his own soul, but that before long he had heard of eighteen persons who had been helped. Against the suggestion of Satan I opposed the promise of God. Dr. Pierson said that his special text as a preacher was Isa. lv. 10, 11 : "My word shall not return unto Me void, etc." and that he did not remember an occasion when he had claimed that promise but that he presently heard of some fruit. The promise upon which I have relied is John vii. 38 : "He that believeth on Me . . . out of him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit." On the occasion in question I reflected that water will flow through an open pipe even though the pipe does not feel anything, and I kept on speaking daily.

We have to work in faith as much as to walk by faith. In this case faith was soon justified. Before the workers returned to their places there was a testimony meeting. Miss Hastie, chief English helper to Pundita Ramabai, was kind enough to say that a talk I had given had shown her the secret of overcoming wandering thoughts in prayer. Privately she added that not once during the late weeks had she heard me speak but it had each time exactly suited her soul's need. This must have happened at least fifteen times during the period that my own feelings were cold. The vitality of the heavenly seed is not dependent upon the feelings of the sower, but upon the perpetual energy of the spirit of truth.

My dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Golden, of Coimbatore, were at Coonoor. They had booked passages for England by the Italian *S.S. Balduino* sailing from Bombay on

July 15th, and they were very urgent that I should join them.

But I had neither guidance nor money and could only defer the matter. Mr. Golden, however, without mentioning it to me, asked Thomas Cook and Sons, of Bombay, to offer me a berth, which they did. By the same post, or perhaps the next, a letter came from Miss Ely, before mentioned, saying that she would be in charge for that summer of the rest home "Fairhaven" at Ramleh and intended to place on the sea-shore a tent in which to hold meetings for missionaries and for Moslems. She asked if I should be returning about that time, and, if so, would I break the journey in Egypt, and join in this service? And she redeemed her promise, which I had forgotten, by enclosing a draft for £20. It was drawn on Cook's at Bombay and I had only to send it and book the passage. So exactly does God work as to time and measures.

On the way to Bombay I paid a short visit to workers in Belgaum district, and had an hour at Poona with Soonderbai Power, an Indian lady conducting a Christian training home for Indian women purposing to serve in the gospel. There followed two days at Mukti with the cultured and spiritual Pundita Ramabai. This learned lady was engaged in printing, on her own press, the Bible, as to the Old Testament, in Hebrew, Marathi, and English, (both A.V., R.V., and Newberry's emendations), and as to the New Testament, in Greek, Marathi, and English.

It was a new experience to hear a thousand women and girls praying aloud at one time. The sound rose and fell like the roar of the sea or the wind in a forest. But what to a Westerner might seem mere confusion did not so strike me, for I had before heard in Egypt a whole school of boys similarly learning and reciting their lessons out loud. Yet the mind of each was on his own recitation, undisturbed by the noise around. Similarly each woman and girl was oblivious of the rest and when each finished praying she rose quietly from the ground and left the hall. What is the force of Acts iv. 24: "And they . . . lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said . . . ?" Was it that the whole company were suddenly moved by the one Spirit to say unitedly the same words? The New Testament was not written as a description of modern and Western meetings!

On the ship there were two British officers, Captains. One had won his commission in the South African war. He was quiet and religious, but a Freemason. He loaned me one of their books, but when he found that I was beginning to fill in correctly the blanks in the book he would no more converse on the matter. It reminded me that in south India a young Englishman had tried to kindle in me an interest in Freemasonry. Asked what was the advantage of being a Freemason, he replied that it was knowledge. Each grade that

one advanced, more knowledge was imparted. Asked what was the nature of the knowledge that could be imparted only behind locked doors and under revolting vows of absolute secrecy, he would say no more. I pressed upon him the extreme contrast of this secrecy with the statement of Christ before His judges : “ I have spoken openly to the world : I ever taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews come together ; and in secret spake I nothing ” (John xviii. 20). The Book of God contains indeed high mysteries, but they are written there for all men to read. There is no esoteric teaching declared only to initiates, as in the ancient pagan Mystery societies or in modern Theosophy or Freemasonry.

The other captain was of the older type of officer, a man of some position in society. After a long, close talk upon salvation and the divine life he revealed the darkness of mind of many such men by saying : “All I can say is that never in my life did any man talk to me as you have done tonight.” Where are the clergy, where the Army chaplains, that such an assertion should be possible ?

As we neared Suez, where I was to disembark, my loving friend H. C. Golden wished to know how I was placed as to money. I answered evasively, not wishing to tell any one but my Master. My dear brother later gave me five pounds. Without this I could not have reached Alexandria, where the next service waited.

(To be continued)

THE DISCIPLE

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LIVE FOR JESUS

A Translation of a Finnish hymn, taken
from an article on Finland in the *Sunday*
Magazine, 1884, page 784.

Live for Jesus ! All the pleasure
That can come from earthly things
Equals not one hour's enjoyment
Which His blessed service brings.

Live for Jesus ! For thus only
Does our life deserve the name ;
To thy heart, before all others,
Jesus has a perfect claim.

Live for Jesus ! Round His banner
Gather souls while life doth last ;
To His cross invite poor sinners ;
Soon the work-day will be past.

Thousands of such wanderers round thee,
After peace and comfort sigh ;
Tell them of the Friend Who only
Can their longings satisfy.

Tell them simply of salvation
Thou thyself in Him hast found ;
Of the grace and loving kindness
Wherewith He thy life has crowned.

Live for Jesus ! Life's young springtide
Give Him, and thy summer's prime ;
Live for Him when fading autumn
Speaks to thee of shortening time.

Give thyself entirely to Him ;
Thus He gave Himself for thee,
When He lived on earth despised,
When He died on Calvary.

Give up all for Him, well knowing
Thus to lose is all to gain.
Live for Jesus, till with Jesus
Thou for ever rest and reign.

THE DANGER OF THE SUBJECTIVE TEST

Objectivism is “the tendency to lay stress upon what is objective or external to the mind.” Subjectivism is “the quality or condition of resting upon subjective facts or mental representation.” (*Shorter Oxford Dictionary*).

Meeting a stranger one may immediately form an impression of him, favourable or unfavourable. Every fair-minded person allows that this subjective opinion requires to be checked by external facts afterward to be learned: for experience shows two things, either that such an impression may be well-founded and valuable, or it may be wrong and misleading.

It is the same in matters spiritual and doctrinal. The spiritual man has a power of spiritual discernment in spiritual things (I Cor. ii. 10-16). On first hearing or reading some line of teaching he may form instinctively a judgment that it is of God or that it is false. But experience teaches that this needs to be confirmed, amended, or rejected by careful objective study of the Word of God; for, as a bishop said to his clergy: “none of you is infallible, not even the youngest of you.”

The danger of being misled by subjective views or feelings is constant and severe. The Christian can propose for himself some purely subjective test of truth which may be without basis in fact and prove disastrous.

1. ERASMUS. This greatest scholar of the sixteenth century earnestly wished to see the Roman Church reformed in many particulars, but he clung tenaciously to certain of its doctrines and ceremonies. His account of why he retained the Mass, and transformation of the bread and wine into the veritable body and blood of Christ, is an instructive example of the danger in view. He wrote:

I never dreamed of abolishing Mass. Concerning the Eucharist, I see no end to discussion; yet I cannot be and never shall be persuaded that Christ, who is the Truth, who is Love, should have suffered His beloved spouse, the Church, to cling so long to hateful error, as to worship wheaten bread instead of Himself.

Here are two purely subjective tests of the truth of doctrine or practice. First, that it can claim sufficient antiquity: note the words “so long”: second, that it cannot be supposed that Christ will or will not do a certain thing.

The former test implies that in the Christian sphere age guarantees truth : therefore the more hoary the error the more certainly it is truth !

The conjoined test is that in one's opinion Christ will not do or allow this or that. Erasmus' opinion as to the Lord was purely subjective, being not only without basis in objective fact but directly contrary to fact. The Lord by His inspired apostle gave plain warning against believing every spirit, because many false prophets are in the world, and He laid down a two-fold test to be applied ; first, the fact as to the true humanity of Himself, Jesus Christ, and second, the attitude of a person to apostolic testimony (I John iv. 1-6). It is simple and sorry fact that can be daily verified that many of Christ's redeemed, whom He loves, are inviegled into false cults because they fail to apply these tests, but are swayed by some subjective feeling, such as that this man at the door, or his book, impresses me as sincere and trustworthy.

The objective fact as to Christ is that, though He is indeed truth and love, He does not prevent us being misled if we shut our eyes and follow any and every guide, even as He does not prevent the blind walking into a ditch if he follows a blind leader.

2. LUTHER. Luther's attitude to the authority of Holy Scripture was uncompromising. He

accepted it as the supreme court of appeal in all matters of faith . . . He finds truth in the Bible and in the Bible alone. The Word of God is the supreme reason which dominates all reasons, the proof which supersedes all proofs. The attestation of the Word is the Holy Ghost, Who bears witness to its truth and authority. The Bible in Luther's view does not come from the Church. History yields information on the growth of the Canon : it does no more. In the last resort the Bible attests its own inspiration. The Holy Ghost testifies as to its Divine character and the absolute authority of the truth contained in it. Five times in a single page he tells us, " The Holy Spirit has written," and he believes " not a single letter has been written in vain." " The Holy Spirit is neither foolish nor drunk to utter a tittle, much less a letter in vain."

Here is a noble declaration of the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture. But there arises the question as to what *is* Holy Scripture ? How shall the canon be determined ? Which of the sixty-six books in the Bible belong properly to the Word of God written ? Luther rightly insisted upon the attestation of the Book by the Holy Spirit Who makes its statements a living voice to the heart. But what is the safe criterion to distinguish between that Divine attestation and ideas as to the Book which may form in the reader's own mind or be insinuated by a false spirit ?

Luther's criterion of the sacred record was, he thought, plain. "The right test," he laid down, "by which to judge its books is whether they preach Christ. Whatever does not preach Christ is not apostolic, even though it had been written by St. Peter or St. Paul. And, on the other hand, whatever does preach Christ would be apostolic though it proceeded from Judas, Pilate, or Herod."

The situation thus raised includes an important distinction. The attestation to Scripture by the Spirit is indeed subjective, in that it takes place in the mind of the hearer or reader ; but it is also an *experience*, a *fact*, which the man can isolate from himself and contemplate as if exterior to himself. Falling in love is a like case. It is interior, subjective, and yet it can be regarded as something conscious, real, and can be considered objectively. Thus the witness of the Spirit to the Bible is a known fact, of which explanation can be sought and gained, and thus it is not *purely* subjective.

But the test of the canon proposed by Luther is purely subjective and has no facts in support. It is true that all the prophets testified of Christ, and that to do so is the Spirit that animates true prophets (Rev. xix. 10) ; but it is equally *not* true, it is not the *fact* that true prophets spake of *nothing but* Christ. Nothing about Him could be learned from Obadiah's prophecy concerning the destruction of Edom. In the light of other passages it can be seen that Christ is the Jehovah of that prophecy, but this could not be gained from *Obadiah* taken by itself. Again, the Lord Jesus has told us that there is correspondence between Jonah's time in the sea-monster and the period He would be in Hades, but who could have learned this from the history of Jonah ? Nahum foretold the destruction of Nineveh, but he did not preach Christ. Or again, is Christ preached in the histories of such wicked men as Abimelech the son of Gideon or Ahab king of Israel ? The genealogies in *Chronicles* are of use to the close student of Old Testament history, but do they preach Christ ?

The position may be reversed. If preaching Christ is the test of the canon of Scripture, ought not a vast mass of later literature be included, such as the sermons of C. H. Spurgeon ? Christ is their constant theme.

Luther's test was purely subjective, a creation of his own fertile mind, but supported by no objective statement of the Bible as to itself, and contrary to fact. The danger of the proceeding is seen in the results of the test reached by Luther himself. To the words quoted he added :

But this James only preaches the law and obedience to the law, and mixes one with the other in a confusing fashion. Therefore I will not admit him in my Bible among the number of true canonical writers.

Surely on the same ground he should have excluded Moses from his Bible, for does not he teach law and obedience to

the law? With so self-devised and unreliable a test of what is or is not Scripture it is not surprising that

The modern way in which he [Luther] looked at the Bible, especially the Old Testament, continually astonishes one. To him it matters little if Moses himself did not write the five books that bear his name. It may well be, he thought, that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Hosea contain additions, and have reached their present forms from later writers. He has the insight to see that the book of Job is not a history, but a poem or drama.

Such are the loose views that may follow a purely subjective test. Objective fact, taken from the Bible, corrects such lax ideas. Our Lord accepted Moses as the writer of the books that bear his name (John v. 45-47; vii. 19-23). God Himself twice joined Job with Noah and Daniel as equally historical (Ezek. xiv. 14, 20), and James treats him in the same way (v. 11). That there are later additions in the prophets named is pure assumption, a mere subjective literary opinion.*

3. THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED. There is discussed today a notion that Holy Scripture is not in itself the Word of God but becomes this to any individual when the Holy Spirit applies it to him personally. This again is a purely subjective idea contrary to the facts which Scripture gives as to itself.

It is true that until the Spirit of truth speaks by Scripture the reader or hearer may not appreciate or acknowledge that the Bible is from God, but this proves only the deadness of the hearer but nothing as to what the Bible is in itself. Peter says (II Ep. i. 20, 21) that

no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man, but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

This means that no prophet released from his mind by his own will the prophecy he launched on the world. No prophecy was ever thus originated, but the prophet was lifted above himself by the Holy Spirit, as an article is taken up by the wind and borne along without effort of its own.

This type of inspiration was well known in the heathen world by their prophets being seized by an outside spirit and caused to utter an oracle. It is known today in the spiritistic seance. An instance of the Divine afflatus thus using a prophet is found in II Chron. xx. 14-17: "Then upon Jahaziel . . . came the Spirit of Jehovah in the midst of the congregation; and he said . . . thus saith Jehovah." It is evident that what the prophet then said was a word from God in itself, whether the people would attend to it or not. God Himself plainly declared this to Ezekiel (ii. 4, 5, 7): "Thou shalt say unto

The quotations in sections one and two are from Dr. R. H. Murray's compendious study *Erasmus and Luther* pp. 298, 145-147, where the sources are given.

them, thus saith the Lord Jehovah. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear (for they are a rebellious house), yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them . . . And thou shalt speak My words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear : for they are most rebellious." Here the most resolute rejection of the message is contemplated, yet the words spoken were the words of God.

Similarly, Paul stated that the words in which he spoke the divine message were taught by the Spirit of God not by human wisdom (I Cor. ii. 13), and Peter declared that it was "in [the power of] the Holy Spirit" that he and others preached the gospel (I Pet. i. 12). He adds (ver. 23) that "the word of God liveth and abideth"; that is, it does not suddenly become living when the Spirit applies it to a person, but it is in itself a living and incorruptible seed, containing inherent vitality, which being divine can never wither.

Referring to the Old Testament Paul reminded Timothy that from a babe he had known certain "sacred writings," and that *because* they are inbreathed by God *therefore* they are profitable (II Tim. iii. 15, 16). This is very other than the idea that they *become* a message from God when from time to time the Spirit uses the words. They are in themselves inspired and sacred. It is to be noted that this is said of the whole Old Testament, the "sacred writings" in question, so that the inherent quality, the sacredness, the inspiration attached to history, law, poetry, as well as to the more distinctly "prophetic" utterances; all was indited by the Spirit, though not everything declares the mind of God.

David being a prophet, and being given foresight (Acts ii. 30, 31), described the prophetic utterances in the same terms : "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And His word was upon my tongue. The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me" (II Sam. xxiii. 2, 3). So far were David's prophetic utterances from being self-originated, that in fact God first spoke to David and His Spirit caused David to re-utter what was said. So far was it from being that the Spirit put ideas into the prophet's mind and left him to express them as best he could, that in fact his very tongue was under Divine control. It is in keeping with this that Peter points out that sometimes the prophets did not comprehend their message but searched into its meaning. This could not have been the case had they originated their utterances out of their own minds (I Pet. i. 10, 12).

It is thus an objective fact, plainly declared in Scripture as to itself, that it is inherently and continually the words of God.

Holding firmly to this objective fact, it is important to remember that it is the Spirit of truth Who alone makes this inspired scripture to become a living, conquering, life-giving message to a hearer or reader. The importance lies in this, that

(1) It is therefore urgent that the human agent He is to employ should be one walking in communion with Him, so as to be a suitable servant to Him, speaking in dependence upon His energy (I Cor. ii. 4, 5).

(2) This human messenger is thereby emboldened to declare the message with the confidence that, being God's word, it will prosper in the thing whereto He sends it (Isa. lv. 8-11). "Your labour is not vain [being] in the Lord" (I Cor. xv. 58).

(3) By the voice of the Spirit in the word the hearer comes under obligation to believe and obey. This is not so by listening to a fellow-man. My neighbour is not bound to believe miraculous events merely because a fellow-mortal tells him, for example, that a man named Jesus rose from the dead and departed bodily into the skies. But when he has heard the voice of the Spirit of God giving divine, inward demonstration of the facts and truths of the gospel, then he is under obligation to believe and obey.

(4) It is this conjoint divine inspiration of the Book and the preaching that will involve the rejector of the message in a corresponding divine judgment. Therefore the Spirit-filled Prophet solemnly said, what is equally true of every Spirit-given message, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 48).

In conclusion. A notice headed, "By the Queen. A Proclamation" carries inherent royal authority whether the reader be loyal or a rebel. Thus God's message in Holy Scripture is a Divine command, irrespective of how man treats it. (Acts xvii. 30 31 : II Pet. ii. 21 ; iii. 2).

4. HIGHER CRITICISM. The higher criticism denies the foregoing objective feature of inherent, continuous inspiration and authority of the Bible and assails it upon subjective grounds. Bishop Colenso was one of the first thus to act in the English-speaking world in the last century. We shall let him state this feature as to the great German critics of his time. On page xxiii. of the Preface to his *The Pentateuch* (1862) we read :

writers of the liberal school in Germany take so completely for granted—either on mere *critical* grounds, or because they assume from the first the utter impossibility of miracles or supernatural revelations—the unhistorical character and non-Mosaic origin of the greater portion at least, if not the whole, of the Pentateuch . . .

They "take for granted . . . they assume"—that is, their whole position is merely subjective, a process of their own mind. One illustration will suffice. It was asserted again and again that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because at the time that he was supposed to have done so, the

early period the books picture, writing had not been invented. There were no facts to warrant this assertion, and, of course, archaeology has long since shown it to be false. Yet it is still repeated. Quite lately (1955) the headmistress of a large school so taught her pupils. Happily for them, if not for her, shortly an archaeologist of standing lectured at the school and informed them that there were five languages in which Moses might have written his books, and he exhibited original specimens of those languages.

5. DEISM is the philosophy that admits a Creator but suggests that, having created the universe, He retired into the background and left it to the outworking of irreversible and inescapable laws He had imposed.

Such an absentee God were no God at all, for God to be GOD must be omnipresent and sovereign, not withdrawn and inactive. Therefore there being no such God as is imagined deism is virtually atheism, being without a Deity.

This purely subjective imagination is contrary to the facts of human and earthly experience that the Almighty definitely intervenes in affairs public and private. For the deist necessarily prayer is futile, there being no God ready to answer. They are in the sorry case of a small boy I knew who wandered from home and fell on a heap of stones, which was painful. Asked if he cried he answered, "No, there weren't nobody to hear!"

Now as the Bible is full of reports of Divine interventions, therefore for the deist the Bible is wholly unreliable. This is the real, if unconfessed objective of the philosophy. God being absent and never interfering, man has no need to reckon with Him or to fear a day of judgment, or to expect any other reward or penalty than will come from the unavoidable outworking of cosmic laws. This, of course, is the essence of Buddhistic and other pantheistic and fatalistic conceptions of the universe. In contrast, Scripture tells us that "all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to reckon" (Heb. iv. 13).

Were deism true the Creator it theoretically postulates would be the responsible Author of all the vice and misery that grips and desolates creation through the outworking of the all-controlling yet uncontrolled laws under which He placed it and leaves it. This is the logical outcome of all fatalistic reasoning, as much in hyper-Calvinism as in heathen thought.

The apostle Peter forewarned of a time when men would thus argue for an imaginary invariable working of natural law. Their object would be to cancel all fear of the coming judgment of the world by a personal intervention of God, by the return to earth of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to execute judgment. Of this mighty event the ancient prophets had spoken, Christ Himself had enlarged upon the theme,

and His apostles pressed it upon men as a demand for repentance. But these opposers, said Peter, would present the challenge

Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation (II Pet. ii. 3, 4).

This is pure deism. A creation of the world is admitted, contrary to the opposite subjective notion that matter is eternal. But admitting a creative beginning of things it is urged that nature has worked uniformly and without interruption: *therefore*, no cataclysmic interruption is to be expected. The very idea is "unphilosophical." Thus have modern deists argued. Supernatural happenings, miraculous interventions cannot be, for they would be contrary to the uniform laws that control all creation: *therefore* the Book that alleges that miracles have occurred must be mere fiction, mere legend.

The Scripture, in the words of Peter, meets this with an overwhelming refutation, founded on fact, and which includes a charge of moral turpitude against the deists.

For this they wilfully forget, that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the word of God; by which means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished (II Pet. iii. 5, 6).

Men of old knew perfectly well, what the learned today know equally well, that there was a Flood that desolated the earth. Traditions of many widely scattered races combine to assert it, and modern excavations in Mesopotamia leave the deist doubly without excuse. Nevertheless this stubborn fact of a direct cataclysmic intervention of God in judgment must be rejected. This can only be done by deliberate intention—"they wilfully forget" the Flood.

On what grounds? Let Colenso tell us how he came to accept the assertion that no such universal Deluge had ever occurred. He wrote (*Pentateuch* viii) :

I refer especially to the circumstance, well known to all geologists (see Lyell's *Elementary Geology*, p. 197, 198), that volcanic hills exist of immense extent in Auvergne and Languedoc, which must have been formed ages before the Noachian Deluge, and which are covered with light and loose substances, pumice-stone, etc., that must have been swept away by a Flood, but do not exhibit the slightest sign of having ever been disturbed.

So Sir Charles Lyell had climbed some hills in France, had looked around upon the volcanic debris, and felt himself quite competent to determine that it had not been disturbed for certainly more than *four thousand five hundred years at least!* *therefore* the Flood never happened; *therefore* the Bible is legend, not history; and *therefore* man need not fear any future interruptions of the laws of nature!

I read of this some sixty years ago, when a young man, in a book by Andrew Lang, and thought it amazing conceit. As an old man I still think it so, and equally amazing that other men will give decisive weight to a merely subjective opinion upon such a matter as to rocks and pumice-stone. It is saner and safer to believe Moses rather than Lyell, not the least because the Son of God accepted Moses' account as true history and as an earnest of judgment to come at His return to earth (Luke xvii. 26, 27 : Matt. xxiv. 37-39).

6. EVOLUTION. Lyell was a chief early supporter of Darwin. Darwin was deistic, after his abandonment of his early profession of Christianity. To the end he wavered between uniform law and active intervention of a Creator and Ruler, but he never returned to real faith in God. Having turned from truth that he once maintained he paid the inevitable and sorrowful penalty of ending his days in spiritual darkness and distress.

His theory of natural selection to account for changes in natural life was never anything but a theory. It was not based on fact, but was merely a theory proposed as a supposed explanation of facts. That it remains unproved, and is considered by leading scientists as beyond proof, is well known, though the rank and file, ready enough to embrace an opinion contrary to the Bible, are slow to follow their leaders in abandoning their favourite theory.

Thus the whole destructive infidel propaganda of evolution has been the outcome of a purely subjective conception unrelated to objective realities.

7. UNIVERSALISM and ANNIHILATION. That numerous passages of Scripture have, as their first and clear meaning, the doctrine of the eternal conscious punishment of the impenitent rejector of Christ is generally admitted, if by some reluctantly. In the endeavour to prove, however, that such is not the real meaning of these passages attempt is made to show that yet other passages foretell either the restoration to God of all fallen beings, angelic, demonic, and human, or that the finally rebellious will be put out of existence.

These two conceptions are mutually contradictory, but the advocates of both rely alike on one principal argument, even that the character of God makes it impossible that any of His Creatures should remain for ever estranged from Him and be in torment. To reach this conception the love, mercy, grace, and tenderness of God are heavily emphasized, while His holiness, justice, and wrath are minimized. Scripture ever presents these various characteristics as a combination forming the perfect nature of God. Man is called upon to behold both His goodness and His severity (Rom. xi. 22). To isolate or exaggerate either aspect is to create a merely mental, subjective Deity who really has no existence. To subject one's beliefs or

opinions, even if unconsciously, to such an ill-conceived deity is virtually to worship a false god, who exists only as a subjective idea in one's own mind.

8. **ANGLO-ISRAELISM** is the theory that the ten northern tribes of Israel were "lost" for a time but emerged into the light in the Anglo-Saxon tribes, so that the British and American peoples are Israel.

The theory insists on a distinction that in Scripture the name Israel means only the ten tribes, and that those known today as Jews are only the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The concordance will show that the name Israel covers primarily the whole twelve tribes descended from that patriarch, and that even after the division under Rehoboam it still covered them all, though a secondary application arose to distinguish the northern kingdom from the southern, but with no exclusive application to the former.

That the ten tribes were "lost" is not shown in Scripture. Late in Paul's history, and nearly seven centuries after their captivity, he refers to the twelve tribes as still an entity (Acts xxvi. 7), as does James (i. 1); and Peter speaks of the Dispersion (a term which applied to all the race), and gives their location as Asia Minor (I Pet. i. 1).

The supposed migrations far eastward have only a precarious historical basis, depending largely on unphilosophical manipulations of proper names. After only four centuries of being "lost" the ten tribes are supposed to emerge from total obscurity as Saxons. The characteristic dark Jewish complexion has vanished and the people have become fair-skinned, golden-haired, and blue-eyed. They have not the least recollection of their distinguished ancestry, nor signs of the Hebrew language, customs, or exalted religious monotheism. They are degraded barbarians, polytheistic and savage. Such a metamorphosis is without parallel and is mere supposition.

The theory includes such purely imaginary "history" as that Jeremiah saved the sacred vessels of the temple from Nebuchadnezzar and hid them in a cave east of Jordan; also that he transported from Palestine to Ireland the heavy stone which, about a thousand years before, as is alleged, had been Jacob's pillow, and which later got to Scotland and England, over which the sovereigns of Britain are crowned in Westminster Abbey. Moreover, on this unchronicled journey Jeremiah took to Ireland the daughters of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, one of whom married an Irish prince, from whom the house of Hanover are descended and reign over Britain.

Critically considered the alleged historical basis of this theory is without authentic support, as also in philology and Scripture. It is faced with historical difficulties not to be surmounted. It is without objective warrant, opposed by insuperable objective obstacles; it is purely subjective, the

invention of men, albeit godly men. Yet it is held tenaciously by a vast number of Christians, who honestly believe it. They are strong upholders of evangelical truths, such as the Deity of Christ, His atoning blood as the only means of salvation, and the certain triumph of His kingdom. With some of them in different lands I have enjoyed hearty fellowship in gospel service. Yet they are persuaded of such a fallacy as that the British and American peoples are in covenant relation with God and enjoying the spiritual blessings promised to the sons of Israel. Of course, their outlook on the political future of Britain and America is rosy. Time will disillusion them, is already doing so, though they see it not.

How this power of the subjective to override the objective is to be explained we shall consider later.

9. PROPHECIC INTERPRETATION. (a) For a century and a quarter the minds of innumerable Christians have been dominated by a scheme of interpretation which includes among other items two chief ideas ; first, that John the Baptist and Jesus early offered to the Jews that, if they would then and there accept Jesus as the Messiah, He would then and there establish the kingdom of glory promised in the prophets ; and second, that as regards the departure of Christ to heaven and His return thence to earth, this latter event was to be expected during that first generation of believers and therefore it might ever since have taken place " at any moment."

The facts of Scripture stand in invincible opposition to these two ideas.

(1) On the road to Emmaus the Lord explained from Moses and all the prophets that it behoved the Messiah to suffer and afterward to enter into His glory (Luke xxiv. 26, 27). Peter later enforced this as being the message of the Spirit of Christ through the prophets (I Pet. i. 10, 11). Atoning suffering must precede reigning in glory.

In harmony with this united voice of Scripture John the Baptist pointed to Jesus as being the Lamb of God Who should take away the sin of the world, and Who therefore must be sacrificed in death as the atoning lamb. And in the very earliest example of our Lord's teaching that has been preserved to us we hear Him tell Nicodemus that the Son of man " *must* be lifted up " in order to provide eternal life for sinners (John i. 29, 36 ; iii. 14, 15).

It is therefore certain that neither John nor Jesus entertained or spread the notion that He might reign without having first died. It would have involved a cancelling of the united voice of the Scripture which He had come to fulfil.

(2) It was a fact known to all the apostles that the Lord had expressly told Peter that he must live till he was old and would then die by violence (John xxi. 18, 19, 23). When the fulfilment was at hand Peter showed that he had lived in

anticipation of dying, and therefore not in anticipation of the soon return of the Lord (II Pet. i. 13, 14).

The same applied to Paul. At a certain point in his career the Lord specially appeared to encourage him, and told him that he " *must* bear witness also at Rome." Two years or more later this was confirmed to him by an angel (Acts xxiii. 11 : xxvii. 23, 24). It is obvious that until the Lord's distinct prediction had been fulfilled Paul must have known that the return of Christ to take away His people could not take place. It is equally certain that the Son of God never told men that something might take place which He knew would not take place.

This second point was examined at length in Preliminary Dissertation 2 of my commentary on the *Revelation*, now out of print. A reprint of this discussion may be obtained from me, price sixpence by post.

These two notions were suggested by a great scholar and elaborated by another great scholar, both true lovers of the Lord and His truth. Yet when tested by the facts shown in Scripture they are seen to be purely subjective products of their minds.

(b) Speaking of "attaining unto the out-resurrection from the dead," and of "pressing on toward the goal unto the prize," Paul said : "Not that I have already obtained or am already made perfect" (Phil. iii. 10-14). Clearly this implies that Paul was not taking for granted that he was certain to share in that out-resurrection, the first resurrection of Rev. xx. 4-6. To this thought many raise the purely subjective objection, "Then if Paul was not certain to attain, what hope is there for me?" That Paul meant what he said is thus challenged on a subjective ground. Suppose that Caleb had said : "Since Aaron has failed, and died in the desert, how can I hope to reach the goodly land?" or that Joshua had argued : "Since Moses may not cross Jordan, how can I expect to enter Canaan?" Such a defeatist attitude would have shown unbelief in God's promise and have secured failure.

(c) The same result is reached by testing similarly the common Protestant theory that the Papacy is the fulfilment of Scripture regarding Antichrist, the Beast of Revelation. The *facts* stated about this coming monarch will not allow the theory, however learnedly and plausibly it be argued. But space will not permit this to be now demonstrated.

10. FALSE CULTS. The same disastrous principle can be seen in modern religious movements.

Christian Science regards everything as illusion. Matter does not exist. As a boy I was walking backward along the road where I lived and I turned round at the exact moment to bump into a lamp-post. It remains a vivid memory, but, according to *Christian Science*, it was all illusion. I was not

a reality, nor was the street lamp. I did not bump my head, for there was no head to be bumped. This is neither Christian nor science. Being utterly contrary to Scripture and to objective fact it is purely a subjective delusion. Its effect is to destroy moral responsibility and fear of judgment of God to come, for that judgment will be concerned with deeds we have done by the instrumentality of the body (II Cor. v. 10), which forecast must be false if the body be not a reality.

Russellism (*Jehovah's Witnesses*) asserts that before He became man Jesus was of only angelic nature and rank, though because of His fidelity on earth He has been elevated to "divinity." For the first statement there is no trace of evidence: it is flatly contrary to the facts presented in Scripture, and is purely a subjective idea of Russell's mind, as it was of ancient Gnostics.

Unitarian views of our Lord are of the same character. It is fact that He stated of Himself that He had been in glory with the Father before the creation of the universe (the cosmos) (John xvii. 5). Therefore He existed before ought was created, is Himself uncreated, and was eternally with the Father sharing the uncreated glory. Colossians i. 17 declares that "He is before all things" and that "all things were created through Him." Consequently all views to the contrary are subjective, with no basis of fact, indeed contrary to fact.

The Millennial Kingdom. The rejection of the hope of a millennial kingdom on earth, under the personal rule of our Lord Jesus Christ, affords further examples of the danger of subjective tests. We hope to deal with this in a later issue.

This discussion raises a vast and deep question. How has it come about that the subjective element in thought has obtained such preponderant and universal influence throughout all human history, and that by it millions of men and women are swept along on the current of error? The Bible gives light on this as on all needful matters. God tells us of the Anointed Cherub that covered the spot where the glory of God is displayed in heaven, even as later the earthly copy, the cherubim in the tabernacle, spread their wings over the ray of Divine glory above the mercy seat. It is narrated that he was perfect in his ways from the day that he was created until a time when unrighteousness was found *in* him. Thus sin at its beginning was inward, subjective. It is added that his *heart was lifted up*, that is, the inward, subjective element of his being took a wrong direction, there was self-exaltation (Ezek. xxviii. 1-17).

In Isa. xiv. 12-14 this inward movement of the Day Star, the Son of the Morning, is analyzed and exposed. He said in his heart, that is to himself subjectively, "I will ascend . . .

I will exalt my throne . . . I will be like the Most High.” This subjective working of his own heart Satan proceeded to make objective, to carry it out into act and fact. It was thus subjective sin out of which flowed all the evil in heaven and earth.

To have weighed certain objective facts might have preserved the great Cherub from his fatal folly. He should have pondered the fact that the Almighty is omniscient and aware of the working of each heart before any action is taken. He should have reflected that God is omnipotent and could most certainly overthrow rebellion, and could neither be taken by surprise nor successfully resisted. He should have remembered the benevolence of his Creator that had so richly endowed him with position and splendour. The objective might have regulated the subjective.

This dreadful history was repeated on earth. For when Adam and Eve were placed in the garden they too were for a time perfect in their ways until Satan caused unrighteous thoughts and feelings to arise in the heart of the woman. He inquired : “ Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden ? (or ‘ of every tree of the garden ’).” He therefore knew that God had spoken upon this matter, and that He had *not* said what his question implied. Thus there was injected into Eve’s mind a false subjective idea.

She too could have been preserved had she at once tested this idea by strict attention to objective fact, the fact of what God had actually said. This she failed to do, but, on the contrary, she falsified what God had said in all three of the ways by which a statement can be perverted. She *added* something which God is not recorded to have said : “ neither shall ye touch ” the tree, thus making the restriction more severe and extensive. She *omitted* something God had said, even that they might eat of *every* tree save one, and eat *freely*, thus minimizing the bounty of God and their own liberty. She *changed* and weakened what God had said, turning “ ye shall surely die ” into “ lest ye die.” All this subjective unrighteousness arose in Eve’s heart, and was not checked and balanced by objective facts.

Satan at once proceeded to deny the *downward* effect of eating of the tree in question, and assured her that by eating of it she should *ascend* and become like God. Thus did he start her heart on the same iniquitous and ruinous course he himself had followed. And from that day onward it is out of the heart of man, the subjective realm of his being, that all evils have flowed (Matt. xv. 18-20 ; xii. 34, 35).

Has, then, the subjective faculty no value ? is it only dangerous ? By no means. *Imagination* is a valuable power. It enables us to visualize, to make mental *images* (as the very word implies, *imagination*). Thus ideas cease to be indistinct

and become vivid, attractive, impelling. Similarly *meditation* is a priceless faculty, indispensable to advance in knowledge and to soul culture. Finite man is not able to see immediately into the profound inner meaning of Scripture or to pierce at a glance to the heart of an event or a person. He must take note of the facts of a document or an affair and ponder them. But the vital point is that his mind must work on objective facts, on realities, otherwise imagination and meditation are only baseless supposition, mere speculation, and necessarily illusive and delusive.

The histories of Satan and of man here briefly noticed are the solid warrant for the solemn statement of Scripture that "the god of this age hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the good news of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them" (II Cor. iv. 4).

By his subtlety Satan blinded Eve's mind as to the true character and purposes of God, inducing in her heart complete and fatal misconception as to God and His world of affairs, and blocking all advance in knowledge of Him and His plans. To dispel this darkness God, in grace, began at once to talk about a Person who should appear on earth and crush Satan (Gen. iii. 15). As time passed this light as to the glory of Christ intensified by the messages of God through His prophets, until, in the fulness of the season for its full display, the Light Himself appeared to enlighten men, that through Him they might get to know the Father, of Whom Christ is the image, the visible representation. To receive this light is to become illuminated in heart as to God and His will, and thus to be delivered from the authority of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son Whom supremely the Father loves (Col. i. 12, 13). Eve passed under Satan's power by believing his lies as to God; we can escape from him only by believing the truth that God states concerning His Son. To prevent such belief is Satan's necessary endeavour so as to retain us in his power.

This light can be enjoyed by those individuals only who *believe what God has said about His Son*. Adam and Eve could have no hope for the future except by seizing upon what God said as to the coming Conqueror of the serpent. Abram must have remained an idolater, dark in mind and evil in life, had he not accepted the revelation and direction which the God of glory granted to him. It has been thus ever since, and it must needs be so.

Thus the psychological process of salvation is that the subjective power of our nature must turn from itself and take hold of objective, exterior factors presented to it. It must believe what God says, the imagination giving defined inward form to the conceptions presented by His statements, and subsequent meditation amplifying understanding of the matter.

This applies of necessity throughout our after course as

believers. To be delivered from the danger of the subjective the mind must be fastened upon God's statements and must *believe* them. Those who listened to the spoken words of the prophets could gain the benefit of God's promises only by such a belief of them as bowed the heart in confidence and obedience. Those saving messages God caused to be made permanent in the written record of them in Holy Scripture. It is for us to believe this written message, nor can its power and benefit be obtained otherwise.

God has said of Himself that "He is nigh unto all them that call upon Him" and that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Psm. cxlv. 18 : Eph. i. 11). Let the deist, who talks of an absentee God Who does not interfere in the created world, look these statements straight in the face and bow his heart to believe them. Then he will escape from darkness into God's marvellous light.

Jesus said of Himself : "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father" (John xvi. 28). He thus asserted His pre-incarnate relation to the Father, the reality of His humanity, and the resumption of His presence with the Father. Let the Unitarian of any type grasp the meaning of this statement of facts, and humble his mind to believe.

I knew a dogged Unitarian in the days of his resolute antagonism to the truth of Christ's deity. Later he told me that he had faced the Lord's words "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven" (John vi. 51). He reasoned thus : "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 that He came down out of heaven I ought to believe Him." He did believe : as he put it, "I ate of that bread." He thus gained a new life energy, the eternal life promised by Christ ; and his formerly oppressed wife testified that he was a tiger changed into a lamb.

God says that "*Israel* shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end" (Isa. xlv. 17). Let the denier of a future to Israel, that Israel of whom the prophet spoke, look this statement squarely in the face and ask, "Do I believe it?" or "Do I pervert it, by making 'Israel' mean something quite other than the God-taught prophet meant?"

It is the minds of "the unbelieving" that Satan can blind, and then keep them occupied and satisfied with their own subjective notions. They are like men who have been blinded and taken to a strange land. It were vain for them to exercise their imagination as to the features of the unknown region. How could Zedekiah of Judah form right ideas of Babylon seeing that he had been blinded before being taken there? His only hope of knowledge of his surroundings would be by believing what others might tell him.

God draws near to man in his blindness and would lift his mind away from itself. He says to him, "My thoughts are not your thoughts" (Isa. lv. 8). The situation was summed up in two statements by a Jew with an exceptionally powerful mind. The earlier part of his life Paul described thus: "I verily thought with myself" (Acts xxvi. 9). His own subjective views governed him. Of his converted life he said: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to account anything as from ourselves . . . casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. iii. 5; x. 5, 6). That is, the subjective powers of the mind must be cast down from the supremacy by which they are a barrier to gaining knowledge of God and must be brought into subjection to a Person objective to themselves.

The issue faces us perpetually. George Fox taught each man to look within himself, to seek Christ *there*, asserting that the divine light is in every man by natural condition. This is the recognized Quaker doctrine. It is subjectivism. But the Bible says: "ye *were* once *darkness*, but are *now* light in the Lord" (Eph. v. 8). Christ said: "the light *is* come into the world" (John iii. 19), not that it has ever been in the world in the heart of every man. The Lord's commission to Paul was that he should turn men "from darkness to light" (Acts xxvi. 18), by taking to them the knowledge of Himself. This is objectivism.

Humanism is the deifying of the subjective: it elevates man's reason to the place of sufficiency and supremacy. *Revelation* is the denial of that self-sufficiency, the assertion that man must rely upon objective facts external to himself, facts connected with God and His Son.

The subjective must be co-ordinate with the objective. Then is the believer truly free and safe.

THE WAY BACK (6)

by J. L. STANLEY

Chapter VII

FOLLOW HIM. WALK.

"*He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness.*"

—John viii. 12.

"*If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.*"—I John i. 6.

"*Walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*"—Rom. viii. 4.

THERE are two words which may be said to sum up briefly the directions of the Christian life. One word is "Come," the other is "Follow." There is no Christian duty but what may be ranged under one or other of these terms. In our unregenerate state, as aliens, and far off from God, the Saviour's call to us is expressed in the word "Come." But when we have

obeyed that call, His next word is "Follow."

In Mark's account of the miracle on blind Bartimaeus the narrative closes thus: "And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way" (Mark x. 52). He first came to Jesus to receive his sight, and then he used it to follow Jesus. Bartimaeus furnishes us with a striking allegory of Christian life. Following Jesus is a concise definition of the believer's walk from its commencement to its close. Let us consider:

(1) The nature of the action by which the Christian life is designated: "Walk."

(2) The direction of that action: "Follow Me."

(1) The word "walk" is a figurative term used in Scripture to describe a course of life, either good or bad. One verse will suffice to illustrate and prove this. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (iv. 17). Here it will at once be plain that the word *walk* describes the conduct of men generally, without necessarily denoting its moral character.

Considering the word as applied to the life of the believer, we shall see how exceedingly appropriate it is for the purpose.

Walking means Action. The Christian life is intended to be one of activity. The new life instinctively desires to exercise itself, and also needs exercise for its healthy development, just as the natural body requires regular exercise of its muscular powers to retain and increase their vigour. Contemplation and meditation are undoubtedly important duties of the spiritual life, but to make the life consist of these occupations is a profound mistake. Eating, drinking, and rest are necessary to the natural life, but to pursue these employments to the neglect of exercise is to sink into Epicureanism and slothfulness. "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath afore prepared that we should walk in them" (Eph. ii. 10). We are exhorted to be "always abounding in the work of the Lord," and again "to abound unto every good work." The more practical our life becomes, the more will it be in harmony with the Scripture model.

Walking is a regular action. Walking is a common method of movement, and is distinguished from such exercises as running, leaping, and jumping. No person can keep up a running pace for a great length of time, and leaping and jumping would soon exhaust the physical powers. Walking, on the contrary, being a quiet, easy, steady action, within the limit of our natural powers to sustain, may be kept up for a long period.

Our Christian life should not be spasmodic and fitful. Some persons are fitful and freakish in their religious behaviour. They can only exist and act under excitement; hence their conduct is characterized by occasional leaps and bounds,

which make a great display for a time ; but the inevitable reaction comes, and they sink back into a state of exhaustion and inactivity until the next spasm seizes them. Steadiness, regularity, persistency are important valuable qualities in the Christian life, and these are aptly illustrated by the term "walk."

Let us try to keep up a steady pace, not be anxious to perform wonderful feats. It is a well-known fact that many gymnasts, who might do themselves great good by the right use of the gymnasium, really do themselves great harm, because they are anxious to distinguish themselves by some clever performances.

Yet let it not be supposed that we plead for an easy-going sort of religion ; by walking we do not mean crawling, or strolling, or shambling along anyhow. No ; we mean good earnest walking, with a purpose in it ; and this leads us to notice, in the next place, that

Walking is a progressive action. The sort of walk that best illustrates this phase of the Christian life is that in which a man sets out for a particular destination, with a fixed purpose in view to reach it. In this case, every step taken brings him nearer to the goal. The Christian walk is a progressive one, for it is a heavenward one. He has an end in view, and is daily advancing towards it. He looks forward to dwell with God, and to be like Him for ever, and all his thoughts, aims, and efforts are directed to this sure result.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the word "walk" is so frequently used, we find it standing in different connections, each setting forth some particular feature of the Christian life.

Walking worthy of our calling. In Eph. iv. 1 Paul says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called." This refers to our walk in its relationship to God. We are to bear in mind the holy character of God, and the fact of our call by Him, in order that we may thereby be stimulated to a life of holiness. "Like as He who hath called you is holy so be ye holy in all manner of living" (I Pet. i. 15). This argument is one of the strongest persuasives to holiness used in the Scriptures. An impressive instance of its use will be found in Leviticus xix., a chapter filled with solemn commands, each one of which is enforced with the statement : "I am the Lord." God is a holy Father, and we, as His children, are to exhibit a family likeness. We are to walk so that we may honour Him, and not bring discredit upon His name.

Walking as children of light. "Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord ; walk as children of light" (Eph. v. 8). Here our walk is viewed in relation to the world. When Cortes and his Spaniards invaded Mexico, the Mexicans were told by their chief that their enemies were children of the light, and had no power in the darkness. They accordingly

attacked them at night, and gained a victory. Believers are children of the light. God is light ; and we are called to walk in the light as He is in the light. We are to put off the works of darkness and to put on the armour of light. Darkness is the symbol of sin, and with it we should have nothing to do. As children of the light and of the day, our conduct should be ever radiant with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. " Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven " (Matt. v. 16).

Walking circumspectly. " See that ye walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise " (Eph. v. 15). This aspect of our walk relates more directly to ourselves, as surrounded by dangers and exposed to temptation on every hand. We are like men travelling through an enemy's land, where every tree or bush or rock may conceal some sly foe, and therefore we have need to keep a strict watch at every point. " Circumspectly " means looking all round, not to be fixing our attention on one adversary only, but keeping an eye on all. The king of Ai thought he was gaining an easy victory over Israel ; " but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city."

Walking in love. " And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us " (Eph. v. 2). In these words we have that aspect of our Christian walk presented to us which relates especially to our fellow-believers. This is the kind of behaviour which is to characterize us in all our intercourse with the members of the body of Christ. The exhortation " walk in love " is addressed to a church, and denotes a walking together. We are to walk together as those who are " agreed," in the genial atmosphere of a holy affection. Christ's love to us is to be both the pattern and motive of our own. As a walk it is to be an habitual, and not a spasmodic thing : not like the fitful and fickle spirit which fawns one day and becomes furious the next, but like the great original, the love of God, which is unchangeable.

(2) Let us notice now the direction of this action, as expressed in the words " Follow Me." In walking worthy of our calling, walking as children of light, walking circumspectly, or walking in love, all is to be done after the pattern of our Divine Exemplar. Following Christ means

Copying His example. " I have given you an example " were His words to His disciples in reference to one particular act ; but they apply to all His actions. In the Gospels we have the record of His earthly life, and the lovely character delineated there is set out before us as a pattern for imitation. Though the Son of God, yet He was truly man, made like unto us ; feeling the sinless infirmities of our nature, yet being Himself without sin. He was made under the law, and voluntarily placed Himself in a position of subjection. In this He was consistent throughout, and in everything perfectly obeyed

the will of God. As the perfect servant He invites us to take His yoke upon us, and to learn of Him, declaring that His yoke is easy and His burden light. Following Him also means

Obeys His commands. He is our "Leader and Commander." When we come to Him, we voluntarily range ourselves under His standard, and take Him as our Lord. If we do not, then to that extent our conversion is incomplete. We must recognize His authority, His rightful claim to our submission. As soldiers in an army follow their leader, placing implicit confidence in him and moving by his direction, so are we to follow Christ our Lord. For us, it should be enough that Christ has commanded us. Loyal affection will never hesitate to ask, why? or, is it necessary? but will hasten to prove its friendship by doing whatsoever He has commanded. Again, following Jesus means

Acting in sympathy. In all our work for Him it is important that we should have spiritual discernment, that we may be able to recognize His presence and action, and move in harmony therewith. When David would go forth against the Philistines on one occasion, he sought guidance of God, and was directed to approach his enemies over against the mulberry trees. There he was to wait until he heard "the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees," and then he was to go forward, because the Lord was gone forth before him (II Sam. v. 22-25). Communion with Him daily will educate our souls into a fineness of perception, and make us "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord," so that we shall quickly discern His mind and will, and know how to shape our actions accordingly. Following Jesus also, and very obviously, means

Keeping behind Him. "When He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth *before* them, and the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (John x. 4). We are in danger of being impetuous and running on before. If we do this, we shall lose time, and have to come back again. When Christ was upon earth He did not move fast enough to please some people. They undertook to instruct Him, saying, "For there is no man that doeth anything in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show Thyself to the world" (John vii. 4). Just so—but they were wrong altogether. They mistook His aim. If His object had been to "show Himself," then their advice might have been in season. But His object was very different. He came, not to seek His own glory, but the glory of the Father. And so now, there are many who misconceive the purposes of God and of Christ, and consequently rush forward, as they suppose, to do God's service, but really to accomplish their own designs.

And let us further observe, that in telling us to follow Him, Christ is really giving us the easier place. He asks us to go nowhere whither He Himself does not go first. He does not send us forth in difficult paths to force a way for ourselves; but, like the Good Shepherd, He goes before us to clear the

obstacles from our course and to defend us from the dangers.

Following Christ is the truest service. "If any man serve Me," He says, "let him follow Me" (John xii. 26). How often we prefer to have and to act upon our own notions of service! Let us take care lest, in professing to serve God, we be really serving ourselves. "To obey is better than sacrifice" (I Sam. xv. 22).

"Who best bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best." We serve Him, not by doing what we choose, but by doing what He chooses. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" should ever be the attitude of our hearts towards Him.

And let our following be whole-hearted. Like Caleb, let us "wholly follow the Lord." Let there be no double-mindedness, no half-heartedness, no halting, and hesitating, and starting aside; but let us follow hard after Him, and cleave unto Him "with purpose of heart." Then shall we hereafter join that triumphant host on high, whose honourable distinction is proclaimed in these words: "These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Rev. xiv. 4).

A PHILOSOPHY FALSE AND TRUE

a letter by

PETER THE VENERABLE

(*Abbot of Cluny, France, 1122 to 1156*)

To his beloved son Master Peter, Brother Peter the humble Abbot of Cluny wishes the seeing eye and hearing ear:

Pitying you, my most beloved son, labouring as you are in acquiring the knowledge of secular literature, and burthened with the heavy load of profane studies, and foreseeing no reward for your labour, no relief for your burthen, I grieve to think that you are spending your time in vain. For, if the single and definite object of the true philosopher is to learn wherein real blessedness consists, and having learned that, to attain it, so that instead of being miserable he may be blessed—and if that is not worthy to be called blessedness in which any good thing is wanting, but that the *summum bonum* is a blessed eternity—who will dare to say that he is a philosopher who, by all his labours, is not advancing to eternal blessedness, but to eternal misery?

The wise men of antiquity laboured in a search after this blessedness, and set to work vigorously to bring to light what was hidden in profound depths, as it were from the very bowels of the earth. Hence the invention of arts, hence the multiplied perplexities of argumentation, hence the innumerable dissensions of sects disputing with each other; some of which placed happiness in sensual pleasures, others in the capabilities of the soul, others thought it was to be sought in something above man, others with some other opinion opposed them all.

Seeing that these erred, and that they were seeking among things below for those which are hidden above, and that mortals in this world were straying in the confusion of falsehood, Truth, looking from heaven and compassionating their misery, arose from the earth ; and having taken the likeness of sinful flesh, in order to render Himself visible to such creatures, He cried to those labouring under these and the like evils, " Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest ; take My yoke upon you." And, because He saw that they were tied and bound by deep ignorance of truth, assuming the character of a teacher, He added, " Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly, and ye shall find rest to your souls." And in His sermon on the mount, He plainly taught not only where true blessedness is to be found, but also the means by which it is to be obtained ; and at once put down the curious trifling of those who are searching after happiness, saying, " Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

See now, without the study of Plato, without the disputations of the Academy, without the subtleties of Aristotle, without the teaching of philosophers, the place and the way of happiness are discovered. Let human presumption, then, be silent, now that the divine Master has been heard. Let Falsehood hold its peace, for Truth teaches. Let man quit the teacher's chair, for the God-man sits down to teach—" Blessed," saith He, " are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Why is it then, my most dearly beloved, that you run from school to school ? Why are you labouring to teach and to be taught ? Why is it that you are seeking, through thousands of words and multiplied labours, what you might, if you pleased, obtain in plain language, and with little labour ? Why, vainly studious, are you reciting with the comedians, lamenting with the tragedians, trifling with the metricians, deceiving with the poets, and deceived with the philosophers ? Why is it that you are now taking so much trouble about what is not philosophy, but should rather (if I may do it without offence) be called foolishness ? I say, foolishness ; for this is the declaration of the true philosopher—" Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world ? "

Run, then, my son, to that blessedness of the kingdom of heaven which is proposed to you by the heavenly Master, as the one single fruit of all philosophy, and which you cannot obtain except by true poverty of spirit. For as I have already said, the true Master, presiding in the school of the whole world, and overthrowing the seats of the false teachers, has declared him that is poor in spirit to be blessed, because for him is laid up the highest blessedness, that is, the kingdom of heaven.

Enter the way of poverty, which leads to the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. Enter, I say, the way of poverty,

not so much of the body as of the soul ; not so much of possessions as of humility ; not so much of the flesh as of the mind. You will then be the true philosopher of Christ, when He shall have made the wisdom of the world foolishness to you. For, according to the same apostle, if you will be wise, become a fool, that you may be wise. And do not glory in your knowledge of the vain talk of logic, or the curious trifling of physics, or in knowing anything else but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. If, through His gift, you attain to this, there will be joy over you among the angels of God, who rejoice over every sinner who repents, and there will be much joy among the saints, for when one member rejoices, all the members rejoice with it. And to me it will be a joy beyond everything ; for I will receive you as an only son—I will nourish you with the milk of piety—I will cherish you in the bosom of love—I will bring you up among the little ones of Christ ; among the multitude of recruits I will arm you with heavenly weapons, and, as far as I can, will animate you to the spiritual warfare, and will fight by your side against the enemy. We shall have help from above, that as fellow-soldiers in the heavenly camp we may conquer the enemy, and, conquering, may be crowned ; and, truly philosophizing, may arrive at the true object of philosophy—eternal blessedness.

“ See to it that no one shall lead *you* away as a prey through philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.” (Paul : Col. ii. 8).

SOME IMPORTANT PASSAGES (10)
concerning
ISRAEL'S NATIONAL FUTURE

1. I Chron. xvi. Israel's spiritual state declined, apostasy deepened. At length God allowed the ark of His presence to be taken to a heathen land by the heathen (I Sam. iv) and presently the house of God at Shiloh was itself given over to destruction, as a punishment for sin (Ps. lxxviii. 59-61). This was drastic treatment. Centuries later God reminded His people of it as a warning against still severer punishment (Jer. vii. 12 ; xxvi. 4-6).

Did this general declension and religious break-up disturb the purposes of God ? Not at all. As soon as David had brought the ark to Jerusalem, and had restored in measure the national worship, his prophetic song of thanksgiving (in I Chron. xvi) returned at once to celebrate the covenant God had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, declaring it to be an everlasting covenant commanded to a thousand generations (15-17), and quoting the Divine promise as to the land of

Canaan. Looking to the promise that all the families of the earth shall be blessed the singer calls upon all the peoples to worship Jehovah, and speaks of an era when Jehovah reigns and judges, the world is established immovably, and concludes with a prayer that Israel shall be gathered together and delivered from the nations (28-36). These last conditions have never yet obtained. Are they yet to do so? or is this inspired prayer and prophecy to fail of fulfilment, as some assert?

ii. I Chron. xvii. The answer of God to that prayer is given in the next chapter. David had planned to erect a grand temple, to take the place of the tabernacle. God approved the purpose but said that a son of David should carry it out. But to David He said that *He* would build *him* a house, that is, a family line, and make him great. As for David's people, this significant promise was added: "And I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any more, as at the first . . ." (9, 10).

These features are renewed from the Abrahamic covenant:

(1) Israel is God's special people. (2) They have a special place appointed by God, that is, the land promised to Abraham, Canaan. (3) They shall dwell there and never be moved from it. (4) They shall never again be wasted by oppressors as formerly. As history shows, these last two promises have never been fulfilled. Are they to be so? or is this covenant with David now null and void? But there are further correspondences of weight. (5) Even as victory was promised to the seed of Abraham so it was here promised to David, "I will subdue all thine enemies" (10). (6) And just as the guarantee to Abraham was of an everlasting covenant so it was three times said positively to David concerning his son, "I will establish his throne *for ever* . . . I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom *for ever*, and his throne shall be established *for ever*" (11-14). But (7) inasmuch as the covenant with Abraham and his descendants was conditional, so it was laid down that, if David's son should commit iniquity, he should be chastened, yet nevertheless God's mercy should not be withdrawn from him, as it had been entirely withdrawn from Saul (II Sam. vii. 14, 15).

It is obvious that neither David, nor Solomon, nor their kingdom continued for ever. Yet God calls it "*My kingdom.*" Is this promise to be fulfilled or not?

iii. Ps. lxxxix. The covenant was confirmed by the oath of God and its terms were public property. Ethan the Ezrahite recited them in his psalm (19-37), and emphasized (1) the supremacy promised to David over all kings; (2) the certainty and everlastingness of the covenant; (3) the chastisements for failure and disobedience; (4) but "My covenant will I not break. Nor alter the thing that is gone out of

my lips. Once have I sworn by My holiness ; I will not lie unto David ; his seed shall endure for ever, And his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as the faithful witness in the sky ” (i.e., the rainbow) (34-37).

Yet in spite of these solemn unequivocal declarations by Jehovah some ask us to believe that He *has* altered the thing that has gone out of His mouth, and that the notion of the throne of David being established for ever is now wholly ruled out, and that Israel never will be established for ever in their own land.

iv. Isaiah xix. But this is the exact reverse of how Isaiah was enlightened by the Spirit of Christ and inspired to describe the future of Israel and the nations.

The future of Egypt is the subject of this chapter, but that of Israel and Assyria is interlocked with that of Egypt. The following particulars have never been fulfilled and must be future. (1) Judah a terror to Egypt. (2) Five cities in Egypt speaking the language of Canaan, (3) invoking the name of Jehovah and (4) at the same time one being named “ the city of destruction.” (5) An altar for the worship of Jehovah in the midst of Egypt.* (6) The Egyptians crying to Jehovah for deliverance and (7) worshipping Him when He has delivered them. (8) A highway from Egypt to Assyria, with regular peaceful traffic. (9) The Egyptians and the Assyrians worshipping Jehovah together, and therefore having abandoned their idols. And finally (10) it is declared that

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth : for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my inheritance.

It is certain that these three peoples never yet have had such a triple alliance and been jointly a blessing at the world's centre. Never yet has Egypt been a people of Jehovah, nor Mesopotamia been His handiwork. Is this rich prophecy to have fulfilment ? Or is it also to prove void and vain ? They who rule Israel out of the future, as merged in the church, must say who is to be the third with Egypt and Assyria in that great time ; or else they must rule out these lands also as having no future, and so the prophecy will be reduced to a nullity and falsity.

But this will involve similar mangling of the many other prophecies concerning the other lands of the Middle East, for they are all associated with these three both geographically, politically, and in the Divine forecasts of the End Days.

Those who would turn the literal Israel out of God's programme do assuredly emasculate and evaporate of meaning

* It is untenable and fanciful to refer these particulars to the Great Pyramid. That is not an altar, nor is it a pillar as next mentioned, nor is it at the border of Egypt.

the words of God as effectively as do the sceptical opponents and higher critics they themselves heartily oppose. Nothing is more condemnatory of the mis-called "spiritualizing" of the prophecies than that its advocates simply cannot accept the plain, straightforward meaning of innumerable Divine statements, but must entirely devalue them and force on them a sense utterly diverse from what they say.

To the speakers, hearers, and readers of the prophecies the names used had definite, well-known significance. Israel was the nation dwelling in Palestine. Jerusalem and Zion were known spots. Egypt, Assyria, Edom, Moab, and the rest, were similarly identifiable. Yet these modern teachers would have us believe that God caused His prophets completely to mislead their hearers, by using well-known names to create certain prospects for the future of these countries, though He foreknew that such prospects were not to be realized. It virtually means that God juggled with well-known names to create false ideas, just as modernistic theologians juggle with well-established theological terms to instil false doctrines.

This article is taken from the Editor's pamphlet—*Israel's National Future*, (see back of cover)

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (9)

EGYPT AND TUNISIA 1910, 1911

I LANDED at Suez on July 26th, 1910, and reached Ramleh on the 28th. The meetings for Christians in the tent helped many. For six Sunday evenings gatherings were held for Moslems, concluded by two on week-nights. Many attended, mainly from Alexandria, six miles distant. Not a few remained late for conversation. Fierce opposition was shown in the Moslem newspapers. The city authorities were against us. The Prime Minister, a Moslem, was in the city and lent support to the agitation, as did a chief British official. He would have closed the tent, but Miss Ely was American. The United States consul came several times and reported the threat to the Legation in Cairo, who declared they would refer the matter to Washington if there was attempt to interfere with the rights of an American subject. So we were let alone, though Miss Ely on her part made no appeal to the consul, who came and acted on his own initiative.

Here is seen the wisdom, we may almost say the strategy, of the Lord. British policy in all lands has been to hinder gospel efforts among Moslems. One known to me went from Canada to Khartoum to do such work. When he applied for a permit to reside and evangelize, the British Chief Secretary to Government asked why he had not applied in writing from Canada, for he could have saved him the journey, and he added that he had already refused thirteen such applications. No permit could be had save to work among the *pagan* tribes.

But God is not to be thwarted. Almost a century earlier the Church Missionary Society had tried to work in Egypt,

but having found the field sterile had withdrawn. Later the American Presbyterians entered and established themselves. Thus when the British took control of the country in 1882 the work of God was in hands they could not tie, nor was it feasible to hinder officially English people from doing in Egypt what Americans were allowed to do. One who knows the ways and judgments of God can see His recompense of this false policy of Britain in the cessation of their rule over the chief Moslem areas, as Pakistan, India, Burma, and the Middle East.

The fear of disturbance in our little tent on the shore was not unfounded. A plot was laid to make a riot and afford the authorities pretext for suppressing us. But this came to nought. Four of us had spent the whole of the day in prayer in the tent, though not knowing of the plot for that night. The powers of darkness were bound and defeated. It was this circumstance that led to my booklet *Controlling the Situation*, incorporated now in *Prayer Focused and Fighting*.

When this effort ceased in September guidance came to other work in Egypt. It is happy to be without local ties or fixed plans and so to be available for special service. Mr. Dickins of Ramleh proposed a series of midday meetings to attract the English-speaking young men of Alexandria. These were held in the Scots church with encouragement.

An English lady living in Paris had given me the name of an English Christian in Ibrahimia who had married an Irishman. He was prominent in British business circles but not a member of the kingdom of God. They kindly asked me to be their guest while holding the meetings at the Scotch church, and the Lord responded by leading my host to the knowledge of Christ as we talked on his verandha on 22nd January 1911. He has gone forward throughout the forty-five years since. It may be instructive to some to mention that he began to suffer from facial neuralgia, severe and prolonged. No remedies helped, but upon giving up smoking the attack ceased. Nicotine is a powerful poison.

On 29th January 1911 I crossed Lake Menzaleh from Mansourah to Port Said. The steamer stuck in the mud and the night had to be passed on deck without food. There was a tiny cabin, but sixteen Arab merchants packed it, all smoking. So I went outside. Ponderous with clothing, rugs, and a counterpane of cocconut matting, I was nevertheless bitterly cold.

For several months I visited up and down Egypt, sharing the toils and joys of godly people of various missions and churches. One of the first was William Fairman of Shebin el Kom in the Delta, a godly man, a master of colloquial Arabic. He gave an illustration of how phrases current in Christian speech may seem ridiculous to the unconverted and are better avoided. In his worldly days, he, with two godless companions, stood at an open-air gospel meeting. An elderly lady with

white hair commenced with the announcement : " Dear friends, I am two years old today." They booed at her and passed on.

While staying with J. Gordon Logan at Zeitoun another instance came of the value of being free for sudden calls. Dr. Samuel Zwemer was expected as a speaker at the American Mission annual meetings. When he reached Egypt by sea the ship was quarantined and it fell to me to fill the gap until his arrival.

Near the Logan's house were patches of open desert. On one of these a Greek lived and kept four large dogs. As I was passing in the gloaming these beasts rushed down on me. With true military instinct they encircled the foeman, and dodged easily the blows I aimed with a heavy ash stick. Not until I began to stone them did they retire. Artillery succeeds where small arms fail. As I described this incident a humorous friend told me the best way to scare dogs. He said, You turn your back on them, stoop far forward, and stare at them between your legs ! He had a large head, prominent eyes, and huge mops of hair. I told him that I thought the plan might succeed in his case.

My host at Ibrahimia had asked me to see his brother, who was in the R.A.S.C. at Cairo. I saw him in barracks, and the following Sunday evening he came to the American Mission church where I was to preach. After the service he remained in his seat. All others left. I spoke to him and prayed, prayed and spoke, yet he, though Irish, said not a word. I appealed to him, prayed, appealed. We sat thus for two hours ; it was now ten o'clock ; the stone building was very cold ; and I knew it must soon be locked for the night. At last, with sweat pouring from his face under the pressure of his spirit, he uttered a few words of confession of faith in Christ, and we departed.

We did not meet again until my next visit to Cairo three years later. Upon asking him if he could say Christ was his Saviour he at once answered in the affirmative. I asked how long this had been the case and the prompt reply was, " Ever since that night in the church." Thank God that I had not given up until that battle had been won. The good shepherd " goeth after that which is lost *until he find it* " (Luke xv. 3).

It was at this time that I made the acquaintance of that excellent woman Mrs. Todd Osborne, famous for gospel work among troops of the Mediterranean garrisons. She took me to Abassia, a few miles from Cairo, to the vast camp then being formed. On a spot at the highest and central point she said that for the Home she proposed to build " they " wanted to give a site at the bottom corner of the camp, right out of the road the soldiers would use. She asked that we should pray together that the Home might be on the exact spot where we stood. And there the King George V Soldiers' Home was erected.

I was often at the Russell Soldiers' Home near Shepherd's Hotel, Cairo, her then centre. She sought advice under the following circumstances. The Home had been bought many years before from the executors of a Greek. Some while afterwards a woman put in a claim for £600, alleging that she was a beneficiary under the will and had not been paid her share. The Mixed Tribunal gave judgment in her favour. Mrs. Osborne's lawyer was the leading French advocate in Egypt and said the judgment was bad in law. An appeal was entered and had been lying unheard for years : what should she do ? Of course, if either party had given a sufficient bribe to the clerk of the Appeal Court the case could have been called early ; but Mrs. Osborne would not do this and the other party did not. I told her that it was no concern of hers how long the appeal lay : she had nothing to lose ; let the other woman stir it up, if she wished.

Fourteen years later, at Keswick, I asked Mrs. Osborne about the matter and learned it had just been settled. A clerk in the Greek consulate, clearing a drawer of papers found a document connected with the case, and took it to her lawyer. The hearing came on immediately and as soon as the President of the Court saw this document he dismissed the action.

Such was the state of things when English and French judges dealt with matters affecting non-Egyptians. Delay and bribery will be far more prevalent now that, with the abolition of the Mixed Tribunals, Moslem judges act. One who knew the facts told me of two farmers who went to court under Egyptian law. One took £10 to the clerk and it was arranged that he should get the verdict ; the other took £20 and it was arranged that *he* should get the verdict. The case had not yet been heard. Presumably the clerk would leave the judge to decide the matter, and so excuse himself to the party that lost.

Only where the Word of God has had public influence has it been reasonable to expect justice in the Courts. Why is this ? The explanation is in Psalm 82. Evil *angel* judges secretly pervert human judges so as to defeat justice and corrupt mankind. Consider also I Kings xxii, especially verses 19-23.

At table one evening there was occasion to mention that in Rangoon I had visited the Synagogue on Passover day and had held a long conversation with an intelligent Jew, speaking English fluently. I asked him if I had not read in the Torah that God could forgive sin only when there had been the shedding of blood of a victim in place of the sinner ? He assented. I remarked that there was no shedding of blood in their present services. He replied that there could not be, because they had no temple or priesthood. I urged that this did not alter the requirement of the law of Moses. His answer was pathetic : " Yes, we do all these things, but we

do not know if it is acceptable." I replied, that they might be sure that it is *not* acceptable, seeing that it did not fulfil the just requirement of God. Such is the uncertainty of even the pious Israelite.

I added that this Jew, surprised to meet an Englishman who seemed to know the law and the prophets like a rabbi, said : " May I ask, Sir, if you are a Hebrew ? " Mrs. Todd Osborne quietly interjected, " That is just what you are, Mr. Lang " ; from which I learned that this fine Christian was misled by the theory of Anglo-Israelism. Not appearing, however, to notice this, I went on to narrate that, in a train in Upper Egypt, a German had said : " But you are not English ? I thought from your appearance that you were a German professor " ; and I added that, as the fact that a Jew mistook me for a Jew showed that I was a Jew, so that a German mistook me for a German showed that I was a German ! My dear friend did not pursue the subject.

At Port Said I stayed several times, and I think on every occasion some person was blessed. The first was a Greek named Lehannas. In the Greek-Turkish war he was called to the army, where he distributed tracts written by himself. After the war he ran a Sunday School of his own, and so continued till his death. Another was a leading Englishman who received Christ as we walked the beach on New Year's Day 1911. I have reason to think that the truth found entrance to the heart of an English governess met on the shore with the children she taught.

Light and shade chase each other across life's sky. My friend, C. T. Hooper, agent of the B. & F. Bible Society, kindly let me use his bathing hut on the shore. Some genuine humorist, able to rise above the sad events of life, had drawn on the wall a tombstone, with skull and crossbones at the top, and beneath the following inscription : " In fond memory of 5/- which departed from this hut on such and such a date. 'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

On 10th January 1911 I witnessed in the Muski, Cairo, at night a procession of Persian Moslems. It was an annual event in memory of the death in A.D. 680 of a grandson of Mohammed, and is thus an ancient ceremony. It was a spectacle characteristic of the cruelty and barbarism in which Islam was born and nurtured, and which properly belong to it as a system.

Down the narrow and poorly-lit street of the native quarter came many men and lads in loose, open files, some bearing banners, richly worked in colours, and others carrying torches of wood flaming in an iron framework at the top of a pole. By this lurid light was seen, first, a young boy riding a horse, both boy and beast being covered in white and much splashed with what may have been blood, but was more likely pink

colouring. But the boy's face, being freely smeared, looked hideous. Presently followed in the procession a disgustingly filthy dervish, a beggar, with matted, tangled hair and unwashed person, who is earning a reputation for sanctity by living in rags and dirt. Shortly, amidst the motley crowd, where all sorts of eastern garbs mingled, appeared men stripped to the waist flogging themselves with scourges made of many small iron chains fastened to a short handle. My impression was that, whilst one or two were hurting their persons, the more part of these men caused the chains to clank more in the air than upon their body. And last of all, came some fifty men, in two long lines, walking sideways, each with the left hand holding the man coming after him, and each in the right hand brandishing a fierce, cruel scimitar. As they moved they chanted a weird monotonous dirge; and at short intervals the procession stopped—but not the dreadful dirge—whilst these poor fanatics cut their heads about with the swords. It was too horrible to hear the keen, hard edge of the weapon click against the skull bone, and to see, by the red glare of the torches, the scalps of all cut and gory. The white outer robes also were stained and blotched with blood, where others had used them to wipe the faces of the wearers, and had staunched for the moment the flow of blood from the gaping wounds. Crowds of men, women, and children watched the ghastly sight with enthusiasm.

Such scenes were far more common in former days when Moslems only ruled, and Islam revealed its native ways unhindered. As in India, so in Egypt, British rule, though with less vigour than formerly, counted for much against these public horrors. This procession was prohibited a few years later.

Let none be deceived by the specious writings of some who in modern days, and for English readers, would present Islam as a virtuous, pleasant system of thought. In its home spheres Islam is cruel, vice-encouraging, and inhuman—and therefore demonic, Satanic.

On 11th March 1911 I heard Dr. John R. Mott address perhaps a thousand Egyptian men in Cairo. His talk was wholly psychological. There was not a word of the gospel. A fine opportunity lost.

I was now so accustomed to the heat that the summer did not tax me though the temperature rose at times to 115° in the shade. But by May, 1911, I felt the Lord's time had come for me to move towards England. I therefore bought in Cairo a ticket from Alexandria to Tunis, proposing to see the work of the Lord in that Moslem country.

There being a little time before sailing I paid farewell visits in the Delta.

Tanta is the third largest town in Egypt. The mayor was a pasha who had been virtually insolvent, but, securing this

position, after only a few years was very wealthy. This was attained by crooked means ; but, omitting this ungodliness, the change of his circumstances illustrates the honour and advantage to which the Lord pointed in the reward the king gave to the servants who had been faithful to his interests in his absence : “ have thou authority over ten cities ” (Luke xix. 17). *To be ruler of a city suggests much to an Oriental.*

Tanta was fortunate in having the tomb of some ancient Moslem saint. Quite possibly his sanctity lay in having endured for years more filth and vermin than other men. It was often thus with monks of *all* religions. The advantage to the town was an annual pilgrimage to this tomb which brought perhaps 200,000 visitors to spend money in the shops. Pilgrimages are lucrative affairs for keepers of shops and hotels, and guardians of sacred shrines. In connection with this pilgrimage there was a vast fair. At night (11th April 1911) I wandered around the booths, and spent hours sitting with the folk in dimly lit tents watching the religious dance known as the *zikh*.

A number of men joined hands and moved round and round in a circle with a slightly swaying and slightly springing motion, chanting continuously a sentence from the Koran. The motion increased steadily in rapidity and energy, the chanting becoming proportionately louder and faster. After some while the faces grew frenzied, the voices screaming, the forms jumping and twisting violently. This would continue until the desired climax was reached by demonic possession imparting supernatural energy, so that the fierce dancing might go on for long hours, until the possession ceased and the devotee collapsed with exhaustion. It was obviously the same as the devil-dances of savages.

The night was very cold, so I sat with others near a brazier where burnt the cobs of Indian corn from which the grains had been eaten. It gave a most pungent smoke severely irritating to the eyes. Unfortunately I had not brought my overcoat and could not stay the whole night and watch the dancing to its fullest development. Oh, with what fetters of deceit, excitement, and destruction have the powers of darkness bound their slaves. Only Christ can set them free.

“ He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free.”

The Lord strengthen and own every Christian that he may strive to make known His victory by the cross and resurrection.

After buying the ticket to Tunis I had only enough money for the visits between Cairo and Alexandria where I was to embark. But a comfortable assurance was given that I should find needed funds at the port. A large English mail awaited me at the house of my kind and godly host Dr. Finney, of the American Mission. In my mind I had taken for granted that this would be the means by which the money needed

would reach me. But the Lord wished to teach me again the important lesson not to look to England but to Himself. The heavy mail brought much news but no money—not a penny ! “ Now,” said the Enemy, “ you are stranded. You cannot even put your bags on board tomorrow.” But the promises of God preserved my heart in peace. Considering how to spend the evening I thought of two houses which I would visit to say farewell. But they were miles apart on opposite sides of the great city and I had only enough pence for the tram fare to one. Which should it be ? Waiting upon God I decided to go to the Rikards, the customs officer mentioned. There I learned that the other friends were from home, so a visit to them would have wasted my pence. After a long talk with two unconverted daughters, Mrs. Rikard kindly proposed that I should stay the night, rather than return to Dr. Finney’s in the dark. No sooner had I closed the bedroom door than it opened gently, my hostess put out her hand and put into mine a packet containing five golden sovereigns. I had found the needed help at the port, but not by the means that “ common sense ” had forecast.

The American Mission was housed in fine premises on the chief street in Alexandria. Dr. Finney told me the story of this. For years their schools, teachers, and missionaries had been scattered in different directions and often in unhealthy premises. One of their number went to Pittsburg, a wealthy area of U.S.A., the centre of the Presbyterian churches with which the Mission was associated. A loan of £20,000 was secured at 5% interest. The central site was bought, shops (including a Bible depot) were built on the street, also a fine auditorium for 500 persons, with commodious schoolrooms, flats above for workers, and above these other flats to be let. It was expected that in twenty years the rents of shops and flats would repay the loan. In addition there was the saving of the rents of the many scattered premises and the convenience of the work being centralized.

I remarked to my kind friend that it was a first-class business scheme, with only one drawback—the spiritual ! He had a little before told me sadly how disappointing they found their converts from Islam, for these became dependants of the Mission, expecting to be supported by its funds, developing little faith, stamina, or spiritual vitality. I asked how could it be otherwise ? Upon turning from Islam these converts found themselves cut off and beggared. Was it not natural that each should think that as it was these Christians who had led him to this, of course they will support him ; they are wealthy ; look at the style in which they live !

It is not only in Egypt, nor in American Missions alone, that this tragedy has obtained, by reversing the apostolic ways of life and methods of work.

During these months in Egypt I visited some of the ancient monuments, as well as on later visits, but space does not allow of writing about these. It may be the will of the Lord that a separate account be given.

TUNISIA

Leaving Egypt on 19th April 1911, we touched at Syracuse on the 22nd, and reached Bizerte the next day. The day following, on the train to Tunis, I gave a gospel in French to a young man. He read it from beginning to end without even lifting his eyes save once, when the door of the compartment closed with a bang. Thus fascinating is the story of the Lord Jesus to one who evidently had never before read it.

On April 29th Mr. Liley took me over the ruins of Carthage. The theatre is largely intact. Its acoustics were perfect. The heart was moved when standing in the arena where in A.D. 202 or 203 Perpetua and Felicitas were martyred for Christ's sake. In this city Tertullian, the lawyer, wrote his "apology" for the Christian faith. Here Cyprian, the bishop, was beheaded in A.D. 257. He was another instance of one so devoted to Christ that he would die for Him, yet who led the churches far astray as regards unscriptural and ruinous church organization. It is good that the heart be sound, bad that the mind be misguided.

The city of Tunis is well worth a visit. Its bazaars are famous. It was instructive on Saturday to pass at a step from the thronged and bustling Moslem bazaar into the closed Jewish bazaar, as silent as a graveyard. The Moslem is required by Islamic law to go on Friday to the morning prayer in the mosque, but the rest of the day he may do as he pleases. It is thus in Catholic lands also on Sunday. Alas, alas, that it is rapidly becoming the same in Protestant lands. Men in general do their pleasure on God's holy day.

My host had lived in Tunisia many long years. He told me that 50% of Moslems there drank intoxicants regularly, that 25% were heavy drinkers, and 10% habitual drunkards. This is a shocking effect of Western influence, for wine is prohibited to Moslems by the Koran (Muir, *Mahomet and Islam*, ed. 3, 244).

In Mr. Liley's house, in other houses, and in the assembly of Italians gathered by Miss Alice Case of Bristol, there were many opportunities of filling the five weeks in Tunis. The first week in May I visited Kairouan. The great mosque is noted for the number of carved marble pillars. It is the one mosque known to me where "infidels" (non-Moslems) may enter without removing their shoes, or putting on over-shoes, as an acknowledgement of the sanctity of the building. As I was not free in conscience to admit this supposed sanctity in a building where the Son of God is blasphemed I never entered a mosque save this one. The exception is made on the ground that when the French captured Kairouan, after an obstinate defence,

the Commandant spitefully marched his troops into the mosque and so defiled it. Since then, in contempt, the Moslems permit the defiled infidel to enter it.

In a small yard behind a house I was gravely shown a wondrous sight—the two large anchors with which Noah fastened the ark !

Sfax was visited, and on the way to it the vast Colosseum at El Djem, said to be the next best ruin of a colosseum to that at Rome. At Sousse there are catacombs bearing their silent witness, as do those at Rome. In these three towns there were brave and isolated witnesses for Christ whom it was a privilege to visit, as well as at Nabeul.

But the time for this long tour to end was come. On May 29th 1911 I sailed from Tunis. It was a most miserable, cold night, with a strong cross-wind tossing the tiny ship. Going to the cabin late at night it was to find a lady already in bed, and looking very ill. Finding the second officer I succeeded in making clear that I objected to the situation. He was astonished, it being a French way of things. But he fetched the unhappy husband, who poured out streams of arguments in voluble French, fearing lest I should disturb his poor wife. But all I wanted was another berth. This the officer found in a tiny cabin where three other men were in possession. It opened on to the small dining room, reeking with fumes of French cooking. I was dreadfully ill, and understood the remark about sea-sickness that at first one is afraid one is going to die, and then afraid one is *not* going to die !

But the worst night ends in morning. As soon as the ship reached the long entrance to Marseilles and the rolling ceased, I was well, and the warm welcome to their home of Mr. and Mrs. Thorpe banished the cold of the night.

Here, as I think, was one of the two occasions when I believe I missed the exact way of God for me. I was over-anxious to get on to Switzerland and home. I had word that a letter with £10 was on its way. On the strength of this I borrowed a few pounds from Mr. Thorpe and went forward the next day. Had I waited only one day more, as my kind hosts proposed, the letter would have reached me there and the loan would not have been needed, nor the disclosure of the need. “ Rest in the Lord, and *wait patiently* for Him ” (Ps. xxxvii. 7).

In the village of Blonay, above Vevey, on the lake of Geneva, Miss Ely had taken a chalet, so as to provide, at nominal cost, a holiday resort for workers from Egypt. She had furnished it with taste. A devoted, self-denying friend had objected to the pictures, lounge-chairs, and general refinement. Why did missionaries need such indulgences ? But she had bested him with the argument that when God made the garden ugly she would make the house ugly ! Yet in Egypt her own quarters were plain and unadorned.

After a few days in Paris I reached England on June 8th, 1911, to praise the Father of mercies for the joys and trials that my loved ones and myself had been granted during the two years and four months of our first separation.

(To be continued)

THE MIDDLE EAST

In reply to inquiries as to present events in the Middle East, I would say that I do not regard these as covered by any particular passages in the prophetic scriptures. They exemplify the age-long enmity of Ishmael against Isaac, enmity which will continue until Psalm 83 has found fulfilment, enmity for which Israel sometimes gives occasion.

Though Israel has fiercer times to face than even in the past, by which they will be reduced to that "very small remnant" of which Scripture has spoken (Isa. 1. 8, 9 : Zech. 13, 8, 9), yet verse four of the psalm mentioned will never be realized, their foes will never "cut them off from being a nation ; that the name of Israel be no more in remembrance."

The combined attack by the peoples mentioned in verses 5-8 will come under the Antichrist as king of Assyria, the king of the north of Daniel II. Present plans by Egypt are not in view in these scriptures, because Egypt is not mentioned in the psalm as one of the confederates then attacking Israel. Daniel 11. 40-43 shows that at that time Antichrist will be at war with Egypt and will overwhelm it.

Great caution must ever be exercised in trying to fit current events into particular passages of Scripture. Detail predictions will be fulfilled only as part of the broad programme of the End Days, of which the rise and supremacy of the personal Antichrist, the king of the north, the Beast is the dominant feature. He is not yet on the scene, being neither the Papacy nor Russia, but a personal sovereign of Assyria yet to force his way to world dominion (Dan. 7. 23, 24 ; 8. 9-14, 22-25). I sought to open out this subject in my book *The Histories and Prophecies of Daniel*.

THE DISCIPLE

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*“The opening of Thy words
giveth Light”*

PSALM 119: 130. (R.V.)

TO THOSE WHO MOURN A SON

*Why art thou grieved?
My Lord said unto me,
Am I not more
Than ten sons unto thee?
Be not so sad
For him whom thou dost miss:
Can I not give to thee
Much more than this?*

*Yes, Lord, Thou canst,
Thou canst indeed; the past
Has proved Thy love
To give much more than asked.
O Lord, forgive
That I so soon forgot;
Soothe Thou my heart
And dry those tears so hot.*

*Then give me love,
Love for Thyself, I pray,
As though ten sons
Were mine to love each day;
Then shall I sing
With shining eyes of Thee—
Thyself, O Lord,
A Son, art given to me.*

H. G.

THE DANGER OF THE SUBJECTIVE TEST (2) THE NON-MILLENARIAN DOCTRINE

I. THE THOUSAND YEARS

The danger of subjective ideas misleading the mind is forcibly illustrated in the doctrine that blots the millennial kingdom out of God's programme and conceives that the gospel age will continue until there arrives a single general wind-up of earth's affairs going over into eternity, a fulfilment of II Pet. iii. 8-13. This scripture will certainly be fulfilled, but the cancellation of the Millennium is plainly only a subjective idea, for not even one clear statement of Scripture affirms it, whereas the plain testimony of the Word of God is forced to yield to it.

The personal, visible coming of Christ in power and great glory, and the establishment by Him of a kingdom of righteousness and peace on earth, is the unequivocal meaning of both Old and New Testaments. Every passage which bears on the subject is to this effect, as is shown in detail in my essay *Israel's National Future*.

In Rev. xx. 1-7 the Spirit of God six times mentions distinctly a period given as a "thousand years." Whether the number is to be taken literally or as meaning a vast period of time, in either case it is placed between a first and a second resurrection. In the former, resurrected saints are said to "live" and to reign with Christ the thousand years. By pure "spiritualizing," an eminently subjective process, "they lived" is declared to be the new birth, and reigning with Christ is regarded as sharing directly after death in a supposed present reign by Him at the right hand of God. This again involves several subjective suppositions.

(1) That the first resurrection equals the new birth. But it is set in this scripture at the close of the rule of and at the destruction of a then future Antichrist, the Beast, whereas John and thousands more had long before already experienced the new birth, as millions have done since, though nothing has been yet seen of the Antichrist, the binding of Satan, and the absence of external temptation to sin. Non-millenarians would make our Lord's victory over Satan by His cross and resurrection to be this binding of Satan. They confuse the personal victory of Christ and the full carrying out of its results in heaven and earth. According to Rev. xii. 7ff., fifty years after the Lord's ascension Satan was still active in heaven: he had not yet been even restricted to the earth, let alone imprisoned in the abyss. It has been pithily remarked that if in this age Satan has been bound, it must be with a

very long chain!

(2) The common supposition is accepted that believers go at death to heaven. This is not taught in Scripture. They go where their Leader went at death, to Hades, and will leave it, and ascend to heaven, only as He did, by bodily resurrection.

(3) It is further assumed that Christ commenced His reign at His ascension. But this is true to only a degree strictly defined in Scripture. All things have been put in subjection to Him so that He may be "head over all things *to the church*, which is His body" (Eph. i. 19-23). It is the "exceeding greatness of His power *to usward who believe*" that is in question in this passage; but as regards the actual suppression of His foes and the entering in active sovereignty upon the dominion universal that is His in title, this remains in abeyance, even as it was said to Him by God long since, "Sit thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool (Psm. cx. 1)" This is confirmed in Heb. x. 13, which shows that many years after the ascension the Lord, at the right hand of God was still and "henceforth *expecting* till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet." That epistle reveals that in the interval from the ascension to that expected hour Christ fills His office as Priest, acting on behalf of His people still in a world where the devil operates and of which he is prince, but from whose spiritual tyranny Christ in resurrection frees His own people.

Clearly there may be an interval between the hour when a king has the crown set on his head and the day when he may summon his forces and go forth to reassert his authority in rebel territory. Rev. iv and v shows Christ's actual and public investiture with executive authority as being still future when John saw the visions, even as ch. iv. 1 gives the words of the angel to John, "I will shew thee the things which must come to pass hereafter," and this was, say, half a century after the ascension of the Lord. Daniel vii was an earlier vision of the same investiture, and places it at the close of the fourth world empire with the destruction of its final king (Antichrist). Not till then will the kingdom be actually given to the Son of man and to the saints of the Most High (vv. 26, 27). Only then will He and they receive in fact what is already theirs in title, even the actual sovereignty over heaven and earth, men and angels.

II. A REVIEW OF EARLY AND LATER CHRISTIAN TEACHING

1. During the first two centuries after the apostles the dominant expectation of Christians was that this Christian age will close with the rise and rule of a personal Antichrist. He will be overthrown by Christ at His personal return to the earth, Who will thereupon establish His visible kingdom and rule for one thousand years. So Barnabas, Papias, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Victorinus,

Lactantius. Justin Martyr set this forth as the general belief of orthodox Christians. (*Dialogue with Trypho*: about A.D. 150).

2. In the latter part of the second century there set in at Alexandria the practice of virtually eliminating a literal sense of Scripture and "spiritualizing" its statements. Upon this treatment of the Word of God and its baleful effects we shall quote a competent scholar who, being an advanced higher critic had no theological bias in favour of millenarian views. Dr. R. H. Charles, in *The International Critical Commentary, Revelation*, ii. 184, 145, says on ch. xx. 5:

this is the resurrection the first. This must not be construed in a spiritual sense and taken to mean a death to sin and a new birth unto righteousness. The earliest expounders of the Apocalypse, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenæus, Hippolytus, and Victorinus, quite rightly take the words in a literal sense of an actual reign of Christ with the glorified martyrs on earth. The spiritualizing method which emanated from Alexandria put an end to all trustworthy exegesis of the Apocalypse, when adopted in its entirety with reference to the Apocalypse. The meaning assigned by the votaries of this method became wholly arbitrary, and every student found in the Apocalypse what he wished to find. The earliest expounders were right, as they were in close touch with the apostolic time.

Clement of Alexandria, the principal teacher there, was saturated with pagan philosophical thought and modes of reasoning.

3. This process greatly prepared for that abandonment of the hope of the personal return of Christ, and the events to flow from it, which became the general outlook when Christianity was made the State religion. Augustine greatly furthered this changed outlook. The Papacy presents the notion that the church has the task in this age to subdue all mankind to itself and so establish on earth the authority of God. Even where this political aspect is not held there is too commonly the idea that the gospel is to convert the race, and that only thereupon will Christ intervene and wind up affairs by a general judgment.

4. Much essential basic truth was recovered by the Reformers but not that of the Biblical expectation of a personal Antichrist, the visible return of Christ, and the millennial kingdom. Their horizon was filled by their near and giant enemy the Roman Catholic Church, which was to them a corporate Antichrist, the Papacy being both Antichrist, Beast, and Scarlet Woman.

5. Thus the common Protestant outlook did not envisage that the end of this age will see a restoration of Israel as a people to the chief earthly place in the kingdom of God on earth, or their prior oppression by Antichrist in the "tribula-

tion the great ” during the latter half of Daniel’s seventieth week of years, or the personal advent of Christ at that epoch, or the establishment of a millennial kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital, and the setting up of divine worship in a restored temple, with priesthood and sacrifice. Though this whole programme is the subject of innumerable passages of Scripture it is simply blotted out by the non-millenarian view that things will go on as now until at some indefinitely remote time the great white throne judgment will close earth’s history. This outlook has no room whatever for two resurrections with the thousand years between, though this is declared categorically in Rev. xx.

6. In century seventeen Biblical students in Europe began to re-discover Biblical prophetic truth. In the next century this was furthered by J. A. Bengel and others, which advance continued in century nineteen. See E. Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity*, 141, 142. This recovery received powerful impetus through the ripe scholars who pioneered the Brethren movement from 1828 onward. In particular, J. N. Darby and William Kelly pursued the subject with vigour and developed the dispensational scheme which held the field for a century. Much as they helped these studies they unfortunately clogged and embarrassed the theme with such ideas as the postponed kingdom theory, the “Jewish” character of the Synoptic Gospels, the view that Christ must certainly come for the church before the rise of Antichrist, that this coming will be secret, that Old Testament saints cannot share in the heavenly church, and that there are different gospels for different periods and different classes of believers.

It is natural and healthful that a reaction has come against these mistaken assertions. It is to the good that such features as these of the Notes of the Scofield Bible should be challenged. But it is regrettable that many opponents have failed to see that these details are not essential to the millennial hope as set forth in Scripture and can be dismissed without loss. These critics have too often thrown over the broad purposes of God while rejecting the accretions of men. For example: the rise and doings of Antichrist do not depend on whether the church is to be removed before or after his reign. The plain statement of Scripture that there are to be two resurrections, one before the millennium and the other after, is not jeopardized by whether Old Testament saints will share in the first or only in the second resurrection.

III. PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN BELIEF AS TO THE MILLENNIUM AND ANTICHRIST

In 1849 Dr. Charles Maitland issued *The Apostles’ School of Prophetic Interpretation*. In ch. 2 he quoted and reviewed all but one of the known statements upon prophecy by Christian writers down to the time of Constantine, ending with the *Christian Institutes* of Lactantius (about 300 A.D.). His

summary of these writers (pp. 201-205) reads as follows:

Before dismissing the primitive writers, we should notice accurately the amount of agreement prevailing among them in reference to, 1st, the thousand years of St. John, and 2nd, the last half week of Daniel.

Those who have recorded their opinion for or against the Millennium may be thus classed :—

For	Against
St. Barnabas	
Papias	
Justin	
Irenæus	
Tertullian	
Hippolytus	
Nepos	
	Origen
Cyprian	
	Dionysius
Victorinus	
Lactantius	

But on which side shall we range St. John? Were he uninspired nothing could be more decisive than his statement :—“ They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Have we at length come to this, that because we reckon him inspired, the plain sense of his words is to go for nothing?

The two writers who appear in opposition to the doctrine, are not altogether unexceptional. The system by which Origen contrived to get rid of the millennium was soon branded with the name Origenism, having been found to interfere with the belief in the literal resurrection of the flesh. Nor can Dionysius be justified in his method of dealing with the Apocalypse : for not daring to revile it in his own name, he repeats with satisfaction the saying of “ certain persons ” that the book itself is devoid of sense and reason : also, that its title is utterly false, since it is neither written by St. John, nor does it, covered as it is with a thick and dense veil of ignorance, deserve the title of a Revelation.

Regarding the latter half of the seventieth week (of Daniel), the primitive writers were not entirely agreed. It was applied by

Irenæus	to Antichrist,
Tertullian	„ Vespasian,
Judas	„ Antichrist,
Clement of Alexandria	„ Vespasian,
Hippolytus	„ Antichrist,
Origen	„ Antichrist,
Victorinus	„ Antichrist.
The majority, therefore, make that half week identical	

with the three years and a half of Antichrist. In their favour may be urged :—

First, The precise agreement of the time ; the weeks being land weeks, or weeks of years.

Secondly, The identity of the events assigned to each : for everything said of the half week is repeated in the prophecies relating to Antichrist. These things are, the cessation of the daily sacrifice, the setting up of the abomination, the desolation thereby occasioned, the consummation of God's mystery, and the pouring out of the vials upon the Desolator.

Thirdly, The events of the half week are continued till the consummation : apparently the sounding of the seventh trumpet, when the mystery of God shall be finished.

According to the primitive scheme, the sense of the whole passage amounts to this :—

Seventy sevens of years are fixed in the history of the Jews and of Jerusalem. In these will be accomplished the summing up of iniquity, the work of atonement, the winding up of all prophecy, and the anointing of the Christ.

Between the edict to rebuild Jerusalem and the mission of Christ there will elapse two periods, seven sevens, and sixty two sevens, of years. In the course of the first, the city will be rebuilt ; and at the end of the second the Messiah will be put to death.

Afterwards the Romans under Vespasian will destroy both city and temple ; and until the end of God's warfare with His people (or after the end of the Roman war : so the Vulgate, "*post finem belli, statuta desolatio*"), it is determined that the desolation of the city and of the temple shall continue.

But God will renew His covenant with many of His chosen people, during a certain seven of years, the remaining week of the seventy ; (probably by means of Elias, who will come and restore all things). But throughout the latter half of this week, that is, for three years and a half, the daily sacrifice will be taken away ; and on account of the abomination set up by Antichrist, the temple will be made desolate : to remain so, till the consummation of the mystery, and till the end of the plagues that will be poured out upon Antichrist the Desolator.

Certain consequences plainly flow from these beliefs of Christian teachers who directly followed the apostles.

First. The deferring of Daniel's seventieth week to the close of this Christian age ; including that a personal Antichrist will then arise ; that he will be destroyed by the descent of Christ from heaven ; that the Lord will then reign visibly

at Jerusalem for a thousand years—these are still four most prominent features of the Futurist interpretation of prophetic scripture.

Second. Therefore the allegation that this scheme was first suggested by the Jesuit Ribera in century sixteen is utterly unfounded, and must have been the result of ignorance or controversial malice. Ribera's purpose, as to these matters, was to counter the assertion of the Reformers that the Papacy was the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning Antichrist. For this purpose he revived the primitive belief that the Antichrist will be a person not a system, and therefore could not be the Papacy. The common Protestant belief is clearly contrary to primitive belief, and with it falls the attempt of the "historical" school to identify the events of the Christian era with the visions of the Apocalypse.

Third. It is equally plain that in the sub-apostolic period the majority of Christian teachers did not hold the non-millenarian view which sweeps away the programme for the End days of this age, including the millennial kingdom, the restoration of Israel as a nation to the favour of God, and all that is associated with these expectations.

We do not seek to show here that the dominant primitive belief, as to the main matters in question, was drawn from the Word of God, but only what in general that belief was. Post-apostolic views must be tested by Scripture ; but it may well be asked how those who directly followed the New Testament days could have held almost unitedly the futurist outlook had it been the case that the apostles had taught that Daniel's seventieth week had followed immediately after the sixty ninth without any break in the sequence, and so was already past ; or that Antichrist would be a long-protracted system and not an individual ; or that neither Israel nor the Gentile nations had any national future, but would all be merged in the church of God ; or that the Spirit meant nothing distinct when He moved John to speak distinctly concerning a reign of Christ for a thousand years.

When Maitland wrote, one of the very earliest post-apostolic documents had not been recovered, *The Teaching of the Apostles* (the *Didache*). As to the date of this book Lightfoot wrote : " The work is obviously of very early date, as is shown by the internal evidence of language and subject-matter . . . These indications point to the first or the beginning of the second century as the date of the work in its present form " (*The Apostolic Fathers*, 215, 216). The closing section (16) shews the prophetic expectations of a Christian writer of that date, so near to the days of the last apostle, John. That he makes no attempt to commend his views suggests that his readers would readily accept them as being generally held. His remarks are worthy of much attention. The translation is Lightfoot's. The italics are

words which he regarded as quotations from the New Testament.

Be watchful for your life ; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirded, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour in which our Lord cometh. And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls ; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if ye be not perfected at the last season. For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate. For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God ; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands ; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began. Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and perish ; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself.¹ And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead ; YET NOT OF ALL, but as it was said : The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him. Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

There is here much of deep interest as showing how literally the predictions in the Gospels were accepted so very near to the apostolic days ; but for our main purpose it suffices to note from the words in capitals how definitely the writer expected more than one resurrection, thus harmonizing with our Lord's words : " The sons of *this* age marry and are given in marriage, but they that are accounted worthy to attain to *that* age, and the resurrection which is from among the dead, etc." (Luke xx. 34, 35). Here are set against each other a present age and a following age, the latter to be reached by a resurrection from among the dead (*tees ek nekron*). The singular " age " forbids the notion of " that age " meaning eternity following directly after this present age, for in Scripture, and by necessity, eternity is " the ages of the ages," equals " ages upon ages," not a single age.

Paul used Christ's words when he said, " if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection which is from among the dead " (Phil. iii. 11, *teen exanastasin teen ek nekron*).

These statements agree with Rev. xx by placing a first resurrection before an age of time, implying that there will be another and later resurrection after that interval of an age. The force of such statements is inescapable : they preclude the notion of only one resurrection to close this age and be immediately followed by eternity, and the words of our Lord and Paul show that the conception of an era between

¹ Another rendering is, " shall be saved under the curse itself " (Romestin).

two resurrections was not first stated by John, though declared by him with particular exactness.

There are not wanting modern English theologians of front rank who agree with the earliest teachers. Thus Ellicott, on Phil. iii. 11, writes of

' *the resurrection from the dead;* ' i.e., as the context suggests, the *first* resurrection (Rev. xx. 5), when at the Lord's coming the dead in Him shall rise first (I Thes. iv. 16), and the quick be caught up to meet Him in the clouds (I Thes. iv. 17) ; cp. Luke xx. 35. The first resurrection will include only true believers, and will apparently precede the second, that of non-believers and disbelievers, in point of time . . . Any reference here to a merely ethical resurrection (Cocceius) is wholly out of the question.

Lightfoot on the same passage accepts the same distinction between the resurrection *from* the dead and the general resurrection.

Alford's comments on Rev. xx. 5 are as clear and strong as language can command against the "spiritualizing" treatment of this passage. They read :

It will have been long ago anticipated by the readers of this Commentary, that I cannot consent to distort words from their plain sense and chronological place in the prophecy, on account of any considerations of difficulty, or any risk of abuses which the doctrine of the millennium may bring with it. Those who lived next to the Apostles, and the whole Church for 300 years, understood them in the plain literal sense ; and it is a strange sight in these days to see expositors who are among the first in reverence of antiquity, complacently casting aside the most cogent instance of consensus which primitive antiquity presents. As regards the text itself, no legitimate treatment of it will extort what is known as the spiritual interpretation now in fashion. If, in a passage where *two resurrections* are mentioned, where certain *psuchai ezesan* [souls lived] at the first, and the rest of the *nekroi ezesan* [dead lived] only at the end of a specified period after the first,—if in such a passage the first resurrection may be understood to mean *spiritual rising* with Christ, while the second means *literal* rising from the grave ;—then there is an end of all significance in language, and Scripture is wiped out as a definite testimony to any thing. If the first resurrection is spiritual, then so is the second, which I suppose none will be hardy enough to maintain : but if the second is literal, then so is the first, which in common with the whole primitive Church and many of the best modern expositors, I do maintain, and receive as an article of faith and hope.

IV. THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Several chief objections to the doctrine of the Millennium are examined with fairness and care in Erich Sauer's able book *From Eternity to Eternity*, Part III. It is striking how many of these objections are subjective ideas not based on the facts of Bible statements. A statement by God in the Bible is a double fact : first, that God has made the statement, and second, that He has recorded it in the Bible. But many of the objections in view are subjective, as for example—That the expectation of a literal kingdom on earth is contrary to sound Christian hope ; or, it is contrary to the spiritual calling of the church ; or, that the name Israel is to be taken "spiritually ;" or, that the New Testament is silent as to a coming visible kingdom of God on earth.

This last assertion is so wholly subjective as to be, not only without factual basis, but to be actually contrary to fact ; as witness our Lord's own statement that He will come in His glory, sit on the throne of His glory, and all nations shall be gathered before Him to be judged (Matt. xxv. 31ff.). He shall come whence ? Obviously from the heavens whither He had just said He was going. Come where ? Clearly to the place where He was then speaking, Jerusalem. What nations could be in question other than those of the earth ? Neither in heaven, Hades, nor hell do the national divisions of earth persist. All of these details Christ was repeating from the Old Testament. This does not need to be here shown, but see, for example, Zech. xii-xiv: Joel iii. 11ff. This is an instance of the full agreement of both Testaments on this theme.

For another passage which speaks of a return of Christ to the earth see Rev. xix. 11-21, and note that the Word of God descends from heaven and that the armies of the Beast are mobilized to resist Him. In ch. xiv. 13, 14 this is distinctly stated to be on the inhabited earth (R.V. mgn. 16) where they are destroyed. This is followed in ch. xx. by reference to the kingdom of Christ and His saints. This also is based on the Old Testament.

Sometimes it is urged that this doctrine of the Millennium is recent, whereas the opposed doctrine goes back through the centuries to the Reformation. In the last chapter it has been shown that in fact the expectation of the millennial kingdom was the dominant hope of the early church. But were it not so, the argument used is a repetition of that of Erasmus before cited, that the Mass is true because held for so long. The only true question is whether the doctrine is Scriptural.

But the chief objection to the hope of a millennial kingdom on earth is based on the opinion that the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews forbids the idea of a revived temple worship with priesthood and sacrifices of animals, which being a central part of the picture of this literal kingdom,

involves that *Hebrews* forbids this last also. This is probably the only really weighty objection. Without it the whole body of objections would be negligible.

Let the *facts* be first examined. Theology can easily forsake the true approach to any subject, the collation first of relevant facts.

The following seventeen (at least) passages of the Old Testament are involved :

- (1) Psalm lxxv. (2) Psalm lxxvi. (3) Psalm lxxvii.
(4) Psalm lxxviii. (5) Psalm xcvi. (6) Isa. xix. 21.
(7) Isa. xxvii. 13. (8) Isa. lxvi. 18-24. (9) Jer. xxxiii.
14-18. (10) Ezek. xxxvii. 26-28. (11) Ezek. xl-xlviii.
(12) Dan. viii. 11-14. (13) Mic. iv. 1-4. (14) Hag. ii.
6-9. (15) Zech. vi. 12-15. (16) Zech. xiv. 16-21.
(17) Mal. iii. 1-4.

Psalm lxxv pictures a time when "all flesh" seek God at Zion (ver. 2), and "all the ends of the earth" confide in Him. At that time Zion is His centre, there He has a "house," a holy temple, with priests who dwell in His courts, and there vows are paid to Him. It is clear that these conditions never yet have co-existed at Jerusalem, and the fulfilment must be in the future or there will be no fulfilment. In my essay named it is shown that all the rest of these passages likewise await fulfilment in that coming kingdom of glory which the prophets foretold should result from Messiah's sufferings. They all agree in declaring the re-erecting of the temple, with priests and sacrifices. This prospect the New Testament confirms at Matt. xxiv. 15 : II Thes. 11. 1-4, and Rev. xi. 1, 2.

This vast, consentient, weighty, explicit forecast is the only prospect that Scripture opens upon this subject. No hint is to be found of anything other than this, *which is the fact as to Hebrews also*. There is no reference in that epistle, direct or indirect, to the question of a future temple and sacrifice, and therefore no denial of the forecast. Any such supposed reference has to be *supposed*, and is therefore subjective.

Yet the writer, so learned in Old Testament history and prophecy and in its spiritual meaning, could not but have known the mass of scripture statements mentioned above. If he was undermining them, making them of no effect, he must have known well what he was about. But he gives no hint of such effect of his teaching, though he is clear enough as to its effect upon the *Mosaic* institutions. If his statements mean what non-millenarians say they mean, he must have recognized (or if he did not, we must recognize) that he was proclaiming a direct, head-on conflict with all Scripture on this subject, involving the annulling of the whole Old Testament as to the coming kingdom of Jehovah, of which the city, the temple, and the worship at Jerusalem was a central, vital feature.

But let the facts of his statement be observed narrowly.

1. He affirms that a covenant has been cancelled. *What* covenant? He states most explicitly that it was the covenant made between God and Israel at Sinai, and he cites God's own words to this effect: "the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt." *That* covenant is cancelled, "for they continued not in My covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord" (ch. viii. 9). It was broken by the one party and declared void by the other Party.

It is vital to remember that when a statute or a covenant is declared cancelled that only is cancelled which is specified to be so. Any earlier and unmentioned statute or covenant remains in force. Now God had made with men prior covenants to that at Sinai, such as those with Noah and Abraham. It is clear that the covenant with Noah, guaranteeing exemption from another such flood, is unaffected by the cancellation of the covenant made at Sinai. That covenant with Noah was God's response to burnt offerings of clean beasts and fowls!

It is thus also with the covenant with Abraham and his descendants. *This* covenant remains in force, and in divine law is the basis of all fellowship with God to-day and for ever. This is shown clearly by Rom. iv. 16-25 and Gal. iii. 6-14, and that it applies to all men, Jew and Gentile, who believe God. Now the basis of this covenant also was typical sacrifice, as was pictured most impressively at the time it was made (Gen. xv.). This practice of sacrifice was continued by Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, before the covenant was made at Sinai. Also there were priests and sacrifices in Israel before the tabernacle was erected (Ex. xix. 22; xxiv. 5). Therefore it will be fully consistent with the Abrahamic covenant that pictorial sacrifices be resumed on earth when Israel and the nations, upon repentance and submission to Christ, enter into *this* covenant hereafter. Such resumption is the plain and repeated assertion of Scripture.

But there are further facts to be noted as to the argument in *Hebrews*.

When God created the universe it was created with a two-fold major division, heavens and earth (Gen. i. 1). When God's plans for the universe have come to completion this division will still obtain, there will be new heavens and a new earth (II Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1). The heavenly things are the pattern from which the earthly are copied (Heb. viii. 5), and even as these coexist now, so they can and will coexist for ever in the new heavens and the new earth. There is therefore a heavenly Israel of God and an earthly, a heavenly Jerusalem and an earthly, a heavenly section of the kingdom of God and an earthly.

Now Heb. xi. 9-16 tells us that part of the promises made

to Abraham was that he should attain to a place and glory in that nobler world above ; whereas other promises were a guarantee that some of his descendants, as well as all the families of the earth, should receive their blessings on earth, and his racial descendants in particular in the land of promise, Canaan. Nothing in the non-millennial outlook is more injurious than that it obliterates this great distinction between heaven and earth, and between Abraham's heavenly and earthly seeds, and merges them all into one general condition for all the saved, which is miscalled " the church."

It is evident that for those to whom belongs the heavenly sphere and portion, when they at last reach that heavenly realm above the earthly and physical things will have passed away ; an earthly temple, priesthood, and sacrifices cannot obtain in that heavenly realm. *There* will be the realities of which things *here* were copies. Now it is precisely as having obtained a share in that heavenly world that the Writer of *Hebrews* regards and addresses his readers, even as " holy brethren, partakers of a *heavenly* calling " (iii. 1). For such Sinai is cancelled, but Abraham remains, and the very stress of the exhortation is that they should on no account forfeit their prospects in the heavenly things by clinging to the earthly. He does no more than glance at the earthly side of the covenant with Abraham, and he gives not the slightest hint that the prospects of his earthly seed, as given in the prophets, will never be fulfilled. This last is the subjective notion which men insert into the Scriptures, without any basis in *Hebrews* and in defiance of the mass of scriptures to the exact contrary.

2. But there is something still more positive. The Writer of *Hebrews* plainly declares that *Israel* and *Judah* will be brought into this covenant upon faith in Christ, and will share its spiritual benefits, even the cancelling of their iniquities, acquaintance with God, with His laws in their mind and heart as an instinctive guide in life (Heb. viii. 8ff). All of these blessings will be as indispensable and as available in the earthly section of the kingdom of God as in the heavenly, for without them one would not be a subject in God's kingdom at all. And this is their direct connexion in Jer. xxxi which the Writer of *Hebrews* cites. For in verses 33-40 of that chapter there is added to the promise of these spiritual benefits the express assurance that, just as sun and moon and stars are permanent features in the physical world, so Israel shall *never* cease from being a *nation* before God ; and the great prophecy concludes with particulars as to the rebuilt city of Jerusalem, which particulars can never find any spiritual counterpart to whatever refined and grotesque extent " spiritualizing " may be pressed ; and of that city it is declared without any equivocation that " it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more for ever "

It is truly sad, indeed solemn, that godly men, including

the great Reformers, should so miss the line of God's thought and purpose as to assert that the very many scriptures which thus declare the intentions of God will never find any sort of actual fulfilment, and should so mislead themselves by purely subjective reasonings of their own minds.

When the Writer of *Hebrews* specifically quoted this prophecy of Jeremiah he repeated from it the names "Israel and Judah" and "the house of Israel" (Heb. viii. 8, 9, 10). Had he thought that Israel is to be merged into the church, and thus lose its national identity, it would have been to his purpose not to have repeated these national names. His use of them here rebukes the idea of such merger and points to the same sense as the promise had in Jeremiah. But since Israel as a nation will retain their earthly status and position there is involved national public worship.

These and all relevant scriptures are examined more fully in my discussion named. The point here is that the literal fulfilment of them will not, as is asserted, contradict *Hebrews*. The assertion is not based on any statement in that Epistle and has no factual basis: it is only a subjective idea, an idea certainly held by many with all sincerity but not securely based on any facts presented in Scripture, but rather contrary to the facts. I earnestly invite my honoured brethren who differ to ponder more deeply the fact that there is to be a new earth, with saved nations dwelling on it (Rev. xxi. 24, 26), with all that is necessarily involved in this. It forbids the idea that finally all the saved are to form one undifferentiated company, "the church." The New Testament employs the term "church" for a smaller section of the redeemed who are to be more closely related to the Sovereign than the bulk of His subjects, even as his "body" or his "bride" are more intimately associated with a king than are the mass of his people.

V. CHARACTER OF MILLENNIAL SACRIFICES

1. Further observing the facts of Scripture it is to be noted carefully that not one of the many passages above listed represents an individual as bringing a sin offering to seek individual pardon for sin. This is in definite contrast to the purpose and facts of the Mosaic sacrifices, which were distinctly and principally for securing pardon. See, for example Lev. iv. 20, 31, 35; v. 10, 13, 16, 18; vi. 7: etc. But the passages which deal with those future sacrifices speak of *worship*, of men presenting burnt offerings, thank offerings, and payments of vows.¹

¹The one seeming exception is that the consecrated priest may become ceremonially defiled by allowable contact with the corpse of a deceased intimate relative. To annul this defilement he must bring a sin-offering (Ezk. xliv. 25-27). But this was purely ceremonial, not a seeking pardon or a moral offence; and it was that he might resume his service to the worshippers.

In Psalm lxvi. 13-16, the speaker, promising to offer burnt offerings and to pay vows, adds the sacrifice of "bullocks with goats;" but the fact that he uses the plural, "bullocks with goats," shows that he is not speaking as a culprit seeking pardon of specific sin, or one bullock or goat would be all the sacrifice needed: he has in mind the requirement that a sin offering must accompany other offerings to make them pure and acceptable. Thus in the context also he speaks in the plural of paying vows and presenting burnt offerings as a regular practice, all speaking of devotion and worship.

2. In Ezek. xliii. 18-27 and xlv. 13-25, the passages which prescribe the offerings in that millennial temple, the facts are:

- (a) That it is the prince who offers the sacrifices on behalf of his whole people. They are collective, not personal, and therefore not for atonement for specific sins. In the matter of the passover, the festival named, this is in contrast to the ancient practice, when each family or group offered its own lamb. This collective aspect pervades ch. xlvii also, culminating in its final sentence in the singular "the sacrifice of the people," not their sacrifices as individuals.
- (b) These sacrifices by the prince are for the purpose of sanctifying the altar (ch. xliii), and the house itself (xlv. 18-20), rather than the worshippers.

By this the worshippers will be taught that in our yet imperfect state (which will characterize the millennial age as it marks us now), there is sin in the believer, which in God's holy sight defiles all that is connected with him. It is that aspect of the atonement of Christ by which places and things are cleansed, both the heavens and the earth (Heb. ix. 23). This also is not the same as an individual applying for forgiveness for known transgression and a personal sacrifice securing this pardon. It is not this latter aspect which is in view.

3. In other words the position as presented in the prophets and psalms corresponds exactly to that shown in *Hebrews* as the fulfilment of the new covenant promised in Jer. xxxiii: "let us offer up a sacrifice of *praise* to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 15). The persons to be in question in that future day are regarded as on the same footing as believers of the present day; that is, as having been already justified and cleansed from their guilty past, as having actually received a new heart and new spirit, with the consequent new standing before God and a real inward knowledge of Him and His holy will. Therefore that whole sacrificial system foretold by God, as seen by Him and as presented in His prophetic word, is not for the purpose of effecting redemption and leading to justification of the guilty, but it proceeds on the basis that these have been effected and that the offerers are *worshippers*, who, having been once

cleansed, have no further conscience of sins (Heb. x. 2).

4. It results that those sacrifices will serve a similar purpose to the Lord's Supper to-day. This ordinance likewise does not *effect* the forgiveness of sins (as some falsely teach), but it offers visible and affecting reminder of that holy body and blood the sacrifice of which on the cross provided the remission of which the worshipper takes grateful advantage when he may have failed. In principle there can be no more objection to such a reminder in that coming day than there is to the Supper now. In this age believers are comparatively few, have no universal public centre, and must often worship in secret. So simple a reminder as the Supper suits these external conditions, but this will continue only "till He come." When, on the contrary, an universal kingdom is present in glory, then a public centre of worship, with more elaborate features, will suit the grander conditions.

VI. MORAL STATE OF MANKIND AS THIS AGE CLOSES

There is yet another feature at which it may be helpful to glance as it is not much noticed.

Gal. iii. 23-iv. 3 describes Israel before Christ came as "children," and the Mosaic ordinances were designed for their education in things divine and moral. Hence the pictorial element in their instruction by types of the truth to be clearly revealed in due season. When God sent Moses as their redeemer and leader they did not know even the name of the God of their ancestors (Ex. iii. 13), and nothing of His character and laws, so debasing had been the influence of their enslavement to the Egyptians.

Scripture shows that this spiritual state will prevail in the days to precede the advent of Messiah. Zephaniah iii predicts a time when Jehovah shall be in the midst of Israel and they a joy to Him before all the earth. Ch. i. 1-6 shows that when that period approaches there will again be idolatry in Israel. It corresponds with this that, when God speaks to Ezekiel about that future temple where He will dwell forever, He reminds him of the former idolatries that had brought destruction and adds, "Now let them put away their whoredom . . . far from Me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever" (Ezk. xliii. 1-9).

But at that time of darkness it will be said to Israel, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of Jehovah is risen upon thee. For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples: but Jehovah shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Isa. lx. 1-3). Even the pious remnant that will be seeking the help of God (Joel ii. 15-17), will still have the veil upon their hearts, with much darkness as to the things of God. It will be only a very small remnant that will give heed to Elijah and who will be spared in that day of con-

sumption of the wicked. Isa. i. 9 : Zech. xiii. 8 : Zeph. iii. 8-13. God pictures this small remnant as a "peculiar treasure" which a man contrives to secrete and save in a day of disaster, while the bulk of his possessions perish (Mal. iii. 17).

With the Gentiles it will be still worse morally ; their darkness will be "gross." A hint of this is seen in the Lord's parable of the sheep and goats (Matt. xxv. 37-39, 44). Neither class will have thought of Christ when befriending His persecuted brethren. Antichrist will all but succeed in blotting out the knowledge of the true God. Christ has Himself raised the question of whether there will be faith on the earth when He comes (Mat. xviii. 8).

A further hint of the then ignorance of Israel is given in the very passage in Ezekiel which foretells the restoration of the priesthood and sacrifices. Of the priests it is said, "they shall teach my people the difference between the unclean and clean" (Ezek. xlv. 23). This was the moral necessity when Israel came out of Egypt, and a chief end of the Mosaic types and ritual was to dispel this darkness as to the character and claims of God.

Since such darkness will recur, and be deeper, and men be again infants as to knowledge of God, it will be but a repetition of the former grace and wisdom of God that pictorial instruction be repeated.

VII. THE RIGHT METHOD OF STUDY

Another influential factor may be mentioned, which has indeed wide application beyond the present theme.

Non-millenarian writers are greatly occupied with discussing objections to and difficulties in certain dispensational views connected with the expectation of the Millennial kingdom, and very much less with weighing the positive testimony of Scripture to the coming of such a kingdom. This is a subjective and psychological process which greatly disables the human mind from feeling the weight and force of positive testimony to any subject.

The fair and just process of investigation is that followed in the law courts. The whole of the evidence and arguments for the plaintiff are heard first and alone ; the counter evidence and arguments, the objections and difficulties, of the other party not being admitted until the positive case for the plaintiff has been fully investigated and weighed. Unless the mind be thus kept resolutely free and open no fair estimate of the positive evidence and arguments will ever be formed.

No truth is free from difficulties, for the finite mind cannot grasp fully any spiritual subject. The doctrines of the Trinity, creation, incarnation, and redemption all have problems we cannot explain. Yet the Christian believes

these truths because he is satisfied with the positive testimony to them found in the Word of God. This he accepts, not rejecting it because of difficulties that remain, and which he expects will be resolved in due season. In such matters we all accept Butler's just principle that, if a belief has once been established by adequate evidence, no objections can overthrow it ; because, in such case, the belief is based on our knowledge but the objections on our ignorance.

Let this be applied to the question of the millennial kingdom and belief in it will be all but inevitable, for the testimony of the Word of God is explicit and adequate. But if during the investigation of this evidence the mind be busied with detecting or inventing difficulties, it will be almost impossible to form a sound and balanced judgment or to find solution of the self-created problems. In this case also the subjective queries will override the objective facts as presented in Scripture.

VIII. ATTITUDE TO THE WORD OF GOD

Sundry other arguments in this matter are discussed in my paper *Israel's National Future*. The present discussion must close by considering briefly the attitude involved to the Word of God.

In its lack of factual basis "spiritualizing" resembles the line of reasoning of deism and higher criticism dealt with earlier. The results of those philosophies are heartily repudiated by the godly "spiritualizers" now in view ; but they reason on the same principle in allowing the subjective to override the objective. The position is that the mighty array of Scripture testimony agrees with one voice as to a future temple, priesthood, and sacrifices. It would be wise and reverent for an objector to say that, as far as he sees, *Hebrews* does not allow the expectation of a literal fulfilment of Old Testament Scripture, but he will wait further light or the event in its season. But it is *not* reverent to set one's subjective opinion as to one scripture in direct conflict with what all the rest of Scripture categorically asserts, and to build one's whole scheme as to the future of Israel and the nations upon ideas which have no basis of facts.

Involved in this is the momentous question of one's real attitude to Holy Scripture as the revealed Word of God. It is not enough to declare, however honestly, that the Word of God is wholly from Him and wholly to be accepted, and yet cancel the plain sense of the greater part of its statements as to the future. It is often urged that only one passage of Scripture mentions the Millennium (Rev. xx). It has been pointed out above that earlier scriptures lead to and involve the conception ; but even if this were not so, does one who presses this point really acknowledge that the Bible is from God ? Is not one single statement by *Him* ample to establish

a matter? Is it not essential impiety to demand that the God of truth must state a thing more than once or it cannot be deemed credible? This objection also is wholly subjective and exhibits the profound peril of such reasoning.

There are many other matters mentioned only once in Scripture, as for instance—What God wrought in each of the six days of the reconstruction of the earth : the details of the crossing of the Red Sea and of the Jordan and of the capture of Jericho : that the sun stood still at the word of Joshua : the numerous miracles of Elijah and Elisha : the accounts of the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar's madness, Belshazzar's feast, and the den of lions. There are also those miracles and sayings of our Lord recorded in only one Gospel, and that He said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive ;" also the voyage and shipwreck of Paul. Are all these and other statements to be challenged because recorded only once? Any who would do this do not really believe that the Bible is God's book ; but it is involved implicitly in rejecting the period of one thousand years because it is mentioned specifically in only one passage.

At the beginning of this century I was walking in Bristol with that master of Scripture, Dr. A. T. Pierson. He suddenly said : "I want you to take particular notice of what I am going to say—I have never met a believer who held intelligently the doctrine of the pre-millennial return of Christ who was ever troubled with higher criticism. It seems that God has given us this hope as a helmet to protect our mind from unbelief." Presumably he had in mind Paul's words : "putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (I Thes. v. 8). Faith and love protect the heart, the one Godward, the other manward, preserving the affections from injury : hope is a helmet to guard the intellect from error or from despair as to the future. This being so, to what intellectual danger do they who reject the pre-millennial advent expose their own minds and those who heed them !

May the Lord graciously grant to us a fuller measure of the new spirit, heart, and understanding which are our possession under the new covenant ; in order that, becoming more and more as a little child toward God our Father, we may penetrate ever further into the kingdom of heaven, understand its mysteries, and further the plans of our God. I beg this for myself and my brethren.

THE WAY BACK (7)

by JAMES L. STANLEY

Chapter VIII

WORK FOR HIM

WORK

Faith without works is dead—James ii. 26.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven—Matt.v.16.

Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man—Matt. vii. 24.

The celebrated Puritan writer, John Howe, very quaintly illustrates the difference between good works *before* and *after* conversion in this fashion : If a man walked continually with shoes on, the soles of the shoes would in time wear out ; but if he walked on his bare feet, the soles of his feet would never wear out. Now, how is this ? Because there is no life in the soles of the shoes, but there is life in the soles of the feet, and in this way the wear-and-tear is repaired. Thus it is with good works. Those *before* conversion have no life in them, whereas those *after* conversion have life, and consequently are sustained, while the others wear out.

It is important to keep works in their right place—that is, where God has put them ; not preceding but following faith. “ They which have believed God may [should] be careful to maintain good works ”. (Titus iii. 8, R.V.).

The order of things, together with some of the leading principles of Christian work, are concisely expressed in the words, “ Son, go work to-day in my vineyard ” (Matt. xxi. 28).

Relationship. It is a father who speaks : “ Son, go work.” We must be sons before we can serve. God does not want, and will not have, any servile work. The work that God approves is spontaneous, free, gladsome. It springs from a filial spirit, and flows from a fountain of love. Our Lord is in this respect the great Pattern for our imitation. He was a Son, but He was also the model servant. Everything He did was a delight to Him. “ Wist ye not,” said He, “ that I must be about My Father’s business ? ” “ My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.” “ I delight to do Thy will, O My God, yea Thy law is within My heart.” In this spirit, too, must our service be performed : in the spirit of the Son. Not a single thing does God ask us to do, till through faith in Christ we become reconciled to Him, and enter His family. Then, being made free from sin, we become the servants of righteousness.

Authority. “ Go.” Note the imperative nature of the command. He speaks as a Master, as one having authority. God has a rightful claim upon our service. His orders leave no room for hesitation or questioning. “ Go forward,” He said to Israel at the Red Sea, when an advance seemed impossible. Yet the result proved that the command was not only the utterance of authority but of wisdom too. “ God’s biddings are His enablings.” He will never set us to do that which is impossible. Here are some of His commands : “ Go thou and preach the kingdom of God ; ” “ Go thou and do likewise ; ” “ Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” We must not water down

these and similar words, lowering them from commands to invitations. We must take them as they stand, recognizing their full force, and our personal obligation.

Duty. "Work." This is practical. It is not, Go scheme, and plan, and devise, and discuss, but *work*. It means *doing something*; ascertaining God's will, and then performing it. It has been well observed that "the best way to do a thing is to do it." This reads like a truism, but there is much wisdom in it. How much of our time is lost in intending, purposing, and planning, where we ought to be doing! A good story is told of Stonewall Jackson and old Miles, the Virginia bridge builder. The bridges were swept away so often by floods, or burned by the enemy, that Miles was as necessary to the Confederate army as Jackson himself. One day the Union troops had retreated, and burned a bridge across the Shenandoah. Jackson determined to follow them, and summoned Miles. "You must put all your men on that bridge," said he; "they must work all night, and the bridge must be completed by daylight. My engineer shall furnish you the plan, and you can go right ahead." Early next morning Jackson, in a very doubtful frame of mind, met the old bridge builder. "Well," said the General, "did the engineer give you the plan for the bridge?" "General," replied old Miles slowly, "the bridge is done. I don't know whether the picture is or not." We lose time often because we are looking for some *future* work, instead of taking up the work that lies in our path. The best preparation for future service is attention to present service.

Promptitude. "Go work to-day." When the gospel call came to us, it was with a like urgency: "*To-day*, if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts." The present moment is our opportunity. "We must work the works of Him that sent Me *while it is day*; the night cometh when no man can work." Our life-span is brief, and we can afford to lose none of it. So much of it, too, has been lost, that it becomes us to redeem the time. Prompt obedience is ever the best and most appreciated.

Proprietorship. "My vineyard." This is the sphere of service, and suggests to us three interesting thoughts.

(1) *Honour.* The dignity of the service is indicated in the word "My." What an honour to be employed in such a service—to be the servants of the God of heaven! It is a distinction to exult in, for it is work in which holy angels delight.

(2) *Obligation.* It is *God's* vineyard; then that is enough for us. His goodness and love lay us under perpetual obligation to serve Him with the best of our powers.

(3) *Unity.* It is *one* vineyard, and though the size be great, and the parts various, and the workmen scattered, yet they are all fellow-servants in the common service of the great Master.

Working with God. It is one thing to work *for* God, it is another to work *with* God. Yet there can be no happy and successful work for God that is not done *with* God. To grasp this thoroughly is to lay hold of a grand secret. Our hearts are deceitful, and we are apt to delude ourselves. An active temperament finds satisfaction in energetic effort, and on this account may experience great pleasure in vigorous Christian work. There is danger lest natural impulse be mistaken for the movings of the Spirit. But our most strenuous exertions, made at the bidding of our own will and in our own strength, will be in comparison of the Divine power like an infant's arm compared with a steam engine. We need Divine direction and Divine strength. Furnished with these, our work will be happy and successful. To ensure this, we must take care that work does not supersede communion. Let our Lord's own example guide us here. In Luke v. 15, 16 we read : " And great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed of their infirmities, *but* (R.V.) He was withdrawing Himself in the deserts, and praying." Our Lord did not allow pressure of work to rob Him of private devotion. By this we are not to infer that work was neglected ; on the contrary, the work was better attended to. Sometimes men become so absorbed in their secular calling, and seem so pressed with duties, that they do not allow themselves time for food or rest. We know what the end of such a course must sooner or later be—an utter collapse. So is it with the spiritual life. " Prayer and provender hinder no journey."

" To talk with God—no *breath* is lost ;
 Talk on, talk on !
 To walk with God—no *strength* is lost ;
 Walk on, walk on ;
 To wait on God—no *time* is lost ;
 Wait on, wait on !
 To grind the axe—no *work* is lost ;
 Grind on, grind on !
 The work is quicker—better done,
 Not needing half the strength laid on !
 Grind on ! "

Do everything for Christ. Speaking to young Christians, a venerable servant of Christ said, " Now I have no doubt you would like to be doing *something* for Christ. I can tell you what is better than that—do *everything* for Him." This is often lost sight of. The notion takes hold of many minds that the only work for Christ is that which has some distinctly religious form. So, unfortunately, the phrase " Christian workers " has been coined and passed into currency as the conventional title for those engaged in some recognized form of religious work. But every true Christian is a Christian worker in the real and Biblical sense, though he may not be in the modern technical sense.

How encouraging are the words addressed by Paul to

servants (slaves) in the epistle to the Colossians (iii. 23, 24), "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men ; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance ; for ye serve the Lord Christ." Here we see that the commonest acts may be elevated into the rank of service to God.

" A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine ;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that, and th' action fine."

—*Herbert.*

And the same principle applies to all kinds of work in which Christians may be lawfully engaged.

The bulk have to be mainly employed in what are termed secular duties ; and if Christian work were to be limited to certain phases and lines of duty, then the majority would be excluded. But as it is, none need stand outside. Every one united to Christ by faith may also be every day and hour a happy servant of God.

" The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask ;
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us, daily, nearer God."

—*Whittier.*

And this is further strengthened by the Scripture principle expressed in the words, "Beginning at Jerusalem." The apostles were to begin among their own countrymen.

To the healed demoniac who wanted to be with Him, Jesus said, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." The light that shines well at home will soon begin to send its beams abroad.

While, however, the apostles were to begin at Jerusalem, let us remember it was only a *beginning*. They were not to end there. And so with ourselves. While giving full weight to Scripture teaching as to our *first* responsibility, let us ever remember that our obligations do not end there. Like Paul, we are debtors to the Greeks and to the Barbarians.

We are debtors to all men. The debtorship arises, not for anything which they have conferred upon us, but from the blessings which *God* has bestowed upon us. The treasure of the gospel entrusted to us makes us debtors to others, and it becomes us to discharge that responsibility in every way we can. If we are in earnest, we shall soon find out what we can do. By voice or pen, by the press or by the private letter, in an endless variety of ways, we shall find opportunity for making known the name of Christ and doing good to men. Let our prayer constantly be, "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise" (Ps. li. 15). The field is the world : the labourers are not too numerous, and there is room for every zealous worker.

Those who ask in earnest, " Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ? " will not have to wait long for the answer.

Let it be our ambition to become *well-trained servants* of our great Master. We can scarcely over-estimate the possibilities in this direction. Servants who respect and love their masters, and who have been long in their employ, become so acquainted with the master's wishes and habits that they perform numberless services without any direct commands or instructions. This is the result of careful attention on the part of the servant, coupled with a real desire to please. Let it be our honest desire to please God in all things, and we shall find that condition of mind highly favourable to advancement in the knowledge of His will. Eastern servants receive directions from their masters by a simple wave of the hand (Ps. cxxiii. 2), and this mode of communication necessitates the greatest watchfulness, lest any sign should pass unobserved. By constant attention these servants are able at once to interpret the slightest movement on the part of the master. Thus should it be, and thus *may* it be with us.

Thoroughness in work. This is an age of show and shams : let us take care that we be not affected by the prevailing spirit of the times. Let our work be solid, substantial, true. The eye of our Master is upon us, and His judgment will hereafter decide the quality of what is done. Let us not be anxious to make a display of energy or results before the face of men. Let us not undertake so much that we have no time to do anything well. A comment was once made upon the hurried manner of a certain preacher, that he looked as though God had given him a commission to preach the gospel, but had not given him time to do it. *God* never gives us more than we can do. We may give it to ourselves, but that is a totally different matter. *We may not* have time to carry out *our* designs, but we shall always have time to do what God sets for us. Let us have a conscience in our work, and regulate all our actions by the standard of God's Word.

The words of David concerning the temple may be well applied to all our Christian service : " The work is great, for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God." We work, not for man, but for God ; not for time merely, but for eternity. We are but in our apprenticeship now ; let us be diligent, careful, attentive, conscientious, looking forward to the glorious eternity of sinless service which shall be our happy employment in the world to come.

CHILDREN OF GOD AND SONS OF GOD

Who are the children of God ? The New Testament leaves us in no doubt about the answer. The Eternal Word, says John, " came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them

gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name : which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God " (John i. 11-13). That is to say, children of God are those who have been begotten by Him, born into His family by a new and spiritual birth—those who have received Christ, who have believed on His name. This new and inalienable relationship belongs, by the grace of God, to all who know Christ as Saviour.

Who are the sons of God? What is adoption? Is there any difference between the thought of being children of God and the thought of being His sons?

In general it may be said that, when the two thoughts are distinguished in the New Testament, the expression " children " implies relationship, while the expression " sons " implies status. Adoption is the bestowal and reception of a status as sons—in the case which we are considering, a status as sons of God.

Are all the children of God sons of God? There are some scriptures which, taken by themselves, suggest that they are. According to Eph. 1 : 5 God has foreordained His people " unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself." According to Gal. iv. 5 the purpose of Christ's incarnation and redemptive work was " that we might receive the adoption of sons." And it was to the Galatian Christians, who were being tempted to backslide into Jewish legalism, that Paul wrote : " ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus " (Gal. iii. 26). It might appear from these scriptures that the distinction between being sons of God and being His children was mainly a verbal one.

But there are other scriptures which give a different impression. In the very Epistle where Paul tells his readers that they " are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus," he makes a careful distinction between a child who is under age and a son who has attained his majority with its attendant responsibilities (Gal. iv. 1-7). The child is an heir and the son is an heir, but there is this difference, that the son is an heir who has been entrusted with the administration of his inheritance in some degree. Paul in this passage is contrasting life under law with life under grace. But the Christians to whom he writes, in spite of the grace which God had extended towards them in redeeming them when they were under the law, were inclined to slip back into legalism ; and this would in practice mean the abandonment of their status as sons. Their relationship to God as His children was not affected ; but they were abdicating the mature liberty which properly belonged to them as sons of God ; they were ceasing to be sons *de facto* if not *de jure*.

In Gal. iv. 1ff. Paul has in mind the occasion when a child was reckoned old enough to receive a measure of responsibility in managing his father's affairs. There were,

however, other ways in which adoption might be brought about. Among the ancient Hebrews and ancient Romans alike a man who had no son might "adopt" one of his servants or slaves—he might, with due legal formality, recognize him as his son and heir. In Abraham's childless days, he contemplated dealing with Eliezer in this way (Gen. xv. 2). This practice probably underlies Paul's language in Gal. iv. 7: "thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son." A servant (it has been pointed out) handles his master's property; a son owns it. John Wesley in later years used to speak of the occasion which is usually described as his conversion as the time when he exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son. That Wesley was a child of God many years before his "conversion" in 1738 is hardly to be doubted; but not until that strange warming of his heart did he put away the legalism under which he had laboured so long and enter into the enjoyment of perfect freedom as a son of God.

Similarly, in Rom. viii. 15 Paul draws a contrast between slavery and sonship, saying: "ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." It seems clear that "the spirit of adoption" here is identical with "the Spirit of his Son" in Gal. iv. 6. And just here we have the secret of the practical enjoyment of the privileges of sonship: as the apostle puts it in Rom. viii. 14, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

Now, it is a matter of common experience that many Christians who have been born of the Spirit and sealed with the Spirit know little of what is meant by being "led by the Spirit of God." This is not the spasmodic or impulsive matter that it is sometimes thought to be, but something that characterizes a man's habitual way of life and makes him manifestly and effectually a son of God in the fullest sense. "In his standing a believer is a child of God; in his state he should be a son of God": such is W. E. Vine's pithy comment on Rom. viii. 14.

It is probably along this line that we shall find the solution to the vexed question of the relation of Rom. vii. 14-25 to Rom. viii. 1-17.

We have quoted one place in the Epistles where the leading of the Spirit is mentioned; the only other place (to my knowledge) where it appears in the Epistles is Gal. v. 18, which emphasizes the same lesson: "if ye are led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law"—or, without the article, "under law." There are, however, some Christians who prefer to have their lives directed by rules and regulations. But this is a sign of spiritual immaturity. The small child must be told to do this and not to do that; it is a necessary part of his training. But as he grows older he must be given freedom and responsibility. In a properly ordered family he

will be more anxious than ever to please his father ; but he knows his father's mind and can conform to it by his own free choice, instead of having to be guided by a list of Do's and Don'ts. Those Christians who are afraid to venture beyond the well-hedged path of rules and regulations, who employ a spiritual adviser to make all responsible decisions for them, who never progress beyond the apron-strings stage, cannot know the exhilaration of being led by the Spirit in all the ways of life, of feeling themselves (in Anthony Norris Groves's great phrase) " the Lord's free-born children in the way of holiness." This course calls for much more spiritual exercise than the other, no doubt, but it brings with it a much greater " recompense of reward."

But if this is so, what are we to say of those scriptures quoted in an earlier part of this paper, where Christians are addressed in apparently unconditional terms as sons of God ?

The answer to this question lies in the fact (which should always be kept in mind) that much of the ethical teaching of the New Testament can be summed up in the injunction : " Be what you are "—that is : " Be in living practice what you are in the purpose of God." Thus, because we " have put off the old man " and " have put on the new man " (Col. iii. 9, 10), we receive the exhortation that we should " put away . . . the old man " and " put on the new man " (Eph. iv. 22, 24). Similarly, it is because we are holy people by divine calling that we are so continually urged to be holy people " in all manner of living."

The Editor of *The Disciple* several years ago wrote a little book entitled *Ideals and Realities*.^{*} That title may help us to understand why the indicative and imperative moods stand side by side in these scriptures, and in those which speak of our being sons of God. Those who are children of God by the new birth, and consequently possess eternal life, are also sons of God *ideally* (in terms of God's purpose for them). It is for them to become sons of God *in reality*, by accepting and standing fast in the freedom with which Christ has set them free, and by following the daily leading of His Spirit.

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WANDERING THOUGHTS

It was a highly trained scholar, with an exceptionally powerful mind, who expressed an universal weakness in the lines

“ No infant's changing pleasure
Is like my wandering mind.”

Our thoughts are too much like clouds or foam, " tossed too and fro and carried about by every wind." Yet we are told that Gladstone attributed his mental vigour in old age

^{*} This is out of print.

to excellent sleep, and this latter to the habit that when he shut his bedroom door he shut politics outside ! Now politics were the chief element of his life, and he might have come direct from the House after a long debate, with his mind full of such subjects ; but he could peremptorily turn from them and exclude them.

There is a human side to this. It demands stern and sustained mental discipline, against which inclination and general social habits rebel. Conversation is commonly desultory, like a butterfly flitting from flower to flower settling nowhere. Books, including too often religious books and magazines, are frequently too superficial, offering little deep thought and not requiring concentration. In early manhood President Garfield was a lumberman. He noticed that the blows of a man near him were slower than his own, yet in a day the other cut down more trees than himself. He then observed that the other, unlike himself, did not interrupt his work to gaze over lovely lake scenery at hand. Concentration effected more with less effort. The other might enjoy the landscape when work was finished, but he was not to be diverted from his job.

In business it fell to me to deal with insurance claims. The morning mail might bring letters dealing with twenty, thirty, or more claims. It was essential to deal with each case separately, to file its papers, and put that matter right out of mind, so that attention could be concentrated wholly on the next claim.

Only as far as such mental discipline is maintained can control of the thoughts be gained. Much mental weariness can be thus avoided. As with the muscles so with the mind—jerky movements are more exhausting than quiet rhythmical motion. The saving of time also is marvellous. The minutes Garfield spent gazing around had to be made up by faster toil, and even so his work was behind. Without this mental habit Gladstone's advice to students cannot be followed : " Let me recommend to you thrift of time. It will repay you with a usury beyond your utmost expectations." Thrift of time must begin with conservation of time in the process of thinking. Wastage here can never be recovered.

If the disciple has walked with Christ to Emmaus, or met Him in the quiet of the upper room, he will have had his understanding opened to understand the Scriptures. This will expose to his astonished gaze a vista of the far-reaching and magnificent purposes and programme of God, and the central and supreme place in them of the Son of God. Such a heart will respond to the lines

" I have seen the face of Jesus,
Tell me not of ought beside ;
I have heard the voice of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied."

Such a betrothed heart will have little interest in things

unconnected with its Beloved. Matters trifling and transitory are to it a nuisance, an annoyance, a wasteful distraction, and company where such themes prevail is distasteful, painful. Concentration is then produced by the splendour, the fascination of the Object beheld, with the glory of the affairs of which He is the centre, and to Him thought reverts automatically when released from other matters. All right and proper duties are then easily subordinated to this controlling sphere, and are made to contribute to the glory and rights of the Beloved. As light increases and is followed affairs foreign to Him and His interests are more and more excluded. Such a mind is consequently freed from the fearful tyranny of self-occupation, from devotion to the things of the world, the lusts of the flesh, the eye, and the vain-glory of life. He no more lives for money, pleasure, learning, ambition : dead to such things he can say, "To me to *live* is CHRIST !" In ever progressive degree his thoughts will pass under the regulating, co-ordinating control of his master passion, and will cease to be discursive because concentrated. Restless colts can be trained to run in harness.

Yet there is always the danger that Demas may be allured again by this present evil age. Therefore the disciple must heed Solomon's counsel, "*Keep thy heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23). Thus does Peter exhort us "*to gird up the loins of your mind*, and set your hope perfectly [steadily, undividedly] on the favour that is being brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. i. 13). When Elijah had before him a hard run of many miles, in which he was to keep in front of Ahab's chariot horses, driven fast to escape the storm, he "girded up his loins" (I Kin. xviii. 46) ; that is, he gathered up his skirts into the girdle, so that his feet should be unimpeded. The Christian is thus to keep his thoughts collected, again and again recalling them from wandering to be set on the goal of life's race. This is a constant exercise, like control of rudder or steering wheel. We must heed at all times Paul's call to "*set your mind* on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth," for Christ is there, above, seated at the right hand of God (Col. iii. 1-4).

It is when the believer addresses himself seriously to the task, especially when he gives himself to concentrated prayer seeking the face of God in His throne room on high that pre-eminently he finds distracting thoughts harass and obstruct. But the more he cultivates the regular habit of concentration of thought the more readily he will gain the victory when at prayer. And in this holy endeavour he will experience the power of that word of Paul that "the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting down of strongholds ; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the

obedience of Christ ” (II Cor. x. 4, 5).

Distracting thoughts when at prayer, or at other times, may arise because one has left the hour for that supreme exercise until the end of the day, when the brain is too weary for the mind to control its own processes. Let the disciple follow his Teacher’s usual practice to rise early in the morning and retire to a solitary place to pray ; or let him enter into some closet, some “ closed in ” spot, such as an inner chamber, and pray.

Concentration in prayer may be prevented by the incessant, habitual set of the mind being on things earthly, instead of things heavenly, and the heart cannot escape from the things of the earth and soar upward like an uncaged bird. Wings clipped and fettered feet prevent flight.

The Christian must himself deal with these two causes of wandering thoughts. He must resolutely strip himself of these weights on his spirit, and divest himself of this sin which so easily clings about us like an ungirdled robe.

But a third source of disturbing thoughts, especially at prayer, is the power of wicked spirits to inject ideas into human minds. Here our resource is those spiritual weapons of which Paul affirms that they are “ mighty before God ; ” which means that in that holy Presence which we seek in prayer these weapons secure victory. The Christian must study the battle described in Eph. vi. 10-19, and must array himself in the pieces of armour there named. Let him take note of the vital feature, obscured in A.V. but disclosed in R.V., that these weapons have to be put on by the believer himself. The helmet and the breastplate do not accidentally fall on the Christian ; he will not find the sword in his hand unless he takes hold of it ; but in this panoply he can resist the foe until he flees, and the child of God thus gains consciousness of the presence of God.

This battle must be fought all day long, in all life’s affairs as they arise. If we yield ground to Satan by carelessness in things ordinary he will defeat our spiritual efforts in prayer and testimony. But by wearing the armour constantly it will be found that the enemy’s strongholds in our thoughts, feelings, and ways can be cast down and he be driven from any vantage point in our inner life. He is a determined fighter, and the Christian must be an equally determined warrior.

It is particularly instructive that the apostle intimates “ imaginations ” as the special stronghold to be cast down. The “ *imagination* is that special element of our reasoning powers by which *images* are created in the mind, objects being suddenly presented before the mental vision. These objects may be the recurrence of past events, or may be purely “ imaginary.” Evil spirits love to present such objects before us when we seek God, and by them to keep the heart engaged with matters that bar access to the higher world by obsessing

the mind with things of this lower world, real or imaginary, moral or vicious.

Here again concentration is indispensable. The man with whom prayer is habitual turns steadily from such mental images, he resists and rebukes the devil until he flees and the soul becomes undisturbed and tranquil before God. But it is most important that faith should grip the fact that God, for Christ's sake, hears Spirit-inspired prayer whether the believer gains a sweet consciousness of God or not ! Charles Inwood well said at Keswick that " God must save you from the habit of testing His faithfulness by your consciousness."

Thus whatever high thing exalts itself before the mind, so as to hinder experimental knowledge of God, can be overthrown. When the disciple has set himself to acquire such acquaintance with God he can depend absolutely upon the efficient aid of the Holy Spirit, the Creator of our mind, to bring him to this experience. Without Him we are not able to lift up our soul unto God, for the altitude is too high and our effort too feeble ; but the Spirit is with us and within us that we may mount up with wings as eagles.

The inclusive work for which the Spirit is here is to glorify the Son of God. Therefore Paul speaks of bringing " every thought into subjection to the obedience of Christ." I have no more right to think wrongly than to speak or act wrongly, nor can the latter evils be cured until the former is cured. Of this the will of Christ is the infallible secret. The Lord has His mind about all that transpires on earth, including movements in the heart of man. It is mine to gain His mind about every person and matter, to which end diligent attention to what He has expressed in His Word is the primary secret. There He gives utterance to His mind about all matters of life, and it is my duty and good to subdue my thoughts to His. Unto this end the blessed Spirit will always strengthen us.

In my boyhood, though already a believer, I was beguiled into devouring great quantities of mental and moral garbage, such as low-class detective stories and Wild West adventures. A retentive memory served to make these a constant source of inward distraction. When the time came that I was brought to a joyful, whole-hearted devotion to the Lover of my soul, and to make all life (I was still in business) a means of acquaintance with Him and service to Him, then the gracious Spirit, by an act of Divine power, cleared from my mind that heap of accumulated rubbish. It was parallel in the mental sphere to that sudden release in the physical realm, of which converts not seldom tell, when the love of tobacco or liquor departs without a struggle. It has been my part ever since to keep the door of the mind fast barred against such mental poison, but ever wide open to divine truth by steady occupation with the Scriptures and thereby with things heavenly.

Spurgeon was speaking upon the words "We preach Christ crucified." Some people, he said, blow a big organ, and other people beat a big drum, but it was his to preach Christ crucified. People might think it foolish to be ever harping on the one string. "Well," said he, "be it so : we are fools for Christ's sake, and therefore you must let us preach Christ crucified, for every fool talks about *what is uppermost in his mind.*"

The youth whose thoughts flit from one to another of half a dozen girls will find the cure by really falling in love with one of them. Here is the great secret of concentration and the chief cure for wandering of thought. The heart will rule the mind ; love will guide and limit thought. "The greatest of these is love." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."

A VETERAN TO A RECRUIT

JOHN BERRIDGE *to* ROWLAND HILL, 1771

Rowland Hill, son of a baronet, took early to itinerant preaching, though unordained. This behaviour, at that time most irregular, turned his family against him, and made him poor. Writing to the Countess of Huntington, John Berridge, in his quaint style, said of him :

I find you have got honest Rowland down to Bath : he is a pretty young spaniel, fit for land or water, and has a wonderful yelp. He forsakes father, and mother, and brethren, and gives up all for Jesus ; and I believe will prove a useful labourer, if he keeps clear of petticoat snares. The Lord has owned him much at Cambridge and in the North, and I hope will own him more abundantly in the West.

To Rowland Hill himself Berridge wrote as follows :

Dear Rowley,—My heart sends you some of its kindest love and breathes its tenderest wishes for you. I feel my heart go out to you whilst I am writing, and can embrace you as my second self. How soft and sweet are those silken cords which the dear Redeemer twines and ties about the hearts of His children ! How different from mere natural affection, and much more from vicious self-love. Surely it is a pleasant thing to love with a pure heart fervently, and something of this love I feel for you, which brings a melting tear into my eye, and refreshes my very body as I write. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you. May heavenly truth beam into your soul, and heavenly love inflame your heart.

I suppose you are now arrived in the West, and are working as a labourer in your Master's vineyard. Be faithful and diligent, and look up to your Master continually for direction and assistance. Remember His gracious promise, "*Lo, I am*

with you always, even to the end of the world." He will supply you with wisdom, strength, and courage : for He sends none upon a warfare at their own cost.

I think your chief work for a season will be to break up fallow ground. This suits the accent of your voice at present. God will give you other tongues when they are wanted ; but now He sends you out to thrash the mountains, and a glorious thrashing it is. Go forth, my dear Rowley, whenever you are invited, into the devil's territory ; carry the Redeemer's standard along with you, and blow the gospel-trumpet boldly, fearing nothing but yourself. If you meet with success, as I trust you will, expect clamour and threats from the world, and a little venom now and then from the children. These bitter herbs make good sauce for a young recruiting sergeant, whose heart would be lifted up with pride if it was not kept down by these pressures. The more success you meet with, the more opposition you will find : but Jesus sitteth above the water-floods and remaineth a king for ever. His eye is ever upon you, and His heavenly guards surround you. Therefore fear not ; go on humbly, go on boldly, trusting only in Jesus, and all opposition shall fall before you.

Make the Scriptures your only study, and be much in prayer. The Apostles gave themselves to the word of God and to prayer. Do thou likewise ; labour to keep your mind in a heavenly frame ; it will make your work pleasant, and your preaching and conversation savoury. Now is your time to work for Jesus ; you have health and youth on your side, and no church or wife on your back. The world is all before you, and Providence your guide and guard. Go out, therefore, and work whilst the day lasteth ; and may the Lord Jesus water your own soul, and give ten thousand souls to your ministry.

I am, with great affection, your friend,

JOHN BERRIDGE.

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (9)

ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND, 1915-1922

The next seven and a half years were spent ministering the Word of God in all parts of England and in the south-west of Scotland. My readers being able to picture this service only special incidents need be narrated, such as will evidence that God is the same to faith in this land as abroad and that the principles of the life of faith are the same everywhere.

While we were in Egypt, in the early part of 1914, my father-in-law found it needful to leave Clevedon, Somerset, and return to his house in Clayhidon, Devon. It was necessary that our furniture should be removed in our absence in

Egypt. This difficulty was met by our dear friend William Rouse, evangelist, and his wife, who had been using the house. He kindly prepared all for removal. As I prayed for light as to where the goods should be stored my mind was directed to Weston-super-Mare, rather than to Taunton or any centre near Clayhidon. The matters that weighed were that my cousin Musgrove had his home there, which would afford to my wife pleasant and loving friendship should I be much from home. Then there were suitable schools for our daughter. And I was well-known at the Gospel Hall, which provided Christian fellowship. Also it was a good railway centre, for either Bristol and London, or the north and the south.

Our effects were therefore stored at Weston-super-Mare. In November we were distinctly guided to a flat at "Tower-side," The Shrubbery, and in December we moved in; and this was our home for thirteen years. It consisted of a fair-sized sitting room, with pleasant views over town and sea; a bijou kitchenette, and two small bedrooms, with the use of a bathroom. The rent was moderate and was restricted by the Statute passed at the start of the war.

My cousin kindly gave me a second-hand cycle. It was a good make, a "Swift," and after thirty-five years was still running well. Many side lines of the railways having been sent to France, and trains in general being restricted, I journeyed by bike all over England and in Scotland. This saved expense and also made possible visits to out-of-the-way houses and hamlets where the gospel seldom was taken.

In all these matters I had the advantage of a higher wisdom than mine.

Early in 1916 many soldiers were billeted in Weston-super-Mare, and a reading room, with refreshments, was opened at the Gospel Hall. As we did not allow smoking, dancing, cards, liquors, or theatricals, men who wanted such entertainments went where they were provided, while the serious and more refined came to us. Not a few were led to Christ before they went to the slaughter-fields of France. One evening there came in a man dressed as a monk, in brown robe, rope girdle, and with tonsured head. He said he spent his time visiting such Rooms and talking to the men. His testimony showed that he knew and loved Christ. He commenced by saying that he had been at such a Room on Salisbury plain. The Army Scripture reader introduced him by saying: "This friend wishes to speak to you. He looks like a priest, but he seems to be a Christian." The Lord still has a few who love Him though in strange associations and strange attire.

Another line of service in these years was that of helping younger brethren to state their objections to military service before the Tribunals. At the Local Tribunals they were not seldom treated with scant justice or courtesy. Too many

members of these tribunals were men of small mind and great prejudice. At the Appeal Tribunals it was usually better, the members being more cultured and having a certain social dignity to maintain, and this obtained at the Central Tribunal in London. When the last war broke out I thought of telling the Authorities that I had had experience of Tribunals in 1916-1918, and that if they would make the first Tribunal to consist of two lawyers the former unfairness and troubles would be mostly avoided. I did not write, but when it was announced that the County Court judge in each district was to be chairman I saw that, in the good ordering of God, the end desired would be served, as was the case.

In the former War the Government had no easy task. A majority who applied for exemption had no real conscience in the matter, but were socialists out to make trouble for the authorities. Men who failed to gain exemption and still would not serve in the army, were sent to prison, and shortly most of them were sent to the great prison buildings at Princetown on Dartmoor, used as a settlement. There they were unable publicly to spread their opinions.

Usually forty or fifty brethren from "Open" assemblies were there. I obtained a permit to visit them for religious purposes, and paid several visits of a week or a fortnight. I stayed at an hotel and went into the Settlement after the evening meal and all day on Sundays. They were picked men spiritually, and they valued the fellowship shown by one going to that inhospitable region and gloomy building. We had profitable Bible studies, seasons of prayer, and fine gospel meetings. One Sunday evening after I had spoken in the chapel a rabid socialist simply rushed at me to attack what had been taught. Before the conversation ended he had turned unto Christ, and he was following Him still after more than thirty years.

There were probably 2,000 men there most of the time. As far as I could tell, if 200 of them were true Christians it was a liberal estimate. The rest were there for political or personal reasons, and many were atheistic socialists. They could not but respect the real Christians, for these had gone through the mill like themselves; but some of them said plainly to friends of mine, that when their time came it would be seen whether they could shed blood! It was the fact of this situation that compelled Government to make severe the conditions for exemption, or many more unworthy applicants would have attempted to evade service.

One evening on the way to my lodging I came upon a half-drunken soldier threatening and terrifying a young objector and his sweetheart. I drew off his attention and motioned to the pair to move off in the dusk, for they stood there helpless, much as a bird frightened and fascinated by a snake. As we walked down the road the poor fellow stopped now and then, gazed at me, and said, "Ah, but you're an

old man, and I wouldn't hit an old man." I was thankful for his chivalry, and did not deceive him by saying that I was only forty-three and might myself have done some hitting had I too been tipsy.

Of the hundreds of young brethren that went through that ordeal almost all returned after the war into fellowship and service in the assemblies. This, alas, is more than can be said of those who went into the Services. Some returned keener for the spiritual battles faced, but far more, I fear, lost their testimony to Christ ; nor can he wonder or condemn who knows what soldiering means.

The first of the many cases I took before a Tribunal gave me a salutary warning. That morning I was struck with influenza. But unwilling to disappoint the young man I took the risk and nerved myself to the task. He gained complete exemption but proved most unsatisfactory and his exemption was cancelled. It would have been better in his case had he failed. It taught me the lesson to be learned from the words of king Saul : " I *forced myself*, therefore, and offered the burnt offering " (I Sam. xiii. 12). It may occasionally be right to disregard the body, but I saw later that God had intervened to prevent me from a step I should later regret. I could never afterwards go before that Tribunal, having helped one found unworthy.

On another occasion I was privileged to be " counsel for the defence " at the court martial of two earnest brethren, and was of service. Both the prosecuting adjutant and the officers who formed the Court were fair and courteous. Afterward I visited the brethren when serving their sentences in Taunton goal.

This unforeseen fellowship with younger brethren in distress for Christ's sake, was a service few others were ready to share. My early experience in matters legal and with Courts bore fruit now. I did not feel as strange or as awed in a Court as most would feel. God prepares His servants in advance. My kind friend Mr. W. R. Moore freely put at the disposal of his tried brethren his training as a barrister, and was a strength to their hearts. On the other hand, there were leaders in Assemblies who opposed this testimony to separateness from the world and even asserted in the press that it was not the recognized attitude of the " Brethren." This was contrary to history. For myself, to be entrusted with this work of supporting and comforting my brethren under these circumstances fully reconciled me to having been brought away from such happy service as Egypt had granted. Here, as there, I was doing what few others would have done. The joy is great of *adding* something to the cause of Christ, instead of duplicating work.

It is needful and good to walk and work in the communion of the Holy Spirit, for then what seems hopeless can be

attained, if in the will of God. On Sept., 28th, 1916, I visited at Southampton a man of 68 years. He had been godless, but had a praying wife. He was in such extreme distress from what was diagnosed as the last stage of cancer that it appeared useless to talk with him. But I spoke to the effect that he had left his soul's affairs very late. If he had had property to leave he would have found it difficult to discuss business, but he could have said to his solicitor that he wished this and that done and would leave it to him to see to everything. Even so it was not possible to explain to him now the why and wherefore that the death of Christ avails to save sinners, but he could just tell the Lord Jesus that he would leave it to Him to be his Saviour. A few days later, being a little easier, he said that he had done this. It was not cancer, for six months later he was about again, and by then he had proved and shown that the Saviour had responded and had saved him from his sins.

There was another such case in Weston-super-Mare. A man sat in bed with heart disease, struggling for breath so desperately that it seemed idle to talk to him ; but the few words spoken were applied by the Spirit, and a later visit revealed that he had understood and believed unto salvation.

In all experience, personal or with others, it is not firstly a question of what the Christian can be or can do, but of what the Spirit of truth and power can do in him and through him. "Your labour is not vain in the Lord."

In October 1916 I was in the north of Ireland. It was travelling thither that I had as companion Edmund Hamer Broadbent. Very much developed out of the friendship then formed, as will be related.

In November 1918 the path led to Ayrshire, and visits to many towns in that county extended to April 1919. On 23rd December 1918 at Irvine occurred one of the most decisive battles of my life. Late in the evening, walking towards my lodging, I passed the cross roads at the centre of the town. Cold sleet was falling, yet the hardy Scots were loitering and talking. It occurred to me that if they could stand about in such inclement weather a preacher ought to be ready to tell them the gospel. But I had never stood alone to preach and there rose in my heart a furious battle as to doing so there and then. Well I knew that were I to shirk this task it would involve a heavy defeat and serious setback. For twenty minutes I walked up and down that dark street, the conflict raging and surging. Suddenly the Voice spoke, and said, "Go ye and preach . . . and lo ! *I am with you* all the days" (Matt. xxviii. 20). I was *not* alone. My mouth was opened ; with the first word the battle was won. Astonished at the sudden sound of an English voice the chatting ceased, the

people backed under doorways or against walls and listened. I went to my lodging more than conqueror through Him Who loved His foolish and feeble servant.

On New Year day 1919 friends took me to special meetings in an ancient town. The hall was large and was well filled. The brethren asked if I could have a week of meetings there and we started on January 11th, Saturday. That evening, the next day, and all the week numbers were good and the hearing excellent. It looked as if the assembly was healthy. But the skin may be pretty, yet the core unhealthy. In reality the condition was like that church the minister of which said that it was "looking up ; because it was lying on its back, and all it could do was to look up." Visitation soon revealed that there was much strife, personal, family, and in the church, and consequently the Spirit was grieved. But it pleased the Lord to work salvation ; healing set in. The leaders had the wisdom to see the hand of God and at their request we went on for over eight weeks. The Spirit of grace changed the whole situation, and the church is still vigorous after the intervening thirty-seven years.

At the close I said to myself, that had I been booked up for meetings many months ahead, as usually was the case, I could not have had this privilege ; and I resolved that, as the Lord was ready so to work when His servant was *really* at His ordering, there should be no further long-distance bookings for me, but I would follow guidance as it might be given, even were it from day to day. Since then my service has been one continuous experience of distinct guidance and perpetual working of the Holy Spirit. It had been thus in service in other lands ; now it became so in England, as it ought always to have been.

The New Testament makes clear that this was the method by which the Head of the church then controlled His work and workers. The closer we work to His own revealed ways the more He can use us. The merely human system of arranging for preachers which is now the rule, is a chief cause of the little unction felt and the poor effects mourned. A convener of an annual Conference asked me in March if I would be one of the speakers for the following May twelvemonth. I answered that I would if he could tell me how to find out where my Master would wish me to be next May twelvemonth, for I did not know how to find out. As he could not help in this the matter dropped. On no account could I consent to turn back from the way of the Lord to the human method of service. It is borrowed from the world and bears no relation to that manifesting of the presence of the Spirit of God which is a chief reason for the presence on earth of the church of God (I Cor. xii. 7).

But it requires faith to walk in the ways of the Lord ; faith in assemblies that the Lord will raise up or send in

suitable ministers of the truth, and faith in the preacher that his Master will keep him busy and will support him and his family in things temporal. Decline of such faith is evidenced in every forsaking of the way of the Lord and in resort to the ways of the world. That faith should grow exceedingly is therefore the cure for every evil. And faith feeds on the faithfulness of God. "Have faith in God" may mean "Hold to God's faithfulness" (Mark xi. 22).

The two months in question was one of the prominent occasions of spiritual advance on my part.

As there will not be occasion to speak again of that town I will bring forward here the mention of my next visit there. Twenty-three years passed before I felt any drawing to go again; but being in Cumberland in June 1942, and the cloud moving northward, I wrote to one of the brethren and said that, as I should be passing near, I would like to make a personal call by the way. Nothing was said as to meetings. The prompt reply was that the week proposed would be the Glasgow holiday week; their town would be crowded; they had arranged with one of the best known ministering brothers to give a series of Bible lectures; he had just then been obliged to cancel the visit; therefore my presence would be most welcome in his place. In the outcome this led to two and a half weeks of daily ministry, indoors and on the sea front. Christ's captive slave does not plan out his own service but is "led about in triumph" (II. Cor. ii. 14).

The first fortnight in April (1919) I spent cycling round the south west coast of Scotland. I had a meeting in a different place almost every night, but the real object of the tour was to visit as many churchyards as I could find where Covenanters were buried. It included Anwoth, the place of Samuel Rutherford's ministry, and Wigton, where the two Margarets were drowned rather than deny Christ. The tombstones bore regularly the like inscription, that the person was killed for maintaining the crown rights of Christ as Head of His church! That the Covenanters fought with carnal weapons was wrong, but they did know for what they were fighting! How many (or how few) to-day will be prepared to die by violence rather than abate the rights of Christ at the dictate of rulers? Let us face it. The test will yet come in England: perhaps in subtle form first, so as to beguile the weak and unwary; then by violence to break down, or destroy, the valiant soldiers of Christ.

August (1919) was the month for meetings on the sands at Weston-super-Mare. On the 7th there sat next to me a man, well-built and gentlemanly. On speaking to him I found he was a Christian. He desired intercourse and we met in the afternoon, when it transpired that he was a major in the Indian army, but a slave to women. He had come away from his own town to where he was unknown, so as to

escape the besetments of life. By the grace of God he came through into the liberty from the tyranny of the flesh which *death* grants, the death of Christ accepted by faith. And in this liberty he walked the many years we had contact.

On August 26th, 1922, there came suddenly a call to wholly unexpected service. We went on a visit to Mr. E. H. Broadbent's hospitable home at Gislingham, Suffolk. The car had but left the station on the way to the house when the first word he spoke was, "I have wanted to see you, because I think you could help in the work in Europe." Instantly my heart knew that this was of God, which was duly confirmed abundantly. The preparations for this new and extended service must begin a new chapter, but from November 18 to 23 I attended my first conference in Berlin and commenced much happy fellowship with brethren of that land.

I returned to London for a few days and was at my father's house in Bowes Park on Sunday, November 26th. The next day I was to leave for Norway, but it was clear that my father was dying. Being the eldest son I assured him that, if it would be any comfort to him that I should be at hand, I would willingly defer my departure. His reply was memorable, an evidence that Christ was, as ever, the major object of his heart. He replied: "Oh, no, my boy; the gospel needs you more than I do. You go, and may your work be blessed." And blest it was, beyond most periods of my life.

The next night, or the Tuesday, my only brother was with him from south London. Presently father said to him: "It is your prayer meeting at Lewisham tonight. I do not need you here. Go to the prayer meeting as usual."

Thus from his dying bed he sent one son to preach and the other to pray, and early the next morning, November 29th, he went to give account of himself to the Lord of his heart and life. He was within a fortnight of his eighty-fourth birthday. He died as he had lived.

*Teach me to live, that I may dread
The grave as little as my bed;
Teach me to die, that so I may
Rise glorious in the awful day.* (KEN)

Of my honoured father it was true that for him to live was Christ and to die was gain (Phil. i. 21).

*Let me die the death of the righteous,
And let my last end be like his.*
(Num. xxii. 10).

(To be continued)

THE DISCIPLE

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THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS

*In peace will I both lay me down and sleep:
For thou, Jehovah, alone makest me dwell in safety.* Ps. 4. 8.

The evening comes, the sun is sunk and gone,
And all things lie in stillness and in rest ;
And thou, my soul, for thee one rest alone
Remaineth ever, on the Father's breast.
The wanderer rests at last each weary limb ;
Birds to their nests return from heath and hill ;
The sheep are gathered from the pastures dim—
In thee, my God, my restless heart is still.
Lord, gather from the regions dim and far
Desires and thoughts that wandered far from Thee ;
To home and rest lead on, O guiding Star,
No other home or rest but God for me.
The daily toil of this worn body done,
The spirit for untiring work is strong ;
Still hours of worship and of love begun,
Of blessed vision and eternal song.
In darkness and in silence still and sweet,
With blessed awe my spirit feels Thee near ;
Within the Holiest, worships at Thy feet :
Speak Thou, and silence all my soul to hear.
To Thee my heart as incense shall arise ;
Consumed upon Thine altar all my will ;
Love, praise, and peace, an evening sacrifice,
And in the Lord I rest, and I am still.

(Gerhard Tersteegen).

The Editor offers to readers his Hearty Greetings for 1957.
May we all abide under The Shadow of His Wings and enjoy
rest of heart by day and by night.

THE SELF-LIMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD¹

Jesus Christ is the subject of the Christian faith, as He is the object of the Christian's trust. He Himself raised the cardinal question, "Who say ye that I am?" The only Christian answer is that made by Peter, "Thou [the man Jesus] art the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16. 15). The conjoint humanity and deity in one Person, Jesus, is the foundation truth of our faith. The following paper emphasizes one pregnant feature of the fact that God became man.

It has been said that :

Our Lord Jesus Christ from all eternity was equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. When He became man He necessarily brought His full Godhead into Manhood, for He could not change His Person, but He was pleased to impose such limitations upon Himself that He could declare He was dependent on His Father and did not know the time of His Second Advent. None other than a Divine Person could so suspend the exercise of His inherent omnipotence and omniscience, yet it was only through doing this that He became an example to us and gained that experience which now enables Him to sympathize with us.

Scripture teaches that this Divine Person *eternally existed in Godhead glory* (Phil. 2. 6 ; John 1. 2). Indeed He is spoken of as the actual Creator of the Universe, in Col. 1. 16 ; Heb. 1. 2 ; and John 1. 3. He, the Son, became Man (Phil. 2. 7 ; John 1. 14) being begotten of the Father (Heb. 1. 5) by the Spirit (Matt. 1. 20 ; Luke 1. 35), and born of a woman (Gal. 4. 4). He thus became the true Head of mankind (I Cor. 11. 3).

But it was *only the outward place* of equality with God which He relinquished in order to be made for a little time lower than the angels (Heb. 2. 7, R.V. ; Phil. 2. 7), so that He could say "My Father is greater than I" (John 14. 28).

It necessarily follows that in *the condition of Manhood* into which Christ entered, He must ever fulfil the true relationship of man to God, which is characterized by subjection and dependence, while in that very relationship

¹ This discussion, and that which follows on Mark 13. 32, formed a contribution to a doctrinal controversy of over thirty years ago.

displaying all that God is morally, for He is God. He necessarily retained His full Godhead with all its inherent attributes ... for He could not change His Person ; yet there could be nothing manifested in Him inconsistent with the place which He had thus voluntarily taken.

And again :

Even in resurrection Christ holds all His power and authority in delegation from the Father as Matt. 28. 18 shows. Rev. 5. 7, following I. 1, shows He received the book from the Father, which accords with Mark 13. 32, and Acts 1. 7. So long as He remains man, and this is to all eternity, He must ever be in entire dependence upon God.

And again :

In resurrection He received from His Father supreme authority and power and the glory He had had with Him before creation. But as He has retained His full Manhood He still takes a place of subjection to His Father, so that the unity of the Godhead be maintained, and He may be the Firstborn among many brethren to all eternity.

The essential matters here are two : It is declared (1) that our Lord, as to His experience during His life on earth, suspended the exercise of His inherent omnipotence and omniscience ; (2) that now in ascended glory the Son still " holds all His power and authority in delegation from the Father." To show that our Lord did not see fit to exercise His omnipotence, reliance is placed upon such passages as Christ's words : " The Son can do nothing of Himself " (John 5. 19); " an angel strengthened Him " (Luke 22. 43); " He was crucified through weakness " (II Cor. 13. 4). And that He had Himself voluntarily set a limit to His knowledge it is considered is shown by Mark 13. 32 and Matt. 24. 36: " Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."

1. Upon the statement by Christ Himself I would ask if the surface meaning does not seem to be, as is above averred, that there was one thing the Son did not know ? It is true that the real sense of Bible statements, as of Oriental teaching in general, has often to be sought beneath the surface and in conjunction with other passages on the same topic. But it happens in this case that there are no other passages upon the same subject; and the question arises: Are Divine statements ever so worded that the surface meaning presents a fundamental error ?

2. Does the statement that Christ did " suspend the exercise of His inherent omnipotence and omniscience " differ essentially from this other comment on Mark 13. 32, that Christ " had denied to Himself the knowledge of this one particular fact," that is, of the day and hour of His

second advent? The one explanation is that the Father had not at that time communicated to the Son the knowledge of that one fact; the other says that the Son had denied to Himself the knowledge of it. But surely one who has denied to himself the knowledge of one thing does not at the same moment know all things!

3. The direct negative of the view advocated makes me pause. Omniscience means knowing all things. If it is asserted that God is able to know all things, I say that this is indisputable; if it be asserted that He is not able not to know something, I ask: How is this impotence in God known thus positively? and how, then, is He omnipotent if He is not able fully to control His own mental processes by being not able to put out of His mind knowledge that it had, for here would be one seemingly legitimate thing God could not do? Besides, what says this four times repeated promise, twice made emphatic in Hebrews, "their sins will I in no wise remember any longer" (ou me . . . etc.)? Isa. 43. 25: Jer. 31. 34: Heb. 8. 12: 10. 17. I know these words are susceptible of another explanation, but, first, what do they say?

If it were suggested that God can forget as we do, from failure of memory, I would demur strongly, for it would deny His unfailing energy; but, if He assures me, or seems to assure me, that He will certainly cease to remember what I am only too thankful He should put for ever out of His mind, my sins, why should not my soul seize eagerly the fullest comfort which His words are capable of affording?

Does not the assertion that God cannot dispossess His memory of this or that information assume to the finite mind a fuller knowledge of the processes and possibilities of the interior working of the infinite Mind than it is entitled to assume? Omniscience as a capacity is an everlasting essential to Deity, but is knowing for ever every separate thing as a fact thus essential? Would God be any the less God if He can, and does, honour the blood of Jesus His Son so far as actually to put out of and never of Himself to recall to His memory certain facts of the past, to wit, my sins? I inquire: I do not assert.

I find that in writing thus upon one attribute of God, omniscience, I have approximated to what Dr. James Orr wrote on another attribute, omnipotence. In *Side-Lights on Christian Doctrine*, 26, he says:

Omnipotence in God does not mean an absolute *quantum* of power, but an exhaustless potency of power—a possibility in the exercise of power to which no limits can be set; a power which can do everything which is a possibility of power, and that endlessly. This is still plainer in the moral perfections. Infinite holiness or love is not a boundless *quantum* of holiness or of love, but a holiness and love which qualitatively are free from all

limitation and defect. Perhaps we may say that infinity in God is ultimately : (a) internally and qualitatively, absence of all limitation and defect ; (b) boundless potentiality.

Applied to omniscience, this would mean a necessary capacity for knowing everything, but not that the *quantum* of the Divine knowledge should of necessity always be exactly one and the same, the absolute sum total of all fact, past, present, and future. If the pre-incarnate Son necessarily knew all things absolutely why did He say to Abraham, " Because the cry of [=report concerning] Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto Me, and if not I will know " (Gen. 18. 20, 21) ? It would seem that omniscience, as defined by many, that is, absolute omniscience of facts, could not make a personal local inspection in order to know. But may not He Who is omniscient in capacity choose to learn in fact by this or that means, as pleases Him ? for example, either by the immediate perception of His own universal Spirit, or by hearkening to reports from His angelic servants, or by a personal visit to the scene of action. Does Scripture assert that God is of unavoidable necessity bound to know everything, and that eternally, by the first of these three methods ? God has restrained the exercise of His omnipotence, and " suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways " (Acts 14. 16) : why may not He restrain the exercise of His omniscience, so as not to know anything He chooses not to know ?

It is necessary to attribute indivisibility to the three Persons of the Godhead, or there would be three Gods ; it is equally necessary to attribute to each a real individuality, or God would be only one Person, not a Trinity. But individuality in the Godhead (as we see in fact) allows of one Person acting while another Person is not acting in that same matter ; e.g., The Father sent the Son ; He did not Himself come : or again, the Son became incarnate and human, died, returned to life, ascended where He was before, none of which acts was the experience of the Father or the Spirit. But since individuality in Deity thus allows of one Person doing what another Person is not doing, why may it not admit that one Person may know what, at the moment, another Person does not know ? Yet the capacity for action and for knowledge is equal in each Person ; there is but one infinite energy or infinite mind, possessed equally by each Person, though exercised by each in separate degree as He pleases.

4. Again, the assertion that it is not possible for God to dispossess His mind of certain items of knowledge seems to depend upon *a priori* reasonings of the human mind, since, so far as my poor finite memory can recollect, no Divine state-

ment to that effect is available. It seems to us inconceivable that God should not know everything. We reason, therefore, that absolute omniscience in matters of fact is of the essence of Deity.

But if we knew nothing of the Incarnation, might we not reason thus as touching other perfections of Deity which the Son of God did in fact forgo? "God is Light"—the verb is emphatic: "The words are designed to give us some conception of His Being . . . Physically, 'light' embodies the idea of splendour, glory" (*Westcott*, on I John 1. 5). Now of this divine glory the Son from all eternity was the effulgence, the raying forth (Heb. 1. 3); it was that glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 17. 5), which glory is peculiar to and proper to Deity. Reasoning as above indicated, should we not have said that he who should be without it would not be God? Yet the Son dispossessed Himself thereof without diminishing His Deity. To this idea the Incarnation has familiarized us, but I venture to think it, in itself, equally difficult of *a priori* apprehension.

Again, immortality, incapacity of dying, is a *peculium* of Deity (if I may elevate this expressive term from the lowest to the highest possible use). Of it God is the sole inherent possessor: "Who only hath immortality" (I Tim. 6. 16).¹

Prior to the Incarnation, or at least prior to Isaiah's prophecies, should we not have reasoned that God could not dispossess Himself of this indispensable element? Yet the Son of God died, for "we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. 5. 10), and in Himself He was just as fully the Son of God in death as before the cross or after the resurrection.

These reflections make one hesitate to say that this or that action is not possible to God, or to declare my brother a heretic if he differs from me upon such profound subjects.

4. But this at least is certain, that many distinguished, able, and truly orthodox teachers have held views identical with or similar to those above quoted. There may be cited to this effect Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Dr. A. T. Pierson, Sir Robert Anderson, Lord Congleton, H. W. Soltau, J. N. Darby, William Kelly, Bishop Ellicott, Dr. Hoyt, and Dr. Alexander Whyte. To this goodly list may be added, upon Mark 13. 32, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzus, Cyril of Alexandria, of the ancients, with Bishop Bull and the celebrated Hooker, of the Reformation school in England, all cited by Liddon in his *Divinity Lectures*. Also Liddon himself, Tregelles, Handley Moule of Durham, Olshausen, Calvin, Bengel, Stier, Alford, Bloomfield, Neander, Plumtre,

¹ "Immortal soul," "never-dying soul," are unscriptural expressions, and therefore erroneous. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The soul (the person) exists for ever, but either with life or in death. Endless conscious existence is the truth as to man; "life" and "death" are the terms that describe the condition in which he exists.

Sadler, Nolloth, Luckock, Tillotson, Orr, C. A. Chadwick. All these and others accept as fact that our Lord did not know the day and hour of His advent, though the explanations offered vary.

I pass to the second point, the doctrine of the eternal subjection and dependence of the Son.

1. It is to be observed that it does not trench upon the truth of the proper and eternal Deity of the Son of God. It is admitted that our Lord in resurrection possesses and exercises the fulness of the divine powers without limitation : but some hold He does this by resumption of His original rights as God the Son, whereas others say that, because He is still, and eternally also Man, and because man must ever be dependent upon the Father, therefore Christ holds those powers from the Father. The primary fact that He does hold all divine attributes is not in question, but only the subordinate matter of the mode of His doing so.

Now only God is competent to exercise the powers of God. A finite being is not able to bear or to use infinite powers. It is therefore necessarily impossible that the Father could delegate the divine attributes to any one less than God. Therefore the assertion that Christ does in fact hold all these powers includes the assertion of His Deity. Is not this the Rock upon which the church is being built (Matt. 16. 15-18) ? and before God is not he of the church who confesses it ? Where does Scripture lay down that this confession is nullified by one holding the doctrine of the permanent subjection and dependence of the Son ? Is it foreign to the surface meaning of I Cor. 15. 28 ? That passage says that " when all things have been subjected unto the Son [which is ' the end,' verse 24], then [that is, in the future that follows on from ' the end '] shall the Son Himself be subjected to him that did subject all things under him, that God may be all in all."

2. It will be profitable to consider what the Son is stated to have received from the Father.

(1) His humanity : " a body didst THOU prepare for me " (Heb. 10. 5). (2) Power of self-existence : " For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself " (John 5. 26). (3) Authority—never granted to any other person—to lay down His life by His own will : " I have authority to lay it down." (4) Authority—possessed by no other man—to recall from God His spirit (as well as to dismiss it to the Father, Luke 23. 46 : John 19. 30 : " he gave up his spirit ") : " I have authority to take it [my life] again. This commandment I received from my Father " (John 10. 18). (5) Power to judge : " The Father gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is Son of Man " (John 5. 27). (6) Power to raise the dead (John 5. 25), a consequence of having " life in Himself"—observe the " For " commencing verse 26. (7) The knowledge

of what the Father does : “ The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth ” (John 5. 20). The rest of this verse requires particular notice : “ and greater works than these will [the Father] shew him,” which words extend into the future the principle which operated whilst He was on earth, that what works the Son will hereafter do will be still such as the Father will shew Him, for those works (as the continuing verses prove) will include the final raising and judging of the dead. This suggests continuity of the terms of relationship between the Father and the Son, rather than a post-resurrection alteration therein.

Thus (not to extend the list into the details of practical life) the Son received from the Father (1) His humanity ; (2) power over His own life ; (3) power to give resurrection life to others ; (4) “ all authority in heaven and on earth,” extending even to being the universal judge ; (5) power to know and to do the works of the Father. Now each and all of these possessions and powers the Son retains in ascended glory, and the question arises :—

Does Scripture say, and, if so, where, that consequent upon and at resurrection the Son ceased to hold these as conferments from the Father and resumed enjoyment of them by pre-incarnation rights ?

Numerous considerations must have weight.

(a) He cannot have taken His humanity into heaven by resumption of original rights, for originally He had no humanity.

(b) The eternal retention of humanity cannot but maintain some external difference between His former and His present conditions. For example, He has not resumed the “ form of God ” in which He formerly was (Phil. 2. 6), but now bears the glory of God in His human body (Col. 2. 9 : II Cor. 4. 4, 5). Thus, abstractly considered, the notion of difference between the pre-incarnate and the post-resurrection conditions of the Son is true.

(c) On the supposition that the Son could have and had returned to the Father without the humanity He had assumed, no other supposition than a resumption of His former conditions would seem to be possible. But on what grounds, by what rights, has manhood any place at all in the heavens (for man was made for the earth), least of all on the very throne of God in the highest heaven ? The Scripture answers this by a heavy emphasis on His humanity rather than His Deity, and on what He did on earth as Man.

Isa. 53. 12 : “ *therefore* will I divide Him a portion with the great . . . *because* He poured out His soul unto death.” Phil. 2. 8, 9 : “ He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. *Wherefore* also God highly exalted Him . . . that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” Heb. 2. 9 : “ We behold . . . JESUS, *because of* the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour.”

Rev. 5. 9, 12 : “ Worthy art thou . . . *for* thou wast slain . . . worthy is the LAMB that hath been slain.”

In this He is the example and encouragement for His followers, for “ it is if we endure [that] we shall also reign with Him.” they who continued with Him in His earthly trials shall sit with Him at His [the chief] table in His kingdom and shall sit on thrones judging : “ He that overcometh I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne ” (II Tim. 2. 12 : Luke 22. 28-30 : Rev. 3. 21).

It would seem that emphasis upon the true humanity of our Lord, and its proper implications, is at least as urgent a need as a just insistence upon His Deity.

(d) The possession of life in Himself (John 5. 26) being necessarily an everlasting benefit, does it not follow that for evermore the Son will enjoy this at least on its original condition, that is, as a gift from the Father? And if this mighty, unique, divine privilege, why not others ?

(e) The testimony of Scripture is explicit upon some supreme aspects of the Son in resurrection glory. His universal sovereignty is a gift : “ All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and earth ” (Matt. 28. 18). As regards the entire universe of created things over which He will exercise that authority we read : “ The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand ” (John 3. 35). Concerning the future actual securing of His rights over this earth, it is said to the Son in resurrection by the Father : “ *Ask of ME*, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession ” (Ps. 2. 8). All this is in pursuance of that act of the Father which preceded creation, when “ He appointed the Son heir of all things ” (Heb. 1. 2). For the pre-eminence of the Son is not an after-thought, but a primary purpose of the Father in creating a universe ; neither is it a post-incarnation feature that the Son acquires the inheritance by the will and gift of the Father.

But if the universal kingdom and the divine authority over it be thus received by the Son from the Father, why should it be thought derogatory to the Son to derive also from the Father the infinite knowledge and infinite power necessary to administer such a kingdom ?

As to the days of His flesh, He Himself has told us that any judgment He formed He formed upon data supplied by the Father : “ I can of myself do nothing : as I hear I judge ” (John 5. 30). “ The judgment of the Son is based upon the perfect knowledge of the thoughts of the Father, as the action of the Son is based upon the perfect vision of His works ” (ver. 19), (Westcott, *in loco*). Now a right judgment is formed by (a) a correct knowledge of facts, (b) a true appreciation of them. So that Christ tells us that it was from the Father that He derived both information and under-

standing. It followed that speech thus originated was from the Father : “ I spake not from myself . . . the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak ” (John 12. 49, 50). And as with His words, so with His works, He attributes the doing of them to the Father, not to any underived energy or wisdom of His own : “ Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? the words that I say unto you I speak not from myself : but the Father abiding in me doeth His works ” (John 14. 10).

The question may be asked : Seeing that it in no wise impaired the Godhead of Christ to receive all that has been before specified by delegation from the Father during a period of thirty-three years, how should it impair His Godhead thus to receive all for, say, thirty-three billions of years, or eternally ?

Surely Westcott is right that “ The very idea of Sonship involves (in some sense) that of dependence. There is but one ‘ fountain ’ of Deity ” (John 5. 30). And if one avows belief that that dependence is as real and as full eternally in heaven as it was in time on earth, this does not detract from the essential Deity or glory of the incarnate Son ?

This leads to the matter of the pre-incarnate relations of the Father and the Son. Two statements of the Son are notable.

1. John 5. 19. The Lord prefaced this word with the solemn “ Verily, verily I say unto you, The Son is not able to do anything from Himself ” (*ap' autou*). This self-declared limitation is no matter for surprise. Had the Son ever originated any action independently of the Father there would have been a breach in the unity of the Godhead, which is impossible. Therefore the Son *can* do only “ what He seeth the Father doing ” : here is subordination and dependence. But then further, “ what things soever the Father doeth, these the Son also doeth in like manner : ” here is the precedence of the Father, but here also is the equality of the Son in capacity, for He can do all things without exception that the Father does ; and here is utter fidelity in co-operation, for the Son's action corresponds exactly to that of the Father, it is done “ in like manner.”

2. John 5. 25, 26. It is a wondrous scene. A real man, speaking on earth, declares unequivocally that He has power to raise the dead, that “ they shall hear the voice of the Son of God ” and shall start into life. The nature of this authority, and the source of the power to exert it, is this : “ For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so the Son also He gave to have life in Himself.”

The life principle and energy, the existence of the Father is absolute, not derived or contingent. He does not owe His existence to any other being, nor can any one impair or

terminate it. The Father has no father : He has life in Himself, is self-existent. This inherent and essential quality of Deity the Father communicated to the Son. The first emphasis, by position in the sentence, is upon the Person to whom the gift was granted : it was to the Son, and to no one else. To make this grant to any other would be to incorporate him into the Godhead, which cannot be.

This gift of self-existence causes the Son also to be superior to all persons and conditions. Therefore He could say of His life that "no one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (John 10. 17-19). His death could be atoning only by being voluntary. But clearly this independence of all cannot include independence of the Father. For it being a gift, the life of the Son is derived from and dependent upon the Father.

When was this gift conferred ? If it was at some distinct point in time, then prior to that point the Son was without this quality essential to Deity and could not have been God. This would establish the central idea of every type of Unitarianism, that the Son had a beginning. But in that case the grant of self-existence to the Son would have incorporated a creature into the Godhead, which we have just noted is impossible. It would entirely nullify the Bible revelation of God as a Being distinct from, and independent of all creatures, for a creature would have become equal to, indeed, part of the Creator. Therefore this grant to the Son of self-existence must have been ever a fact in the eternal relations of the Persons of the Deity.

Thus it is an eternal fact of the Deity that the Son derives life from the Father, is dependent upon Him, and in this respect is subordinate to Him. But, on the other hand, by this supreme grant of having life in Himself the Son is indissolubly one with the Father, is equally God with the Father, and is uniquely the "only begotten Son," since He alone derives life directly from the Father, whereas all others derive life through the Son.

Hence the Lord pressed upon men the inevitable consequence that it is the determination of the Father that all shall honour the Son even as they honour the Father, and that therefore he who honours not the Son with such honour, honours not the Father who sent the Son (John 5. 23). Here is exposed the vanity and sin of all pretence to honour the Father while refusing equal honour to the Son.

The Lord's hearers that day had perceived perfectly justly that the Speaker was making himself equal with God (ver. 18). He was ; it was exactly what He was doing, and was doing so with perfect right, for He *is* equal with God, though dependent upon the Father, and in the inner harmony of the Godhead is subordinate to the Father. Clearly Westcott's statement already quoted is true : "The very idea of Sonship involves (in some sense) that of dependence. There is but

one 'fountain' of Deity" (John 5. 30).

The two ideas are combined in the incarnation: The Father's action; "a body didst THOU prepare for Me" (Heb. 10. 5): the Son's corresponding action; "He emptied Himself, *taking* the form of a slave (Phil. 2. 7); thus in his humanity exhibiting, emphasizing, and enlarging *The Self-limitation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

And thus to all His creatures, heavenly and earthly, He displayed the basic moral principle of the universe that it is "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and thus He "left us an example that we should follow His steps."

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (11), Mark 13. 32.¹

But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. (Matt. 24. 36).

QUOTATIONS FROM DIVINES

It is the glory of God that He subdues evil to promote good: "Ye meant evil; but God meant it for good" (Gen. 50. 20). Controversy regarding the omniscience of Christ has constrained many to deeper thought and better understanding concerning His Person as the God-man. This is for good; and if thereby any be excited to a more thorough study of the deeper teachings of the Faith in general, further great gain will accrue. Urgent need exists that younger brethren should qualify as teachers, as true doctors of divinity. There is much shallow talking, evidencing a want of careful research; often a dogmatic asserting that texts mean this or that which students know they cannot mean. A late teacher once said to me that the inexact treatment of Holy Scripture he sometimes heard reminded him of the schoolboy's answer to the Inspector's question: "Who was the most merciful man?"—"Please, sir, Og, King of Bashan: for his mercy endureth for ever"! (Ps. 136. 20).

In time, and yet more in the eternal kingdom, profound study of the truth will repay a young man a thousandfold, even if he must for this forgo special secular studies, degrees, and monetary prospects in this fleeting world. He will acquire wealthy store of the true riches, will enrich others, and will count for much in the kingdom of God.

But not all can have many books. Hence, for aiding the earnest in a study of Mark 13. 32, I have collected the following (among other) statements by competent divines, all of whom, it will be seen, are upholders of the true doctrine of the proper Godhead and proper humanity of Christ. These will show what various opinions upon the matter of His knowledge in the days of His flesh have been held, and

¹ This paper was a contribution to a controversy of over thirty years ago. It has been now curtailed by the omission of a number of quotations.

rightly tolerated, all through the Christian centuries.

The explanations offered may be thus classified :—

(1) That our Lord really knew the time of His return, but as the teacher He said He did not know, because it was not then the occasion to tell the disciples. (See Wordsworth, Extract 1). Dean Alford describes this not too strongly as an evasion. It comes not far short of imputing to our Lord prevarication.

(2) That in the fact our Lord, in the background of His mind, in the reserves of His knowledge, did know, but that He chose not to bring the information into His conscious mental vision at the moment, and so said He did not know. (See Lange, Extract 2). Stier and others rightly reject this view also. It does not fit Christ's plain words, and is too much like Nelson at Copenhagen putting (as is said) his telescope to his blind eye and saying he could not see the senior admiral's flag order to retire.

(3) The third opinion is that as God Christ knew, but as Man He did not know. This view commands able and ancient support ; see Extracts 3 to 5, especially the last by Liddon. Its difficulties are mainly two : (1) As to the text, our Lord did not say that the Son of Man did not know, but simply "the Son," including Himself with men and angels in the contrast with the Father as the only One who knew. (2) Theologically, the explanation (in spite of Liddon's efforts) runs near the ancient and fatal error of dividing the personality of Christ into two, of separating the Deity from the Humanity in such degree that He ceases to be one Individual, though with two conjoined natures. Compare Lord Congleton Extract 17.

(4) The only remaining method is to accept the simple sense of Christ's statement that, without reservation, He, the Son, did not know that day or hour. This implies a then existing limitation of our Lord's knowledge as to that one matter at least. The remainder of the Extracts adopt this view in essence. See, e.g., Moule, Extract 6. Some suggest explanations ; some, like Tregelles (Extract 21), leave untouched the question "How?" while unreservedly accepting the fact.

The Extracts with an asterisk (*) prefixed I have taken from books and have not myself checked.

EXTRACTS

1. Bishop Wordsworth, *Commentary*, ed. 6, 1868, pp. 89, 146. Various Latin quotations omitted.

Matt. 24. 36. The Father only knows that day ; an assertion which does not exclude the Son of God from that knowledge, as the *Agnœiæ* imagined. Christ does not know it as Man, and it is not His office to declare it, as Son of God. See on Mark 13. 32.

By saying that the Angels do not know it, He checked the disciples from desiring to know it. He knew that they

would be inquisitive concerning it, and restrains their curiosity. The times and seasons are in the Father's own power, and they are not therefore for the Son to "reveal." It is in this sense only that He says they are not known by Him (Chrys. citing Luke 10. 22).

The Arians say, that the Son cannot be equal with the Father, if the Son does not know what the Father knows. To whom we reply that by the Son all things were made (John 1. 3) ; and therefore all times are made by Him, and all things are delivered to Him of the Father (Matt. 11. 27), and all the treasures of wisdom are hid in Him (Col. 2. 3). And when He says that it is not for His Apostles to know the times and seasons which the Father has put in His own power (Acts 1. 7), He intimates that He Himself knows them ; but it is not expedient for the Apostles to know them, in order that, being always uncertain when the judge will come, we may so live every day as if we were to be judged on that day (Jerome, see v. 42).

Mark 13. 32, *nor yet the Son*. A sentence perverted by the Arians and Agnoetae, affirming that Christ's knowledge, not only as Son of Man (cf. Luke 2. 52), but as Son of God, was limited.

The sense appears to be,—The Son, Who is the Eternal Logos, or Word, the "Dei Legatus," and so the only Minister and Messenger of Divine Revelation to man, does not know it so as to reveal it to you ; it is no part of His Prophetical office to do so.

2. J. P. Lange, D.D., *Commentary*, vol. iii., 441. (T. & T. Clarke, 1880).

Neither the Son. Athanasius says, Jesus did not know as a human being ; Augustine, He did not know it to impart it to His disciples . . . We admit that the Son, as God-man, knew not that day in His present daily consciousness, because He willed not to pass beyond the horizon of His daily task to reflect upon that day ; because He preferred, accordingly, the encircling horizon of His holy, energetic observation and knowledge, which widened from day to day, to a discursive, pedantic polyhistory, or supernatural pretention of knowing everything, the sombre opposite of dynamic omniscience. Self-limitation in the knowledge of all chronological, geographical, and similar matters is quite different from "limitation" of Jesus' omniscience, arising from the union of His divine and human natures.

Vol. ii., 370 : *Knoweth no man but the Father only*. "This excludes the Son also" (Mark 13. 32) whose not knowing "Lange regards as a sacred willing not to know" (Meyer). Sartorius has rightly understood and explained this. The Son would not prematurely reflect upon that point as a chronological point of time, and the Church in that should imitate Him.

3. Bishop Harold Browne, *Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles*, III.

It has been seen that in His human nature our Lord was capable of knowledge and ignorance. He was perfect Man as well as perfect God, and He grew in Wisdom as well as in stature (Luke 2. 52). In that nature, then, in which He was capable of ignorance, He, when He was on earth, knew not the coming of the day of God. Though He is Himself to come ; yet as Man He knew not the day of His coming. This is indeed a great mystery, that that Manhood, which is taken into one Person with the Godhead of the Son, should be capable of not knowing everything, seeing that God the Son is omniscient. But it is scarcely more inexplicable than that God the Son in His Manhood should be weak, passible, and mortal, who in His Godhead is omnipotent, impassible, and immortal. If we believe the one we can admit the other.

4. Blomfield, *Commentary on Matt. 24. 36.*

That the Son should not know the precise time of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of the end of the world, ought not to be drawn as an argument to prove the mere humanity of Christ ; the expression having reference solely to His human nature, since, though, as Son of God, He was omniscient, as Son of Man He was not so. See Calvin, and Smith's *Scrip. Test.*, iii., 331, et seq.

5. Canon Liddon, *The Divinity of our Lord*, 458, et seq.

But it may be pleaded that our Lord, in declaring His ignorance of the day of the last judgment, does positively assign a specified limit to the knowledge actually possessed by His human soul during His ministry. "Of that day," He says, "and that hour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

"If these words," you urge, "do not refer to His ignorance as God, they must refer to His ignorance in the only other possible sense, that is, to say, to His ignorance as Man."

Of what nature, then, is the "ignorance" to which our Lord alludes in this much-controverted text? Is it a real matter-of-fact ignorance, or is it an ignorance which is only ideal and hypothetical? Is it an ignorance to which man, as man, is naturally subject, but to which the soul of Christ, the Perfect Man, was not subject, since His human intelligence was always illuminated by an infused omniscience? or is it an economical as distinct from a real ignorance? Is it the ignorance of the teacher, who withholds from his disciples a knowledge which he actually possesses, but which it is not for their advantage to acquire? or is it the ignorance which is compatible with implicit knowledge? Does Christ implicitly know the date of the day of judgment, yet, that He may rebuke the

forwardness of His disciples, does He refrain from contemplating that which is potentially within the range of His mental vision? Is He deliberately turning away His gaze from the secrets which are open to it, and which a coarse, earthly curiosity could have greedily and quickly investigated?

With our eye upon the literal meaning of our Lord's words, must we not hesitate to accept any of these explanations? It is indeed true that to many very thoughtful and saintly minds, the words, "neither the Son," have not appeared to imply any "ignorance" in the Son, even as Man. But antiquity does not furnish any decisive consent in favour of this belief; and it might seem, however involuntarily, to put a certain force upon the direct sense of the passage...

"At any rate," you rejoin, "if our Lord's words are to be taken literally, if they are held to mean that the knowledge of His human soul is in any degree limited, are we not in danger of Nestorian error.¹ Does not this conjunction of 'knowledge' and 'ignorance' in one Person, and with respect to a single subject, dissolve the unity of the God-man? Is not this intellectual dualism inconsistent with any conception we can form of a single personality?"...

The question to be considered, my brethren, is whether such an objection has not a wider scope than you intend. Is it not equally valid against other and undisputed contrasts between the Divine and Human natures of the Incarnate Son? For example, as God, Christ is omnipresent; as Man, He is present at a particular point in space. Do you say that this, however mysterious, is more conceivable than the co-existence of ignorance and knowledge with respect to a single subject in a single personality? Let me then ask whether this co-existence of ignorance and knowledge is more mysterious than the co-existence of absolute blessedness and intense suffering?...If Jesus, as Man, did not enjoy the Divine attribute of perfect blessedness, yet without prejudice to His full possession of it, as God; why could He not, in like manner, as Man, be without the Divine attribute of perfect knowledge? If as He knelt in Gethsemane, He was in one sphere of existence All-blessed, and in another "sore amazed, very heavy, sorrowful even unto death;" might He not in equal truth be in one Omniscient, and in the other subject to limitations of knowledge?...

No such limitation, we may be sure, can interfere with the completeness of His redemptive office. It cannot be supposed to involve any ignorance of that which the

¹ Nestorius (early century 4) taught that Christ had two separate personalities, the divine and the human, with a single consciousness, instead of the orthodox doctrine of one Person with two natures.

Teacher and Saviour of mankind should know ; while yet it suffices to place Him as Man with a perfect sympathy with the actual conditions of the mental life of His brethren.

If then this limitation of our Lord's human knowledge be admitted, to what does the admission lead ? It leads, properly speaking, to nothing beyond itself. It amounts to this : that at the particular time of His speaking the Human Soul of Christ was restricted as to Its range of knowledge in one particular direction.

For it is certain from Scripture that our Lord was constantly giving proofs, during His earthly life, of an altogether superhuman range of knowledge...

If that statement [respecting the day of judgment] be construed literally, it manifestly describes, not the normal condition of His Human Intelligence, but an exceptional restriction. For the Gospel history implies that the knowledge infused into the human soul of Jesus was ordinarily and practically equivalent to omniscience...

If then His Human Intellect, flooded as it was by the infusion of boundless light streaming from His Deity, was denied, at a particular time, knowledge of the date of a particular future event, this may well be compared with that deprivation of the consolations of Deity, to which His Human Affections and Will were exposed when He hung dying on the Cross...

We may not attempt rashly to specify the exact motive which may have determined our Lord to deny to His human soul at one particular date the point of knowledge here in question ; although we may presume generally that it was a part of that condescending love which led Him to become " in all things like unto His brethren." That He was ever completely ignorant of ought else, or that He was ignorant on this point at any other time, are inferences for which we have no warrant, and which we make at our peril.

Note to p. 469 : If a human teacher were to decline to speak on a given subject, by saying that he did not know enough about it, this would not be a reason for disbelieving him when he proceeded to speak confidently on a totally distinct subject, thereby at least implying that he did know enough to warrant his speaking. On the contrary, his silence in the one case would be a reason for trusting his statements in the other.

6. Bishop Handley Moule, *Outlines of Christian Doctrine*, The Doctrine of the Son, 63.

(8) We read in the phenomena of the Gospels the truth that our Incarnate Lord, whatever the conditions of His humiliation, still was always God as truly as Man, and Man as truly as God. Real temptations, real hunger, thirst, and surprise, leave Him still able to offer rest to all the weary of mankind ; to assert His own eternity

and His eternal being in heaven (John 3. 13) ; to exercise omniscience as far as He wills.¹ In Him full Godhead and full Manhood were always present, in harmony.

As regards Luke 2. 52, the "increase in wisdom" no more implies stages of defective wisdom than the "increase in favour with God" implies stages of defective favour. What is implied is developed application to developed subject matter. Compare by all means Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, Lect. viii.

7. Dean Alford, *Commentary*, vol. i., ed. 6.

P. 245, on Matt. 24. 36 : The very important addition to this verse in Mark, and in some ancient MSS. here, *neither the Son*, is indeed included in *but My Father only*, but could hardly have been inferred from it, had it not been expressly stated : Ch. 20. 23. All attempts to soften or explain away this weighty truth must be resisted ; it will not do to say with some Commentators, "*nescit ea nobis*" [that is, His knowledge is not our concern], which, however well meant, is a mere evasion :—in the course of humiliation undertaken by the Son, in which He increased in wisdom (Luke 2. 52), learned obedience (Heb. 5. 8), uttered desires in prayer (Luke 6. 12, etc.)—*this matter was hidden from Him*: and as I have already remarked, this is carefully to be borne in mind, in explaining the prophecy before us.

P. 409, on Mark 13. 32 : This is, one of those things which the Father hath put in His own power (Acts 1. 7), and with which *the Son*, in His mediatorial office, is not acquainted : see on Matt. We must not deal unfaithfully with a plain and solemn assertion of our Lord (and what can be more so than *neither the Son*, in which by the *neither* He is *not below* but *above* the angels?) by such evasions as "He does not know it so as to *reveal* it to us" (Wordsworth) . . . Of such a sense there is not a hint in the context ; nay, it is altogether alien from it. The account given by the orthodox Lutherans, as represented by Meyer, that our Lord knew this *kata kteesin* [that is, as regards right of possession], but not *kata chreesin* [that is, as a matter of use], is right enough if at the same time it is carefully remembered that it was this . . . *kteesis* of which He emptied Himself when He became Man for us, and which it belongs to the very essence of His mediatorial

¹ Mark 13. 32 is quoted as invalidating His perfect knowledge. It no doubt limits His knowledge on that one point. But the very phrase from His lips looks like an implicit claim to knowledge otherwise complete. And the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship, in the Gospels, makes it surely inconceivable that even that limitation of conscious knowledge should be imposed on the Son because of limitation of capacity. It was for unknown purposes of dispensation ; and it was the one thing of the kind. The Christian who deals eclectically with any positive statement of His, about fact as well as about principle, is on very dangerous ground indeed.

kingdom to hold in subjection to the Father.

8. Calvin, *Commentary*, iii., 153 (ed. Calv. Transn. Socy., 1846).

I have no doubt that He refers to His office appointed to Him by the Father, as in a former instance, when He said that it did not belong to Him to place this or that person at His right or left hand (Matt. 20. 23 ; Mark 10. 40). For (as I explained under that passage) He did not absolutely say that this was not in His power, but the meaning was that He had not been sent by the Father with this commission, so long as He lived among mortals. So now I understand that, so far as He had come down to us to be mediator, until He had fully discharged His office, that information was not given to Him which He received after His resurrection ; for then He expressly declared that power over all things had been given to Him (Matt. 28. 18).

9. Neander, *Life of Christ*, 406 (ed. Bohn, 1869).

Christ Himself says (Matt. 24. 36 ; Mark 13. 32) that the day and hour of the final decision are known only to the counsels of the Father, and, as it would be trifling to refer this to the precise "day and hour," rather than to the time in general, it could not have been His purpose to give definite information on the subject. To know the *time* pre-supposed a knowledge of the hidden causes of events, of the actions and reactions of free beings, a prescience which none but the Father could have ; unless we suppose, what Christ expressly denies, that He had received it by a special Divine revelation. Not that He could err, but that His knowledge was conscious of its limits ; although He knew the progress of events, and saw the slow course of their development, as no mortal could.

10. J. A. Bengel, *Gnomon*, I, 562, 563, (ed. Clarke, 1877).

Mark 13. 32, *neither the Son . . .* Moreover, both in the twelfth year of His age and subsequently, "Jesus increased in wisdom" (Luke 2. 52) : and the accessions of wisdom which He then gained, He had not had before. Since this was not unworthy of Him, it was also not even necessary for Him in teaching to know already at that time the one secret reserved to the Father.

11. Rudolf Stier, Dr. Theol., *The Words of the Lord Jesus*, III., 295-297 (Clarke, 1856).

Matt. 24. 36 : Christ having come thus far, now in the first place again connects together the last day of His coming with that announced at ver. 30, comprising them in the one *that day*, and assures us that His people shall indeed perceive the being near at the doors, but that the exact determination of the time (for this is what is meant by *and hour*) is and remains what the Father alone reserves for Himself. Not even "the decree of the watchers" in

heaven (Dan. 4. 10, 17), who know of many a time and hour, knows this day, but the Father alone, in the reserved, eternal decree : what a word against all such apocalyptic curiosity as degenerates into special reckonings of time ! . . . The Son also knew not—He said of so important a thing as this : I also know it not...

He does not say : This I have not to tell you, I know it not for you—but the Son knows it not, thus He speaks of Himself simply as of the Father and the angels. Here again to have recourse to the artificial distinction that as man He knew it not, although as God He knew it—such knowing and not knowing at the same time, severs the unity of the God-human person, and is impossible in the Son of Man, who is the Son indeed, but emptied of His glory.

12. *Dean Plumtre, *Ellicott's Commentary*. The Four Gospels, 226, in loco.

The passage indicates the self-imposed limitation of the divine attributes which had belonged to our Lord, as the eternal Son, and the acquiescence in a power and knowledge which, like that of the human nature which He assumed, was derived and therefore finite. Such a limitation is implied by St. Paul when he says of our Lord “ being in the form of God . . . He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant.”

13. Bishop Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*. (Oxford University Press).

. . . Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (Luke 2. 52) ; one in respect of His body, the other of His soul. Wisdom belongeth not to the flesh, nor can the knowledge of God, which is infinite, increase : he then whose knowledge did improve together with his years, must have a subject proper for it, which was no other than a human soul. This was the seat of his finite understanding and directed will . . . (Vol. 1, page 285).

14. Dr. A. T. Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs*.

God is omnipresent ; yet here is God submitting to the laws and limits of a human body, which can occupy but one space at any one time, and must, by the law of locomotion, take time for a transfer from place to place. God is omniscient ; yet here is a being claiming equality with Jehovah, yet affirming there are some things which as man, and even as Messiah, He knows not. God is omnipotent, yet the God-man says He “ can do nothing of himself,” and that it is God dwelling in Him that “ doeth the works ” (p. 236).

“ He emptied Himself ” of His divine glory, and laid His divine attributes, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, under temporary, voluntary limitations ; it was part of His humiliation that He condescended to human infirmities, to accept as His lot human want and woe, so far as consistent for a sinless man (p. 246).

15. *Canon Nolloth, *Person of our Lord* (Macmillan & Co.), 1908.

If we find that our Lord does not know something, it is not for us to suggest that, in a sense, He does know it, because the theory which we have adopted regarding His knowledge seems to require some such "Vermittlungshypothese" [mediating (or accommodating) hypothesis]. Any view of His Person which can only be consistently maintained by the omission or neglect of something which is authentically reported of Him, stands self-condemned. It is not the Gospel view.

Two facts come out clearly in the Synoptic narrative.

Our Lord's knowledge is infallible, unerring. But it is limited. There is no contradiction in these two statements. To be infallible and incapable of error is not the same thing as to be omniscient...

But a knowledge which requires no correction within its own province, which is perfect so far as it goes, is not necessarily encyclopaedic...

His knowledge was, in certain departments, acquired ; which means that it was not at one time what it afterwards became. St. Luke expressly and repeatedly mentions this in his Gospel of the Childhood : "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature." Therefore, at one period of His life our Lord's knowledge was inferior to what it was at a later period. To that extent He was at one time ignorant.

Then there is our Lord's own statement of a limitation of His knowledge : "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Here our Lord states that, on a matter of first importance, the date of the Judgment at which He Himself will act as Judge, He Himself was in ignorance. "The Son" is used in its absolute sense, as in St. Matthew 11. 27, and is set over against "the Father." It would therefore be untrue to the meaning of the passage to say that our Lord is here speaking simply of His human consciousness—that as Man, He does not know that of which, as the Eternal Son, He is cognisant : for it is as "the Son" that this particular piece of knowledge is withheld from Him (pp. 179-181).

16. *C. J. Ellicott, *Commentary* (Cassell & Co.), on Matt. 24 and Mark 13.

It is obviously doing violence to the plain meaning of the words to dilute them into the statement that the Son of Man did not communicate the knowledge which He possessed as Son of God . . . the Eternal Word in becoming flesh "emptied Himself" of the infinity which belongs to the divine attributes, and took upon Him the limitations necessarily incidental to man's nature, etc., etc. (p. 150).

Also on Luke 2 : The soul of Jesus was human, i.e., subject to the conditions and limitations of human

knowledge, and learnt as others learn (p. 257) . . . with Him as with others, wisdom widened with the years, and came into His human soul . . . as into the souls of others (p. 259).

17. *Lord Congleton, in letters to H. W. Soltau in 1864.

All knowledge belonged to Him as God. But He testified of Himself that He did not know of that day and that hour, etc. (Mark 13. 32). Thus it appears that He had emptied Himself of His knowledge.

All power belonged to Him as the Son Almighty, even as to the Father, Who is almighty. But He says concerning His miraculous works, "The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (John 14. 10). Thus it would appear that He had emptied Himself of His almighty power as well as of His freedom from weakness and suffering . . .

It is also true that, whilst He had thus emptied Himself, He was mightily filled by God's Spirit, and that God wrought mightily by Him (Acts 10. 38 ; 2. 22). This only confirms the fact that in taking the form of a Servant He had emptied Himself. Indeed, so true is the fact of His emptying Himself, that it stands good even when He is risen from the dead . . . We are told that "God hath made that same Jesus Whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2. 36) ; also that God hath highly exalted Him (Phil. 2. 9), and He testifies that "all power is given unto Him in heaven and on earth" (Matt. 28. 18). But that is not all ; we are told "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him" (I Cor. 15. 28). Thus even at that time He will be manifested as One that has emptied Himself . . .

We both reject that mode of explaining those passages whereby it is said that this was true of Him in His human nature and that in His divine . . . Except Jesus was a real Man, leading the life of dependence here, thus distinguished from other men . . . He was no example to His dependent disciples. And except the Risen Jesus, Who has ascended to His God, is a real Man and a dependent Man, possessed indeed of Lordship (for He has been made Lord), possessed also of all power in heaven and on earth (for the same have been given Him) . . .

Now, if anybody should say to me "Don't you know that He was God as well as Man, and therefore, though it is true He was crucified through weakness, and felt weakness, He at the same time was strong and felt strong," I can only say it is a contradiction and I don't believe it ; no more does anybody else, for nobody can believe contradictions.

18*. H. W. Soltau in letter to Congleton, 1864.

I believe He is emphatically God ; and that He is emphatically Man. But I equally believe that He is a

person, who always acts as a person, and never acts in a separate nature. . .

So that I cannot say that He acted or thought as God, or that He acted or thought as Man. But that He always acted and thought as the person, Christ. God and Man, one Christ. . . It was not God speaking, or Man speaking, but Christ speaking—God and Man, one person. . .

I hold the perfect subjection of the Son to the Father, and His perfect dependence on Him. Neither do I believe that He ever put forth His own power as God, but in subjection to, and in dependence on His Father ; and that He wrought His miracles and spoke His words by the power of the Holy Ghost. . .

19. W. Kelly, in *Bible Treasury*, June 1865, p. 284 ; afterwards re-published by him in *Lectures on Philippians*.

No matter who or what it was, you have in the Lord Jesus this perfect subjection and self-abnegation, and this, too, in the only person that never had a will to sin, whose will cared not for its own way in anything. He was the only man that never used His own will ; His will as man was unreservedly in subjection to God. But we find another thing. He emptied Himself of His deity when He took the form of a servant.

*William Kelly, *Lectures Introductory to the Gospels*, 229.

The reason of this peculiar, and at first sight perplexing expression seems to me to be, that Christ so thoroughly takes the place of One Who confines Himself to what God gave to Him, of One so perfectly a minister—not a master, in this point of view—that, even in relation to the future, He knows and gives out to others only what God gives Him for the purpose. As God says nothing about the day and the hour, He knows no more.

20*. J. N. Darby, *Words of Faith and of Good Doctrine*.

No. 13. The Deity of Jesus Christ. . . . As a Person He “emptied Himself.” He could not have done so save as God. A creature who leaves his first estate sins therein. The Sovereign Lord can descend in grace. In Him it is Love. Then, as in that position, He receives all. All the words He has are given to Him. He is, though unchangeable in nature as God, yet in His path a dependent man. He lives by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God—is sealed by the Father ; the glory He had before the world is now given Him of the Father. Now in this state of obedient servant, with a revelation which God gave to Him, the day and hour of His judicial action was not revealed (Mark 13. 32) (p. 52).

21. S. P. Tregelles, LL.D., *Three Letters*, 55, 56.

As to verse 67 [of Psalm 119 : “Before I was afflicted I went astray ; but now I have kept thy word ”], the difficulty [as to applying it to Christ] was removed when I saw how Jerome had rendered the passage 1,400

years ago ; his knowledge of Hebrew was respectable, and he did not differ from the Old Latin version of the Psalms (still retained in the *Vulgate*) without having a reason for so doing. He renders the verse : “ *Antiquam audirem ego ignoravi: nunc autem eloquium tuum custodivi.*” “ I was ignorant,” or “ uninstructed,” instead of “ I went astray.” This appears philologically to be the meaning of the verb ; all thought of wandering seems to be secondary. No one who believes in the humanity of our Lord can feel difficulty in this : He had a “ finite mind and directed will ” (Bishop Pearson) ; He was instructed by God. How He could be the omniscient God, and at the same time the one who could say, “ Of that hour knoweth not the Son,” I neither wish nor attempt to explain ; I only bow to the testimony of the Spirit concerning Him Who is very God, equal with the Father, and very man even as we are men. He was instructed ; He prayed to the Father, and He was guided ; “ He grew in wisdom ” ; the New Testament reveals all this, and much more, to us.

22. Professor James Orr, D.D., *Sidelights on Christian Doctrine*, 117-122.

Every view of Jesus which detracts from the entire reality of His humanity—whether by pronouncing it a semblance (thus the Gnostics), or by saying that the Divine Logos took the place of the rational soul in Jesus (Apollinaris), or by denying the reality of Christ’s human development, and His voluntary assumption of human limitations—is shown by the facts of the Gospel history to be in error. . .

He, the Son of God, took upon Him “ the form of a servant,” and voluntarily renouncing all pre-prerogatives of Godhead, submitted to poverty, suffering, rejection, ignominious death. In this, surely, there is “ kenosis ” enough to satisfy the most exacting . . .

Let it be granted that, in His earthly state, Jesus submitted to such limitations as a true manhood imposed upon Him. He neither claimed nor exercised, as a man, an absolute omniscience in matters of natural or of even divine knowledge. No one imagines that Jesus carried with Him through life, from manger to cross, in His human consciousness (nothing is said here of His divine), a knowledge, e.g., of all modern sciences—astronomy, geology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and the like. Such things were foreign to His calling ; He had no need of them, else they would have been given Him. On divine things, such, e.g., as the time of the Advent, He distinguishes between His own knowledge and that of the Father, who had set the times and the seasons within His own authority (Acts 1. 7), and says expressly ; “ Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father ” (Mark 13. 32).

It is, however, a very wide and unwarrantable inference to draw from this that on the things on which Christ did pronounce, His mind was in error. The conclusion to be deduced is rather the opposite. If Jesus had not the knowledge of the day and hour of the end, He said so, and gave no utterance on the subject. He was conscious of what He knew, and of what it was not given Him to know. Within His knowledge He spoke ; on what lay beyond He was silent. In what He did say His utterances were authoritative . . .

It means that Christ's consciousness moved in a sphere of revelation as in its natural environment. There are other sayings that might be recalled, as, " He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God : For He giveth not the Spirit by measure [unto Him]. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand " (John 3. 34, 35). Does this leave room at any point for error in Christ's consciousness? Finally, it is never to be forgotten that, while the Son submits to the conditions of humanity, it is still the Son of God who so submits, and behind all human conditionings are still present the undiminished resources of the Godhead. Omniscience, omnipotence, all other divine attributes, are there, though not drawn upon, save as the Father willed them to be.

23. W. E. Vine, M.A. (*The Witness*, July, 1925).

He could and did restrict the use of His Divine attributes. He allowed His captors to bind Him after the display of His Divine power in prostrating them with His word. He subjected Himself to human violence and indignity. He permitted those who had charge of His crucifixion to carry out their deed. " He was crucified through weakness " (II Cor. 13. 4), not through helplessness, nor through weakness caused by maltreatment, but by the voluntary suspension of His essential power as the Son of God. . . .

The restrictions He imposed on Himself are consistent with His true Manhood. . . . His death could not have been the death of a mere man. It is useless to argue that God cannot die and therefore Christ was not God. He who was God could become also Man in order to die, and this He did. His death was the supernatural death of One who was both Man and God.

As with His Divine power, so with His Divine knowledge, referring to His Second Advent, He said, " But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father " (Mark 13. 32). . .

The Scriptures plainly teach, then, both that the Lord divinely imposed limitations upon Himself, and that He sat as a scholar in the Father's school and learned from

Him His daily will. It was of Christ that Isaiah wrote :
“ The Lord God hath given me the tongue of them that
are taught . . . He wakeneth morning by morning, He
wakeneth mine ear to hear as they that are taught ”
(Isa. 50. 4, 5). . . .

All such instances, while evidences of the true humanity
of our Lord, are at the same time to be regarded in the
light of His essential Deity. Not that the attributes of the
Divine were communicated to the human nature ; the
Lord’s acts were those of One Who was in possession of
both natures. He never acted at one time as man and at
another time as God. The two natures were, and are,
perfectly and inseparately combined in Him. The
restrictions He imposed upon Himself illustrate then the
Apostle’s statement that Christ “ emptied Himself, taking
the form of a servant.” They reveal the essential reality
of His Servant character, and only so can they be rightly
considered. They are not matters of mere Christology.

The whole subject may be summarized in the following
statements of a renowned orthodox German divine of the last
century :

24. F. W. Krummacher, D.D., *The Suffering Saviour*, 103,
Gethsemane.

The self-renunciation of the Eternal Son consisted
essentially in this, that during His sojourn on earth, He
divested Himself of the unlimited use of all His divine
attributes, and [in] leaving that eternity, which is above
time and space, in order that He might tread the path of the
obedience of faith, like ourselves, and perfect Himself in
it as our Head, High Priest, and Mediator. As the
“ Servant of Jehovah,” which title is applied to Him in
the Old Testament, it was His part to serve, not to
command ; to learn subjection, not to rule ; to struggle
and strive, but not to reign in proud repose above the
reach of conflict. How could this have been possible for
one who was God’s equal, without this limitation of
Himself? All His conflicts and trials would then have
been only imaginary and not real. He did not for a
moment cease to be really God, and in the full possession
of every divine perfection : but He abstained from the
exercise of them, so far as it was not permitted by His
heavenly Father.

THE WAY BACK (8)
by JAMES L. STANLEY

Chapter IX.—WAIT FOR HIM.

My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.—Psalm 130. 6.

To wait for His Son from heaven.—I Thes. 1. 10.

Behold, I come quickly . . . Surely I come quickly ; Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.—Rev. 22. 7, 20.

“ And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord ” (Luke 12. 36). Such is our Lord’s description of the attitude in which His people ought continually to be found. Before His departure He left with His disciples this comforting assurance : “ I will come again, and receive you unto Myself ” (John 14. 3) ; and after He had departed, while the astonished disciples gazed up into heaven, angelic voices reminded them of the same glorious truth, “ This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven ” (Acts 1. 11).

This grand fact should be kept distinct from all questions relating to accompanying events. It is to be regretted that long and bitter controversies over prophetic topics have tended both to obscure and discredit the doctrine of the second advent of our Lord. Whatever disagreement may exist as to the interpretation of certain scriptures bearing upon time, manner, and order of occurrences, there is a general agreement on the one point that *He will come again*; and in apostolic days the hope of His return occupied a prominent place in the minds of teacher and taught. When the Thessalonians received the gospel, they “ turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to *wait for His Son from heaven* ” (I Thes. 1. 9, 10). In the brief summary of elementary doctrine contained in Paul’s epistle to Titus, ch. 2. ver. 13, prominence is given to this truth : “ Looking for that blessed hope, even the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Our Lord has represented Himself as the absent Bridegroom who will come to receive His bride (Matt. 25. 1-13), and as the Lord of His servants who will come to take account of their work (Matt. 25. 14-30). To the Jewish Council He declared, “ Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven ” (Matt. 26. 64). To the Thessalonian Christians, to comfort them under the loss of friends, Paul presents as a heart-sustaining truth, “ The Lord Himself shall descend

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first ” (I Thes. 4. 16).

Thus throughout the Gospels and Epistles we find our Lord and His apostles in various ways unfolding this important doctrine, and placing it in a strong light before the eyes of the church. And, as if finally to remind our hearts, and to add emphasis to the teaching, three times in the last chapter of the Bible do we hear our Lord saying, “ Behold, I come quickly.” “ Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

A practical truth. Against this doctrine it is often urged that it is not practical. It is regarded as merely speculative ; but this is a mistake. Rightly understood, its influence on life and service is most powerful.

The two parables in Matt. 25 of the Virgins and the Talents indicate the practical bearing of this subject. The parable of the Virgins is designed to teach the duty of watchfulness and expectancy. But the parable of the Talents serves as a complement to it, showing what the character of that waiting should be : that it should not be an idle “ gazing up into heaven,” but a diligent occupying till He come.

It is a *stimulus to holiness*. “ Every man that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure ” (I John 3. 3. The consideration of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ is eminently fitted to quicken us in watching against sin and cultivating purity of life. Our desire will be to “ abide in Him, that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed from Him at His presence ” (I John 2. 28). The thought that we may speedily be called into His presence will make us anxious so to conduct ourselves that we may be ready at any moment to meet Him. There are many motives to holiness set before us in the Scriptures, but there is surely not one more powerful than this—“ Behold, I come quickly.”

It is a *stimulus in service*. “ I charge thee,” says Paul to Timothy, “ before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ” (II Tim. 4. 1, 2). What can be more forcible and significant than this ? Here the fact of the second advent of Christ is made the ground of a special and solemn appeal to Timothy to be diligent and faithful in service. If this truth holds its right place in our thoughts, then it cannot fail to awaken a desire to serve Him as we shall wish to have served Him when all earthly opportunities are over and we stand before His judgment seat. If we truly love Him, it will be our ambition to please Him, and to gain the expression of His favour when we see Him. If we acknowledge His authority, it will be our desire to give practical proof of it by steady obedience to His commands, so that we may not have

to suffer loss at that day. Our Lord not only said, "Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching" (Luke 12. 37), but also, "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find *so doing*" (Matt. 24. 46).

Although the question of the acceptance of our persons was settled when we believed in Jesus, the acceptance of our *works* is another matter, and for this we wait the day of His appearing. Then "every man's work shall be made manifest : for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire ; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved ; yet so as through fire " (I Cor. 3. 13-15).

Again, the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, is a *stimulus to self-judgment*. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." We may, and ought, to anticipate the tribunal of Christ. By the discovery and confession of our sins now, we do not leave them to be dealt with hereafter ; for, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness " (I John 1. 9). Remembering what our Lord has said respecting the suddenness of His appearing, we shall be the more diligent in self-examination, so that we may have "a conscience void of offence toward God," and may not have to go forward to the judgment seat with a burden of unconfessed sin. The Israelites were directed to keep the camp free from every unclean thing, because the Lord their God walked in the midst of them. Surely the prospect of the sudden appearance of our Lord, if kept vividly before our minds, would beget in us a like carefulness for the purity of our hearts and ways, and the exclusion of everything that would defile.

The predicted return of Christ is also an *encouragement to patience*. When the apostle James would encourage oppressed believers to patience under their sufferings, he directs them to the same glorious prospect : "Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord " (ch. 5. 7) ; "Be ye also patient ; stablish your hearts : for the coming of the Lord has drawn near " (ch. 5. 8). So also, Paul, in comforting the Thessalonians under persecutions, says : "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels " (II Thes. 1. 7). All the trials and sufferings of believers will terminate then. Their cause is in the hands of a mighty Redeemer, and they may well leave vengeance to His execution. "Vengeance is Mine : I will recompense, saith the Lord " (Rom. 12. 19).

How often the people of God have been perplexed by the seeming contradictions of Divine providence ! The ungodly prosper, and increase in riches, while the godly are poor and

afflicted. Oppressors are allowed to march in triumph, and the feeble flock of God is trampled under their feet. The appearing of Christ will rectify that which now, to our limited gaze, appears so wrong. "The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in His wings;" and then we shall be able to "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth Him not" (Mal. 3. 18). Then the last mark of reproach shall be completely rolled away, and Christ and His church be eternally vindicated before the whole universe.

The waiting which the delay of Christ's return involves constitutes a *salutary discipline*. There is scarcely anything more difficult to do than *to wait*. Patience is not a common virtue. It does not require much acquaintance with life, either our own or others, to bring us to this conclusion. It is easier to *do* than to suffer, to *act* than to be still.

King Saul was tried by this test, and failed. His standing orders for critical times were, to wait for Samuel's appearance for the space of seven days. The history shows how on one memorable occasion he waited, *but* not long enough; then he acted upon his own responsibility, and disobeyed. Although we would not dare to put it into words, and indeed would shrink with horror from an attempt to formulate such an idea, yet does there not now and then start into our minds the dim shadow of a suspicion that there must be some flaw in the Divine arrangements? and are we not tempted, like Saul, to anticipate Him, and put our hand out to expedite the result? Let us be on our guard against this snare. Impatience will hurry us into mistakes, dishonouring to God, distressing to ourselves; while faith and patience will keep us calm and steady till the fulfilment of the promise. "Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. 2. 3).

While we wait for Him every virtue is called into exercise. "We walk by faith, not by sight." Hereafter, faith will cease, and it will be easy to serve God in the presence and enjoyment of all the glory and happiness of the future state. But to serve Him *now*—amid scorn, reproach, unbelief, perplexities, weakness, and opposition—to maintain faith in the presence of infidelity, meekness under injury, patience under persecution, hope in spite of discouragement, faithfulness amid general unrighteousness,—these are the things that glorify God, exalt His name, and develop Christian character.

We shall not wait in vain. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me" (Isa. 49. 23). These are the words of Jehovah of hosts. His honour is at stake. Did any ever turn their eyes in vain to the east as morning approached, and fail to see the streaks of dawn announcing the advance of day? Did any, after the long reign of winter, look in vain for the signs of returning spring and summer? Never have these ordinances of Nature failed, but, true to His ancient covenant,

the great and beneficent Creator has caused the seasons punctually to appear.

It is upon the word of that same God that we rely. "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning ; I say more than they that watch for the morning " (Ps. 130. 5, 6). "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness ; but is long suffering to youward " (II Peter 3. 9). With Him

"Slow circling ages are as transient days."

As certainly as the periods of day and night, and the circle of the seasons run their course, so with equal faithfulness will it be found that the larger prophetic circles fulfil their round. Vast they are, and baffle our limited comprehension ; but they are accurately measured by Him who "meted out heaven with a span," and are even now running on towards their close. "These times and seasons " the Father hath set within His own authority ; and though we may not know "the day and hour," we may discern the gathering signs, and look up and lift up our heads with joy, knowing that our redemption draweth nigh. "And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for Him, and He will save us : this is Jehovah ; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." (Isa. 2. 95).

A CLERGYMAN'S CONVERSION

HENRY VENN, 1724-1797.

One reason why George Fox and the early Quakers were so bitterly persecuted in century sixteen was that their stern denunciations of the clergy were all too justified by the low lives and neglect of duty of the majority. In 1662 the rulers of the Church of England succeeded by the Act of Uniformity in forcing out of the Church about one-fifth of the clergy. These two thousand were the élite of that body in both learning and piety. This drastic step gave a mighty impetus to Nonconformity and left the Church correspondingly depleted spiritually. This showed itself the more in century eighteen.

In addition to the movings of the Spirit of God through the Methodist Movement, it pleased God to stir the hearts of a few clergymen to live and serve more faithfully. Among these Henry Venn became prominent and influential, distinguished from the majority of the clergy by strict morality and exemplary devotion to clerical duties. This was so even before his conversion. It caused him to be much disliked by neighbouring clergy who were reproved by his moral life and his zeal. In his biography by his son¹ it is stated that "Once

¹ *Life and Letters of Henry Venn*, London, 1834, (pp. 12-26).

at a meeting of some clergymen, his character being thus rudely treated, he met with a singular defender in an old fox-hunting clergyman :—‘ Hush ! said he, ‘ I feel a great respect for such men as Mr. Venn, and wish there were more of his kind ! They are the salt of our order, and keep it from putrefaction. If the whole body of the clergy were like ourselves, the world would see that we are of no use, and take away our tithes ; a few of these pious ones redeem our credit, and save for us our livings.’ ”

The state of the clergy in general in those times was a chief cause of the moral degeneracy of the public and their almost complete ignorance of the Bible and things spiritual. Nothing more clearly shows the falsity of the doctrine of regeneration by baptism than the unregenerate lives of the clergy themselves in those times. It pleased God that Henry Venn should be one He would use to bring on a better state of affairs in the Church of England, in spite of heavy opposition by his fellow-clergy ; and it is profitable to trace the steps of his conversion from being a sincere and zealous formalist to becoming a saved and evangelical preacher of the true gospel. His son gives the following account, after having mentioned that his father was ordained Deacon in 1747, about which time he became Fellow of Queen’s College, Cambridge.

It was about the time of his entering into Holy Orders that his first religious impressions commenced . . . Hitherto religion had made no particular impression on his mind. He was moral and decent in his conduct, regular in his attendance upon public worship, and had accustomed himself chiefly to read books on Divinity, after he had taken his degree of B.A. (in 1745) ; but he was a stranger to that influence of religion which gives it a predominancy in the mind over everything besides, and to those views of the benefits and excellence of the Christian dispensation which renders the Saviour the object of the highest affection and regard. He possessed, however, high ideas of clerical decorum, and scrupulous conscientiousness in doing faithfully whatever he was convinced was right : and so highly did he rate a strict regard to conscience, in acting up to the light received, that he often used to say, in his own forcible way of expressing himself, that he owed the salvation of his soul to the resolute self-denial which he exercised, in following the dictates of conscience in a point which of itself seemed one of only small importance.

The case was this :—He was extremely fond of cricket, and reckoned one of the best players in the University. In the week before he was ordained, he played in the match between Surrey and All England . . . When the game terminated, in favour of the side on which he played, he threw down his bat, saying, “ Whoever wants a bat,

which has done me good service, may take that ; as I have no further occasion for it." His friends inquiring the reason, he replied, " Because I am to be ordained on Sunday ; and I will never have it said of me, ' Well struck, Parson ! ' "—and to this resolution, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, and even of the Tutor and Fellows of his college, he strictly adhered. Thus, being faithful in a little, more grace was imparted to him.

The first considerable religious impression made upon his mind arose from an expression in the Form of Prayer, which he had been daily accustomed to use, like the world in general, without paying much attention to it—" That I may live to the glory of Thy name ! " The thought powerfully struck his mind :—" What is it to live to the glory of God ? Do I live as I pray ? What course of life ought I to pursue, to glorify God ? " After much reflection upon this subject, he came to this conclusion—That to live to the glory of God required that he should live a life of piety and religion in a degree in which he was conscious he had not yet lived ;—that he ought to be more strict in prayer, more diligent in reading the Scripture and pious books, and more generally holy in his conduct :—and, seeing the reasonableness of such a course of life, his uprightness again discovered itself in immediately and steadily pursuing it. He set apart stated seasons for meditation and prayer, turning his reading chiefly into a religious channel, and kept a strict account of the manner in which he spent his time and regulated his conduct. I have heard him say, that it was his custom at this period to walk almost every evening in the cloisters of Trinity College, during the time that the great bell of St. Mary's was tolling at nine o'clock ; and, amidst the solemn tones and pauses of the bell, and the stillness and darkness of the night, he would indulge in impressive and awful reflections, on Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell . . .

In this frame of mind, Law's " Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," a book which has been the means of exciting many to a life of holiness, was particularly useful to him : he read it repeatedly, and with peculiar interest and advantage ; and immediately began, with great sincerity, to frame his life according to the Christian model there delineated. He kept a diary of the state of his mind ; a practice from which he derived great benefit, though not exactly in the way he expected : for it chiefly made him better acquainted with his own deficiency. He also allotted the hours of the day, as far as was consistent with the necessary duties and employments of his station, to particular acts of meditation and devotion. He kept frequent fasts, and was accustomed to take solitary walks, in which his soul was engaged in prayer

and communion with God. I have heard him mention, that, in one of those retired walks, in the meadows behind Jesus College, he had such a view of the goodness, mercy, and glory of God, as elevated his soul above the world, and made him aspire toward God, as his supreme good, with unutterable ardour and enjoyment.

It is truly instructive and affecting to watch the Spirit of God thus attracting and influencing a soul that was sincere in desire after God though not yet personally acquainted with Him through Christ. Here was a man answering to Rom. 2. 7, who "by patient continuance in well-doing was seeking for glory and honour and incorruption," and to whom God would shortly grant "eternal life." In July 1750 Mr. Venn ceased to reside in college and devoted himself entirely to ministerial duties, part of the summer at St. Matthew's church, Friday Street, London, and the rest of the year at West Horsley, Surrey. It was here that the incident mentioned occurred when the fox-hunting parson stood up for him at a meeting of local clergy. The narrative proceeds to say :

Whilst he lived in this retirement, his books and his devotions afforded him a fund of never-ceasing pleasure. He was accustomed to ride upon the fine downs in that neighbourhood, and to chant to himself the *Te Deum*; and in this devotional exercise he used to be carried far above terrestrial objects. His plan of life was very methodical, realizing, as far as he was able, that laid down by Mr. Law, in his "Christian Perfection." Mr. Law was indeed, now his favourite author ; and, from attachment to him, he was in great danger of imbibing the tenets of the mystical writers, whose sentiments Mr. Law adopted in the latter periods of his life. Many writings of this class discover, indeed, such traces of genuine and deep piety, that it is not at all wonderful that a person of exalted devotional feelings should admire them.

From a too fond attachment, however, to Mr. Law's tenets, he was recalled by the writings of Mr. Law himself. When Mr. Law's "Spirit of Love," or "Spirit of Prayer," (I am not sure which) was about to be published, no miser, waiting for the account of a rich inheritance devolving on him, was ever more eager than he was to receive a book from which he expected to derive so much knowledge and improvement. The bookseller had been importuned to send the first copy published. At length the long-desired work was received, one evening ; and he set himself to peruse it with the utmost avidity. He read till he came to passage wherein Mr. Law seemed to represent the blood of Christ as of no more avail, in procuring our salvation, than the excellence of his moral character. "What !" he exclaimed, "does Mr. Law thus degrade

the death of Christ, which the Apostles represent as a sacrifice for sins, and to which *they* ascribe the highest efficacy in procuring our salvation ! Then farweell such a guide ! Henceforth I will call no man master ! ” From that time he laid aside his overweening esteem for human productions, and applied himself chiefly to the study of the sacred writers.

His preaching was, however, still of the strictest kind. He required (according to the ideas which he had imbibed from the mystical writers) a measure almost of perfection in man ; and exalted the standard of holiness to a degree to which it was scarcely possible that the frail children of men could ever reach.

It is true, he was himself striving, with the utmost assiduity, to reach that point. He kept a diary, in which he endeavoured to record the very slightest alienation of thought from the love or fear of God—every rising of irregular desires and passions—every thought which seemed to be contrary to the spirit of our Holy Religion. This he deeply lamented before God, and, with fervent prayer, requested that every thought of his heart might be brought into captivity to the Law of Christ.

Still, however, as must be the case where a man cannot attain the object he has proposed to himself, he was not happy : he did not overcome sin in the degree in which he had hoped ; and, as he was conscious of no deficiency of endeavour on his part, he began to feel religion to be a hard service, rather than one which was perfect freedom : he deeply felt for the rest of the world, who neither did, nor, generally speaking, could, make such exertions as himself : and the question often forcibly occurred to him in the pulpit, “ Why do you impose upon others a standard, to which you are conscious you have not yourself attained ? ”

Such reflections induced him to study the Scriptures more attentively : and then he began to perceive that his attachment to mystical writers had hitherto led him to overlook the particular provision which is made for *fallen* and *sinful* man in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He now saw that it was not upon the perfection of our obedience, but upon the all-sufficient merits and the infinite mercies of a Redeemer, that we are to rely for our justification. He saw that sinners are brought, through the gospel, into a new state—a state of reconciliation to our heavenly Father—a state of adoption into His family—a state of grace and mercy. Hence the religion of Christ now became to him a religion of hope, and peace, and joy : he saw that our sins are taken away by the blood of Christ, and that, being justified by faith in Him, we have peace toward God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and

joy also in God, by whom we have received the atonement.

He beheld with wonder the infinite tenderness, compassion, and love of the Saviour ; upon whose care and providence he now relied, to sanctify him by His Spirit, and to make him meet for the kingdom of glory above. The desire of his heart had been already towards holiness ; but it was with a view to render himself acceptable to a holy God by his own excellence. He now felt the same desire : but it sprang from a different motive : it was an earnest wish to shew forth the praises of Him who had called him out of darkness into His marvellous light. He did not conceive himself, any more than formerly, at liberty to sin against God ; but that which before had been a servile fear was changed into a spirit of filial attachment to his Heavenly Father. Love to God, and to the greatest of all benefactors, his blessed Saviour and Redeemer, now became the ruling principle of all his devotion and all his conduct ; and he entered fully into the meaning of the Apostle, when he exclaimed, “ God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ ! ” “ I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ;—that I may win Christ, and be found in Him ; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,—but the righteousness which is of God, by faith.”

This essential change in his views produced an important change in his feelings and in his preaching. He now enjoyed a peace and cheerfulness of mind, which he had not done before ; which he could not do whilst he looked chiefly to himself and his own qualifications for heaven. His preaching, also, set forth a new object, and took a new direction. He now more fully explained to his hearers “ the unsearchable riches of Christ ; ” he set before them the love of God, in making “ Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” He entreated them, in the name of Christ, to be reconciled to God ; assuring the penitent of a gracious reception, and urging him to flee to the hope set before him—to that great Deliverer, who would supply all things needful for him ; who would impart to him the sanctifying influences of the Spirit ; who would bless him with His grace here, and conduct him to glory hereafter.

The effect of his preaching became now much more manifest. The view of so great a salvation, offered so freely to mankind, filled the hearts of many with fervent love to the Saviour, and with earnest desire to be numbered among His disciples. . .

It is observable, that this change in his sentiments was not to be ascribed to an intercourse with others : it was the steady progress of his mind, in consequence of a

faithful and diligent application to the Holy Scriptures, unbiased by any attachment to human systems. It was not till some years afterwards that he became acquainted with any of those preachers who are usually known by the name of Evangelical ; though his own views now agreed with theirs, and were strictly, and in a proper sense, Evangelical ; that is, in conformity with the motives and hopes held out to us in the gospel of Christ. . .

In 1756, he laboured under a severe illness, which incapacitated him for duty, for more than eight months. This, however, was a most useful season to him. He had time to reflect upon his principles and his conduct ; and he used to observe, that after that period he was no longer able to preach the sermons which he had previously composed. His view of eternal things had now become clearer—his meditations upon the attributes of God more profound—his views of the greatness of the salvation of Christ more distinct ; and the whole of his religion had received that tincture of more elevated devotion which rendered his conversation and his preaching doubly instructive.

Thus prepared by God, Mr. Venn in 1759 accepted the vicarage of Huddersfield, in Yorkshire. The generality of the people were utterly ignorant of their state by nature, and of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. The effect of his preaching was wonderful. The Spirit wrought powerfully to the conversion of very many and to the sanctifying of believers, with the effect of a mighty change for the better in the whole district.

It is worthy of the deepest attention that at that period God moved in this benighted and wicked land to commence a movement of grace which has extended to the whole earth. Nor may we overlook that the prime agents He then chose were at first mainly clergymen of the Church of England. It needs only to mention the names of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, Fletcher, Grimshaw, Berridge, and Toplady. These drew forth many more. Venn, for example, was a distinct help to Charles Simeon. Shortly men unordained were called forth by God, such as Rowland Hill, and Robert and James Haldane in Scotland. The impact of this revival of pure gospel preaching was extraordinary, changing the face of the whole people as to outward conduct. Nothing but the apostolic gospel ever has or ever can so work. It is the only power of God unto salvation, for it alone directs sinners to the only Saviour.

It would be a mighty grace were God to work again in many clergy and other preachers of this time as He worked in Henry Venn, bringing them from darkness to light, from death unto life. The situation is in some respects more dangerous now than two centuries ago. Parsons who drank,

gambled, hunted were bad enough, but thoughtful people knew that was not right. Now parsons and ministers are moral and often devoted to their work ; but what avails this for eternity if they preach salvation by works and sacraments, and command the more respect that they are outwardly moral, thus the more blinding their hearers? What avails morality and energy if they preach some false gospel, which men the more readily imbibe that the teacher is such a " nice man " ? Oh for more men who have been taken through the slough of despond, till sick of sin and self-effort, wretched in conscience, they come to the joy of peace in Christ through His cross, and then go forth to blaze abroad the good news of present salvation and eternal hope, in the power of the Spirit of truth.

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (10)
ENGLAND, 1911-1913

On July 3rd, 1911, we moved from Bristol to Clayhidon on the Blackdown Hills in the north east of Devonshire. My wife's grandfather, George Brealey, had invaded that remote and neglected district with the gospel some fifty years before. After his death her father, W. J. H. Brealey, had continued to superintend the six mission halls that had been acquired or erected, with Clayhidon as the centre. Later he went to Clevedon, Somerset, as pastor of Copse Road Chapel, while still responsible for the work on the Hills. His home being vacant, and the work needing help, we went there. But I accepted no binding tie and was free to visit other places as guided by God.

But by October Mr. Brealey's vigour was reduced and a long rest was needful. He and his family therefore came to Clayhidon and we went to his house in Clevedon, where I undertook the ministry until May 1912, when he returned.

The work at Copse Road had been commenced by a lay Churchman who outgrew that State-bound system. In due time the Mr. Victor whose labours had resulted in Unity Chapel, Bristol, took up the work. It developed, and a fine chapel was built ; too handsome for serving the best purposes. The work was on the same lines as at Unity. One preacher was responsible for the ministry, though he could invite others to speak, which was often done. The morning gathering was first a usual preaching service conducted by the pastor, followed by a short open meeting at the breaking of bread. The same features as at Unity were evident, and the same defects ; particularly that gifts of ministry did not develop, nor spontaneity of worship. To this day the church is too weak to dispense with arranged ministry and function healthily in the energy of the Spirit. Yet good men and good ministry have been its portion for eighty years, and many have been

saved and helped. But feed people never so well, if they always have a crutch they will never walk freely or safely.

The rest of 1912 passed in ministry of the word on the Hills and in many places in the south and west of England. At Yeovil conference in September there was present Lieut. Willie Lange from Germany. He was a strong witness for Christ, and forwent his chance of a post on the Imperial General Staff because he would not abandon the principles of the New Testament as to church life and join the Lutheran church, at that time a condition of being on the Staff. This I learned from his brother Major Ernst Lange, whom later I knew well. Yet when this sincere and brave Christian was asked at Yeovil by an English brother what he would do were their two countries at war and they met in battle, without hesitation he replied, "I should kill you; it would be my duty." Thus does the spirit of the world quench the Spirit of love, and it is made manifest that no man can in this matter serve two masters, the State *and* the Christ of Calvary, for no one can act at the same time by law *and* grace.

The year 1913 was full with the same labours in various parts. In March, Walter H. Clark held evangelistic meetings in the tiny hall in the hamlet of Stapley, three miles from Clayhidon. On Wednesday, 5th March, there took place here a notable miracle. There lived nearby a notorious ruffian named B. He had put in twenty-one years in the Army and finished his education in wickedness. He was a poacher, a drunkard, a curser. His boy dreaded his return from the inn, for he and his mother had known what it was to be driven out of the cottage to pass the night on the hillside.

This evening Walter Clark finished his address abruptly and said that Mr. Lang had something to say. I whispered that I had no notices to give out or anything to say. He replied: "I am spent. Test the meeting or close it." Now I am not enamoured of the plan of "testing" a gospel meeting, and on the few occasions I had done so it had been to no purpose. But seeing B. present (for I knew him, though he did not know me), I said a few words as to the power of Christ to save us from the power of sin. Then, while all heads were bowed, I asked any who might wish to experience this salvation to put up the hand and B.'s hand was raised.

He remained behind alone, and in that small hut, by the dim light of a single small lamp, we talked. He began by saying, "I want to tell you, sir, that I have been a very wicked man: I've committed every crime a man can commit except murder, and I've been near that more than once."

I let him talk awhile, checking his story against what I already knew, and it was plain that he was honest and sincere. So I said: "Well, B., the question we want to get at tonight is, Do you want to get quit of your sins?" "That's what I came for," he replied. "Then we can soon get at that."

You know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He came down here to pay the penalty for our sins, by His death, so that we may be forgiven." " Yes." " Do you know that He is now alive and ready to deliver us from our sins ? " " Yes." " Then get down on your knees and tell the Lord like an honest man, just as simply as you have told me, that you have been a wicked man and that you are going to trust Him to save you."

This he did. It was probably the first time he had ever prayed, and the wording was what may be easily supposed ; but he spoke out of his heart into the heart of God. I prayed briefly and we rose and sat again. He looked at me and said : " I don't know what's happened, but I feel very different to what I did just now." I replied : " Of course you do : you have asked the Lord Jesus to save you from your sins, and He has kept His promise and done so ; so of course you feel different."

And different he was, a new man in Christ. Some while later he told me that his Foresters' Club met monthly in the inn where he used to get drunk so often, but that now he did not even want to go into the bar. He had no difficulties with his pipe ; the craving to smoke simply ceased at once. But the most miraculous change was in his language. He was so habitual and confirmed a swearer that he poured out volleys of curses in his dreams ; but many weeks after his conversion his wife told me that since that night she had not heard an oath, waking or sleeping.

Let this be considered carefully. Let a man accustomed to use habitually any one word—say, " awfully " or " tremendous "—decide not to use it for a week or even a day ; and let him ask his wife or a friend how often he has used it ; and he will feel how extremely hard it is to banish from his speech even one word. What then shall be said of the sudden and complete removal from the mind of a whole class of words, so that no watch had to be kept against their use ? Such a mental miracle can be effected only by the Creator of the mind.

I said to B. that night : " You must be fifty-five years of age." " Just about," he answered. " What has begun to trouble you now about these things ? " " It was a hymn sung last night." It was Dr. Watts' lines :

Alas, and did my Saviour bleed ?
And did my Sovereign die ?
Would He devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I ?
Was it for crimes that I had done
He suffered on the tree ?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree !

Said he : " I went through the battle of Abu Klea." That was on 17th Jan., 1885, in the Sudan war, twenty-eight

years before we were conversing. He continued : “ After the battle, as we lay on the sands at night, a lad of my Company was bleeding to death at my side, and as he lay there he sang that hymn. It made no impression on me : I was already the ruffian of the regiment ; and I never heard it again until last night. As it was sung I suddenly saw that lad singing it as he lay dying. It was more than I could stand and I had to leave the meeting to get control of my feelings. I went home and said to my wife, ‘ Wife, we must change our lives.’ She said, ‘ Then you change yours first ’ ; and that’s what I came for tonight.”

That dying boy cast his seed upon the waters, and the fruit was found after many days. Let us sow the truth beside all waters, even the foulest ; in the morning and at even ; in season, out of season ; for we know not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether both alike shall be good. That dying singer shall come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaf with him. One soweth and another reapeth, and we shall rejoice together.

But it is startling and solemn that his wife, as far as I knew, was never converted, though she had seen and benefited by the work of grace in him. She had kept straight and respectable in spite of him, and seemed not to feel a need of his Saviour. Still do the rogues and harlots go into the kingdom before the self-righteous (Matt. 21. 31).

During our time at Clayhidon another unusual case was as follows. Several miles distant was a place named Lopham. It was of it, I think, that a countryman, a Christian, said : “ There’s one thing lacking down there—there’s too many public houses.” This quaint remark has nothing to do with my story. From Lopham there came to Clayhidon a quiet, respectable man, with his wife and child. The wife was a keen Christian and was commendably concerned for her husband, who made no profession. Sitting in their big chimney corner, by the log fire, I asked him why he had not believed on Christ as his Saviour. He replied that he had done so. I asked when ? He said it was three years ago. His wife had been given up by the doctors. He was dreadfully cut up ; went into his smithy, shut the door, turned unto God, and accepted Christ. In astonishment I said : “ Man alive, you had that experience and yet have managed to keep it so utterly secret that not even your wife has had any suspicion of it ! ”

How little we can judge of the state of the heart of another. With the heart he had believed unto righteousness, and three years later he made confession with his mouth unto salvation. Now his inner and dormant life began to grow.

About this time the Lord opened the door to one of those usually inaccessible places, a large county mansion. The Colonel sometimes read prayers in church, which seemed to

be the sum of his religion. The lunch hour was dismal. I was a fish out of water while they chatted about dogs, racing, and theatres. But the lady of the house was a smothered Christian, starved and hungry, whom it was good to cheer. She wrote later to ask whether I thought it allowable to paint her face. Her husband wished it, as he did not like to see her looking old. She was well on in years. What troubled her conscience was the thought that she was deceiving people. Making allowance for her childish spiritual state, I put upon her no burden that she was not likely to bear well, and said that, if she felt free to please her husband in so foolish a desire, I thought she might do so ; and added that she need not feel any trouble in conscience as to deceiving people, for no one was likely to be deceived.

How important is the desire of the apostles that the regenerate shall *grow up* into Christ in all things, shall cease to be children and become men, having their senses exercised to discern between good and evil, becoming full of the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to walk worthily of the Lord. For this growth from babyhood to manhood the Word of God, the sacred writings, are indispensable and sufficient (II Tim. 3. 14-16). It is ignorance of this holy Word that accounts for such infants as this poor lady. She illustrates the scriptural distinction between a *child* of God, born of the Spirit, a member of the family, and a *son* of God, grown up, with knowledge of the Father's will and able to work together with Him in His affairs.

During our residence in Devonshire I was one evening stricken down without warning with influenza, the fourth such seizure known. Utterly prostrate, and with severe nausea, my first thought was to send for some brethren to pray. But this being found impracticable, my wife and I prayed together ; and faith was given to plead that there should be a prompt raising up to fulfil a preaching engagement in a distant city the next day but one. In particular it was asked that the distressing nausea might subside. My wife rose, and at once left the room ; but ere she had closed the door I recalled her to say that the nausea had instantly gone, and that I was already well.

Many who adopt no such opinions as that sickness is always from the devil, or that it is sinful to use remedies or to consult a physician, nevertheless know experimentally the power of the prayer of faith in severe sickness.

That God does not always immediately heal all infirmities is evident from the cases of Trophimus (II Tim. 4. 20) and Timothy (I Tim. 5. 23). Some bodily weakness is permanent, being for spiritual benefit, and is cause for glorying (II Cor. 12. 7-10) ; some is disciplinary, and can be relieved only by repentance, confession, and prayer (Jas. 5. 15, 16 : I Cor.

11. 29, 30) ; some is but the unavoidable wear and tear upon the physical machinery which is incidental to all strenuous effort. God will instruct prayerful hearts as to the nature of the ailment, and what measures, spiritual or medicinal, or both, are proper to each case.

During the autumn of the year (1913) Miss Ely wrote from Egypt that she purposed to erect a large native tent in the heart of Cairo for another gospel attack upon Moslems. Mr. McClenahan would lead the Arabic side ; would I join them to take meetings in English ? She also invited my wife and daughter. I knew this was a call from God. But to take them also nearly trebled the expense. Yet what is that to God ? Sometime before, my cousin Musgrove had arranged that I should address a gathering at the house of Mr. F. W. Byrde at Weston-super-Mare. This kind friend, hearing of the purposed visit to Egypt, sent £30. Miss Ely sent £25 ; other smaller gifts furthered the project, and we reached Alexandria on 22nd December 1913 with 11/4d. in hand. Here a quite unexpected difficulty met us. Miss Ely had intended to receive us at once at Heliopolis, near Cairo. But her arrangements for a house were delayed. Perforce we had to stay at Ramleh, and for some weeks we were greatly tested as to funds. Yet money came in small sums from as far apart as England, Egypt, and South Africa, and we were brought through, with faith tried and strengthened.

(To be continued)

THE DISCIPLE

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SOLITUDE

(Sister Eva, of Friedenshort, Silesia, Germany)

I hungered, oh so many a time,
For Solitude !
Stern is the task and hot the fight,
The harvest field so wide and white,
That oft there is so little time
For Solitude !
O Solitude !
How makest thou my heart so wide !
God's glory nears at thy still tide ;
And as a dream Time fadeth there ;
The world with all its joys, its care,
Its restlessness, lies far from me ;
And brightly shines Eternity
Upon the heart that loveth thee,
O Solitude !

O Solitude, how sweet the rest
When thou the spirit has released
Before by anxious care oppressed :
When free, the soul doth upward rise,
And e'en to God's own throne it flies,
And wholly in His light abides ;
A happy child, in heaven a guest,
By arms of endless love embraced :
Thus borne above all time and place,
O Solitude !
Lord Jesus Christ, all praise to Thee !
What once I lacked Thou gavest me.
Here found I that which long I wooed,
E'en Solitude.
At foot the stream its course doth take,
A vaulted roof my church doth make,
The breeze-touched tree-tops rustle softly,
The birds sing loud Thy praises lofty,
From every side are borne to me
A thousand sounds in harmony.

And then I think in quietness
How Thou, O Lord, in pilgrim dress,
So oft to Solitude didst press ;
How Thou so many a quiet night
Didst pass upon the mountain height,

To watch and pray for us till light ;
 For us didst bear earth's pain, and stood
 Outside in that dread Solitude ;
 The load of sin of our lost race
 With Thy strong arm didst there embrace ;
 Thyself upon the altar laid
 For us propitiation made ;
 God's Lamb, devoted to that death,
 Thou wentest through this time of grief,
 Through toil and strife and death's keen smart,
 In deeper Solitude of heart.

The hours have fled ; time hastens by ;
 The labour calls ; prepared am I.
 Yet though I may not here remain
 What here I found abides my gain.
 What by the darkling stream I heard,
 What spake the oak trees' rustling word,
 What message little birds may sing,
 With what the whispering winds may ring—
 It was the one eternal tone
 Of praise to Jesus, God's own Son.
 To Him have I my vows renewed
 In this so holy Solitude ;
 With Him in comfort turn once more
 To toil and strive midst this world's roar.
 And still, while parting, this I pray—
 O Lord, let one thing with me stay :
 Give me, midst Time's disquietude,
 A quiet heart—give SOLITUDE !

The devoted lady who wrote the above lines belonged to a noble German family. She was the Baroness Eva von Tiele-Winckler, of Miechowitz, Silesia, now in Poland. Born in a great castle she was yet converted as a girl, and was speedily drawn to devote herself to the poor of the most miserable mining village that lay just beyond the castle wall. This service grew continually, until in her later years, when it was my privilege to know her, and to visit her more than once, there were perhaps three thousand persons dependant upon her faith and prayers, in the several homes she superintended. With these large and widespread responsibilities, her days were very full, but there was about her a serenity, a sense of quiet and leisure that was rare and attractive and impressive. In this poem she has revealed a chief secret of this heavenly quality : she cultivated retirement, she loved solitude. Not that she was a recluse shunning society and seeking solitude for its own sake ; but she knew the power of some words of William C. Burns that probably she never read, when he said,

The great fundamental error, as far as I can see, in the economy of the Christian life, which many, and alas ! I for one, commit, is that of having too *few* and too *short* periods of solemn retirement with our gracious Father and His adorable Son, Jesus Christ.

This disastrous error Sister Eva resolutely avoided.

I heard F. S. Arnot, the missionary explorer of Africa, tell that he had lodged with the elderly folk who, long years before, had entertained Burns at the time of the overwhelming outpouring of the Spirit at Kilsyth and in Robert Murray M'Cheyne's church in Dundee in 1839. The day before, Saturday, Burns did not come down to breakfast, but they did not disturb him, supposing that he was taking extra rest. Nor did he appear at the midday meal, but still they left him undisturbed. But when again at tea there was no sign of their guest they felt it a duty to ascertain whether he was yet alive and well. Opening the door gently it was to see the preacher stretched on the floor in prayer. The next day the heavenly floods swept the congregation with a deluge of saving grace.

The first principal of the Pastors' College, George Rogers, was a man of gift and godliness. An address to an annual meeting of the College was on Acts 20. 13 : " Paul himself was minded to go afoot." His points were : (1) Paul had a mind of his own ! The minister must not " be blown about by every wind of doctrine," or be too easily influenced by the opinions or wishes of his hearers. (2) Paul was always on the go ! The minister must be active, not indolent. (3) Paul believed in bodily exercise : " he was about to foot it ! " The minister must take due care of his body. He must, like Paul, walk much, or he should have a garden or a workshop. (4) But the stress of the address was that Paul believed in solitude ! " he *himself* was minded to go afoot." A small ancient ship allowed of no leisure or quiet, so he decided to walk perhaps nineteen miles across the headland while the ship sailed round it. The road was hilly, the hills were covered with greenery : in this corner of the temple of Nature the servant of Christ would have stillness and solitude to lift up his heart unto his God and to join in the *Gloria* that creation chants to its Creator (Psa. 29. 9).

How great is the contrast between this ancient scene and the modern holiday by motor, in which the party races from point to point, from sight to sight, fitting into each day as many places and visits as possible, crowding each hour to the full.

When spending a week years ago with the Pilgrim Preachers we sped from place to place in cars. In earlier years the Pilgrims had gone on foot, in all weathers. I asked the Leader, William Luff, which method he thought the more

helpful. He replied, the former, for then profitable spiritual converse was possible by the way, and lonely houses and hamlets were visited. He agreed when I suggested that a deeper impression was made by the sight of a number of men tramping into a place dusty, hot, or wet, solely to preach the gospel, than by the easier method of motor cars. And the deepest factor of all is, that the quiet of the countryside made possible retirement of soul with God. Byron's lines are true in a far richer sense than the godless poet meant :

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture by the lone sea-shore ;
There is solitude where none intrudes
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.

In this matter, as in many, Paul cries to his fellow-saints : " Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ " (I Cor. 11. 1). For our Lord believed in solitude, and the more that His life was so busy and crowded. He had healed a man full of leprosy, therefore with the foul disease far advanced, his person hideous and corrupt. Naturally vast crowds surged around the Healer. Here was a grand opportunity to serve the chief end of His miracles by healing yet others, thus extending His influence and message. But Luke 5. 16 speaks to the contrary. The A.V. blurs the picture by its rendering, " And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed," as if only one occasion was meant. The R.V. clears the scene by two changes : " *But* He withdrew Himself in the deserts (plural) and prayed." This throws His action into strong contrast with the urgency of the thronging crowds : they clamoured to be healed and taught, BUT He denied them at that time. The plural " deserts " shows that the Lord withdrew on several occasions. But Luke stated this yet more distinctly by two participles : " But He was withdrawing Himself in the deserts and praying." It was a practice.

It required urgent grounds thus to neglect opportunities He had Himself created ; it required uncommon strength of character to do so. It is not easy to be a thorough imitator of Jesus, a fearless disciple. In mission medical work it has been frequent that a successful operation or cure has brought crowds to the dispensary or hospital. How many doctors have been wise enough or strong enough to retire from the scene for days together to pray—*just to pray*? It is so easy to reason that now is our opportunity, the tide will not always flow with us thus, we must work while it is day ! until vigour is exhausted and even collapse is reached. Indeed, sometimes devoted workers have followed exactly the opposite course to Christ, and have extended their premises and increased their burdens though no extra help was in view.

" But HE was withdrawing Himself in the deserts and praying." *He* knew that only God has inexhaustible energy.

He had Himself known that wondrous condition, but He had emptied Himself of what belonged to that divine state, had taken the nature of His creature man and was dependent upon His Father. He knew that for man to go on spending more than he receives, whether of money or of energy, must lead in either case to bankruptcy. The heavier the demand the fuller must be the supply. He felt when energy had flowed from Him to another (Mark 5. 30). That could not go on indefinitely ; there must be renewal of vigour from time to time, and for this He sought His God. For it was the Father who was doing the works in the Son. Neither the words nor works of Christ were exhibitions of any independent divine energies but were a display of the Father in Him (John 14. 10). He lived by reason of what the Father was to Him (John 6. 57). Therefore to draw adequate supplies of life's energy of mind and body was as indispensable to Him as to every other man ; for He had become man, and for Him as for each man it is fact that *man* doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Deut. 8. 3 : Matt. 4. 4).

It is blessedly true that this recuperation can go on moment by moment by ceaseless heart contact with God, and the common demands of ordinary affairs be thus met. Would that Keble's lines were true of far more Christians, and far more true of those who know something of the experience :

There are in this loud stunning tide
 Of human care and crime,
 With whom the melodies abide
 Of the everlasting chime ;
 Who carry music in their heart,
 Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
 Plying their daily task with busier feet
 Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

Now this holy strain must be learned in the holy place of the Most High.

But there come seasons of unusual strain ; indeed, the ceaseless drain of things commonplace may gradually outwear us. To avoid this there must be special recourse unto God, and solitude becomes indispensable. It is extremely seldom that this is to be gained in Eastern houses. A few may have an inner chamber, a small room reached through an outer, such as were once common in England. Jesus said : Get into that " closet," that closed-in place, shut the door, and there pray to thy Father who seeth in secret, and He shall recompense thee—He shall most surely compensate thee for the time and effort to get alone with Him (Matt. 6. 6). In these few words of Christ profound emphasis is laid upon solitude with God by the sixfold repetition (Greek : in English sevenfold repetition) of the singular number of the personal

pronoun : “ But *thou*, when thou prayest, enter into *thine* inner chamber, and having shut *thy* door, pray to *thy* Father who is in secret, and *thy* Father who seeth in secret shall recompense *thee* ”—one soul alone with God, others shut out. Sometimes the sick room becomes the soul’s private oratory, where God is met.

Peter felt the need of such privacy with God and he resorted to another spot possible in many Oriental houses, the flat roof (Acts 10. 9). There God drew near and imparted directions of vast moment for the advance of His plans of grace to men.

In his second book of Contrition (144) Chrysostom (cent. 4) offered these sage remarks on our subject :

Let us not only seek that solitude which is offered by the spot, but likewise that which consisteth in the disposition of the mind, and, above all, let us lead the soul into that true solitude. For thus David, though dwelling in a great city, administering the affairs of a kingdom, and surrounded by a thousand cares, was more warmly inspired by the love of Christ, than were the monks in the wilderness.

These words provoke these reflections :

1. That one may retire into monkish solitude and not meet with God ; indeed, some have met the devil and gone mad.

2. That, on the contrary, so busy a man as the sovereign of an empire may become inspired with love to Christ and learn the priceless secret of inward intercourse with God.

3. That rightly to profit by external solitude, there must be first a right disposition of the mind, and that the believer must learn how *to lead* the soul into the experience of true solitude.

Let me therefore challenge myself as to whether I am really *disposed* to seek privacy with God, or whether I am *indisposed* to this. Can I say : “ As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God : when shall I come and appear before God ? ” (Psa. 42. 1, 2). It is instructive to watch the way of a young man with his sweetheart. His love for her is a passion and constrains him to long ardently to feel her near him, to hear her voice, to talk to her. Therefore he plans his days with the end ever in view to meet her as often as possible and for as long as possible. Does the believer long thus to meet God, to be conscious of His nearness, to hear what He will say, to pour out the heart to Him ? If not, he cannot *love* God much, for love would constrain him to plan each day with the chief object to get alone with God and enjoy His love.

Though he be a properly busy person like king David or Sister Eva yet will he still long after God, will watch for

every opportunity to withdraw into His secret place, and will study how to lead his soul into the experience of true solitude. This will foster the habit and ability to shut the mind away from men and matters and commune with God though amidst a crowd. We are told that upon a train journey Hudson Taylor seemed to be asleep. His companion congratulated him upon this, but learned that in fact he had brought before God personally every one of his fellow-workers in China. Only one who sedulously seeks God in solitude can lead his mind into inward solitude while in human company.

My honoured father was a London business man. He left home at 7 a.m., and was not back till 7 p.m. There was much to occupy the few evening hours and the week-ends. But I can still revert in thought to the small room where, in my childhood, he was wont to retire and one heard his subdued voice pleading with God. Would that every Christian father was leaving on his child such memory and example.

Fifty years ago there was in Bristol a sheet-lead roller who had to be at his machine at 6 a.m. ; but he always rose in time to have twenty minutes with God before leaving his small house in an artizan quarter of the city. To him this was not a formality, pious but irksome, but a welcome and vital privilege. He was of the salt of the earth in his rough neighbourhood. In this he was an imitator of his Master, for of Christ we read that "in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place and there prayed" (Mark 1. 35). The best hour of the day was given to the most important business of the day. This used to be easier than it is now. The whole habit of life of the modern world has been changed, and for the worse spiritually, by two inventions, rapid locomotion and brilliant artificial lights. By the latter night can be turned into day ; the world sits up late and cannot rise early ; the evident rule of the Creator for His creatures is disregarded by man, and one inevitable result is that, while birds and beasts go on without nervous disorders, the human race gets more and more neurotic and undependable.

The disciples as yet had little understanding of their Teacher or of the need of waiting upon God ; so the Lord was subjected to deliberate interruption of His privacy ; " Simon and they that were with him followed after Him ; and they found Him, and say unto Him, All are seeking Thee " (Mark 1. 36, 37). Well is it with the man of prayer if contact with God has developed the serenity with which Christ met this invasion of His privacy. The disciples urge that *there is work to be done!* why neglect it thus ? Jesus replies by stating a profound and much neglected principle in the work of evangelizing : These have had opportunity to hear the

message : Let us go to those who have not heard ! (vs. 38, 39).

The Christian who willingly or thoughtlessly conforms to the world in this one particular of early retiring and rising late, will scarcely be heavenly minded like Jesus was on earth : for disregard of the will of God in one matter will induce general disregard, and general walking by the will of man, and thus the spirit and tone of the believer will be that of earth and not heaven. It is vain to pray " Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven " if we follow any ungodly habits of men of the earth. In his deeply instructive biography *George Muller of Bristol* (94, 95) A. T. Pierson wrote :

On April 20th, 1834, Mr. Müller left for Bristol. On the journey he was dumb, having no liberty in speaking for Christ or even in giving away tracts, and this led him to reflect. He saw that the so-called " work of the Lord " had tempted him to substitute *action for meditation and communion*. He had neglected that " still hour " with God which supplies to spiritual life its breath and its bread. No lesson is more important for us to learn, yet how slow are we to learn it ; that for the lack of habitual seasons set apart for devout meditation upon the word of God and for prayer, nothing else will compensate.

We are prone to think, for example, that converse with Christian brethren and the general round of Christian activity, especially when we are much busied with preaching the word and visits to inquiring or needy souls, make up for the loss of aloneness with God in the secret place. We hurry to a public service with but a few minutes of private prayer, allowing precious time to be absorbed in social pleasures, restrained from withdrawing from others by a false delicacy, when to excuse ourselves for needful communion with God would have been perhaps the best witness possible to those whose company was holding us unduly ! How often we rush from one public engagement to another without any proper interval for renewing our strength in waiting on the Lord, as though God cared more for the quantity than the quality of our service !

Here Mr. Müller had the grace to detect one of the foremost perils of a busy man in this day of insane hurry. He saw that if we are to feed others we must be fed ; and that even public and united exercises of praise and prayer can never supply that food which is dealt out to the believer only in the closet—the shut-in place with its closed door and open window, where he meets God alone.

Sometimes it was to a mountain that Christ retired to pray. All four Evangelists speak of this (Matt. 14. 23 : Mark 6. 46 : Luke 6. 12 ; 9. 28 : John 6. 15). John and Matthew emphasize that Christ was alone. I have experience of both

mountain and desert as wondrous places for solitude. If no wind is blowing the desert affords not only privacy but absolute quiet. No leaf rustles, no insect stirs ; silence is profound and the mind undistracted from without. But not many can reach such a favourable spot, and none can wisely abide there. What shall they do whose lot is otherwise ? I knew in India an Englishman who was head of a municipality with half a million inhabitants. He had a staff of 500 Hindus to control. Only in middle life did he become a Christian, but then he gained an unique privilege not known or possible before ; for when people had come and gone from his office until he was feeling the strain of things, he would lock his door and have ten minutes retirement with the Lord and find refreshment of the whole man. Here is a secret of becoming superior to our circumstances.

As cupbearer to the king Nehemiah had a responsible post. It was his to see that the wines were of the best, suited to the royal taste. It was his duty to be watchful that no poison be inserted by an enemy of the king. Such a post was lucrative and luxurious, but his pious heart became burdened by the ruined state of far off Jerusalem, the city of his God and of his fathers. This constrained him to mourn and weep, to fast and pray, which secret exercise Godward he maintained for four months (Chisleu to Nisan).

Such private intercourse with God prepared him to meet the critical moment when the king suddenly challenged him as to his sadness and inquired what he wished done in the matter. An unwise answer might have proved disastrous ; but being accustomed to seek God, he knew the way to His secret place and was able to resort thither in heart while standing before his sovereign. Nehemiah tells us that, when the king asked " For what dost thou make request ? " before answering he " prayed to the God of heaven " (ch. 2. 4). He paid a momentary visit to heaven, and was moved so to reply that the king furthered the good will of God. How often Christians have bungled affairs at critical moments from not knowing how to retire at the instant, and for an instant, into true solitude with the Lord of all persons and matters.

The sorrowful fact is that the vast majority who pass as Christians are not really *disposed* to seek God. See how they behave on a half-holiday, a bank holiday, an annual holiday. Instead of seizing the opportunity for extra retirement with their God, the direct bent of the mind is to fill up the time fully seeking pleasure. If a car is available so much the more is this evident. Such are really " lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God " (II Tim. 3. 4), even though the " pleasure " is of quite innocent form, such as enjoyment of the seashore or the countryside. But if they *loved* God the first longing would be to seek His face, and then would all other godly pleasures be intensified and prove satisfying.

Of all pitiable believers none are more to be pitied than those who simply dread to be alone. Too often, if nothing else is available, the radio is their resource to avoid solitude, by which in the main their minds are filled with vanity and poison. If only they *loved* their God they would never be alone.

Oh, so to love our most lovable Lord that the heart will sedulously cultivate His company, and seek "desert" places to be alone with Him, to hear His voice, to find strength to do His commandments. For this is the indispensable condition of experiencing the richest of all His promises: "If a man *love Me*, he will keep My word: and My Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and *make our abode with him*" (John 14. 23). It is one thing to trust a person, it is another thing to love him.

The life of each of the Lord's people is an integral part of that community, His church, which He is building. For the community, and for each individual member of it, He has a plan, and that injunction applies in general and in detail, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount" (Ex. 25. 40 : Heb. 8. 5). In *Exodus* the command is applied to details: "see that thou make them [each separate item of the house of God] after their pattern:" in *Hebrews* the application is to the totality, "all things." Only that in any human life which corresponds to the purpose of God for that life will be suitable for incorporation into the house of God, the church glorified. This is as true of our affairs personal as of our religious activities. Everything else will be burned up as wood, hay, and stubble. And the only place where God will show us the pattern is "in the mount," the place where the heart is elevated out of its mundane conditions into solitary fellowship with God. "I became in spirit [in ecstasy] in the Lord's day," and then John saw and heard things heavenly (Rev. 1. 10, 11 : comp. Ezek. 1. 3 ; 2. 2 ; 3. 12).

It was a steady and strenuous effort for Moses to climb to the top of Sinai, some 7,000 feet up. But God had said to him, as He says to each of us, "Seek ye My face;" and Moses replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek;" *and he saw it*. In the power of that holy, private intercourse he became faithful in all God's house, even to its last detail, and so a forerunner of the Son of God Himself (Heb. 3. 1, 5). Let us each study how to lead, to constrain his soul into that true solitude which is the prime secret of power and of true success in the busy outward life. Daniel was a man weighted with years and with public duties, but he *set his face* to seek his God, and was granted deep insight into His divine ways and foresight as to His royal purposes, and became a man greatly beloved in heaven (Dan. 9. 3, 23 ; 10. 11).

The Lord graciously bring us to know His own inward experience, who when utterly forsaken by men could say : “ Ye shall leave Me alone : and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me . . . He hath not left Me alone ; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him ” (John 16. 32 ; 8. 29).

THE WAY BACK (9)

by JAMES L. STANLEY

Chapter X.—FOR EVER WITH HIM.

Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.—1 Cor. 15. 57.

These are they that come out of the great tribulation and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God.—Rev. 7. 14, 15.

They shall see His face . . . they shall reign for ever and ever.—Rev. 22. 4, 5.

The Book of Genesis gives us the story of Paradise lost ; the Book of Revelation gives us the story of Paradise regained. In Genesis we see man excluded from the presence of God, banished on account of sin ; in Revelation we see the gates of the city open, and redeemed man welcomed back to the Father’s house. The ultimate object of redemption is here attained.

“ Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God ” (I Peter 3. 18). “ That He might bring us to God,”—yes, that was the object for which He came down from heaven, nor will He forsake the work until that object is attained.

In one sense this object was effected when we believed in Christ. Then He took us by the hand and led us back to God, reconciling us to Him through the blood of His cross. And ever since that moment He has been still engaged in the same gracious work, leading us by His Spirit into fuller acquaintance and closer communion with the Father.

But the completion of that work still lies in the future.

“ *With Christ.*” How much is contained in these words ! It is not so much to a place or a state that our attention is directed, as to a person. When our Lord replied to the prayer of the penitent thief He said, “ This day shalt thou be *with Me* in paradise.” When Paul looked forward to his release from the body, he spoke of the change as being “ with Christ.” When he was describing to the Thessalonians the blessed consequences of Christ’s return, he summed up the account with these words, “ And so shall we ever be *with*

the Lord.” When our Lord Jesus Christ was praying for His people, one of His petitions was, “ Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me, be *with Me* where I am ” (John 17. 24).

How much sound theology there is in the simple answer of the little child, who being asked, “ Where is heaven,” replied, “ Where Jesus is.”

How often have we felt, in our experience of earthly things, that our happiness on particular occasions has been due, not to place or circumstances, but to the persons in whose congenial company we have been placed ! There is a charm in the personal presence, the subtle, indescribable influence of the individual, which nothing else can supply. And if this be the case with those of like passions with ourselves, in what a high degree must it be true of Him ! The Lamb in the midst of the throne is the one centre of attraction—He is the heaven of heaven. He is the theme of song : they sing, “ Worthy is the Lamb.” He is the One who feeds and leads to fountains of water of life ; He is the one whom the redeemed follow whithersoever He goeth. He is the Bridegroom of the church : the centre of worship, the light of heaven, the supreme authority. And the title by which He is principally known is one which is fitted ever to keep in mind His great sacrificial work—even “ The Lamb.”

“ *They shall see His face.*” There is a whole heaven in that expression. The vision of God ! Who can describe the joy which such a sight will give ? What an intense eagerness is sometimes manifested to see one who, by some deeds of valour or work of philanthropy, has raised himself to high rank and endeared himself to the multitudes of his countrymen ! What a peculiar thrill of pleasure is experienced in simply looking upon one whose name has long been known and celebrated ! What, then, will it be to gaze upon Him whose “ name is above every name ? ”—to look upon Him who bore our sins and carried our sorrows—to see that visage once marred more than any man, those eyes which looked with melting tenderness on sinners, and wept for human sin and human sorrow—to behold those hands which were once extended on the cross, those feet once pierced with cruel nails—to listen to that voice upon which the multitudes hung listening to His words of wisdom, which spoke health to the sick, called back the dead to life, calmed the stormy sea, soothed the troubled heart, and pronounced forgiveness to penitents—and then, as we gaze, to feel and know that He lived, and died, and lives still for us, to be able to say of Him, “ Who loved me and gave Himself for me ” ! What rapture will there be in this glorious vision !

We shall know even as we are known. No longer shall knowledge of Christ and of God come to us through any intermediate channels. We shall no longer see in a mirror,

darkly, but face to face ; no longer know in part, but know even as we have been known. How different is the knowledge of a person we obtain through a personal interview, from that which we obtain by letters or mediators of any kind ! The knowledge is swift and direct : hearts, souls, minds come into contact, and through the communion of spirit an exchange of knowledge takes place which could be communicated in no other way.

It is well to know Christ through the Word, and by the teaching of the Spirit : even now in some seasons of devotion the spirit is raised to a height of rapture almost inconceivable. But what must it be to see Him face to face ! Well may we sing :

“ If such the sweetness of the *stream*,
What must the *fountain* be,—
Where saints and angels draw their bliss
Immediately from Thee ? ”

And just as the growing intimacy with one whose excellencies we admire serves to enhance our joy, so will the discovery of His glorious perfections fill us with the most exalted pleasure ; for this knowledge will be sustained and advanced. It will not be as it was with Paul, when caught up into Paradise, only to descend again to the dimness and darkness of earthly conditions. Clad with immortality, we shall be fitted to endure the glory of that light ; and endowed with larger powers of intelligence, we shall be able to advance without weariness.

We shall be like Him. It is well known that if plants be kept in a window, the side on which the greatest growth takes place is the one that is turned to the light. The analogous fact to that in spiritual things is this : that in whatever direction we turn with our supreme affections, in that direction we grow. So it is written of the idolators and their idols : “ they that make them are like unto them ”—they become like the objects of their worship. The worldly man, turning his affections to earthly things, becomes more and more “ of the earth, earthy.” The Christian, on the contrary, setting his affection on things above, grows into the likeness of his Saviour and Lord. Even here, with imperfect knowledge, with the light broken and dimmed by the media through which it comes, a transforming effect is produced, and the believer becomes in some degree conformed to the image of God’s Son. But when removed to Paradise above, how rapid will the transformation be ! It will be as with some plant, a native of tropical climes, which has been transported to other latitudes for a time, and there has languished and faded, but when restored to its proper home quickly recovers strength and puts on new vigour. “ We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is.”—“ As He is ” : no distorting medium between ; it will be the full beatific vision. Gazing

on Him we shall be transformed into His likeness, and be fully satisfied (Ps. 17. 15).

We shall serve Him. "His servants shall serve Him." This is enumerated among the pleasures of heaven. Heaven is a place of rest from sin and suffering, but not from service. There service will be perfected. Delivered from every element of weakness, sin, and fear, it will be ennobled and exalted. Here our service is constantly marred by various defects : sin disfigures it, bodily infirmity deteriorates and diminishes it. There we shall serve in the vigour of immortal youth. God will find in us the fulfilment of the cherished purpose, "This people have I formed for Myself, they shall show forth My praise." There is a dignity and loftiness in the very simplicity of the sentence which announces the service of heaven. "His servants shall serve Him" : here are no qualifying words, no high-sounding terms, no inflated adjectives. It is enough to say that they are "His servants," and that they "serve Him." That is sufficient. They are servants, not in the earthly, but in the heavenly sense. The difference between the two is recognized in the familiar prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, *as it is done in heaven.*" So when they are called "His servants," it is according to the heavenly ideal, and their service is characteristic of themselves—perfect.

We shall enjoy constant communion with Him. "The tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them." Holy intimacy—all barriers removed, God and man reconciled—eternal friendship. What a glorious possibility is here revealed ! That we, who have sunk so low and become "utterly unclean," should be so renewed in heart and mind as to share the very thoughts of God and be partakers of His pure delights ! Made one with Christ, and completely like Him, our thoughts and affections will evermore be in perfect harmony with the thoughts of God : we shall gain an insight into His purposes of wisdom and love, and know, as we have never known yet, the meaning of those words, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

And then, like Christ, *we shall be immortal.* "This corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality." No shadow of approaching end shall dim the joys of that holy place. Here, the choicest pleasures are alloyed with the thought of their termination ; but it is not so there.

Those glorious realms will be perfectly free from any shade of sorrow. "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The God whom they love, serve, and adore has imparted to them His own nature. They are "born of God," "born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth." Eternal life is assured to them by the covenant of a faithful God, and by

their union to Him who is "the Resurrection and the Life." "Neither can they die any more." "Death hath no more dominion over them." Victors, through the blood of the Lamb, theirs is henceforth the song of triumph. The "last enemy, Death," has been destroyed by Him who is the "Death of Death." This is the blissful consummation for which the whole company of the redeemed now wait. His purposes are ripening fast ; His designs are steadily accomplishing : in majesty the King still rides prosperously forward, doing "according to His will," and shall continue so to do until all enemies are subdued beneath His feet. The process is long, but the issue is not doubtful. Ere long the trumpet of the seventh angel shall sound, and (Rev. 11. 15) the voices in heaven shall be heard proclaiming, "The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign

FOR EVER AND EVER."
(This series is concluded)

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (12)

Of the men therefore who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that He was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of His resurrection (Acts 1. 21, 22).

Since it must ever remain matter of mere opinion it is to little profit to discuss whether Peter had the mind of the Lord in proposing the election of a new apostle. It is much more to the purpose to ponder the rich practical instruction his remarks contain. Here is an instance of how valuable teaching was given incidentally to the main matter in hand.

1. The dominant note of apostolic testimony was to the fact of the resurrection of Christ : "a witness with us of His resurrection." His life as a man was material to the testimony ; His atoning death was essential ; but the fact that God had raised Him from the dead and given Him glory dominated the Christian message. Without this act of the Father all preceding earthly experiences of the Son would have been to no purpose, as regards our salvation and also the plans of God.

This assertion of the resurrection of a man, and his ascension to heaven, was so stupendous, so unprecedented, that it demanded the conjoint testimony of many witnesses to compel, yea to justify, men in accepting it : the new witness must unite "with us" in asserting the fact. This united testimony Paul stressed in I Cor. 15. 4-8.

2. The qualification, therefore, of such a witness was

that he had moved personally in the circle of those who had surrounded the Lord on earth : “ he companied with us all the time ” of Christ’s public life. It implied a capacity for steady intercourse with others in the path of discipleship. One task to which the Lord had ever and anon to return was to keep the peace among His followers. It was needful that they present to the world an united front and united witness : “ By this shall all men know that ye are disciples *to Me*, if ye have love one to another ” (John 13. 35). Men could be disciples of other Teachers without the necessity of loving one another.

3. The limit of time of that intercourse with the Lord was strictly defined. It commenced with the baptismal ministry of John the Baptist and extended to the ascension of Christ. Of the Lord’s life prior to His baptism the inspired histories tell nothing beyond one incident in His boyhood, with the general feature that He was obedient to His parents (Luke 2. 40-52). Like all the silences of Scripture this is instructive. It throws full emphasis upon His public career, and this commenced with the work of John, as fore-runner, drawing the attention of the crowds to Jesus as the Lamb of God who should take away sin and baptize His people in the Spirit of fire and power. As to those many hidden years it was enough that, as the Son emerged from their obscurity into the glare of publicity, the Father had declared from heaven by an audible voice that He was well-pleased with Him.

It had been well indeed if expounders of Scripture had observed this divine emphasis upon the ministry of John the Baptist. Not Calvary, not Pentecost marked the beginning of the new era which completed and superseded the age of the law and the prophets. Peter had heard his Lord declare publicly, without the slightest ambiguity, that “ the law and the prophets were *until John*: from *that time* the good news of the kingdom of God is preached ” (Luke 16. 16). This same good news continued to be the message of Christ and His apostles, including that of *Paul* to the close of his ministry (Acts 13. 24 ; 20. 25 ; 28. 31).

Paul emphasized the distinction between the law and the gospel by assuring men that through Jesus they could, by faith, obtain complete justification from all offences, whereas under the law of Moses only partial justification was provided, there being a great number of major offences for which the law allowed no atonement or pardon. Now this sending by God of a Saviour Paul associated with *John’s ministry*, saying “ John had first preached before the face of His entering in [that is, immediately before His public appearance] the baptism of repentance ” (Acts 13. 38, 39, 23-25).

This good news for all men Mark describes as the “ beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God ”

(Mark 1. 1). Plainly this is the Christian message, for the fact that Christ is the Son of God is the rock on which the church is built (Matt. 16. 16-18). What, now, is the "beginning" of this gospel? Mark at once adds that, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah, "*John came preaching in the wilderness the baptism of repentance unto [with a view to] the remission of sins*" (Mark 1. 1-4).

Speaking to a company of Gentiles concerning the "good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ," Peter told them that this message followed directly upon "the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10. 36 ff.).

It is the same in the Gospel of John. Having spoken of the Word who was God, the Creator, the life, the light that was to shine in this dark world of mankind, John at once adds that "There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John," sent to bear witness to that heavenly Light (John 1. 1-8).

Therefore Peter stated, what all apostolic preachers supported, that the message the apostolic witnesses were to spread had John's ministry as its starting point and the ascension of Christ as its culmination. Dispensational doctrine which differs from this is, in this difference, not apostolic.

4. The facts that Christ was raised from the dead and "received up" in glory are of necessity the permanent essence of the saving Christian message. But how was this witness to be perpetuated seeing that those early personal witnesses soon passed off the scene? It is momentous that those first preachers did more than point out that the Old Testament had foretold the resurrection of Messiah. They did this with emphasis (Acts 2. 22-31 ; 13. 34-37). But this fact did not by itself justify their Christian message. They had to show by personal testimony that this prophetic announcement had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, who therefore was the aforesaid Messiah. In like manner we of to-day must point out to men that the Old Testament foretold that Christ would suffer and then, by resurrection and ascension, enter into His glory (Luke 24. 25, 26) ; and we can add that the New Testament gives the testimony of eye-witnesses that this was fulfilled in Jesus. But this is only to declare that the Book asserts it, and is not the same as a personal testimony to the fact. How, then, can I to-day give this personal witness to the fact that Christ is alive, so that the Book declares verifiable fact ?

For this I, like the apostles, must have the Lord Jesus going in and going out with me in daily affairs, made to my heart a personal reality by the ministry of the Spirit. Not all who believed on Him in those days of His flesh were prepared to take Him as their Leader and heavenly Companion. It meant the renunciation of everything unsuitable to Him.

Those to-day who are sincerely ready for His daily presence and control will be given plain tokens that He is alive and is all that Scripture offers to the disciple. Thus these can give a personal witness to His resurrection and His fidelity to His promises. They can tell from experience that He is with them, they can narrate how He answers their requests and controls their affairs; they can thus testify that the records of the Book are being verified in their experience. Others may believe on Him, or may even tell others what Scripture says about Him; but this is not the same as to be a *witness* to His resurrection, for it is the essence of a witness that he must talk of that which is within his personal knowledge. It was an apostolic witness who said, "we cannot but speak the things which *we saw and heard*" (Acts 4. 20).

5. By a very striking expression Peter reveals the chief and essential condition of this constant intercourse with the Lord in every day life. He said that "the Lord Jesus went in and went out [not "among" us, as the English versions] but *over us*," as R.V. margin following the Greek (*ep̄ hēmas*. Luke 1. 33 : Rom. 5. 14 : Heb. 3. 6 : Rev. 9. 11). The Gospels show the Lord as regularly taking the initiative in the movements and activities of His disciples. He was the Good Shepherd *going before* His sheep (John 10. 4). He was the Leader, and they the followers. As long as this relation was maintained all went well for the sheep, for the disciples. But the narratives silently indicate occasions when the disciples took the initiative, and *every time they did so they blundered*. For example :

Mark 8. 32, 33 : "Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him . . . He rebuked Peter."

Mark 9. 38, 39 : "We forbid him . . . but Jesus said, Forbid him not."

Luke 9. 54, 55 : "Wilt thou that we bid fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? But he turned and rebuked them."

Let us search and try our ways. How often we form our own plans, and then ask the Lord to grant His favour. The place we choose to live; the calling we decide to follow; how and for what ends we train our children; where we will spend our holiday; to what church we will belong; what branch of Christian work we will undertake, if any—these are merely illustrations of the many matters as to which too often we do not wait quietly for the Lord to order but in which we take the initiative. Or again, the church thinks well to have a "mission." It decides the time, and the duration; chooses the missionary; makes needful arrangements; and then holds a prayer meeting or two to ask God to endorse these their own plans. Or a chapel needs a "minister." It invites various preachers to visit them on

trial, and presently selects the one they like best. Or the travelling preacher books his visits as far ahead as he gets invitations, without distinct indications from his Master upon the disposal of his time. The invitation gives a date or dates, his diary shows he is free, and he books the engagement.

Let the individual, let the church, reverently give to the Lord His one true place, as *Head*, as LORD ; let them wait for Him to move first, to indicate His plan and will ; to allow Him to be Lord *over* all, and it will be found that He is indeed and in truth “ over all, God blessed for ever ” (Rom. 9. 5). For His Spirit is on earth expressly to glorify Christ and enable us to be witnesses to Him, making effective our witness by His co-witness, on the very ground that we have been with Him, have habitually companied with Him as obedient followers (John 15. 26, 27). Such fellowship with the Holy One demands clean feet (John 13. 8 : “ If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me ”). Such purity of walk now assures companionship with Him in His glory : “ Thou hast a few names in Sardis who did not defile their garments : and they shall walk with Me in white : for they are worthy. He that conquereth shall *thus* be arrayed in white ” (Rev. 3. 4, 5). Let us give all diligence to be of the few.

NOTIONAL RELIGION DANGEROUS

By JOHN HOWE,

Minister of the Gospel (1630-1705).

That religion is not duly delightful which consists wholly in revolving in one's own mind the notions that belong to religion, without either the experience or the design and expectation of having the heart and conversation formed according to them. So the case is with such as content themselves to yield the principles of religion true, and behold with a notional assent and approbation the connection and agreement of one thing with another, but do never consider the aim and tendency of the whole. . .

When this is never considered, but men do only know that they may know, and are never concerned further about the great things of God than only to take notice that such things here are offered to their view which carry with them the appearance of truth, but mind them no more than the affairs of Utopia, or the world in the moon ; what delight is taken in this knowledge is surely most perverse.

There is a pleasure indeed in knowing things, and in apprehending the coherence of one truth with another ; but he that shall allow himself to speculate only about things wherein his life is concerned, and shall entertain himself with delight in agitating his mind in certain general curious

notions concerning a disease or a crime that threatens him with present death, or what might be a remedy or a defence in such a case, without any thought of applying such things to his own case, or that the case is his own, one may say of such pleasure, "it is mad," or of this delight, "what doth it?"

Or he that only surfeits his eye by beholding the food he is to live by, and who in the meantime languishes in the want of appetite, and a sickly loathing of his proper nutriment; surely such a one hath a pleasure that no sober man would think worth the having.

And the more anyone doth only notionally know in the matters of religion, so as that the temper of his spirit remains altogether unsuitable and opposite to the design and tendency of the things known, the more he hath lying ready to come in judgment against him; and if, therefore, he count the things excellent which he knows, and only pleases himself with his own knowledge of them, it is but a like case as if a man should be much delighted to behold his own condemnation written in a fair and beautiful hand; or, as if one should be pleased with the glittering of that sword which is directed against his own heart, and must be the present instrument of death to him. And so little pleasant is the case of such a person in itself, who thus satisfies his own curiosity with the concerns of eternal life and death, that any serious person would tremble on his behalf at that wherein he takes pleasure, and apprehend just horror in that state of the case whence he draws matter of delight.

.....

Let him also be wise and take the foregoing to heart who has taken seriously the matter of salvation from perdition but is content with merely notional acquaintance with the after truths and experiences belonging properly to salvation. It is easy to assent to the truth that our "old man was crucified with Christ" (Rom. 6. 6) and yet go on pampering his cravings and live under his power. It is easy to accept the idea that God, on His side, sees the believer seated in the heavenlies in Christ (Eph. 2) and yet continue earth-bound and worldly-minded, forfeiting the joy and peace of our heavenly position. It is simple to sing "There, there on eagle wings we soar" and yet crawl on the earth like a worm. Such merely notional Christian life is not Christian, but is empty, disappointing, a reproach to the gospel and our testimony. It is for us, by practical service, to "*lay hold on the life eternal . . . the life which is life indeed*" (I Tim. 6. 12, 19).

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Off the south west coast of Scotland, opposite Ayrshire, lies the island of Arran. Separated from Arran by a narrow strait is the long peninsula of Kintyre, itself almost an island. At the beginning of the last century this district was remote, and religiously almost heathen, for the ministers there were mostly unitarian in doctrine and deeply immersed in farming, fishing, or trading in sheep or cattle. In the year 1800 that famous gentleman evangelist James Haldane, accompanied by John Campbell, invaded this needy region to preach the gospel of salvation in Christ, the Son of God, by faith. The ministers offered intense opposition and even instigated an illegal arrest, but all was overruled for the furtherance of the gospel. It was then arranged for a young preacher named Macallum to till this fallow ground and his efforts were much blessed of God. Mr. Campbell gave the following soul-heartening particulars of his labours¹ :—

It was arranged that his head-quarters should be at the very town where we were arrested, and that he should regularly visit out-stations in the region round about. I remember the first evening I preached there, that the sergeant of the party who guarded us to the Sheriff sat at my right hand in his regimentals, which he had previously put on for the occasion, and was now a converted man ; and on my left hand sat the minister's man, also converted, whose case was somewhat singular. When Mr. Macallum first went there, of course this man was prohibited from ever going to hear him, but one evening Mr. Macallum preached in a barn adjoining to the minister's stable, indeed, only separated from it by an old gable. The man being in the stable when Mr. Macallum was preaching, and observing a hole in the gable, he naturally put his ear to it—for stolen waters are sweet. The gospel passed through this hole to his ear, up to his understanding, and down to his heart, so he became a new man, and his soul not being able to live without food, he was obliged to attend the ministry of Mr. Macallum, and consequently lost his situation at the manse or parsonage-house.

The people had been very anxious to build a place of worship, but no proprietor could be found to part with a piece of ground for that purpose ; but in a singular way their work was accomplished. There happened to be a contested election, in which the minister took a different

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side from the landed proprietor in his immediate neighbourhood, which so incensed that gentleman that, to be revenged on him, he gave to Mr. Macallum an acre of ground to build a chapel and a house for himself upon it, and assisted the people to erect them. There was also room on the ground for a garden. I have slept in the house. So God can thus make even the wrath of man to praise Him.

I paid a visit with Mr. Macallum and a young man to the western side of the Island of Arran . . . The case of the young man was not a common one. He had been, like his companions, very ignorant and careless. He heard Mr. Haldane preach after being freed from his arrest, and went home greatly alarmed about the state of his soul. He could neither sleep nor work : his poor friends did not know what to make of him—some recommended one medicine, others to make trial of another. All failing, they were recommended to take him to the parish minister of a town a few miles off. His mother did so. He inquired of the mother what was the matter with him. She said she could not tell, but he could neither sleep nor work for fear of the judgment and hell. The minister informed her that a person had very lately come to the town to teach the people to *dance*, and was only to remain for a short time ; he therefore advised her to put him for a month under his tuition ; he had little doubt but he would be relieved. She took lodgings for her son, and placed him under the dancing-master for a month. Of course, he began to teach him how to make one foot point to the east, and another to the west, and so on. About the second day he got tired of the foolish work, jumped out of the window of the dancing-room, ran home to his mother, declaring it made him worse instead of better : so he gave up the dancing.

Not long after this Mr. Macallum arrived, and commenced preaching in the neighbourhood. The young man went to hear him, and was greatly relieved under the first sermon . . .

We preached near the spot where Mr. Haldane and I landed two years before, when only about three persons came to hear ; now we had a congregation of upwards of 400—the effect of Mr. Macallum's labours among them. On leaving them, about a dozen of the people walked on each side of my horse, telling what miserable creatures they were when first I visited their county. One said he then acted as fiddler at all the dancing weddings round about, which he immediately gave up when his eyes were opened. “ The people said I had broken my fiddle to pieces, but that was not true.” An aged, grey-headed man then said, “ I was at that time chairman of

a whisky-toddy meeting, that regularly met for the purpose of drinking whisky and water in the evenings. After Mr. Macallum came amongst us, one ceased to attend, then another and another did the same, till I was left alone in the chair. I began then to wonder what it could be that they liked better than good Highland whisky. This determined me to go and see ; so I went and attended the ministry of our friend, and also found that which I liked better than whisky-toddy." Thus the chair was vacated, and the meeting dissolved by the force of gospel truth . . . What was rather a novelty to me, was that I found the conversions as numerous among those who might be called the *aged* as among the young, which is seldom the case where the gospel has long been preached. But in that part of the country I did not hear of any gospel preacher having been there in that generation, or that of their fathers, consequently it was a kind of heathen part of Scotland. So it was, as among the heathens abroad, under our missionaries : conversions are as frequent among the old as the young ; for if the gospel does not soften it hardens ; it is either the savour of life or death.

How pitiful is the spectacle of the official ministers of religion permitting their districts to fall back into ignorance of the gospel till they can be described as " heathen ! " How solemn then to witness such false shepherds being the first to oppose the gospel when taken among them ! It was these who stifled the awakening in Wales in 1904 and 1905. It is such who have lately quenched the fire of grace that blazed in the Western Hebrides.

But in the history now given there is encouragement. The British Isles are again reverting to heathen ignorance and awful indifference to the message of God. Let those seriously, spiritually concerned give themselves to strenuous prayer until God shall have mercy upon us and the world. When His hour struck He raised up James Haldane for Scotland, and He can so act again. In a funeral sermon in February 1851, Dr. Lindsay Alexander finely said :

Of all the influences that have been operating upon our people during the half-century just closed, none, perhaps, has been more powerful and extensive than that which commenced when God touched the heart of James Haldane with evangelic fire, and sent him from secular occupations to proclaim to his fellow-men " the unsearchable riches of Christ."

It needed such a man to accomplish such a work as he had to undertake. Men educated in the retirement of Colleges—men of timid, sensitive, or delicate tastes and temperament—men infirm of purpose or hesitating in action, would have been bent and scattered before the

storm which interest and prejudice, and the old hatred of the human heart to all that is earnest in religious life, everywhere stirred up against the itinerant preachers. It needed a man who had been trained amid scenes of danger and of strife, and whose spirit was accustomed to rise with opposition, to encounter and brave the tempest. Such a man was found in James Haldane. The habits he had acquired at sea, in battling with the elements and with the untamed energy of rude and fearless men, stood him in good stead when called to contend for liberty of speech and worship in opposition to the bigoted and tyrannical measures of those who would fain have swallowed up alive the authors of the new system. He was not a man to quail before priestly intolerance or magisterial frowns. Dignified in manner, commanding in speech, fearless in courage, unhesitating in action, he everywhere met the rising storm with the boldness of a British sailor and officer and the courtesy of a British gentleman, as well as with the uprightness and the unoffensiveness of a true Christian. To the brethren who were associated with him, he was a pillar of strength in the hour of trial : while, upon those who sought to put down their efforts by force or ridicule, it is hard to say whether the manly dignity of his bearing or the blameless purity of his conduct produced the more powerful effect in paralysing their opposition, when it did not succeed in winning their applause.

In century eighteen the God-fearing few prayed and God raised up such as Wesley, Whitefield, Fletcher, Romaine, and other bold preachers of His message. As that century closed the godly prayed and prayed in Scotland, and God sent James and Robert Haldane, and others, and through them wrought wonders. Today let the godly remnant pray and pray and pray until some man or men of the Lord's choice and preparation rise up to rebuke and disturb the features in us all that hinder the truth.

Let each servant say honestly to the Lord of the harvest, Here am I, send ME ! and then *wait till he is sent, thrust forth* into the harvest ! For the Lord of heaven and earth will not conform to our schemes of training and authorizing His messengers nor to our organized human methods of conducting His work. He will follow His own plans and ways as He did when He sent and trained and directed His own chief Messenger, and as the Latter did in choosing, training, and sending forth His apostles. It was for Moses to pray that a successor be appointed by God to take his place : it was for Jehovah to point out that successor and how he was to be installed in office and service (Num. 27. 12-23). And when God gets His own way the man He chooses and equips will be found to be the very man for the hour and the work, as

was James Haldane.

How eminently satisfactory it is to serve a Master with whom nothing is impossible and who works all things after the counsel of His will. Illegal arrest of His servants induces some to hear who were before careless and ignorant, and the sword of His word reaches their conscience. A hole in a wall conveys the truth savingly to one who had been forbidden to hear the preacher. The falling off of attendance at a drinking gathering induces its leader, out of curiosity, to attend the preaching, where he is converted. Truly

“ God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform :
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

Therefore must His servants step boldly with Him on to the sea, and like Him ride out the storm. It is “ they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, *these* see the works of Jehovah, and His wonders in the deep.” Whereas such as only hug the shore, or never even leave it, such cannot see what God can do in the deep waters of life, but only the lesser mercies He can show on the dry land. They who mean to see what wonders God can do in the deep must venture forth ; and doing so, will meet tempests, not as merely something natural and incidental to a seafaring life, but as part of God’s ordering of affairs, for it is “ *He* commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind ” and it is “ *He* maketh the storm a calm ” (Psm. 107. 23-30).

“ Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never failing skill
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.”

And the preacher must keep in mind that it is not in this age a part of that sovereign will to save the whole world, or a whole country, or county, or city, but rather to gather out everywhere a people for His name (Acts 15. 14), to form the church ; which today is His body, the instrument for carrying on His work on earth, and tomorrow will be His bride for His heart’s special delight, and His co-regents for governing His kingdom. To serve this Divine programme is our noble calling, the one enterprise on earth today which is certain of fulfilment, worthy of utter abandonment of devotion.

During the Hitler rule there was ever in Germany a strong resistance movement, and very many of the finest of the country paid the full penalty of death for furthering it. One of these wrote that “ To proclaim Him, God sometimes uses men who are forerunners of the day. But they must die before the day comes.” (P. Lippert). The President of the People’s Court that tried such resisters said to a nobleman, Helmuth James, Count von Moltke, “ Only in one thing are we and Christianity alike : *we demand the whole man!* ”

“ WE DEMAND THE WHOLE MAN.”

To yield the whole man to the world is for the Christian treason against Christ : to present himself unto God, body, soul, and spirit, is his reasonable service. For such and through such He works His wonders in the mighty deep. Always for these

“ His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour :
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”

“ For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels ; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds ” (Matt. 16. 27).

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (II)

EUROPE

27th November, 1922 to July 28th, 1923

Mr. Broadbent had suggested a visit to Norway to strengthen believers there. I wrote to Mr. McKinnon, a brother from Scotland, living at Skien, a town a fair journey south west from Christiana. The immediate reply was a warm welcome from the assembly of believers there accompanied by £10 towards the journey. Thus encouraged I left England on Monday, November 27th.

A younger brother thought it of God to accompany me on this tour. I had known him in adversity at Dartmoor. After conferring with the leaders of his assembly, who approved of his desire, we left together. We had five days with the Danish brethren in Copenhagen, and reached Skien on December 6th. The weather was raw and searching and as I studied my companion on the long journeys I doubted if he were robust enough for the still longer journeys ahead to reach south-east Poland and the yet more severe weather expected. He felt the same and accepted the welcome of the friends in Norway to remain with them. Later his wife joined him, and he found help from God to render acceptable service for a few years, until her health brought him to England.

This going forth of a younger worker with an older followed the apostolic example of Timothy joining Paul (Acts 16. 1-3). My brother was not a novice, but already a helpful teacher of the word ; a very important point too often neglected in the going forth of young men to a foreign land. He was well spoken of by the local brethren where he lived, who, indeed, had expected that he would some day be called of God to devote his life to the ministry of the word.

But it is of the utmost possible importance to observe that the Derbe and Lystra brethren had nothing at all to say as to whether or not Timothy should join Paul. They commended

him personally, and they joined with Paul in laying hands on him, that he might be granted a special spiritual gift, which a prophetic message had intimated he should secure (I Tim. 4. 14 : II Tim. 1. 6) ; but whether he should go forth with Paul was not for them to say, but was entirely a matter for Paul and Timothy, subject to Divine guidance. It is clear that Paul had received in advance prophetic directions as to Timothy. He speaks to him of "the prophecies which led the way to thee" (I Tim. 1. 18). The guidance of the Lord having thus been given, of course the brethren at Lystra and Derbe could have no voice in determining the matter, though they had the privilege of concurring and supporting.

This is seen in other instances. The Spirit expressly directed that Paul and Barnabas were to be separated for a certain forward movement. These also were not novices but experienced teachers. In view of the Spirit's direction it would have been impertinent for the brethren at Antioch to have consulted together as to whether they could commend the two brethren for foreign work. Their part was but to commend them *to the Lord*, and let them go, as "sent forth by the Holy Spirit" (Acts 13. 1-4).

Later "Paul chose Silas" and the part of the brethren was simply to commend them "to the grace of the Lord" (Acts 15. 40). Thus the decision to go, and to go together, was not taken by the elders or the church, though they showed their approval by prayer and support.

How widely different is modern western practice. A "Missionary Society" is formed, with human regulations for conducting divine operations, and its "Candidate's Committee" approves or disapproves of applicants. The Council of the Society sends out the approved, locating them to this or that sphere and directing their efforts.

A hundred and twenty years ago the Lord broke in on this human plan by Himself sending forth A. N. Groves on the original New Testament lines, and for long others went forth more or less on those lines. But this past thirty or more years have seen wide departure from those apostolic ways. Now a brother or sister (often too young and with too little experience or spiritual gift) feels stirred to go abroad as a "missionary." The elder brethren of his or her assembly confer. Perhaps the candidate is referred to a self-constituted group of advisers in a neighbouring big city, who are supposed to be better informed and wiser than the local elders. If one or both of these advisory groups disapprove the applicant is little likely to get further ; if they, and the leaders of one or two other assemblies, approve, the name is sent to the Editors of *Echoes of Service*, who usually accept the recommendation of the local elders, place the name on their list, and the person becomes a recognized "missionary."

For all practical purposes as to one going forth with the

gospel this system, however well meant, differs little from the plan followed by formal Societies. The elders or the group in the city may declare themselves to be but "advisers;" but in present reality they amount to a Candidate's Committee and their "recommendation" has virtually the effect of a "decision." One *may* go forth in spite of them (even as one may disregard a Society) but it seldom occurs. It is no wonder at all that of late, in this country and the United States, leaders in this system have had to deplore that many have gone forth who have duly shown that they were not sent by the Lord. See *Echoes of Service*, May 1949.

The various Counties Evangelization Societies and the Trusts that operate in village work in England tend in the same direction as the measures concerned with work abroad and develop the same spiritual defects. In both the one sphere and the other the work of the Lord is taken largely out of the hands of the Lord and He is in measure denied the actual control of His own affairs, while the workers are likewise removed in measure from direct dependence upon Him. As far as this is so faith is diminished and unction lost. This will increase the longer human ways are followed. Blessed are they who follow the Lord wholly; their paths will be ordered by Him and they will fulfil His good purposes.

It was in connection with the brother mentioned that the incident occurred given in my Memoir of E. H. Broadbent as follows:—

In 1922 a young brother in Christ felt called to accompany me on a tour. The Passport Office delayed his passport and I went to enquire why. The official explained that so many persons had gone abroad whom they afterward wished had been kept in England, that they were becoming more cautious. In this I concurred from my own observation. He continued that this applicant seemed to be of no special status, merely a cabinet worker. He had no means, and no Church or Society behind him. He appeared to be intending a long journey, by the number of countries he wished endorsed on the passport, and he was leaving his wife behind. He concluded that he wanted to know how the wife was to be supported in his absence, and said frankly that he had sent the papers to the police in his town to report.

In reply, I pointed out that in religious work character was far more important than in any other sphere: that many of us felt that to guarantee a sufficient income to assure comfort was a most likely way to induce the wrong sort of person to offer for the work: that, on the contrary, it was likely to deter the unsuitable to say that they should show that they were convinced that it was God who was calling them by trusting Him to meet all needs for going forth, and by risking whatever trials and hardships might be met: that thus the very feature which

made him hesitate, the lack of visible and guaranteed support, was the very thing that we thought of great value.

The official at once admitted the cogency of this, to him an entirely new aspect of the matter, and the passport came without delay.

At Skien I experienced a distinct working of God. I had arrived without money for getting further. On Monday, December 11th, I spoke on Gal. 3. 1-14. A sister said that night to a friend that she would not have missed that address for a thousand kronen. Her friend answered that therefore she ought to give that sum to the Lord ! She was a milliner and had not so much, but the next day she brought me 300 kronen, equal then to £12 10s. Other friends there and at Christiana gave sums totalling about £7. The Continental exchange was so heavily in favour of English money that this less than £20 took me from Norway through Sweden to Denmark ; across the Baltic Sea, over Germany and Poland to Warsaw, and thence to the south-east province where I was to stay. There it sufficed for expenses for two months and allowed me to help towards the cost of over fifty brethren and sisters gathered from the countryside for Bible study. Thus does the Owner of the silver and the gold transfer His ample resources from hand to hand.

The Berlin-Warsaw journey was made on Christmas eve. The train was utterly congested with Poles going home for the festive season. As the only way of securing a seat for the night I took a first class ticket. The cost for the perhaps 300 miles was at that time six shillings. This proved of the Lord. My companion was a Polish lady, on the staff of the League of Nations. She spoke several languages, including good English. She travelled on a diplomatic pass, and when at the frontier the passport and customs officers came she made a brief remark, probably that I was a friend of hers, and they passed on without inquiry or searching my bags. We talked for hours about things spiritual and I afterward sent her literature. In her reply she said : “ On the sea of life it’s not smooth sailing now. I would give much to begin life over again—if I could begin again with the heart of a child.” I pointed her to Ezekiel 36. 26, where God promises : “ A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.”¹

Eastern and South-eastern Europe being now behind the iron curtain it will not be well to give particulars of places or persons. It being mid-winter life physically was hard. The land was under deep snow, the temperature around zero.

¹ In *World Chaos* (III) I gave the sense from memory, not having her letter at hand.

The tiny houses were over-heated, food meagre, sanitation unpleasant or absent. The first sixteen days the sky was so leaden with snow clouds that I gained no idea of the position of the sun or of the points of the compass. When, however, the snow had fallen the short days were brilliant and the air invigorating. It was tiring to walk far in the heavy clothing necessitated by the cold. Pictures of life there are given in the Memoir of E. H. Broadbent.

The population was Russian and Jewish, under Polish officials. In former days it had been part of Russia, and the Greek Orthodox church, the religion of the State, had bitterly persecuted and suppressed evangelical Christians. When the region passed to Poland in 1919, and religious liberty came, sundry believers, humble of rank, commenced preaching the gospel in the villages. The Lord responded, and, by the power of His Spirit, conversions multiplied until many thousands of peasants had turned to God. This went on for years, by their own testimony alone, and in spite of much family opposition which the converted had often to bear. They gathered every night, the meetings lasting for hours, and all being led by the Spirit of God.

The Polish authorities did not hinder this work of grace among Russians. Themselves Roman Catholics, and having been formerly oppressed by the Russian rulers and the Russian Church, they abhorred the latter and were pleased to see it weakened by these many defections. Thus does God turn the animosities of men to the furtherance of His purposes.

But the believers needed instructing more perfectly in the Word and ways of God, for which purpose the leaders gathered the fifty or so mentioned. They came from the very wide area where the work was in progress, and thus, though of humble status, were an influential company. We had three sessions daily. I explained the Scriptures for about four hours, my Russian-Jewish-Christian interpreter occupied the same time, and in the evening there was the usual public meeting. We took a general survey of the plans of God as revealed from Genesis to Revelation. These churches of believers had been incorporated by the leaders into a vast church organization. When we reached the Corinthian Letters it became evident to many that such an organization was not intended by the Head of the church.

The two months ended, and before leaving I pointed out to the leaders that many of their members now saw the real New Testament plan of each local assembly of Christians being administratively independent, bound to other believers by only spiritual ties of life, of faith, of love, and I suggested the probability that these would wish to adopt the Lord's ways in church life and worship. They themselves had confessed it to be according to Scripture, if therefore, I said, they would lead in the abandoning of human organization and adopting of the Lord's methods, then doubtless He

would still use them as before ; but if not, I thought it likely that they would lose the spiritually-minded and be left with the rest.

The brethren thanked me, kissed me in Russian style, and I left on February 26th, 1923. The forecast was soon fulfilled. The church in whose hall we had met asked to be put on the New Testament basis ; but the leaders would not forgo their dominance and their salaries drawn from the Union, and told those who wished any changes they must leave if they would gain them. As the building was held in the name of the leaders they were in a position to assert their will. Some sixty of the ninety members formed an assembly in an adjacent village, and in due time some thirty other churches followed this lead.

The advantage of the Lord's ways was seen later when the region passed again under Russian rule ; for the Soviet rulers suppressed the Union and whatever had a Western appearance or connexion, but tolerated, at that time, what seemed to them purely Russian. They also abhorred the oppressive Orthodox Church and could the more easily allow defection from it.

The spiritual fervour of Christians in that period was highly exhilarating. Neither effort nor carnal devices were needed "to keep things moving." Because almost every convert had to face determined opposition few confessed Christ until the Spirit had made Him a reality to the heart. Devotion to Him being thus kindled they were actually anointed with the Spirit of witness and talked of the Lord to others. For them the personal indwelling of the Spirit was not merely a doctrine but a reality, an experience. Through this divinely energized witnessing the work spread from village to village, and was always ahead of every effort to help the churches formed. From up to seventy miles away they came begging for a visit and instruction. And that seventy miles had been tramped on foot through heavy snow and had to be tramped back again.

One sister of seventy years walked over seven miles every Sunday to the Supper of the Lord, and back in the afternoon. It will be understood that when such effort was made, and made cheerfully and regularly, their hunger was not to be appeased by a meeting of only an hour and a quarter and a brief talk of fifteen minutes, such as testifies to the weak state of many English churches. They expected from six to eight hours of fellowship, with exposition of the Word in proportion.

On one visit a peasant walked into a house where I sat. He told that sixteen miles away through the vast pine forests the Spirit had wrought and several churches had been formed totalling 500 members. They had no teachers as yet, but learning that forty miles away there were to be all-day meetings, he had walked those miles the day before, had gathered all the manna and honey he could during the ten

hours of the meetings, so as to carry it back to his district, and this third day he was plodding the forty miles home. Hearing in the town that there were a few people who thought as he did, he had found us out to enlarge his store of spiritual food. Food for the body he declined, and a little before dark he started the remaining sixteen miles of his walk.

One who has ever shared in such apostolic conditions can only sorrow over the general dullness of spiritual life in England or other similar lands, and will pray and toil to strengthen the things that remain which are ready to die, in hope of a movement of the Spirit.

As the two months Bible study drew to an end I was waiting upon God for His guidance elsewhere. I had met in Germany a business man who travelled widely and was zealous in the work of the Lord. He wrote to say that he was going into Roumania and would come out of his way to visit the work in Poland. He added that the visit to Roumania was in connection with sorry conditions in a village church in Transylvania. As I read the letter my heart said that he would ask me to accompany him, though he had not hinted this. He had not been in my room five minutes before he inquired whither I was going next. I replied that it had not been made clear, to which he instantly answered, "Then you will come with me to Roumania."

In due time I returned to Warsaw to get the necessary visas and took the morning train to Vienna. The journey took the whole day and I listened for hours to a flow of many languages. A Jew seemed able to chat with every one and he tried me in vain in one tongue after another. Towards evening it occurred to him to try English. He was a God-sent aid, for the Polish and then the Czech customs had to be passed: I tacked myself on to his coat-tails, and he piloted me through smoothly.

The journey from Vienna was long and wearying. When we reached our railway station there remained a hard tramp of some miles, over snowy paths, to our village destination. My companion seemed never to tire, but on arrival I was all but exhausted. Yet there was a meeting to be addressed almost immediately. Of the local trouble I had learned little more than that the strife had been so bitter that for six months the church had refrained from breaking bread, a wise precaution in view of I Cor. 11. 26-32, and one which other churches might well follow.

I learned later that the history was this. The village was in a lovely valley among the grand and delightful Carpathian mountains and was a holiday resort from the hot plains. A German brother, working in the gospel in the district, conceived the plan of putting up a good sized house. The ground floor was to be a hall for the assembly, the first floor was to be rooms for the worker for the time being, that is,

the "missionary." Above, there were to be two suites of rooms to be let to visitors on holiday, the rents to go to the maintenance of the premises and the work of God. A sister in the meeting advanced £500 and a wealthy brother in England found the rest, I think £1,500, and he stipulated that the property should be vested in Stewards Company, Ltd., a company formed to hold religious properties out of England.

In due time another German worker succeeded the one who put up the house, and presently he and the meeting quarrelled, and he would not come down to the gatherings beneath his rooms. It was a Saxon population, and the senior man in the church was a tough farmer. Greek had met Greek and the tug of war reached breaking point. The bad state of soul of them all was the *reason* for the strife, but the *casus belli* was paltry, as so often. The meeting said, *We* represent Stewards Company in England and *we* are responsible to manage the house. The missionary said, No, *I* live in the house and *I* am the one to manage it. But in reality it was that both parties wished to control the letting of the upper rooms and to enjoy what balance remained after meeting the upkeep of the property. The landlords could do little to help, being far away in England and the people on the spot using another language. Plainly it would have been a great advantage had the owners been in the country and able to negotiate locally.

At the meeting that first evening I spoke on I John 2. 28, "And now, little children, abide in Him; that, if He shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed from Him at His presence." The solemnity of the judgment seat of Christ for His own people was stressed heavily and the severity of the penalties that may then follow evil conduct by Christians. It was also pressed that if we do not cease from evil in this life, then must we meet again there the persons and wrongs outstanding and receive again the deeds done through the body. It was the solemn truth in the parables of the unforgiving and unfaithful servants (Matt. 18. 21-35; 25. 14-30) and of such passages as Eccl. 12. 14 and II Cor. 5. 9, 10.

The next day I left and ministered in other places for three weeks. Returning on 30th March 1923, teaching and visiting occupied three weeks. The Spirit strengthened for much of that conflict described in *Prayer Focused and Fighting*, without which the walls of Jericho do not fall but by which the giant sons of Anak are conquered. During this time the "missionary" fell ill, which gave opportunity to get near to his hard heart. Visits to the forests and fields with the farmer opened the way to his stubborn heart. At the end of the three weeks there was a perceptible softening of spirit in the community and in the meetings, and I proposed that on the 22nd April the holy table should again be spread.

It was a season never to be forgotten. The members were all present, some eighteen brethren and sisters, and the "missionary" had come down. I spoke awhile on I Cor. 11. 26 : Col. 3. 17 : I Cor. 10. 31, and Zech. 7. 6, and sat down. There was a long silence in which I prayed and the Spirit wrought. The farmer rose and in direct and honest words expressed to the "missionary" his sincere regret that he had ever said or done anything to hurt him ; then he offered his hand which the other shook in silence. One after the other each followed and offered the hand of fellowship, which was accepted. But the elderly sister who had helped to build the house did not move. I waited and prayed. Presently she said that Mr. H., the "missionary," had said in another place such and such wicked things about her daughter and she felt she could not forgive him. He said nothing, and I could do nothing but cry secretly to the Lord to act, and He did.

There had lately come to the house an elderly German lady who had retired from long years of devoted service in the capital as a Lutheran deaconess. She was of social position and education. Though she had not been in England for forty years, one had only to shut one's eyes and listen to a cultured English lady speaking English perfect in language and accent. She was a charming Christian. The night before this meeting I had asked her if she had ever seen the Lord's Supper observed as we observed it, and had pointed her to I Cor. 14. 26 as indicating the absence of formality in a Spirit-led assembly, where "each one" contributed a psalm, teaching, or revelation. She had never noticed the verse. I added that the Scripture demanded no other qualification for partaking of the Supper than that the partaker had been received by Christ (Rom. 15. 7) and was walking with Him, so that if she wished to join us the next morning she would be most welcome. She came, and it proved that she was perhaps the only person in the whole land that could remove the block to which the meeting had come. When the mother had stated her difficulty, the lady intervened quietly and said : "I think I can help in this. I was present on the occasion and what brother H. really said was so and so," which was entirely different to the false account which had reached the mother and contained nothing objectionable. Upon this the mother said : "Oh, that is quite another matter," she shook hands with Mr. H. and then we had such a melting, gracious season at the breaking of bread as I had never known before and have never known since.

Thus had the Lord ordered His own house. He had sent from a far-off land one whom He could use to serve His people, though he knew but very little of their language ; and He had sent from a distant city one who could remove an unexpected hindrance to harmony. Later I learned that He had secretly begun the work of reconciling the two principal

contestants by that first address on my arrival ; for when the farmer learned of the serious prospect that lay ahead at the judgment seat of Christ he said to himself, " If this is how matters stand we'll have to get this trouble settled." Thus had his heart been given a new and right outlook and approach to the situation.

When the hearts of the community were thus softened toward each other it was simple to solve the matter of the house, by the suggestion that they should control it jointly. That solution would have occurred to men of ordinary sense. But often the sons of light are not so wise as the sons of this evil age, and these brethren missed the way because their souls were in a low condition and estranged. Sometime after Stewards Company, Ltd., sold the property, and thus was completely closed an ill-starred scheme that it would have been better should never have been started. Much harm has been done with English money, as well as much good. I would be happy if Stewards Company disposed of all its properties and wound itself up.

For centuries before the 1914-1918 war the Greek Church had been the State Church of Roumania and had resisted evangelical religion. By the peace treaty religious liberty was guaranteed under the new Roumanian constitution. A Department of Religion was created under a Minister of Religion. Let English and other Christians look this in the face, for they may need to understand the position.

Religion—the relations of a creature to the Creator, of man to God, and of the worship and duties involved—is a realm in which Governments have *no* authority from God to interfere. From the point of view of the Supreme Ruler their intruding into this realm and all their actions therein are *ultra vires*, beyond the powers possessed. Of old Israel was God's special people, where His rights and His laws were to be exhibited in national life. National and religious life were interwoven, the former to be pervaded and animated by the latter. Yet the secular rulers had no authority in affairs religious ; they were as much bound by the laws of Moses regulating religion as were all their subjects.

In an hour of acute danger from invasion the first king of Israel presumed to act as a minister of religion and to offer a sacrifice reserved by law to the priest, and for this presumption he forfeited the permanence of his kingdom (I Sam. 13. 8-14). A later king presumed to enter the house of God and burn incense to Him, this also being a function of the priest only. The king was smitten with leprosy on the spot, and continued a leper to the day of his death (II Chron. 26. 16-21). Similarly in the Gentile world Nebuchadnezzar, emperor of Babylon, planned to rule religion, but God frustrated him (Dan. 3).

This principle obtains still. God now acknowledges no

material temple, but He still claims sole authority over the love, worship, and spiritual service of men. Such of them as render this are His present kingdom on earth, the "house" in which He dwells by the Spirit. Of this sphere His Son, Jesus Christ, is the sole Head, and in this realm He has granted no authority whatever to secular rulers (Heb. 3. 6). In things civil rulers have rights conferred by God (Rom. 13. 1-7 : I Pet. 2. 13-17). In the religious life, the "house of God," His reserved realm, they, as rulers, are trespassers ; and while every person, Christian or otherwise, is required by God to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" by the grant of God, no one is permitted to render unto Caesar the things that are God's (Matt. 22. 15-22). These are reserved by Him for Himself and set by Him under the sole authority of His Son. A Minister of Religion is a personal affront to the Son of God.

The Roumanian authorities at that time did not violate the constitution by denying liberty of religion, but they largely nullified that liberty by seeking to impose regulations which it would have been very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to fulfil. Every community of Christians had to be registered and licensed or its meetings were illegal, and a first requirement was that fifty heads of houses must sign the application for a licence. In country districts this could easily preclude any application. Every preacher had to hold a licence, and to preach only in such place or places as the licence specified. Thus the spreading of the gospel and enlargement of the church of God by itineration was severely restricted. No preacher would be licensed who had ever been convicted of a crime, nor one who had not passed a certain standard of secular education. Thus could the supply of preachers be kept quite inadequate.

On May 5th, 1923, I learned that there was to be the next day at a distant town a gathering of leading brethren to consider the above situation. Leaving at 3.30 a.m. I arrived with a friend at 7 o'clock. It transpired that an active evangelist had been in consultation with the Minister of Religion and had come with the draft of a Constitution which the Minister demanded should be adopted. All the assemblies of Brethren were required to federate into one Union, with President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Council, and to be governed by such regulations as have been outlined above. Failing acceptance, the meetings would be declared illegal.

Being asked my view, I showed that the New Testament knows of no visible organization of Christians whatever other than the local church gathered in each separate place. There was long and serious discussion, but the New Testament view was accepted by all but the evangelist in question. When he urged that, unless the demand of the Minister was granted, the work of the gospel would be stopped and persecution

would follow, one of the others asked the simple fundamental question, "*But what has become of the cross?*"

By most of the believers the cross was shouldered. The battle went on for a long time, with considerable victory for the saints. How matters are now (1957) behind the iron curtain, as regards inter-church organization and State licences, I do not know. At one time the Soviet rulers openly tolerated evangelical work, probably because it, like themselves, was adverse to the Greek Church. The present attitude of the Communist Roumanian rulers is, I understand, mainly tolerant.

The uncertainty of travel was illustrated on Sunday night, May 13, 1923. The train left the northern town of Jassi at 7.35 p.m. After some hours it stopped for some hours. Of this I thought little and did my best to sleep sitting on the narrow board of the third class. At length we started, but when day dawned, and we should have been near our destination, I fancied that the country looked unfamiliar. Presently we arrived back at Jassi. Heavy rain had washed away the line where we had stopped, so we were kept till morning to be the down train to Jassi.

After three weeks service in various cities I left Roumania on May 25th, 1923, crossing the frontier into Hungary the next morning with about 6/- in my pocket. After a few days in Budapest I came through to Wiedenest, in West Germany, expecting shortly to return to England. But a call from Poland prevented. The brethren at the centre where the New Testament assembly had been formed had decided to hold a three days conference during a public holiday, and that the meetings should be entrusted to the rule of the Holy Spirit, instead of to human arrangement. But this was an untried venture. How could they risk it without one or more of their English brethren present who were experienced in such meetings? So they wrote urgent letters to Mr. Broadbent and myself to go to their help, and pending replies did not announce the conference. But they duly reflected that this dependence on man was a denial of reliance on the Holy Spirit, so they called the meetings without waiting for our replies. Mr. Broadbent could not go, but I took with me the John Warns mentioned above. The Spirit of God, of course, honoured their faith. The three days, with about ten hours of meetings each day, were a season of power, closing with the Lord's Supper. It was largely the influence of those days upon believers from far around which led to the many other churches adopting the New Testament ways of church life and ministry.

It is intensely sorrowful and forboding that the majority of leaders in British assemblies have so lost confidence in the Lord the Spirit that the control of ministry and of service has

been taken away from Him and assumed by themselves. This waning of faith and spiritual vitality in leaders is aggravating the general decline of faith in saints, the evidence of which is the spiritual feebleness commonly found. Were such a test as Government forced on the Roumanian saints suddenly forced upon the assemblies in England it is greatly to be feared that the majority of believers would succumb, led by their leaders, and would surrender the crown rights of Christ rather than suffer for His sake. Some aspects of those matters are discussed in my books *God at Work on His Own Lines* and *The Local Assembly*.

It was on this second visit to that part of Poland that the incident occurred narrated in the Memoir of Mr. Broadbent. At a question meeting a question was put in as to whether it was right that a choirmaster should conduct the singing and beat time before the audience. The choirmaster of that church sat before me on the front seat. As I knew well how touchy such officials can be I sought grace to answer warily. I pointed out that they had suffered pain by the late separation from their former church, and that the ground of their course had been that they had learned that the affairs of the house of God ought to be ordered by His word in the New Testament. If therefore they found in the New Testament that the early churches had choirs, very well, let them continue as before, and let the choirmaster continue to lead ; but if they did not so find it in the New Testament they would know what to do.

After the meeting, I learned that it was the choirmaster who had put in the question ! The Russians are intensely musical, and choirs were universal ; but without ado or friction the choir was given up. The choirmaster grew in grace and became the pillar of that church. Some time later the whole village selected him to be their mayor. They knew that only under his administration would official corruption cease. Very reluctantly and only under great pressure he at last consented to act. The Polish police then asked him what their share of the "pickings" was to be. He replied that there would be no "pickings." They therefore reported adversely to the authorities in Warsaw and the appointment was not confirmed. Thus was he delivered from the perilous post.

After three weeks in that country and a week in Berlin I reached England on Saturday, 28th July, 1923.

To be continued

THE DISCIPLE

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ECHO SAYS

True faith produces love to God and man :
Say, Echo, is not this the gospel plan ?—
“ the gospel plan.”

Must I my faith and love to Jesus show
By doing good to all, both friend and foe ?—
“ both friend and foe.”

But if a brother hates and treats me ill,
Must I return him good and love him still ?—
“ love him still.”

If he my failings wishes to reveal,
Must I his faults as carefully conceal ?—
“ as carefully conceal.”

But if my name and character he blast,
And cruel malice do a long time last ;
And, when I sorrow and affliction know,
He loves to add unto my cup of woe ;
In this uncommon, this peculiar case,
Sweet Echo, say, must I still love and bless ?—
“ still love and bless.”

Whatever usage ill I may receive,
Must I be patient still, and still forgive ?—
“ be patient still, and still forgive.”

Why, Echo, how is this ? Thou’rt sure a dove ;
Thy voice shall teach me nothing else but love :—
“ nothing else but love.”

Amen ! with all my heart then be it so ;
’Tis all delightful, just, and good I know :
And now to practice I’ll directly go :—
“ directly go.”

Henceforth I’ll roll on Him my every care,
And thus both friend and foe embrace in prayer :—
“ embrace in prayer.”

But after all these duties I have done,
Must I in point of merit them disown,
And trust for grace to Jesus’ blood alone ?—
“ to Jesus’ blood alone.”

Echo, enough ; thy counsels to mine ear
Are sweeter than the flowers, the dewdrop’s tear ;
Thy wise, instructive lessons please me well,
I’ll go and practise them : farewell, farewell !—
“ practise them ; farewell, farewell ! ”

(Attributed to) J. K. McEWEN.

EGYPT AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East was the cradle of the human race, both at the creation of man and at the new start after the Flood. It was therefore the original centre of mankind and thence the various families migrated to develop into the nations. The history of those migrations is obscure ; but the peoples that remained at the centre, that is in Mesopotamia and Persia, dominated the ancient world, and their history is now moderately well known. The discoveries of archaeology have strikingly confirmed in detail the *histories* contained in the Old Testament. And the conditions of those countries for the past two thousand years have equally strikingly confirmed the *prophecies* of those ancient Israelitish writers.

Yet, for a long time, one prominent general feature of those prophecies showed no sign of fulfilment, namely, that there would be a time when the Middle East would resume its place as the centre of the world. The last century and a half, however, has witnessed the commencement of this movement, and it is continually accelerating.

Perhaps it was Napoleon who gave to this movement its most definite impetus. I cannot now trace the book, but I have read that that Satanically far-seeing man said that whoever held Babylon held the key to India and the world. In the second edition of *The Great Prophecies* (1885, p. 175) Pember quoted a letter to himself from W. Greene, C.E., saying that in the French War Office he had examined a survey of the river Euphrates. It contained a plan for a new Babylon, with quays, river walls, and other arrangements necessary for a large commercial city."

It may be presumed that it was with Mesopotamia in view that Napoleon undertook his Egyptian expedition in 1798. "Reading and reflection had convinced him that Egypt was one of the keys to the world." He had said, "Only in the East can one do great things." But, under God, the British foiled him. On August 1st that year Nelson destroyed his fleet at Aboukir, and the next year Sir Sidney Smith frustrated him at Acre. Of the latter he said : "That man made me miss my destiny" (for these three quotations, see Enc. Brit., xvi, 87). These significant remarks seem to indicate that his colossal ambition had been to rule the wide world from Babylon, as Alexander the Great had intended to do.

From Napoleon's time the powers of Europe have taken ever-increasing interest in the Middle East ; its political and commercial revival has advanced continually, and its vast

supplies of oil are a prize which the western and northern nations wish to control. This involves ceaseless friction and international danger and makes urgent the problem of what the future holds. One who wishes to master this problem must consider attentively the following forecast by Isaiah the prophet about 700 B.C. It is chapter 19 of his book.

The oracle concerning Egypt.

Behold Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud, and cometh into Egypt : and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. . . And I will give the Egyptians into the hand of a cruel lord ; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord Jehovah of hosts. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the river shall be wasted and shall become dry. . . The fishers also shall lament and all they that cast angle into the Nile shall mourn, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish. Moreover they that work in combed flax, and they that weave white cloth shall be ashamed. . .

The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish : the counsel of the wisest counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish . . . they have caused Egypt to go astray who are the corner stone of her tribes. Jehovah hath mingled a spirit of perverseness in the midst of her ; and they have caused Egypt to go astray in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit. Neither shall there be for Egypt any work which head or tail, palm branch or rush, may do. . .

And the land of Judah shall become a terror unto Egypt, every one to whom mention is made thereof shall be afraid, because of the purpose of Jehovah of hosts which he purposeth against it.

In that day shall be five cities in the land of Egypt that shall speak the language of Canaan . . . they shall cry unto Jehovah because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour and a defender, and he shall deliver them. And Jehovah shall be known in Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Jehovah in that day : yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation . . .

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria ; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians.

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth : for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

1. The accurate description of these three lands as " in the midst of the earth " is to be observed. This they are, geographically and politically.

2. It is significant that this series of predictions has not had fulfilment, The proof is :

- (a) There has never been a time when the land of Judah has been a terror to Egypt. The reverse was frequent of old (ver. 17).
- (b) Nor have five cities in Egypt used Hebrew as their language (ver. 18).
- (c) Nor has there been a continuous highway from Mesopotamia into Egypt through Palestine (ver. 23).
- (d) Nor have the peoples of these two lands unitedly (or at all) worshipped the God of Israel, Jehovah (ver. 23).
- (e) Certainly these three peoples have never been a conjoint blessing to the earth, though often a source of misery (vs. 24, 25).

3. In the time of Isaiah, Assyria, Judah, and Egypt were the central powers of the earth, the first and the third aiming at world supremacy. He and other prophets boldly foretold the overthrow of these three powers, and gave much detail of how this would be effected in each case. It may be thought not to demand much courage to predict the downfall of these empires, for all kingdoms come to an end in turn. But it did require divine foreknowledge to describe the differing circumstances of their overthrow, and still more so to declare in advance that a time would come when they would revive *simultaneously*. The three lands experienced the precise destructions foretold, and long after the prophet's day, and now we see the announced resuscitation of them all going on before our eyes.

All three have been set on their feet as sovereign powers, and Palestine is in process of recovery after the centuries of spoliation by Romans, Saracens, and Turks. Until lately a highway, and a railroad, were in use from Egypt to Palestine ; motor traffic from the latter to Assyria was in operation.

4. There is thus rational ground for expecting that the rest of Isaiah's predictions as to these lands will be fulfilled, possibly in the not too distant future. And the final and happy issue will be that they will be " a blessing in the midst of the earth " (ver. 24), centres from which will radiate to the nations the mercies of Almighty God. This is a consummation devoutly to be desired. The prophets give much detail as to this restoration, even as they did to earlier desolations. The precise fulfilment of the latter guarantees exact fulfilment of the former.

There are indeed writers on these themes who deny to the Jewish race any national future, and aver that Old Testament prophecies concerning them are being fulfilled in the present bringing of Jews and Gentiles to faith in Christ. These writers teach that the church of God of the New Testament is the sole inheritor of the promises to Israel in the Old Testament.

Let such writers face the exact terms of the divine announcement before us. Israel is expressly conjoined as "a third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth ; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." If "Israel" is to be evaporated of all meaning and distinctiveness by being merged into quite another society of mankind, known as the church of God, what race and nation is to be the "third" with the other two peoples named ?

They who thus expunge Israel must also expunge Egypt and Assyria ; they must declare that these names also have no meaning ; that the whole prophecy has neither sense nor fulfilment, and that the declared purpose that these original world centres shall be the final world centres, but then centres of divine grace to the whole earth, will never be fulfilled. They must also ignore the present and evident trend in those countries, the apparent providential over-rulings laying a foundation for the future here plainly predicted. On their view they ought to offer an adequate explanation of why God has preserved Israel for nineteen centuries as a racial entity, in spite of devastations sufficient to have destroyed any small people.

5. But the prophecy predicts a dark night to precede the radiant morn. The main features of this period of distress are deeply significant for all nations, for the general proceedings of the law and judgments of God are alike in all cases.

In a former generation a Judge of Assize was informing a suitor that he had come to the wrong court. He mentioned several kinds of legal proceedings that were available, and added that, should the suitor say that he could not afford such costly litigation, he must inform him that this is not a land in which there is one law for the rich and another for the poor ! Sardonic as to the then law of England, since the rich could seek redress but the poor could not. Riches give no advantage in God's court, neither to the wealthy person nor the wealthy nation. The proceedings He will take against Egypt, as declared in this prophecy, are such as He takes against any nation when its time for judgment arrives. The following features are prominent :

(i) "Behold, Jehovah rideth upon a swift cloud and cometh unto Egypt" (ver. 1). For long periods, perhaps centuries, the rule of heaven over lands is left to angel authorities. But at crisis hours God Himself intervenes personally. Various instances are found in His Book, of which we cite three early examples.

(a) Genesis 11. Two thousand or more years B.C., when the human family was still one society with one language, they resolved to build a city and a tower which should be a permanent glory and a centre round which they

should cohere. Thus they would defy the command of God to replenish and subdue the whole earth. To deal with this rebellious scheme “ *Jehovah came down to see the city and the tower* ” (ver. 5) : and again, after perhaps returning to confer with His Council of heavenly rulers, He said “ *Go to, let us go down and there confound their language* ” (ver. 7).

- (b) Some centuries later, when the recommendation was put forward that Sodom and Gomorrah should be blotted off the earth, the supreme Judge said, “ *I will go down now and see* ” (Gen. 18. 20, 21).
- (c) Four centuries later again when the time had come to bring the descendants of Abraham, enslaved in Egypt, into possession of the land granted to their ancestors, God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and said, “ *I have surely seen the affliction of My people . . . and I am come down to deliver them* ” (Ex. 3. 7, 8). One detail of the ensuing proceedings should be noted : “ *against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments. I am Jehovah* ” (Ex. 12. 12).

In ch. 19 of his prophecy, here in view, Isaiah foretells that at the close of the present age Egypt is to experience a repetition of that early and awful visitation : “ *Jehovah cometh into Egypt.*” Malachi 3. 1-6 shows that the land of Israel will be visited at the same time : “ *the Lord whom ye seek will suddenly come to His temple . . . behold, He cometh.*” And the effects will be as in Egypt, even severe purifying judgment and resultant worship and blessing.

“ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ” (Heb. 10. 31), as Israel found in the days of David (II Sam. 24. 14). Seventy thousand of the people died in one day. It is a fearful thing for a land when the Great King takes the field in person. His movement is sudden and irresistible. It is a *swift* cloud of holy wrath upon which He rushes invisibly upon His hardened foes. The storm may gather long, but it bursts suddenly.

(ii) When God thus intervenes in wrath one of His first objectives is any *false religion* that He finds deluding and debasing the people : “ *the idols of Egypt shall tremble at His presence.*” We have just before noted that, when He visited Egypt of old, judgment was executed against its *gods*, as well as its king, princes, and populace.

According to the Bible prophecies of the End Days, idolatry will then prevail in Egypt, Palestine (Isa. 2. 8, 18, 20; Zeph. 1. 4-6) and Assyria (Isa. 21. 9; Jer. 50. 2; 51. 17, 47, 52). At present two of these lands are Mohammedan. This requires either that by then Islam will have ceased to be the religion of these countries, or will have itself succumbed to idolatry. The early Arabian tribes out of which it emerged were idolaters. Such a change would be no more than an extension of the reverence paid to the Black Stone at Mecca,

which has always been the central point in Moslem worship.

But the term "idols" here can scarcely mean the blocks of stone or metal. A human conqueror may show his spite or contempt by smashing these, as the kings of Assyria did of old (Isa. 37. 18, 19) : but God will not directly deal with these mere symbols of religion. It is the vital element at which He will strike, which is as follows :

A primary objective of Satan and his kingdom is to rob the Most High of the devotion and worship which are His sole right and to attract it to themselves. In the idol, as a visible symbol, there lurks and works a fallen spirit. Intelligent heathen understand this very well. In South India I inspected one of the thousand wayside shrines. Within there sat a rudely carved block of wood robed in tawdry tinsel. Every year the devotees provide a new image and hold a ceremony invoking the demon to abandon the image of the year just closed and take up his dwelling in the new. Behind the shrine lay several of the discarded idols, no longer sacred, but again mere blocks of wood, since the demon had forsaken them.

This is the regular explanation of idolatry given in the Bible, and given by men familiar with the matter. Fourteen centuries B.C. Moses said : " They sacrificed unto demons, which were no god " (Deut. 32. 17). Some centuries later a psalmist wrote : " They served their idols . . . yea, they sacrificed their sons and daughters unto demons " (Psa. 106. 36, 37). Fifteen centuries after Moses, Paul said : " The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice unto demons, and not to God " (I Cor. 10. 20).

This explanation of idolatry is common to all races and all periods. And it is rational. It requires some singularly powerful inducement to constrain parents to murder their own children. To honour a block of wood were insufficient for this, but to propitiate a demon that is feared for its malignity, or to obtain its urgently-needed help, is a more reasonable motive and spur to the atrocity.

The Roman Catholic offers essentially the same explanation when he avers that he does not direct his prayer to the picture or image, but through these to " Mary " or " Gabriel " or " Peter." Nor is there any other explanation of the powerful, all-pervasive influence of the system upon untold millions of men, including persons of high intelligence. No heathen of old supposed that the oracular advice or orders given at Delphi came from the *image* of Apollo, but from Apollo himself.

Therefore when Jehovah said that He would execute judgment upon the *gods* of Egypt, He meant that He would deal with the *fallen spirits* who dominate mankind through this system of worship. This also the ancient world would understand better than the modern westerner, for they knew that in early times there had been a rebellion against the

supreme Deity by angels they called the Titans, and that these had been cast down from their high realms to the deepest and most dreadful part of the underworld, called in Greek *Tartarus*. This the New Testament certifies as being in its essence historic. "God spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved for judgment" (II Pet. 2. 4). And so Jude: "Angels which kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, he hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (ver. 6). Jude then compares their sin to that of the men of Sodom in "going after strange flesh," as when men gratify their lust with beasts (Lev. 20. 15, 16), and as angels did with women both before and after the Flood, as recorded in Genesis 6. 1-7. This abomination precipitated the judgment of the Flood and the destruction of the giant races of Canaan. This is the meaning of angels "leaving their proper habitation," that is, abandoning the heavenly form in which they are by nature clothed, and assuming a human form for the evil purpose indicated.

It is to this condign punishment of angel princes that God refers when expostulating with other angel rulers long after. For their injustice as judges He threatens them thus, unless they amend their ways:

I said, Ye are gods,
And all of you sons of the Most High.
Nevertheless ye shall die like Adam,
And *fall like one of the princes*.

That is, like one of those former angel princes (Psa. 82. 6, 7).

Thus shall it be with the demon gods of Egypt at the time when God shall again visit that land of idolatry. And the public effects of this drastic disturbance in that scene behind the scenes must needs be tremendous, comparable to what would result in a land were its Cabinet and Civil service, the instigators and organizers of public affairs, suddenly and wholly paralysed. Public life would immediately be in confusion, and the consequent uncertainty would produce consternation and general alarm. And thus Isaiah declares that when, in that coming day, the gods of Egypt tremble, then, "the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it" (19. 1). The latter is the natural accompaniment of the former.

For in human affairs there are two chief stabilizing and consolidating factors, the family and religion. To defend these men have always gone to the extreme of effort and sacrifice. In his *Lay of Horatius* Macauley showed well how these two influences interest and inspire men.

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth

Death cometh soon or late ;
 And how can man die better
 Than facing fearful odds,
 For the ashes of his fathers,
 And the temples of his gods,
 And for the tender mother
 That dandled him to rest,
 And for the wife who nurses
 His baby at her breast,
 And for the holy maidens
 Who feed the eternal flame,
 To save them from false Sextus
 That wrought the deed of shame."

Father, mother, wife, baby are the family : temples, gods, consecrated maidens, the eternal flame are the religion. With consummate art the poet *interwove* these two realms of interest as *combining* to impel the Captain to unreserved self-sacrifice.

When the northern barbarians broke up the Roman Empire it was the Church, that is, religion, that remained the cohesive element of society, surviving the tempest and forming the rallying centre for a new era.

When in 1917 Almighty God visited Russia in judgment, the Revolutionaries, who were His unconscious and unwilling instruments of wrath, set themselves deliberately to destroy family life and the Church (the Greek Orthodox). In consequence the cohesion of the race was impaired and a new religion had to be imposed, namely, the worship of "the State," concentrated in the worship of Lenin deceased, that is, hero-worship.

It had been so a century earlier when God in righteous wrath visited France ; the Revolutionaries set themselves to destroy a false religion (the Roman Catholic Church). They were not so foolish as to suppose they could create the new France of their dreams so long as the old religion prevailed.

Thus it will be in Egypt at the time that Isaiah foretells (ch. 19). God will drive from power the invisible rulers, who use religion as a chief means to control the people. This sudden removal of the organizing consolidating force will produce disorganization and dismay : "the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it" (ver. 1), and "the spirit of Egypt shall be made void in the midst of it" (ver. 3). Now a dereligionized, demoralized, decentralized people will be a disconcerted and dispirited people and will succumb to whatever terrors attack it.

(iii) Ver. 2. Another measure which God takes in judgment is to incite family, social, and civil strife : brothers, neighbours, cities, and kingdoms within an empire find themselves at variance. Antagonisms and contentions, native to the selfishness of mankind, assert themselves when the co-ordinating and restraining influence of a common religion

is destroyed, as just before noted.

(iv) A further measure God takes is to destroy the natural resources of a land. In the case of Egypt this means a failure of the Nile. Cultivable Egypt is simply the strip of land fertilized by its one river. Should this fail, the land would quickly be as the vast deserts that surround it. In Upper Egypt not far from Assuan is the little island of Sehili in the Nile. I have seen on it the rock inscription which tells that for seven successive years the Nile failed to flood and of the famine that resulted. Scholars put this inscription at about 1700 B.C., the era of Joseph (Gen. 41). What has been can be again, and in this passage God says that it will be. The "sea" (ver. 5), is still the term by which Egyptians speak of the Nile. I have heard it used, and when the river overflows in August and September, and the shallow waters are miles in width, the term is appropriate.

The immediate and disastrous effects of this failure of the river will be want of fish; destruction and prevention of crops; lack of reeds and flags for roofing, baskets, fuel, and weaving of clothes; with consequent breakdown of industry, unemployment, and famine. A disastrous situation indeed.

Why did England think it worth while to spend blood and treasure in driving the Italians from Abyssinia? Was it not because, had the latter held the mountain lakes whence the Nile flows, Egypt would have been at their mercy? When the time of God to do this comes, no Great Power shall prevent it.

It is more difficult than some think to decide whether this or that disturbance of the seasons is a judgment by God. But if the 1947 frosts and floods in England were not a *judgment* they were at least a *warning* of what the Creator and Controller of the universe can do to a godless nation. Has the warning been taken to heart? Certainly not by such as that public person who at the same time complained of "this beastly" weather, or by those statesmen and officials who blamed the winter for disturbing their plans for fuel and food but blamed not themselves for their godlessness.

(v) But not only the common people, such as the tradesmen and artisans, are afflicted; the great men also are visited. The masses may be foolish and times may be hard, but wise statesmen have frequently steered public affairs through storms into calms. But when the people become quarrelsome and demoralized and then the princes prove foolish, what hope of steadiness and recovery is left?

And God here says that the princes, the wisest counsellors of state, those who should be the corner stone of national affairs, the foundation upon which the security of the public structure depends, shall become "brutish," that is, ignorant, stupid, obstinate, and brutal as a brute beast (Psa. 49. 10; 73. 22; 92. 6; Prov. 12. 1; 30. 2; Jer. 10. 8, 14, 21; 51. 17; Ezek. 21. 31). Becoming fools and being deceived,

they in turn lead the people astray in every work, devising useless measures, until the situation is as distressing and disgusting as when a drunken man staggers about in his own vomit (vs. 11-14).

(vi) This miserable helpless state is brought about by Jehovah mingling a *spirit of perverseness* in the people (ver. 14). As mingled strong drink induces the giddiness of intoxication, so does a perverse spirit disturb and impair the judgment. Perception is blurred, the sense of distance and proportion is destroyed ; events that are certain and near are thought improbable or remote ; and the wise fool refuses counsel, stubbornly hastens on where angels might fear to tread, and so rushes to his doom and drags many to ruin.

This perverseness was seen in Hitler, and its tragic consequences for Germany and the world. But need the British cross the channel to find this dread element of mind and action ? The more part of British working men would, I believe, stoutly defend women and children and the sick from attempted injury. Yet we have witnessed of late the strange and alarming feature that vast numbers of these normally kind and decent men will, for the sake of securing some small and selfish advantage, deprive hundreds of thousands of women, little children, and invalids, as well as the aged, of most necessary foods, as, for example, of milk. That enormous quantities of food must spoil matters nothing ; that they break contracts, defy their own elected leaders, and also the Government which they may have themselves helped to put into office, is all of no moment ; that they and their families must share the need and trouble which they cause does not seem to weigh with them.

Moreover, it is seen that masses of men will take this rough and senseless course about questions with which they have no direct concern, such as disputes occurring hundreds of miles away, and which men of sense would leave alone. Nor are they deterred by such sharp experience as Solomon described in the words : " He that passeth by and vexeth himself with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears " (Prov. 26. 17). Only a fool would seize an oriental cur by the ears.

Now, the most sinister feature of this most unreasonable and unrighteous conduct is that it seizes vast numbers, even tens of thousands, of men at one time, and suddenly, and in areas remote from one another. What sufficient explanation can be offered other than that of unseen spirit beings spread over wide regions, directed by a common plan, acting secretly and urgently upon the minds of myriads at once ? It is a movement similar to that incident when, by the permission of the Son of God, a legion of demons entered suddenly into two thousand swine and drove them over a precipice into the sea (Luke 8. 33).

(vii) This leads on to the further blow that God will

inflict upon Egypt for its chastening, humbling, and ultimate blessing. "I will give over the Egyptians into the hands of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, Jehovah of hosts" (ver. 4). This may be the Antichrist: he is described as "a king of fierce countenance" (Dan. 8. 23).

Tyrants seize power by craft and force: this is the human and outward side. But God uses them as instruments of His holy wrath; He so manipulates affairs that a wicked people is inescapably shut up into the power of a godless and violent ruler: this is the divine and secret side. The direct purpose for which God has ordained human authority is the support of virtue and the restraint of vice (Rom. 13. 1-7; I Pet. 2. 13-17). Rulers often reverse this and promote injustice. For so doing God duly punishes them; yet at the same time, by allowing evil to display itself fully in oppression by a cruel ruler, He creates a general recognition of its true nature and some revulsion from it towards righteousness and order. In wrath He remembers mercy.

This process has had, and is having, large fulfilment in modern history.

In century eighteen France was oppressed by a cruel king and the aristocracy. But the Revolutionaries were yet more cruel: and the nation was then shut up into the hand of one harder of heart than them all—Napoleon Bonaparte.

Let the reader look into the eyes that glare from any portrait of Hitler, and notice also the knit brow and thin lips, and he will see that modern Germany was indeed given over into the hand of a cruel lord, who has gone down laden with eternal infamy.

But before Hitler rose to view Russia had been handed over to such cruel and fierce leaders. The Romanoffs and the Russian aristocracy were callous enough, but the three great Revolutionaries who destroyed them far exceeded them in ruthless and wholesale barbarity. Does history record any such Triumvirate as Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin? Has such extensive and horrible oppression been known before or since? Has any such avowed, determined, thorough, atheistic revolt against the Most High God ever defied high heaven and crushed mercy and morality?

Lenin and Trotsky are gone to render account to the God and Judge Whom they blasphemed. So has Stalin. His atheism was a definite rejection of Christian witness, for his own mother "fearlessly and faithfully confessed her Christian faith even as she died." *The Times* (Nov. 30th, 1928) wrote of "his brutal and uncompromising desire for autocratic power."

This is the man that was praised by the obsequious new Acting Patriarch of all Russia when in 1944, for political reasons, he allowed a resumption of public services by the Greek Orthodox Church. The Patriarch said he was "a

wise leader placed by the Lord over our great nation.” And we may indeed regard him as having been granted power by the God he abhorred, but surely it was as a “cruel lord” empowered for the execution of the righteous judgment of heaven.

This was the tyrant with whom, and with his like-minded associates, Western statesmen were unwise enough to make compacts and to support with vast material supplies. Better it would have been for the West and for the world had the two anti-God powers, Germany and Russia, been left to exhaust one another yet more completely, instead of the Russian rulers being now in a position to defy and delay every attempt to re-establish general order and peace. The Western statesmen are experiencing a bitter fulfilment of the Hausa proverb, that the lamb got its deserts by going to dinner with the hyena, or of the English proverb that he who sups with the devil needs a long spoon, or he gets nothing out of the meal.

Would that of late years England had been ruled by men who themselves were ruled by the fear of God and inspired with real confidence in Him: then could they and this people have faced German aggression with quietude and courage, without turning to God-hating men for help; then the Almighty could have interposed more notably; then the after-war complications with these godless and treacherous “allies,” who are really enemies (as was Syria to Israel), could have been avoided. But “without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God, for he that cometh to God must believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of them that seek after Him” (Heb. 11. 6). They who do not seek Him are left to their own poor resources and devices. England is finding out that Russia is to her what Egypt was to Israel of old, “a bruised reed, whereon if a man lean it will go into his hand and pierce it” (Isa. 36. 6).

How vivid are these oriental similies; how living are these ancient histories! Happy are they that heed them!

Other Scriptures confirm the above forecast as to Egypt.

Psa. 68. 30, 31 speaks of a time when God shall have “scattered the peoples that delight in war.” It is sadly obvious that this is still future. At that time “Princes shall come out of Egypt,” that is, to acknowledge Jehovah at Zion, and “Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God,” in supplication and worship.

Psa. 87. 4 looks on to when glorious things shall be spoken of Zion, the City of God: when nations shall have there a new birth, when rejoicing peoples shall own that all fountains of grace take their rise there, the city that Jehovah loveth. Among these saved peoples, Egypt shall be mentioned.

Isa. 11. 11-15 had already foretold certain events that would show the Egyptians that God was working for Israel’s deliverance. Both the “Egyptian sea” (the Nile) and the

Euphrates in Assyria, will be smitten dry that the Jews may the more easily flee thence to Palestine. Incidentally this shows that Egypt's present policy of expelling Jews will not be permanent or complete. They will be in that land when Jehovah shall "assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

Two things are here indicated. (1) They who see no national future for Israel simply eliminate from Scripture these detail declarations, a truly sad and solemn irreverence to the divine Oracles. (2) "Outcasts of Israel" and "dispersed of Judah," "Ephraim" and "Judah," are mentioned as equally dispersed over all the earth, which excludes any idea that some tribes are "lost."

In Isa. 45 this prophet adds to his earlier predictions concerning Egypt. He was given to know the part that Cyrus of Persia would be caused by Jehovah to take in restoring Israel from captivity in Babylon. In ver. 4 "Jacob" and "Israel" are synonyms, both being applied to the captives in Babylonia whom Cyrus would release. This forbids restricting the name "Israel" to the ten tribes in captivity.

Now this noble prophecy passes quickly from that epoch to a time when the heavens shall drop down and pour forth *righteousness* and the earth shall open in response and cause *righteousness* to spring up (ver. 8). The figure is beautiful, and is seen vividly in the hot lands, where the earth, during the intense summer heat, dries solid and brings forth nothing, but with astonishing rapidity opens and bears when the latter rains flood the soil.

No such general, rich, and luxuriant moral change took place when the small minority of Israel returned in the days of Cyrus. The histories of Ezra and Nehemiah depict a sad contrast to the prophetic picture, and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi had to upbraid the returned remnant for much unrighteousness.

But Malachi, writing some three centuries later than Isaiah, takes up his glowing picture, and, looking on to "that day" of restoration which Jehovah would make later, the promise is given that, when the people shall be faithful with their God, He will "pour out such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." That this is yet future is clear from the feature that at that time all nations shall call Israel happy, whereas up till now all, or almost all nations curse them (Mal. 3. 10-12). Once again we deplore the baneful notion that wipes this ravishing scene from the divine map by blotting Israel out of the divine programme.

Now at that time says Isaiah (45. 14), "the labour of Egypt," and other adjacent peoples, "shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine . . . they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee; saying, Surely

God is in thee : and there is none else, there is no God.”

This prospect seemed then, and still seems wholly improbable, and the prophet exclaims, “ verily thou are a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour ” (ver. 15). But Israel shall be humbled, saved from idolatry (ver. 16), regenerated spiritually (Jer. 31. 31 ff. ; 33. 14 : Ezek. 36. 22 ff. ; etc.), made fit for the appointed honour and service, and “ shall be saved by Jehovah with an everlasting salvation : ye shall not be shamed nor confounded world without end ” (Isa. 45. 17).

It is to be observed that in this last-mentioned prophecy of Isaiah there was conjoined a forecast of a comparatively near future with that of a remotely distant future. It is a frequent and characteristic feature of the divine prophecies, arising from the outlook of the Eternal who is the End as well as the Beginning.

When that gracious period arrives Egypt will share the restoration to the favour of God, but will share it on the condition of submission to Israel (Isa. 60. 12).

No, no, says common Protestant theology ; it can never be ! Israel is done with, as regards a national future ! None of these consentient scriptures mean what they say ! They mean just nothing at all, and can be cut out of the Bible, or at the most they must be “ spiritualized.”

A century or more follows Isaiah. The judgments he predicted on Israel’s apostasy have fallen. Jeremiah is taken up by God to enforce His messages during the consequent desolations. At ch. 46 there comes a group of his predictions concerning the Gentile nations. The first dealt with is Egypt.

It’s king had passed north to fight with the king of Babylon for world supremacy. Pharaoh was overwhelmed, Nebuchadnezzar triumphed, and pressed southward to complete his victory by destroying Egypt. This put Palestine in his power, with dire results to Israel, as the *Kings* and *Chronicles* narrate.

Jeremiah links the destruction of Egypt with a later time. Without a break he adds, “ and afterwards it shall be inhabited as in the days of old, saith Jehovah ” (Jer. 46. 26). This is indefinite as to the period of fulfilment ; and again without a break the prophet passes on to a noble comforting prospect for Israel : “ But fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, neither be dismayed, O Israel : for, lo, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity ; and Jacob shall return, and shall be quiet and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah : for I am with thee ; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee ; but I will correct thee with judgment, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished.” (vs. 27, 28). Obviously no such sweet time of ease, and of freedom from fear, was known by Israel at the return from

Babylon under Cyrus, nor ever since. Its fulfilment is future.

Jeremiah's contemporary Ezekiel (chs. 29-32) was used by the Spirit of Jehovah to fill up the former's canvas with much detail as to the destruction of Egypt by the king of Babylon. He seems to throw light upon the remark of Jeremiah that after that destruction the land should be again inhabited, for he said that the Egyptians should be dispersed, but gathered again to their land after forty years.

As to the people of Israel that were taken there by the captains after the murder of Gedeliah, presumably they all perished during the devastation of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, as announced to them by Jeremiah, except a very few who got back to Judaea (Jer. 44. 14, 26-28). Josephus (Antiq. X. 9, 7) says that Nebuchadnezzar took to Babylon those who had escaped the sword, but this does not agree with Jeremiah.

But at this point our brethren of the British-Israel persuasion offer some interesting information gained privately apart from authentic history. It is that Jeremiah escaped the destruction, and sailed away to Spain and on to Ireland. He took with him two daughters of King Zedekiah, and, marvellous to contemplate, he carried away also in a great chest the heavy stone that Jacob, a thousand years before, had used as his pillow that night at Bethel. The further supposed events do not belong to our present subject.

But Ezekiel gave a double forecast, which true to the past, is true today, and which contains predictions as to the future of Egypt.

1. Upon being regathered to their land, at the close of the forty years of dispersion, the Egyptians should (*a*) be a national entity, a kingdom : (*b*) but the basest of kingdoms, diminished in numbers, and never again able to rule over other nations, as in ancient times ; and (*c*) " they shall be no more the confidence of the house of Israel " (Ezek. 29. 12-16).

This informs us that no ruler of Egypt will succeed in becoming dominant in the Middle East ; and also that the bitter hostility of the Egyptians to the Jews is part of God's plan to prevent Israel repeating the sin and folly of their fathers in relying upon Egypt for political help, to their undoing by apostasy from their God. Knowing these things beforehand the believer can have a quiet heart though the peoples rage, for they do but meditate vain things.

By the defeat of Egypt world supremacy passed to Babylon and then to Persia. At the very summit of administrative power in those empires the God of Israel set a Jew, His servant Daniel, and gave through him clear and comprehensive outlines of future history to the end of the extended period of Gentile dominance of the Middle East.

The essence of those predictions is that four world empires

would follow each other, each at its zenith ruling from Babylon. The fourth empire would have its culmination in a monarch of Satanic cunning and cruelty, known to later scriptures as Antichrist, the Beast. His title "the king of the north" indicates Assyria (now Mesopotamia) as his centre. Ch. 11 of Daniel foretells prolonged furious conflicts between him and "the king of the south," that is, of Egypt, which shall end, as did the contest between the first king of the north, Nebuchadnezzar, and Egypt, in the invasion and desolation of Egypt (Dan. 11. 41-43). "Yet he [the king of the north] shall come to his end and none shall help him," because Messiah the divine King of Israel, the Word of God, shall appear in glory and destroy him (II Thess. 2. 7-12 : Rev. 19. 17-21).

Since the king of the south is always represented as an antagonist of the king of the north it must be acknowledged that Egypt will not be one of the ten kings that give their authority unto the Beast and exalt him as their Overlord. This compels revision of the scheme that makes Egypt one of the ten kings of the End days who make Antichrist supreme.

That when Palestine is overrun by the Beast he is at the same time conquering Egypt may explain why the latter country is not one of the lands which is joined with Assyria in the confederacy designed to exterminate Israel (Psa. 83). Such wars between Assyria and Egypt must needs be disastrous to Palestine by the contending armies passing and repassing. At one point the king of the north and Israel will form a seven-year alliance (Dan. 9. 27). This is instructive. It implies (1) that Israel will still be distrustful of Jehovah and will turn to the king of the north for help against Egypt. (2) The king of the north will use them as a counter in his contest with Egypt. (3) When it suits his purpose he, having crushed Egypt, will turn against his ally, Israel, and join with her surrounding enemies in the attempt to exterminate the Jews (Dan. 11. 40-45 : Psa. 83. 8). (4) All this shows that the Middle East will then be wholly free from outside domination, whether from Western, or Eastern, or Northern nations ("The uttermost parts of the north," Ezek. 38. 6 ; 39. 2, are to be clearly distinguished from "the king of the north"). What if the God of Israel will allow these remoter nations to blot each other out for their mounting iniquities? Certainly they hold no place in prophetic scriptures of the End time, and quite plainly they are even now steadily losing influence in the Middle East.

Various grounds move the justice of God in His dealings with nations. One that will bring His overwhelming judgments upon Egypt at the end of the age will be that which brought His wrath upon Pharaoh in the time of Moses. History repeats itself when the moral factors are alike. From Joel 3. 19 we learn the chief secret of the judgments to come

upon Egypt : “ Egypt shall be a desolation, and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence done to the children of Judah, because they have shed innocent blood in the land.”

The last but one of the Old Testament prophets, Zechariah, repeats and confirms his predecessors. The restoration of Israel by God includes their being gathered out of Egypt and Assyria, including divine dealings with the Nile, and the overthrow of Assyria : “ the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away ” (Zech. 10. 8-12).

In the final reference in the Old Testament to Egypt (Zech. 14. 16-19) a time is announced when the feast of tabernacles shall be reinstated in Palestine, and all the nations shall be required to honour the God of Israel by attending it at Jerusalem. That coming age of glory and peace shall be an age when law prevails and preserves order on earth. If any people avoid this annual pilgrimage, it will be a sign of that latent rebellion of heart against God and His Messiah which will finally burst into rebellion at the close of the thousand years of Christ’s reign on earth (Rev. 20. 7-10).

Such disaffection will be visited by the withdrawing of rain from that area : and inasmuch as this would not affect Egypt, which is fructified by the Nile without rain, there will be sent a plague if rebellion asserts itself.

Meditation on the testimony of Scripture here reviewed will disclose to the instructed Christian all that we need to know of the part Egypt will take in the affairs of the Middle East. It will be seen

1. That Israel must endure more terrible chastisement than ever in the dreadful past, until their proud spirit shall have been broken and a small remnant of them shall be humbled before their God and shall trust in Him only. Lev. 26. 39-45 : Isa. 10. 20-23 : Zeph. 3. 10-13, 16-20).

2. That the animosity of the surrounding peoples to Israel will continue and be intensified. Nor will other nations be permitted by God to render effectual help to Israel and frustrate the gracious purpose of God to force them to look to Him alone.

3. Nevertheless the utmost and worst the nations shall attempt shall never blot Israel off the map. Upon repentance they shall receive accomplishment of all the magnificent promises of God to their first ancestors, to be fulfilled to those of the race who shall at last be brought to the faith in God of their father Abraham.

The covenant of God with Abraham included an inheritance in the heavenly world (Heb. 11. 13-16), and this will be shared by such of his descendants who have had faith like his to embrace that prospect and to walk with him as pilgrims on earth, aliens in heart, citizens of that heavenly country

and city they ardently seek. Then his spiritual children, whether Jews or Gentiles by natural birth, will form the society known in Scripture as the church of God. This company will be completed, and translated to that upper world, at the advent of Christ.

But Abraham was promised the earth also, for the blessing of all its families (Gen. 12. 1-3). And those of Israel and of the other nations who do not attain unto that superior and heavenly portion will by faith share the favour of God in Christ on a renewed earth, and finally in the eternal earth.

In both of these realms, the heavenly portion and the earthly, it stands for ever true, necessarily true, that the gifts and calling of God know no change of mind on His part (Rom. 11. 20, 29). In His own good time, and to His own great joy, He shall say :

Blessed be
Egypt my people, and
Assyria the work of my hands, and
Israel mine inheritance.

(Isa. 19. 25)

BRITISH-ISRAELISM

Chapter I.

REMARKS by G. H. PEMBER

with

COMMENTS by G. H. LANG

At the close of the last century, G. H. Pember, classical scholar and expositor of Scripture, was a leading writer on prophetic subjects. He died in 1910. The following letter came to me among his papers.

Wilson's *Lectures on our Israelitish Origin* may, I suppose, be regarded as the first serious symptom of the present movement. Since that time the theory has been much discussed ; but with the result, as far as I know, that no great scholar, or person conspicuous in the church of Christ for spiritual discernment, has received it.

For this failure there appear to be two principal causes.

- (1) The theory is at once negatived by three or four fundamental and comprehensive prophecies which cannot be explained away.
- (2) Its supporters mainly defend it by transferring to the present age predictions which belong to the age to come, that is, to the Millennium.

As regards the first of these causes, I will mention one or two particulars. In Num. 23. 9, it is said of all the Twelve Tribes :—

Lo, it is a people that dwell alone,
And shall not be reckoned among the nations.

But the Anglo-Israelites would have us believe that the Ten

Tribes, or a part of them, are now posing before the world as the British Empire, and are, consequently, not merely reckoned among the nations, but probably at the head of them. And that, too, in an age which the Lord has described as "The Times of the Gentiles." Either, then, Anglo-Israelism or the Bible is at fault : from one of them, at least, we are compelled to turn away.

Again, in the comprehensive utterances of Lev. 26, Deut. 28-30 and Deut. 32, all of which deal with the Twelve Tribes and present a complete outline of their sin, exile, and final restoration, we can discover no hint that any of them will attain to power or prosperity before the last-mentioned event. And the first sign that their restoration is near will be their repentance and confession of their iniquities while they are still "in the land of their enemies." Lev. 26. 39-42 ; Deut. 30. 1-6. Can we say that the Teutonic races are now dwelling in the land of their enemies? Or did any repentance or turning to Jehovah take place among these races before they settled in England, in Germany, and in other places? We know nothing of the kind happened : but that as pagans they came and took possession of the lands which they have now held for so many centuries. What, then, can we discover in their history which bears the slightest resemblance to that which is predicted concerning the Tribes of Israel?

Yet again, in Deut. 32. 21, God, when foretelling the exile and fearful woes which were to come upon all the Twelve Tribes, says :—

They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God ;

They have provoked Me to anger with their vanities :

And I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people :

I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.*

* It has been said that manifestly the race to which this prediction points is the Teutonic, the people of which became masters of the Fourth Empire, and were, indeed, enslaved for a while by the Chaldean religion which pretended to be Christianity, and called itself the Catholic Church.

"But when this snare of Satan was broken at the Reformation, it was Britain, Germany, the Dutch States, Teutonic Switzerland, and America, who received the favour of God, and have proclaimed the gospel of His peace to the world. But if God has been drawing the vast majority of His witnesses from the Teutonic race, then, according to Deut. 32. 21, no Tribe or Nation of that race can possibly be Israelitish. Here again, we must let go either Anglo-Israelism or the Bible, for they flatly contradict each other."

The argument for the Teutonic race being the "nation" to take the place of Israel is here stated well ; but is a *race* a *nation*? The Teutons have developed into several nations, as acknowledged above. Nor have these nations, as nations, obtained the kingdom of God, as Christ announced, or brought forth its fruits. That in century nineteen most who spread the gospel came from the Teutonic world is no fulfilment of the promise that the kingdom of God "shall be given to [one] nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21. 43). No Teutonic nation has done this.

in other words, during their exile and the Times of the Gentiles, God would choose for His witnesses a race alien to Israel, and transfer His favour to it. [It would seem that the nation in view must be that heavenly race, priesthood, people, and nation to whom Peter wrote (I Pet. 2. 9, 10). Paul applied that prophecy by Moses as to a "foolish nation" to the Gentiles who, in his time, were attaining righteousness by faith (Rom. 10. 19). These believing Gentiles, therefore, were part of that "nation;" but they were not Teutons, nor did the fulfilment of the prediction begin with the Reformation in century 16 A.D. This heavenly nation, the church, is taken out of every nation, Jew and Gentile, and cannot be identified with the Ten Tribes. L.]

There are other leading prophecies similar to these and affecting the whole House of Israel: but I must pass on to notice one or two which have reference to the Ten Tribes only.

And first the notable utterance of Ahijah (I Kin. 14. 15), according to which they were to be driven *further away from the West*, to be scattered beyond the Euphrates, to be sent back to the idolatrous land out of which their father Abraham had been called. This was fulfilled in B.C. 722 when Shalmanezar carried the northern Kingdom into captivity in Assyria.

In Hosea 3 their condition during this exile on the other side of the Euphrates is described. They are to abide many days without a king and without a prince. Would it be possible to apply such a description to the Anglo-Saxon race? Yet in this condition the Ten Tribes are to remain until they return to seek Jehovah their God and David their king "at the end of the days." The rendering of the A.V. and the R.V., "in the latter days," is not correct. The Hebrew expression occurs in thirteen other passages of the Old Testament and invariably points to the end of the Israelitish exile and the time of the final restoration.

But if the Ten Tribes are banished to the *East*, and must remain there without king or prince until their final restoration to the land of Israel, how can they at the same time be the most powerful kingdom of the *West*? It will certainly be neither in the West, nor in any position of power, that the Lord will find them when He comes, for Isaiah (11. 11, 12, 15, 16) describes them at [that time as located in Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shinar, Hamath, and the coastlands of the sea, that is, the Mediterranean, and declares that, in order to their easy return to their own land, both of the great rivers Nile and Euphrates shall be, the one dried up, and the other made fordable.

Here, therefore, their location is limited at the close of this age to the near East, which shows that they will not be mighty peoples in the far West, such as England and the United States now are.

However, instead of being rich and splendid, as are the United Kingdom and the United States, they will be in misery, "ready to perish in the land of Assyria" and "outcasts in the land of Egypt." (Isa. 27. 12, 13). We must not be misled by present appearances. Israel has fought for and captured its own land, and may seem to be in the way to establish itself there and make itself strong and rich, but this will prove only temporary. They are doing this without repentance toward God, and therefore they have yet to fail for want of His efficient help; "they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by *captivity* and spoil many days" (Dan. 11. 33); and in Antichrist's final attack on their capital, Jerusalem, "half of the city shall go forth into captivity" (Zech. 14. 2). Thus will they again be reduced to "a very small remnant" (Isa. 1. 9), and of these only few will be in Jerusalem, while the rest will be in the surrounding countries to which they will be driven and will be in the deplorable plight pictured.

The whole condition of Israel in this long period of their dispersion, and especially at its end, is in full contrast, both in general and in detail, to the present greatness and splendour attributed to them by the British-Israel theory. L.]

The evidence already adduced is amply sufficient to prove the very obvious opposition of Anglo-Israelism to the Scripture of Truth. Therefore I will not dwell upon the second cause of failure, but content myself with a general remark.

Anglo-Israelites select prophecies of the victorious war in which Judah and Israel will subjugate their enemies at the beginning of the Millennium, and those which describe their long peace, supreme prosperity, and mighty increase during Immanuel's reign, and these they endeavour to apply to the history of the British Empire. But Israel will never prosper save in connection with their own land. Nor can they ever be restored [permanently] to that land until the Lord Jesus appears. Upon His Personal Presence all their hopes depend, just as much as do ours. And it is a terribly despiritualizing feature of Anglo-Israelism that it draws away men's minds from the Great Saviour of ourselves and of Israel and fixes their thoughts upon the earthly triumphs and earthly power of modern Empires. (End of Pember's argument).

The result is that many Anglo-Israelites seem to become obsessed and to live largely for their own theory. Many of them are indeed godly and lovable; we have valued some as personal friends: but it cannot be denied that often they are unable to take an unbiased view of this subject.

Chapter II.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

1. *Dwelling in Canaan essential to Israel being blessed.*

The point concerning the land just touched by Pember is

important, indeed it is decisive against the theory of British-Israelism.

As regards the heavenly portion promised to Abraham, this lies in the heavenly realm, not on earth, and can be enjoyed there only. The son of Abraham who wishes to enjoy now in his heart the blessed moral conditions that obtain in heaven, such as righteousness, peace, and joy, must *set his mind* on the things that are above, where Christ is, not on things on the earth. The latter he touches in the appointed contacts of daily life, but his heart is not set on them. And the full enjoyment of that world above will be known only when the pilgrim is presently transferred in resurrection to the realm where he has already dwelt in his thoughts and affections.

Correspondingly, the earthly portion promised to Abraham can be enjoyed by his earthly seed on the earth only, and on that portion of the earth, the land of Canaan, with which the promises of God specifically connect it. The covenant of God in this regard was declared to Abraham six times, was renewed twice to Isaac, and twice was confirmed to Jacob (Gen. 12. 1-4; 13. 14-17; 15; 17. 1-21; 18. 9-19; 22. 11-18; 26. 2-4, 24; 28. 12-15; 35. 9-12). Ten times was possession of that land connected with the fulfilment of the covenant. Later, when the descendents of Jacob were brought out of Egypt to be brought into their promised land, it was most solemnly declared to them that the blessing of God would be granted to them *in that land*, but that should they rebel against Jehovah their God, He would expel them from the land, scatter them in other countries, visit upon them His righteous judgments, and that they would be restored to His favour, and the promised blessings be renewed to them, only when, upon repentance, He could restore to them possession of their land (Lev. 26 : Deut. 28-30 : Dan. 9. 1-19).

British-Israelism sets this aside, and asks us to believe that Israel while out of their land, and under the judgment of God, are, as the British Empire and the U.S.A., enjoying a vastly richer measure of the promised temporal blessings than ever they enjoyed when in the land.

2. *The Covenant with Abraham and his seed conditional.*

(i) Some have created and pressed a sharp contrast between the covenant of God with Abraham and that made with Israel at Sinai. They assert that the latter was under law and with conditions on man's side, but the former was of God's free grace and unconditional. This goes beyond Scripture. It is true that the proposals to Abraham originated in the free grace of God, seeing that He was under no obligation to make terms with any sinner; but it is commonly overlooked that it is a moral impossibility that God can bless a sinner (or a saint) unconditionally. If God could disregard moral considerations He could make a covenant with Satan.

Even in the original unfallen state of the angels there was of necessity an implied condition that their felicity would continue only as long as their loyalty should continue. This was so with Adam and Eve in Eden. It is beyond possibility on God's side that He should covenant to condone distrust and disobedience.

(ii) As regards Abraham's natural seed, their sharing in the covenant individually was dependent upon each male being circumcized. If this was not done he lost all benefit under the covenant (Gen. 17. 14).

(iii) The actual situation is shown distinctly in God's soliloquy before He destroyed Sodom : " And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that which I do ; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him ? For I have known him [on the force of ' known ' see Amos 3. 2], *to the end* that he may command his children and his household after him, that he may keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment ; *to the end* that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him " (Gen. 18. 17-19).

Thus God's covenant followed His foreknowledge (comp. Rom. 8. 29, 30) that Abraham would fulfil the moral conditions necessary for serving the moral ends God had in view.

(iv) Again, after the offering up of Isaac by Abraham God said, " By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, *because thou hast done* this thing . . . that in blessing I will bless thee, etc." (Gen. 22. 16, 17).

(v) This element of the transaction between God and Abraham was made clear beyond cavil when God renewed the covenant to Isaac and said : " I will establish the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father . . . *because* that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws " (Gen. 26. 2-5).

It is evident that God made to Abraham a much fuller communication of His commandments, statutes, and laws than the history records. At that time Hammurabi, the chief ruler of Mesopotamia, had issued his now recovered code of laws. Over against this God announced to *His* servant *His* statutes and laws, and it was because Abraham obeyed the laws of God, rather than those of men, that God confirmed His covenant to the descendants of His faithful servant.

The full import of this conditional element will appear as we proceed.

The covenant with Abraham being basic the further dealings of God rest upon it and confirm it.

1. Another salient feature of the covenant, as regards its earthly side, was that the blessings guaranteed were to be fulfilled in the land described in the covenant. Thus God told Abraham that his seed should be oppressed " in a land that

is not theirs . . . And in the fourth generation they shall *come hither* again ” (Gen. 15. 13-16). And again God said to Jacob, “ fear not to go down into Egypt . . . I will also surely *bring thee up again* ” (Gen. 46. 3, 4).

2. When the time had arrived for this return to Canaan God said unto Moses, “ I am come down to . . . bring them up out of that land [Egypt] unto a good land ” and then the land was defined by mentioning the races then occupying it, as it had been before defined to Abraham (Ex. 3. 7, 8, 16, 17: Gen. 15. 19, 20).

After the people had left Egypt and were on the resurrection side of the Red Sea, committed to a walk with God by faith, His word to them was, “ *if* ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, *then* ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples : for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation ” (Ex. 19. 19, 20).

It is to be noted that (1) this has to do with Israel's place as a nation ; (2) on earth ; (3) in contradistinction to other nations and in superior relationship to God ; and (4) the royal priesthood was to be their dignity as a kingdom ; but (5) these privileges were declared to be conditional upon obedience and faithfulness to their side of God's covenant. (6) This was *before* the covenant enacted at Sinai and therefore not subordinate to or co-ordinate with it. It was a confirmation to them as a nation of the covenant with their father Abraham and like it was expressly conditional.

It is abundantly plain that the Anglo-Saxon peoples, as peoples, have not fulfilled the express terms of this covenant ; they never have obeyed, and they do not now obey God's voice and keep His charge, commandments, statutes, and laws. The very vast majority of them live without showing any recognition of God, for all practical purposes He might not be in existence. How then can they be partakers of the covenant with Abraham which requires obedience as the condition of it being fulfilled ?

Chapter III.

THE COVENANT AT SINAI AND THE NEW COVENANT

1. *The Covenant with Israel at Sinai.*

That Israel, for their own good, might learn how to carry out in detail the charge and commandment given to Abraham, and so to secure the full benefit of God's covenant with him, a further covenant was made with them as a people at Sinai. This was based upon the former covenant and confirmed its promises and both amplified and applied its requirements. But the hearts of the people not being right with God they neither could nor would keep His commandments. After some seven centuries of patience God at last declared that covenant made at Sinai to be abrogated : “ they continued

not in My covenant, And I regarded them not, saith the Lord ” (Jer. 31. 31 : Heb. 8. 9).

Immediately upon that declaration of annulment the two southern tribes were carried into captivity, as the ten tribes had already been. After seventy years a comparative handful, from all the tribes, returned to the land, and remained there, in subjection to Gentile rulers, until their rejection of their Messiah, Jesus, caused their further complete dispersion.

Now by regarding the Anglo-Saxon peoples as being Israel, British-Israel teaching asks us to believe that, though the covenant with that people is cancelled, they are enjoying far larger fulfilments of its promises than ever they did while it was in force, even in the palmiest days of David and Solomon. This is out of the question. To what purpose, or in what sense, has a covenant been declared void, if the defaulting party continues to enjoy ever expanding benefits thereunder ?

2. *The New Covenant.*

It will be replied that, while the foregoing situation became fact as to Israel of old, yet, according to the scripture cited from Jeremiah, a new covenant was to be made with them under which they would again secure the promised blessings, and that it is under this new covenant that Israel, in the Anglo-Saxon peoples, is enjoying the mighty blessings of God. At this reckless assertion we are struck dumb with astonishment. Yet it is the only way by which British-Israelites can maintain even the semblance of a case, or attempt to avoid the crippling effect of the former arguments stated above.

The basic feature and requirement for that new covenant is thus stated :—

But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah : for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith Jehovah : for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more (Jer. 31. 33, 34).

When was God’s holy law engraved on the inward heart of the Anglo-Saxon peoples ? On the contrary, all too justified by the pride of the English is the satire : No doubt the meek shall inherit the earth : look at the British people ! Or when was it ever true of the English that they have no need to exhort or instruct one another in the knowledge of Jehovah because each and all of them knows Him ? At this very day out of each hundred of them in England ninety never attend to hear His holy word read or explained, nor ever study it privately. Thousands of the rising generation

are completely ignorant of divine truth. Divorces have multiplied to tens of thousands annually, crime has increased alarmingly, general morality declines, godlessness advances. It is deplorable blindness that alone can hold the opinion that the Anglo-Saxon peoples have entered into solemn and saving covenant with God. That a small minority of them have done this as individuals is happily true ; that for some two centuries the proportion of these to the mass has been higher than elsewhere is a sign of the Holy Spirit's grace ; but it leaves the general situation untouched, and the Anglo-Saxon peoples remain an integral part of the whole world which lieth in the Evil One (I John 5. 19).

And further. Into this new covenant which is yet to be made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, they who have believed in Christ have been entering as individuals ever since His coming to earth and the descent of His Spirit. This is the essential argument of the epistle to the Hebrews (chs. 8-10). They who did so were both Jews or Gentiles, and these became "one *new* man," in which new circle there "cannot be Greek and Jew," but "Christ is all and in all" (Eph. 2. 11-22 : Col. 3. 11). Therefore such men, Jew or Gentile, as take advantage of this present opportunity, and secure the benefits of the new covenant, lose before God their standing in Israel nationally, or in any Gentile nation, and become children of God in Christ, with the new heart necessary to this position. Therefore, however many they may be, it is not as Israelites or as Saxons that they enter the new covenant relation with God, and so this portion of those in the new covenant do not reckon as Israelites. Consequently the claim that Anglo-Saxon peoples are Israel and in the new covenant is wholly invalid. It is later that Israel and Judah as such will enter into this covenant with God.

If it were the Anglo-Saxon races who are the parties to the new covenant, who were they who entered it during the centuries before Anglo-Saxons had heard the gospel ?

Chapter IV.

FURTHER ESSENTIAL FACTORS

1. *The name Israel.*

We have set forth some basic and insuperable objections to British-Israel views, but some other matters must be considered.

The assertion that the Jews of the Christian centuries are not of Israel, but of Judah and Benjamin only, is incorrect. It is made in support of the idea that the Ten Tribes are "lost," which in turn is required to give colour to the notion that some other peoples must be these "lost" tribes. But the histories make quite clear that, after the ten tribes had seceded, numbers from them removed from time to time into the southern kingdom (II Chron. 11. 3, 16, 17 ; 15. 9 : I Kin. 12. 17 : II Chron. 10. 17 ; 30. 25 ; 31. 6). Thence-

forward the latter never was composed of Judah and Benjamin only, but included some from other tribes also. Then also at the return from the captivity in Babylon (B.C. 536), representatives of the whole nation went up to Jerusalem and settled there. Judah, Benjamin, priests and Levites were among them, but several times the whole company is styled "the children of Israel" (Ezra 2. 2, 70; 3. 1; 6. 16, 17, 21; Neh. 7. 7, 73 twice; 9. 1, 2; 10. 39; 11. 3, 20; 12. 47).

The theory is further bolstered by the incorrect assertion that the name "Israel" belongs to the ten tribes, whereas the descendants of the southern kingdom are "Jews." That "Israel" is quite commonly applied in Scripture to the northern kingdom, by way of distinction from the southern kingdom, does not warrant the argument, for it is by no means exclusively so used. For example, *after* the division of the kingdoms the name is applied to the southern kingdom (II Chron. 12. 1; 15. 17; 24. 5), and long after the division the king of Judah is styled "king of Israel," nobles of Judah are called "princes of Israel" (II Chron. 21. 2, 4), and chief men in Judah are "heads of the fathers' houses in Israel" (II Chron. 23. 2). The name was still so used after the northern kingdom had been carried into captivity, as in Jer. 5. 15; 6. 9; and in Zech. 12. 1 it is applied to Judah in view of the still future judgments of the time of the End. In Ezek. 12. 8-10 it is applied to the captive people among whom Ezekiel then was, and also to the prince in Jerusalem and the people with him there; while in 37.16 it is used first of the Israelites associated with Judah and then of those associated with Ephraim. This passage still awaits fulfilment, and in verse 21 the name is applied to the whole people to be regathered at last into Palestine to form again one nation.

As to those who returned from Babylon, in *Ezra* only eight times are they called "Jews," and no less than *forty* times by the name Israel. In *Nehemiah* they are termed Jews only *eleven*, and Israel *twenty-two* times. As to those who remained in the eastern lands (whom British Israelites treat as the ten tribes afterward "lost"), in *Esther* these were called "Jews" forty-five times and not once "Israel." In the New Testament, the same people who are called "Jews" 174 times are spoken of as "Israel" 75 times.*

The seeming irregularity of this usage carries the lesson that, as God reckons, and under all the changing circumstances, the name "Israel" belongs to the whole race descended from Israel, as it quite obviously does, and is not to be restricted to the ten tribes. The ten tribes were "Israel," but so were and are the two tribes. And so Paul understood, for though a Benjamite, one of the two tribes, he called

* See David Baron's *The History of the Ten Lost Tribes*, 36. To be had from The Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel, 189 Whitechapel Road, London, E.1.

himself an Israelite (II Cor. 11. 22) ; and thus the Lord, without any reference to a tribal position, called Nathaniel an Israelite (John 1. 47). Our Lord was of the tribe of Judah, but came of *Israel* (Rom. 9. 45).

2. *The Ten Tribes are not "lost."*

The foregoing facts negative the very idea that the Ten Tribes are "lost." They were not lost in New Testament times. James (1.1) wrote to "the *twelve* tribes, which are of the Dispersion." Peter (1. 1) wrote to those of that Dispersion in Asia Minor. Paul spoke of "our *twelve* tribes, earnestly serving God" (Acts 26. 7). Representatives of all the tribes were scattered abroad, and representatives of them all were dwelling in Palestine. These last were forced by Titus and Hadrian to join the Dispersion. It results that wherever Jews are found they represent the whole race, and there is no such thing as the ten tribes being "lost." It is unhistorical to allege that those of the race known today are descendants of Judah and Benjamin only.

3. *Historical.*

The New Testament shows where the Dispersion were found in the first century of this era. Acts 2. 9-11 specifies fifteen nations spread between Rome and Libya on the west, beyond the Euphrates on the east, bounded north by Asia Minor and Media, on the south in Egypt. Thus the Middle East and the Western Mediterranean held them. I Peter 1. 1 confirms this as regards Asia Minor.

The British-Israelite theory requires us to believe that they migrated thence to appear in Europe four centuries later as the Angles and Saxons. This unfounded notion is at once negatived by one fact—that in that same first century, while the twelve tribes were still dwelling in the near East, the Angles, Saxons, with a related tribe called the English, were already located in the extreme west of Europe, by the Atlantic in the regions known as Jutland and Schleswig. See the Enc. Britannica, articles "Angles" and "Saxons," or the opening paragraphs of Green's *Short History of the English People*. Even were this fact not known the theory would still be faced with problems wholly insoluble.

Israelites had dark hair, dark eyes, and were inclined to be swarthy. If one was ruddy the fact was worth mentioning (I Sam. 16. 12). The Saxon races had fair skin and blue eyes. Hence the pretty story that Gregory the Great, seeing some in the slave market at Rome, and being told that they were Angles, remarked that they were *angels*. When did any race thus change its age-long appearance?

The Anglo-Saxons were pagans, worshipping false gods, with no recollections of any other religious views, without any idea of an ancient and noble ancestry. How could all that filled the minds of the Israelites have thus faded completely from their memory in so short a period? How could a civilized and disciplined and highly religious race

have so soon degenerated into the barbarous pirates that the Saxons were as early as the second century A.D. ?

Some British-Israelites offer another scheme. It is alleged that the ancient Scythians were Israelites. Six centuries B.C. these people lived in south Russia. Herodotus (iv. 7) was disposed to credit their story that their first king, Targitaüs, reigned exactly 1000 years before Darius of Persia invaded their country. As this would reach back exactly to the time of the Exodus it is assumed that they must have been Israelites ! But difficulties at once arise. Israel never had a king named Targitaus, nor any king at all for some four centuries after the date given. Moreover, it is not asserted by Herodotus that the Scythian people went back only 1000 years, but that it was then that their first king lived. It was in that same pre-Sinai period that the other races also commenced, by the division of mankind in the days of Peleg. As regards space of time any other race might be assumed to be Israelites. The Scythians must have had some history prior to the time when the need of a king arose, whereas Israel had no national history before Sinai.

Again, similar difficulties arise as in the former case. The Scythians had no recollection of any such history as that of Israel ; by the time they emerge into history they are most fearfully degraded savages, and in religion are pagan. Nor is there evidence that they migrated westward so far as Jutland and Schleswig. And how and when did their language change from the early Hebrew Israel spoke into a speech of another family of languages, the Aryan ? To none of these problems does British-Israelism offer any satisfactory solution. Historically its scheme is unexampled and incredible, and is contrary to both the plain meaning and the basic principles of the Word of God.

These difficulties are not avoided by those who think they trace a migration of the " lost " tribes from Assyria eastward to beyond the Caspian Sea, turning northward, and then westward across south Russia (Scythia) into Europe.

(To be continued).

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (13)

“PREVAIL TO ESCAPE”

(Luke 21. 34-36) : *But take heed to yourselves, lest haply your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you suddenly as a snare: for so shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of all the earth. But watch ye at every season, making supplication, that ye may PREVAIL TO ESCAPE all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*

1. “*These things that shall come to pass.*” The parallel report of this utterance of our Lord found in Matt. 24. 3 shows that He was answering the question by four apostles, “What shall be the sign of Thy presence and consummation of the age?” He had just announced to Israel that He was abandoning them and their temple, and would not be seen again until they should be prepared in heart to welcome Himself as the Coming One aforeannounced by the prophets and psalmists (Matt. 23. 38, 39). The question connected that announced return with the consummation of this age then just begun. The two thoughts (1) His presence closing the period of His absence, and (2) the consummation, are viewed as one event of which there will be one sign. This is clear in the Greek, there being no article before “consummation.”

He had just spoken of the demolition of the grand temple upon which they were then looking and they supposed that that overthrow would be directly before His parousia. He guarded against this notion by saying that “the end is not yet, not immediately” (Matt. 24. 6 : Luke 21. 9). Many false prophets would attempt to mislead them upon this point, which has had fulfilment all through this age. This distinct warning ought to have forbidden the idea that the apostles expected a speedy return of Christ. Only a few weeks later they were told that Peter (one of the four now questioning the Lord, Mark 13. 3), would live to be an old man and then die by violence (John 21. 18-23).

Wars would occur but would not by themselves indicate His return. There would have to be seen a *conjunction* of wars, earthquakes, pestilences, and also preternatural terrors and great signs from heaven. Only this *conjunction* of such events would announce His return, and bring the hour when He would be seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory, assuring them that their deliverance had at last drawn nigh (25-28). Prior to this there would immediately precede two principal matters: (1) universal persecution of His followers (12-19), and (2) Jerusalem desolated and down-trodden by the Gentiles (20-24).

That *this* desolation did not point to A.D. 70 and the destruction by Titus (as did verse 6) is clear.

(a) Zechariah 12-14 tells of the capture of the city, its being sacked, and half of the inhabitants being carried thence into captivity. These details Jesus repeated (20-24). The prophet put these events forward to a specific time when Jehovah should descend to Olivet, deliver Israel, and become King over all the earth. This then is the time of which he and the Lord spoke.

Therefore Christ said that by the events in question "all things which are written shall be fulfilled." This did not become so in A.D. 70 nor since. Much foretold concerning Jerusalem still awaits accomplishment.

(b) The Lord put these things at a time which would see the close of "the times of the Gentiles." Those times, those allotted periods, set in when Jerusalem was, by Divine judgment, brought under Gentile government by Nebuchadnezzar: they will end when Messiah personally intervenes, overthrows Gentile rule and rulers, and establishes the kingdom of God, with Jerusalem as His capital city on earth. The stone from heaven will crush the image and itself fill the whole earth (Dan. 2).

(c) During the period of *this* desolation of the holy city it shall be "trodden down of the Gentiles," which shall continue without break until that conclusion of Gentile times and rulers: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down . . . until" that conclusion. The term "trodden down" (*pateo*) cannot describe peaceable occupation and moderate government. It pictures a man stamping fiercely on a serpent (Luke 10. 19), and grapes being trampled and crushed in the winepress (Rev. 14. 20; 19. 15). Its only other occurrence in the New Testament is strictly parallel to this place in Luke 21. 24. Rev. 11. 2 does not refer to A.D. 70 for it was written after that date and belongs to affairs to come to pass later than when John saw the visions (Rev. 4. 1). Of that future desolation of the holy city the same descriptive term is used: "the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (that is, by the armies of the Beast), as foretold in Zech. 14. Therefore the long possession of Jerusalem by Moslem rulers cannot be in question. It was not a violent "treading down;" they revered the city and built the famous mosque. Nor was the British occupation otherwise: nor, of course, is the present control by Israel a "treading down."

Therefore the "things that shall come to pass" are to occur at the time when "the kingdom of God is nigh." In Palestine the transition from the rainy season to the summer is speedy: there is no prolonged spring time. The rains soften land and trees, the buds burst open, and summer is here. Thus shall be the coming of the kingdom: "All things shall be accomplished" in the one generation, "this generation" of which Christ was speaking, *not* the generation in which He was speaking.

That short period the Lord described as utterly

unexampled for horror : there will have been nothing like it, there shall be nothing thereafter like it (Matt. 24. 20-23). He was repeating the angelic announcement to Daniel as to that time of trouble (Dan. 12. 1), which placed it at the era of the deliverance of Israel and a resurrection—evidently at the parousia of Christ. These plain declarations concerning that fearful epoch give point to the statement in Rev. 7. 14, that the saints there in question “are coming out of the tribulation the great one,” and inasmuch as these had been gathered “out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues” (ver. 9), they are not Israelites in standing, though believing Israelites will be amongst them. This agrees with the feature that the Lord’s exhortation in the Olivet discourse is addressed to “disciples,” those of the apostolic company.

There is no good ground for the common opinion that the church that would be at Jerusalem in A.D. 70 was in the Lord’s mind when He urged the persons who might be concerned to flee from Judea unto the mountains (20, 21). Nor is there ground to think that they acted upon these His words. That such a flight took place has slender proof. Eusebius (ch. 5) mentions it, but he does not connect it with these words of Christ, but, on the contrary, says that those Christians removed because of divine warning given to godly men at the time. Nor was that removal, even if it took place, to the mountains, as the Lord had counselled, but to a town named Pella on level country beyond Jordan. It does not appear to have been a sudden, hasty flight at all, such as Christ pictured. Nor did the Lord refer to Jerusalem in particular, but to the whole of Judea.

2. *The Escape.* From the foregoing considerations it follows that disciples of Christ will be on earth at the epoch in question, exposed to the perils and terrors of that final crisis of this age and of all the ages. But the Lord announced that escape would be possible from “all these things” of which He had been speaking : “that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass” (ver. 36). Here divergent views exist as to the method of this escape. Some say that fulfilment will require the bodily removal from earth of those who are to escape : others, that the meaning is that they will be granted such inward grace as to resist the spiritual perils and endure faithfully to the coming of the Lord. Much depends upon the true meaning of the word “escape” (*ekpheugo*), which we shall now examine.

(i) *Common Greek.* The root of the word is *pheugo*, the meaning of which is simply to flee, as from servitude, justice, or to abandon one’s native land. So Matt. 3. 7 : “who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?” Mark 16. 8 : The women “fled from the tomb.” This flight may be moral : I Cor. 6. 18 : “flee fornication ;” II Tim. 2. 22 : “Flee youthful lusts ;” that is, run away from temptation ; not,

parley and battle with it. Change of locality is implied by this word : Mark 5. 14 : the keepers of the swine " fled ; " John 10. 12 : " the hireling leaveth the sheep and fleeth ; " Rev. 12. 6 : the woman fled into the wilderness." *Pheugo* equals Latin *fugio*, and English " fugitive."

In the compound *ek-pheugo*, *ek* intensifies this thought of change of location, its meaning being " out of, away from."

(ii) *In the Septuagint* (the Greek translation of the Old Testament current among the Jews for a century or more before Christ, and in His time), *ekpheugo* is found at Judg. 6. 11 : Gideon was threshing wheat in the winepress in order " to escape from the face of Midian," that is, to escape the wheat being seized by the Midianites. Prov. 10. 19 : " Out of a multitude of words thou shalt not escape sin," that is, not avoid sinning. As late as century 4 A.D. in a Christian letter this passage is cited loosely in this sense (*Vocab. of Greek Testament*, 200). Prov. 12. 13 : " A sinner falls into snares, but a righteous man escapes from them." Job 15. 30 : Eliphaz said of the godless, " neither shall he in any wise escape the darkness." Isaiah 66. 7 compares the future sudden deliverance of Israel at the appearing of Christ to a woman who should be delivered of a child so early and swiftly as to " escape " the travail pains. In the interpolated passage after Esther 8. 13 Artaxerxes says of the rebellious : " they suppose that they shall escape the sin-hating vengeance of the ever-seeing God."

(iii) *In the Apocrypha* (likewise current in our Lord's time) it is said in the Epistle of Jeremy (ver. 68) that the beasts of the fields are better than a man " for they can flee [escape] into a covert and help themselves." Wisdom (15. 19) says of idolators that " they went without [escaped] the praise of God and His blessings." Ecclesiasticus 6. 35 says " Be willing to hear every godly discourse ; and let not the parables of understanding escape thee." 11.10 says to the meddlesome man, " thou shall not obtain, neither shalt thou escape by fleeing." In 16. 15 it is said to God, " It is not possible to escape Thy hand." 27. 20 says that a neighbour whose love has been lost will not be recovered as a friend, for " he is as a roe that has escaped out of the snare." 40. 6 compares the restless, dreamful sleeper to one who has " escaped out of a battle." In Susannah 22 that chaste woman says to her tempters, " If I do it not, I cannot escape your hands." In II Maccabees 6. 26 we learn that the aged scribe Eleazar was offered life if he would obey Antiochus Epiphanes and eat swine's flesh contrary to the law of God, but he replied, " For though for the present time I should be delivered from the punishment of men, yet should I not escape the hand of the Almighty, neither alive, nor dead." And in 7. 35 a young Jew being tortured warns Antiochus thus : " thou hast not yet escaped the judgment of Almighty God, who seeth all things." In 9. 22 Antiochus himself hopes

that he will "escape this sickness" from which he was suffering. In III Maccabees 6. 29 the Jews in Egypt were expecting immediate massacre, but Ptolemy Philapator cancelled his order, and "they, released the same moment, having now escaped that death, praised God, their holy Saviour."

These six places in the Septuagint and twelve in the Apocrypha are all that I have traced as using *epkheugo*. Not one of them carries the idea of one being able to endure testing without soul injury. They all speak of *escaping*, not of enduring. In this the translators and writers simply followed the customary meaning of this word. It is against the background of this uniform usage, with which they were well acquainted, that the Lord and His apostles employed the word.

(iv) *The New Testament*. The thought in the above passage in Esther is closely followed by Paul in Rom. 2. 3. The former speaks of the godless who "suppose that they shall escape the judgment of God;" of the hard of heart and impenitent Paul inquires if "he reckons that he shall escape the judgment of God?" In Heb. 2. 3 the question is pressed, "How shall we escape, having neglected so great salvation?" Acts 16. 27: the jailor at Philippi, seeing the prison doors open, took for granted "that the prisoners had escaped." Acts 19. 16: the sons of Sceva, overwhelmed by the demoniac, "fled [escaped] out of that house naked and wounded." They did not screw their courage to sticking point and stand up to a further attack. II Cor. 11. 33: let down the city wall in a basket Paul "escaped the hands" of the governor. I Thess. 5. 3 postulates the opposite experience to Isa. 66. 7 cited above. That passage supposes that a woman has escaped the pangs of childbirth: this declares of the godless of the last days that "sudden destruction" shall seize them, "as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape."

Apart from Luke 21 before us these are the only places where *ekpheugo* is found in the New Testament. Here again it is plain that no thought enters of patiently enduring through a trial and being benefited by it. The thought is always that of being entirely exempted, of escaping completely, as from a house, or city, or prison, or evil men, or the judgment of God. It is clear that the uniform usage of the word, ancient and later, secular and religious and Biblical, gives no warrant for taking it in any other sense in our passage. This is the only natural force of the words "escape all these things which shall come to pass," for it does not say "escape the hurtful influences of these things," but escape the things (events) themselves.

The Lexicons are uniform as to this meaning. Grimm-Thayer: "to flee out of, flee away, seek safety in flight." Abbot-Smith: "to flee away, escape." A. Souter: "I flee out, away, I escape." The prefix *ek* compels this force of

removal from one place to another. The other compounds of *pheugo* have the same force. Their only occurrences in the New Testament are *apopheugo*, II Pet. 1. 4 ; 2. 18, 20 : *diapheugo*, Acts 27. 42 : *katapheugo*, Acts 14. 6 : Heb. 6. 18. So unvarying is this meaning that, after two thousand years, the Modern Greek terms (*ekpheugo*, *diapheugo*, *ekpheuge*) retain exactly the same sense "to escape, run away."

3. *Conclusion.* Three deeply important conclusions follow from above.

1. That disciples of Christ of the company of the apostles will continue on earth down to the last days of this age and will be in danger of being overtaken by the snare of that time. They will be in peril of being suddenly caught as a bird in the net of the fowler. It is a plain denial of the Lord's solemn warning to tell Christians that they are certain to be taken from the earth by rapture before that period breaks on mankind. That the Lord addressed the apostles as representing Jews of that end time is mere unwarranted supposition.

2. On the other hand, Christ makes equally plain that escape will be possible. The statement is definite, even were there no other promise to this effect. But other scriptures say the same, such as Revelation 3. 10, with 12. 5 and 14. 1-5.

3. It is equally emphatic that this escape will depend upon the believer being of a pure heart and life, watchful, prayerful, a conqueror in the conflict of faith, and so "*prevailing* to escape all these things that shall come to pass." Teaching cannot be according to truth which assures him that he will escape though worldly in heart and ways. Truth always sanctifies. But neither is it in harmony with our Lord's words to say that there will be no escape at that time even for the sanctified.

(To be continued)

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (12)

EGYPT, 1914, 1915

The most famous street in ancient Cairo is the Mouski, crooked, narrow, fascinating. The principal thoroughfare in modern Cairo is Sharia Kasr el Nil, broad, straight, imposing, yet commonplace. Here is the Savoy Hotel, where, in the ampler days before the first World War, royalty stayed. Beside it, under its walls, there was in 1914 an open plot of building land. Here, behind a high hoarding, was erected the large native tent, constructed of long curtains hanging over high poles and crosspieces. It was entered by one gateway, on which was fixed, over the pavement, a small board announcing the meetings, with the words, if I remember them aright, "What must I do to be saved? The question answered here." Also, handbills in Arabic were scattered widely, especially at the open-air cafes.

Members of the established Missions were much perturbed by this bold attack on Islam at the heart of the city. "Oh, yes, you will get Moslems to come ; but there will be riots, which will give the authorities pretext for suppressing your effort, and our whole work among the Mohammedans will be prejudiced."

But we replied that riots in connexion with aggressive gospel work were quite apostolic ; so we went ahead, protecting and enforcing the effort by intense and persistent prayer. In this last all-important service we were strongly supported by a few sympathetic friends.

Moslems came, generally forty or fifty each of the five nights a week, and smaller numbers to my afternoon talks in English. We did have riots, every Thursday night. Students from the great El Azhar university, having no lessons to prepare for the Friday sabbath, came in groups to interrupt. They switched off the electric lights, chanted the Koran, booed, upset the seats, and caused general confusion. But the authorities gave no sign that they knew of the tent, though we were only a few hundred or so yards from the British consulate. Probably, as at Ramleh in 1911, the fact weighed that the tent was owned and controlled by Americans.

One night the tent was set on fire during a meeting. But the heavy curtains did not burn fast, and sand (of which Egypt has abundance) is a quick extinguisher. Another time it was set on fire during the day when empty. The flames took hold. The occupier of the next adjoining building summoned the fire brigade, who saved perhaps half the tent, and reported to the police. A big handsome Moslem officer, in plain clothes, came to interrogate us. It was explained that we recognized it was the duty of the police to punish crime, only we had to beg them to recognize that it was not our business to help them in this. Our business was to tell all men that God was very willing, for Christ's sake, to forgive them their crimes ; and therefore, if they could catch the miscreants, all we could do would be to assure them that we also forgave them. The officer listened with polite wonder to this strange talk and went his way. We heard no more of it, and not even now did the British officials utter a sound. It was to a ruler of Egypt of old that it was said, " against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue " (Ex. 11. 7).

The Moslem youths of Cairo were well primed against Christian doctrine. I have seen a boy of ten engage eagerly in controverting the truth that God has a Son, even Jesus. The El Azhar university boarded free and educated some ten thousand students, sending them into the professions and commerce, all trained to propagate Islamic doctrine. Those who came to the tent were keen controversialists. But my earlier observation of missionary work among Moslems had

satisfied me that the controversial method was wrong. I had urged upon those so engaged that it was a false move to attack Mohammed and the Koran, for it provoked resentment, just as it would be the wrong approach to a lover of Christ were a Moslem to attack Him and the Bible.

C. T. Hooper of the Bible Society had told me that he and a friend had gone from Suez to Jidda on a pilgrim ship on purpose to be among pilgrims going to Mecca on the annual pilgrimage. His companion was one of the most widely read and able missionary students of Islamic law and literature, and in discussion he defeated easily the learned sheikhs. But his attacks were so severe that shortly they shunned him, and so he defeated also his own good desires to enlighten them. It is noticeable that Paul laboured two years in a chief heathen stronghold, Ephesus, and quietly undermined respect for the abominable goddess there revered, yet the town clerk was able to assert that he had not spoken disrespectfully of Diana (Ac. 19. 10, 37).

I had further stressed that the controversial method was false psychologically, because to discuss Mohammed and the Koran was simply to keep the mind of the Moslem more deeply occupied with the very subjects which one wished to uproot from his mind. Occasionally one will be met already sufficiently suspicious as to his beliefs to make it helpful to show him their fallacies and errors, but in general controversy is unwise.

My fellow-workers agreed, and we made for ourselves a fixed rule that we would on no account discuss Islamic questions. At first our contentious visitors were annoyed that we would not fight. "No," we replied, "you must excuse us; we are not here to do that. We are only messengers. If you send your servant with a message, when he has delivered it his duty is done; you do not expect him to stop and discuss your message. We are messengers of God sent to speak about His Son. If you do not want to hear the message you need not come! but you must not expect us to discuss our message." But they came again and again, and shortly they were saying: "What we like about these meetings is, that you do not say unkind things about our Prophet and Book."

Three young men were particularly troublesome. One afternoon, as I walked down the tent feeling weary, they were waiting as usual, and I said to myself that I really could not further battle with their unreasonable opposition. But the leader rose and said quietly and seriously: "The Lord Jesus has changed my heart this afternoon." When a keen Mohammedan thus spontaneously calls Jesus LORD, one knows that the Spirit of truth has wrought. His spirit and attitude were different from that hour.

During the three months the tent was up, I conversed closely with some hundreds of young men, of various social

orders, and was secretly satisfied that some thirty were definitely convinced that Christ was the Son of God and did in some degree regard Him as their Saviour. But of these only four came out on His side by being baptized in His name. One of these was a special joy. He was a pure-blooded Bedawi, his family having migrated from Arabia. He was proud to be descended from a tribe as ancient as the Prophet and that he spoke the pure Arabic of the Prophet. His contempt for Egyptian Arabic was profound. His father was dead but his grandfather was living, the head of the clan. They lived in the country ; he was boarding in Cairo while at school, and they supplied him freely with country produce and needed money.

The lad in the house where he lived told him of our notice-board and they came in. He had never before heard the gospel and knew scarcely more of Jesus than that his elders cursed by that name. Miss Ely conversed with him and he espoused Christ that first night, was shortly baptized, and continued steadfast. He was thirteen years of age. He was at once cut off by his people and reduced to poverty and was homeless. His grandfather tried to get the army to call him but his diminutive size saved him. He then threatened to get him killed.

After some months, when we were having meetings in a house, his elder brother came to endeavour to reclaim him. A terrible dread seized the lad, thinking that his brother would kill him, and he would not go in. Knowing that this battle must be won or he would relapse in defeat, I and some Egyptian brethren reasoned with him, and prayed. I urged that the Lord would protect him, and that, in any case, his brother would not attack him in the presence of an Englishman, for that would secure his own death as a murderer. It was long before he consented to face his brother, but then there came a demonstration of that word, " God gave us not a spirit of fearfulness, but of power and love and sobering " (II Tim. 1. 7). Without waiting for his brother to speak he commenced to set the gospel before him with energy and boldness and sobriety.

After the conversation had ended and the brother had departed, he told me that the family had offered to receive him back and to start him in life comfortably. I asked why he did not accept the proposal. With a dark look in his eyes he gave an answer which was a flashlight as to the moral state of Moslems : " They are all liars."

Miss Ely and Mr. McClenahan had gone to Europe for the hot season. I remained in Cairo to shepherd the group of converted Moslems and Copts we had gathered. I saw Abdel Messiah (his name by baptism) almost daily. How he should support himself, and not be dependent on others, was an early problem.

I got Mrs. Todd Osborne to consent that he should be

official shoeblack to the Russell Soldiers' Home. It was a humiliating occupation, but I felt it would be helpful against his native pride. At last he consented, and one morning I took him into the dining room, told the soldiers that here was a young Arab who had become a Christian, had lost everything by his stand, and now wanted to earn an honest living by blacking their boots, and I hoped they would encourage him. I then blacked the first pair and he continued the task. This he did for quite a time.

One day he said that he had had only bread and dates for breakfast. I replied that I had had only bread and bananas. From the hour that he thus learned that the English *hawaga* (gentleman) was actually down on his level, and for his sake, his heart was mine, the truculent Arab spirit subsided, and he accepted instruction and counsel as never before. It was a proof of the definite advantage of the servant of Christ being poor, as Christ Himself was.

In 1915 the British army took him to Mesopotamia as an interpreter. His last word to me as we parted testified that God had indeed cleansed his heart by faith : he said : " One thing I ask of my heavenly Father—that He will keep me holy." A few years later a Christian officer made inquiries about him on my behalf in Bagdad and learned that he was giving every satisfaction, and was standing as a Christian.

But the work of the gospel brings sorrow as well as joy. For forty nights in succession a young man attended at the tent. He was the son of a landed proprietor in upper Egypt ; had ample means, no occupation, and just indulged his pleasures in the capital. His English was excellent. For those six weeks I had no contact with him. He began coming to the prayer time for workers before the evening meeting, and at last the Voice said in my heart, " Take Mohammed away and talk with him." We went to the other end of the tent and within ten minutes he made a hearty confession of Christ.

At once he witnessed openly and proved a most efficient helper to me in translating with those who did not speak English. One evening at our rooms he gave an illuminating instance of the oriental habit of thinking and speaking in figures. We had explained the way of salvation to a visitor, and at length I asked him to say that there was nothing more to be stated, that the visitor must either accept Christ and be saved or reject Him and be lost. He spoke a few sentences, and then said, " I have told him that there are two ways of leaving this house ; he must either go down the staircase or jump out of the window."

He brought others to the meetings. One of these was the son of the Arabi Pasha who led the rebellion which took the British into Egypt in 1882. Presently he wished to be baptized. This was arranged, but courage failed and he did not come. Who can throw stones ? How many Englishmen

of standing and wealth will incur the loss of social position, home, inheritance, and for Christ's sake accept poverty, reproach, danger? It was long before I found him. He earnestly averred that in his heart he still believed in Christ. I did not doubt it, but could only press upon him that until he was baptized his friends regarded him as still a Moslem and so must we. This he recognized. On later visits to Egypt I did not meet him.

A law-student of much ability came to the tent. He was very disputatious. I gave him a gospel of John. This gospel is the more suitable because it forces the Moslem to face the most crucial of issues, the Sonship of Jesus. He brought it back with the demand that I should explain its opening statement. "This book speaks of one called the Word of God and says he was both with God and was God. How can a person be with himself? Explain this!" I replied that I could not explain it, nor could any one else do so. "Then why do you ask me to read a book you cannot explain?" he asked angrily. I answered as Christ answered Nicodemus, by asserting the truth positively and assuring him that unless he believed the book he could not be saved. After a further outburst, I added that there was one suggestion which he could ponder. "If there were a problem in mathematics which you could not solve, and you took it to your tutor and he could not solve it, it would at least be clear that neither he nor you had invented that problem. Now here is a problem not in mathematics but in theology, that is, the Being and nature of God as a trinity. Thousands of the ablest minds of the centuries have pondered this problem, and no man has been able to explain it; who then invented it? What man can invent man can explain: what man cannot explain man cannot have invented. It must be a revelation."

He found no answer to this, nor have I ever known a Unitarian to do so.

Near Heliopolis there lived an Englishman, a man of commerce. His wife was a believer, he was not, but was blinded by Christian Science. In the hope of helping him I toiled through Mrs. Eddy's literary desert *Science and Health*. On 18th February, 1914, we spoke together on the divan in his hall. He was of a cool unemotional nature. I explained that it was not of the essence of repentance toward God that the feelings should be deeply stirred. Sometimes, indeed, the sense of shame, the fear of wrath, the thought of being loved by a holy God did overwhelm the heart and cause intense emotion; but this is not necessary or invariable. I showed that the word repentance means a change of mind: that an accused might enter the court thinking he had a good case and should be discharged, but if the judge declared him guilty in law he must simply change his opinion about

himself and accept the verdict of the judge. Thus does God declare of each man that he is guilty before Him, and repentance consisted in humbly bowing to that verdict. Also, a man may think that he can produce works suitable for acceptance by God ; but God says it is impossible and that the only work He can accept to the good of the sinner is the atoning work of Christ, wrought on the cross on behalf of man. The sinner must therefore change his mind as to how to be saved, and obey God by transferring his trust from himself and his works to Christ and His work.

This he there and then did, in the most matter of fact way, sitting on the divan. It was an instance of the truth that, in the last analysis, it is an intelligent act of the *will* that secures salvation, and the decisive step may be taken with or without emotion. He shortly proved that his heart had been reached by his pocket being reached. Upon the sale of some property he brought £5 as a thank-offering to the God of his salvation.

During this tent effort we who were co-operating lived as Miss Ely's guest in a suite of rooms at Heliopolis. My room was very large, furnished sparsely with a narrow bed, a box for washstand, a small table, and a chair. The humorous brother, Jones, who told me how to scare dogs, came in, looked round the spacious apartment, and said, "Well, brother Lang, before you put out the light make sure where the bed is, or you won't be able to find it." The life was typically American, one steady rush all day, with visitors, letters, prayer seasons, and at nights the meetings in Cairo five days a week, from which we did not return till 11 p.m. City life in England, with its late hours, had caused me to forego my boyhood's habit of early rising. I now saw that unless it could be resumed there would be no leisure for indispensable privacy with God and soul nurture. But how resume early rising with days so taxed and retiring so late at night? I besought the special help of the Lord, Who in the days of His flesh had Himself been an early riser (Isa. 50. 4 : Mark 1. 35), and immediately I found myself able to rise at 5 a.m. This profitable practice has continued ever since, but carefully avoiding the late hours as a general rule.

One day there came a Moslem convert of twenty years standing, by name Abdel Messiah (servant of the Messiah). He was a ticket collector on the State railway. Like all others he augmented his small salary by taking bribes from passengers ; for instance, to allow a traveller to ride in a higher class than his ticket warranted, without charging the extra fare. At last his conscience had commenced to prick and he sought counsel, secretly hoping that we should excuse him. But we told him it was robbing the Government. He was offended ; but others he asked said the same, and finally, with his wife's consent, he drew from the Bank all his life savings and the sum was handed by an American

missionary to the Treasurer of the Railways as conscience money.

His name was not mentioned, but as he was the only Christian collector it was easily decided who had done it. God rewarded him with a radiant happiness. But I feared lest he was a little proud of having done something no one had done before him, so I said, "If you had a giant before you, you would not see a little man standing behind him ; but if the giant moved out of the way you would see the little man. God has shown you this giant sin and has enabled you to put it away ; now you must be prepared for Him to show you lesser sins, that you may cease from these also, by His help." Shortly he sent me a message that he had seen the "little man" and had put him also away. It was his cigarettes ! Many other Christians need to put away this same "little man." To do so would increase their joy in the Lord. Slavery is misery ; liberty is bliss. "For freedom did Christ set us free ; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5. 1).

(To be continued).

THE DISCIPLE

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“ I WILL BLESS THEM THAT BLESS THEE ”
(Gen. xii. 3)

Here in this ancient promise see
A blessing, friend, for you and me:
God holds it in His hand until
The expressed condition we fulfil.
Oh, Abraham's God will ne'er revoke
The word of promise which He spoke:
“ Thou shalt,” said He, “ a blessing be,
And blessed be he that blesseth thee.”

Now, in this present gospel day,
The Jews are wandering far away;
Away from God, away from grace,
Dispersed and peeled in every place.
They find not that which they have sought,
Refusing God's way to be taught :
So we their mercy have obtained
Which they in unbelief disdained.

Shall we refuse this blessing great ?
Dare we believers hesitate
To hand Christ's gospel to the Jew ?
(Which by His mercy has reached *you*.)
Lord! we so freely have received,
Help us to bless him in his need :
And as we tell him of Thy grace
Oh, may Thy love shine in our face !

H. G.

IMPORTANT RENEWAL NOTICE

With this issue *The Disciple* completes its fifth year. We thank God for the constant help that has brought us thus far, especially seeing that for the Editor almost the whole period has been marked by continuous and painful ill health. But we have been maintained by the help that is from God. We thank heartily the many fellow-helpers who have supported us by their prayers and cheered us by testimony to blessing received through these pages. Nor do we forget those who have kindly sent gifts towards the cost of production. These have met about one fourth of the expense, which has been a valued help.

It is now needful to revise our mailing list, to ensure that copies are not going astray or reaching any who, from lack of time or other cause, do not really profit by these pages. It is therefore requested that those who desire that the magazine be sent in future will please notify this *without delay* to Coltishall Granaries Ltd., Coltishall, Norwich, England. Their names will then be entered on the corrected list to receive the January issue, if the Lord will.

A few friends have greatly helped by placing several copies in their districts. Will they further help by ascertaining that each receiver does actually read and value the magazine, and then notify Coltishall the number they wish sent? This co-operation will be valued.

Studies in Prophecy (2).

BABYLON THE GREAT

REV. 17 and 18

PART I

THE BEAST

Verse 8 of Rev. 14 mentions an angel who announced, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the Great, that hath made all the nations to drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." This angel was the second of a series; and the third, who followed him (ver. 9), gave solemn warning against the worship of the Beast, and the comments were added (ver. 12) that at that time the saints would need patience, and (ver. 13) that a special blessing would attend their death. This sequence shows that the Babylon here intended would "fall" prior to the period when the Beast should demand worship and persecute all who refused it.

What Babylon this is was not then intimated, but ch. 17 opens this up. It tells of a Woman styled "Mystery Babylon the Great," who at first rides upon, that is, dominates and is served by, the Beast, but is later destroyed by him to make way for his supreme authority (ver. 16, 17). Thus two chief personages have to be considered, the Beast and the Woman.

THE BEAST

(i) *His identity.* It is easy to identify the Beast with the one of ch. 13, for (1) both have ten horns and seven heads (13. 1). (2) Blasphemy characterizes both (13. 1, 6). (3) The Dragon energizes the one (13. 2), and in 17. 3 the colour scarlet connects this Beast with the great red dragon of 12. 3, who also had seven heads and ten horns. (4) Both war against the Lamb and His people (13. 7, 8; 17. 14). (5) Both receive the wonder and worship of all on earth whose names are not in the book of life.

(ii) *The Period.* That the ten horns are already there when John sees the Woman indicates the period at which the vision will find fulfilment. They identify the Beast with the beast of Dan. 7 with ten horns, amidst which horns the "little horn," Antichrist, arises, and who lives at the time when the saints are about to receive the kingdom (Dan. 7. 23-28). These horns are the toes of the image of Dan. 2, the final stage of Gentile empire, upon which toes the Stone falls and destroys the image.

Thus the vision is of the final stage of the Woman, not of any lengthy preceding career she may conceivably have had. As the angel told Daniel that his vision of the four wild beasts

The Revised Version is used. Matter in square brackets [] is mine.
G.H.L.

(ch. 7) had to do with the closing stage of Gentile dominion, even that a court of judgment should sit in heaven for the taking away and destruction of the dominion of the beast (Dan. 7. 26), so John is told by the angel that he is about to see "the *judgment* of the great harlot." It was not a protracted history of the fourth Gentile power that Daniel then saw, but its overthrow: it is not a history of the whole course of the Woman that John sees, but only a hint of her origin, in Babylon, and a forecast of her overthrow at the end of this age.

As the vision opens the Beast is carrying the Woman; as it closes she has been destroyed by him and the ten kings, and he is supreme. Thus it discloses one final phase of world affairs, that which issues in his ambition to rule as sole sovereign of the earth being realized.

(iii) *The Seven Heads*. It is explained that these have a double significance, which serves to show that symbols may have more than one meaning.

In the first place, they are seven mountains where the Woman had her seat in the days when the angel was speaking to John. To him and his first readers this could scarcely have any meaning other than the city of Rome. For many centuries there had been held there annually a festival known as the Septimontium (seven mounts) to celebrate the inclusion of the seven hills within the city wall. Rome was known everywhere as the City of the Seven Hills. In *The Two Babylons* (p. 2) Hislop cites in support of this Virgil, Propertius, Horace, Martial, and Symmachus. So at that time the Woman had her seat at Rome, but the name on her forehead proclaimed a secret connexion with another city, Babylon, upon which more will be said later.

But the seven heads signified also seven kings. Of these five had fallen from that high estate. It does not say five had *died*, but had *fallen*. "To fall" may, of course, mean to die (I Cor. 10. 8: Heb. 3. 17); but a king may die in honour and know no *fall*; or he may *fall*, and not at that time die. This should weigh with those who *will* speculate as to who the five were. But why speculate? John was not told how long prior to his day these five had reigned, nor what intervals of time had separated them, nor any other identifiable particulars, save that each had lost sovereignty by a "fall." It may be best to leave the matter there, since the detail of their identity seems not material to the interpreting of the future aspect of the vision.

But one of this succession of seven was then reigning¹ and the seventh was to rule thereafter, but for a short while only; but again how long thereafter was not specified.

¹ Namely Domitian, if the generally accepted dating of the Revelation be adopted.

Note on *epesan*

As the basis for identifying the five Roman emperors it is asserted that

“to fall” means here to have been murdered or to have committed suicide. But *pipto* does not involve this meaning. There seems no instance in secular Greek literature of its application to suicide or assassination. The nearest such use is of death in war. Reliance is placed, however, upon the Septuagint, and the cases cited are those of Ehud (Judg. 3, 25), Sisera (Judg. 5, 27), both assassinated; and Saul (II Sam. 1, 19, 25, 27), a suicide. To these may be added Abner (II Sam. 3, 34, 38), murdered; the sons of Rizpah (II Sam. 21, 9), executed; and Sennacherib (Isa. 37, 7, 38), assassinated.

i. These six instances are all that can be adduced, though the verb is used in the LXX some 335 times. In any case, therefore, the usage would be exceptional.

ii. But it seems that the term in these instances means chiefly the posture or collapse of the body: “their lord was fallen *to the ground*”: “he fell *at her feet*”: “he fell *upon his sword*”: “they fell [*on the gallows*] all together”: “he shall fall *by the sword*.” In the case of Saul, David applied the term equally to Jonathan, who was killed in the ordinary course of battle (“*how are the mighty fallen*”), so that it had here no special reference to suicide.

iii. Further, if the histories did not show that these persons had committed suicide, or had been murdered, this could not be known from the use of the verb *to fall*. And this last is how Rev. 17, 10, reads; it says simply, “the five are fallen.” No indication of the manner or effects of their fall being given, the passage is not parallel with those cited.

Grimm’s Lexicon, on the word in this verse, says, “to be removed from power by death.” But even this goes beyond what is stated by the simple use of *fallen*. Cremer goes as far as is justified by placing this verse under the heading, “to come to ruin, to fail” [?fall], leaving the manner of the fall unstated.

The verb is employed in the very sense I have adopted in Esther 6, 13 (LXX), where Haman’s friends say to him, “thou shalt certainly fall before” Mordecai, meaning simply to fall from position and authority, since they could not foretell his speedy death, and least of all the manner of it.

Thus *pipto* here gives no means of identifying the five kings from the form of death of certain Roman emperors, nor does it of necessity imply the death of the five at the time each fell.

(iv) *The Eighth Head*. The material matter is that one of these seven is to be the eighth of this series of monarchs and the final head of Gentile world rule: the final ruler, because he shall war against the Lamb at His coming, be overthrown, and be cast direct into perdition (19, 19-21).

The particulars given of the eighth king are:

1. He is one of the seven (11). From earliest times this has been rightly taken in the natural force of the words that the eighth is to be one of the seven revived to act again on this earth.

2. He “was,” that is, had lived on earth at some time prior to the period when he is seen carrying the Woman. Some, however, take this “was” to mean that he had lived prior to the time when John saw the vision and had it explained. In this case the eighth head must be one of the first five kings of the series. On the other hand, the angel did not say, “he is one of the five,” but “one of the seven” (11), and there seems no reason for bringing in the sixth and seventh unless the eighth may be one of these.

3. He “is not,” that is, at the exact time in the end days when the Woman will first ride the Beast. When we consider

presently who the Woman is it will be evident that in this our day she is not yet so riding the Beast. Indeed, the Beast in question is not yet here to be ridden. No political system answering to this vision is in existence. There is no ten-kingdom confederacy. But when this Confederacy shall have come, the Woman will gain dominant influence in it, and will do this before the eighth head shall have arisen. It is at that particular point of affairs that the words "he is not" will apply.

It is important to see that the term "beast" is used in prophecy now of an empire and now of its head, the emperor. Upon this Pember, dealing with Daniel 7, has well said:

In the first answer (of the angel, ver. 17), the Beasts are described as Emperors ("these great beasts . . . are four *kings*"), while the second regards them as Empires. For, although it mentions only the Fourth, yet by the words, "The Fourth Beast shall be a Fourth Empire upon the earth," it manifestly implies that the other three were such before it. . . .

. . . the Beasts may stand either for the Empires or for their most characteristic Emperors. And this double use of the symbol is by no means peculiar to our prophecy, but occurs in other passages also, and may be shown to rest upon a sound logical basis. The best instance of it, perhaps, is that which is found in the seventeenth chapter of the Apocalypse. For the Beast there depicted is a more detailed revelation of the Fourth Beast of Daniel, and, so long as he represents an Empire, the Eighth Emperor is one of the seven heads revived. But the Beast himself is also said to be the Eighth Emperor, doubtless because that monarch, although properly set forth as one of the Heads, will be so perfect a representative of the Fourth Beast that he may be regarded as its embodiment.

A sufficient proof of the correctness of this view may be deduced from the vision which we are considering. For, in the eleventh verse, we read that because of the great words which the Horn spake, the Beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given to the burning flame. That is, the Emperor will be so exact an exponent of the spirit of the people that the whole body politic will be held responsible, and be punished, for the blasphemous utterances of their leader. (*The Great Prophecies*, ed. 1941. 108, 109.)

4. He "is about to come up out of the abyss" (8).

The A.V. "bottomless pit," if it gives any idea that can be distinctly apprehended, is erroneous. It led the acute mind of the boy Spurgeon to puzzle his ministerial grandfather with the question, If the pit has no bottom, where do the people go when they fall out at the other end? That the abyss is not a "pit" at all is seen from the feature that, in the imagery of the Apocalypse (as in the classic poets), it is reached by means of a pit, that is, a shaft (9. 1). In two places the A.V. renders by "deep," which is as indefinite as the other is misleading.

The idea of the word is a vast, profound, unexplored region, and so in the Septuagint the common reference is to the then unexplored ocean depths. In the New Testament this region is located within the earth, and is the sphere of the dead: "Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)" (Rom. 10. 7). Where Christ

was when dead is shown in Ephesians 4. 8-10: "Now this, He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth." It is a region which demons fear: "they entreated that He would not command them to depart into the abyss" (Luke 8. 31). Hence the alarmed cry of others of them: "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. 8. 29). That such enemies of mankind are there confined may give a hint as to what the "locusts" are that issue thence when the pit leading from the abyss is opened, and these hordes rush forth to torment men, as in Rev. 9. 1-11. Verse 11 says that the abyss has an angel ruler, and also a Destroyer, who will be in command of these demons when they are let out on this dread errand of judgment. They know by experience what torment is, and how to inflict it. The passage suggests the solemn reflection that the torments of Hades have not altered or softened their natures.

Readers of the classics will know that these features of that hidden world were the ideas commonly held in John's day. They would cause no wonderment or question to his readers, who would take the statements in their natural sense, as describing ideas generally accepted. Asia Minor was then a Greek-speaking world, and the name of the angel of the abyss given by John, Apollyon, was akin to that of a principal Greek deity, Apollo, and one who inflicted on men the vengeance of heaven. Sudden deaths and deaths by plague were attributed to his arrows.

Our passage is an amplifying of the earlier statement in ch. 11. 7, that the Beast who will kill the Two Witnesses at Jerusalem is to "come up out of the abyss." The only other use of the word in the New Testament is for the place where Satan is to be imprisoned for the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth (Rev. 20. 1, 2).

All the places where the word occurs have been mentioned, and from them it is clear that the abyss is a *locality*, the region *inter alia* of the dead, and it is within the earth. This forbids the common suggestion that the "beast," as about to ascend from the abyss, means an empire, the Roman, and it is to be "revived." No *empire* is in the abyss or can emerge thence. The individual men that ever formed that empire are there, but as individuals. One of these can be brought thence, if God shall permit; but when it is said that the *empire* shall be revived to fulfil this passage, it must be asked which of the many myriads of persons that belonged to it, through many generations in the long centuries past, are thus to form it in its resurrected existence? And when it will be replied that this is not asserted, but only that the Roman empire will be re-formed at the end, composed of men then living, the answer is that this is not what the text states, that it merely avoids the plain sense of the term "come up out of the abyss," and sets aside the fact that the abyss is a *place*, a place quite well known to Scripture and to the general thought of man-

kind by this name, and located in the heart of the earth.

It is here suggested that the angel ruler of this region is he who restrains the Lawless One of II Thess. 2, the "Beast" of the present passage, hindering him issuing thence before the time permitted by God. This conception goes back to early Sumerian days, soon after the Flood. It was the prevailing belief in the ancient world.

That a person should return from the place of the dead to act again in the affairs of the living, was no new idea in John's day, but one known to Scripture and by men in general. It is latent in the very conception of necromancy, the consulting of the dead; and while most of what professes to be this is doubtless demonic fraud, yet the Old Testament had the instance of the coming up of the veritable Samuel to denounce the judgment of God to Saul (I Sam. 28. 15). It is our Lord who shows that Dives took for granted that Lazarus could be sent up to warn living men, an idea the divine Teacher could scarcely have spread uncontradicted had He known it to be erroneous (Luke 16). And both Old and New Testaments unite to say that Messiah is a Man raised from the dead to rule the earth.

The common views of mankind had always agreed with this. This by itself would not establish the truth of the notion; but when Scripture adopts without question an idea prevalent among men, that idea must be regarded as true, for the Word of God cannot endorse error.

From the most ancient times the Egyptians had conceived of the "victorious" dead being granted by the gods liberty to come and go in their former earth spheres. Thus in ch. 11 of *The Book of the Dead* (trans. Budge) it is said of the dead Ani: "Osiris Ani shall come forth by day to do whatsoever he pleaseth upon the earth among the living ones." This notion of the departed having unrestricted liberty to return and act among the living we consider devoid of warrant in Scripture, for the case of Samuel was an exception; but our only concern is to establish that the idea in the words "come up out of the abyss" would be easily accepted in John's day. Egyptian conceptions were then widely spread, including in the Greek-speaking lands, and were in harmony with similar conceptions in the whole ancient world.

In keeping with this was the expectation, then held by many, that Nero was to return to the earth and rule again. This was adopted by many Christians as to be the fulfilment of our passage, which shows that they took the passage in its natural sense of the return of a dead man. That this idea gained rapid and wide credence, among pagans and Christians, is to be explained by the fact that it was but the application to a particular person (Nero) of a possibility owned generally. Upon this Prof. F. F. Bruce kindly wrote as follows for this discussion:

Could any myths of pre-New Testament times have prepared men's

minds for the thought of Antichrist returning from the abyss to reign over the earth ?

The origin of the belief in *Nero redivivus* was a refusal of the people of the Eastern Empire, with whom he was very popular, to believe that he was really dead. [Nero committed suicide in A.D. 68.] (Compare the case of Kitchener in the last war.) Taking advantage of this, various Neronic pretenders appeared from time to time for twenty years after his death : the last apparently in A.D. 88. The idea took shape that he had gone to the Parthians, and that he would return at the head of a Parthian army to reclaim his empire. After that date it seemed hopeless to go on believing that he was still alive, and so that belief gave place to the idea that he was indeed dead, but would return to life.

(Compare the German belief about Friedrich Barbarossa [died A.D. 1190].

Der alte Barbarossa, der Kaiser Friederich,
Im unterird'schen Schlosse hält er verzaubert sich.
Er ist niemals gestorben, er lebt darin noch jetzt ;
Er hat im Schloss verborgen zum Schlaf sich hingesezt.
Er hat hinab genommen des Reiches Herrlichkeit,
Und wird einst wiederkommen mit ihr zu seiner Zeit.
[The ancient Barbarossa, the Kaiser Frederick, dwells
In a subterranean castle, self-bound by mighty spells.
He did not die as others, he lives there even yet ;
In the castle he is hidden, to sleep himself has set.
The glory of the empire he took down with him there,
And, in his time, returning, that glory he will bear.]

(It has been suggested in Germany that he *has* come again in the person of his present successor !) [Hitler].

So in the earlier Sibylline Oracles [perhaps A.D. 80-85], where Nero and Antichrist are identified, Nero is described as still alive ; in the later [perhaps A.D. 180] he is dead, and must be raised to life again as Antichrist.

There were several myths in the Near East which might have prepared people's minds for such a belief, most of them dealing with gods or demigods. But in the eastern Roman Empire the Emperor was generally regarded as a god, even in his lifetime. It would not have been a foreign idea, therefore, for the eastern empire to conceive of the divine Emperor as appearing on earth again.

The myths go back at least to Sumerian days [a very early period of history in Mesopotamia] ; Tammuz [see Ezekiel 8. 14] was Sumerian originally, and the annual weeping which commemorated his death was followed by the rejoicing that celebrated his resurrection. The same resurrection story was told of Marduk, in Assyria, of Aleyn, son of Baal, in North Syria (according to ritual texts discovered at Ras Shamra), of Adonis, also in Syria, whence it spread over the Greek world after Alexander [died B.C. 323] ; of Melkart (Baal) in Tyre (the Greeks identified him with their Heracles) ; of Attis in Phrygia and Tylon in Lydia ; of Dionysus in early Greece, and of Zeus in Crete. Indeed, the tomb of Zeus used to be pointed out in Crete, but the belief grew up that he had risen from the dead, and afterwards, when he was accepted as king of the gods, it was denied that he had ever died at all. Thus Epimenides the Cretan represents Minos, the son of Zeus, as addressing him thus :

"They fashioned a tomb for thee, O holy and high one—the Cretans, always liars, evil beasts, idle gluttons ! But thou hast not died ; thou art risen and alive for ever ; for in thee we live and move and have our being." (Cf. Tit. 1. 12 : Acts 17. 28).

Of the resurrection of human beings there are few traces. The only clear case I can think of is Alcestis, referred to by Milton in Sonnet XIX :

"Methought I saw my late espoused Saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son* to her glad husband gave,

Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.”

There was also Eurydice, whom Orpheus almost succeeded in bringing back from Hades, but who was snatched back when he looked round to see if she were still following. The Athenians, fighting at Marathon in 490 B.C., believed they saw their city's ancient king Theseus fighting for them (*cf.* the angels of Mons). But these are few and uncertain as compared with the resurrection myths of divine or semi-divine beings, which form a background of thought against which it is not difficult to understand the readiness with which the idea of Nero redivivus was entertained when it was no longer possible to suppose him still alive.

Upon this last sentence it is to be remarked that the New Testament does not specify positively the *form* in which the eighth head will appear, whether in a properly human nature, with a mortal body, or otherwise. These factors may be considered.

1. He receives a sword wound which ordinarily would have proved fatal, but which is healed (13. 3, 14). If the stroke killed him, this would imply an ordinary mortal body. But it would then not be an ordinary expression to say that the stroke was “healed,” meaning thereby resurrection from the dead. To be healed is to be preserved alive by the wound not proving fatal.

2. When seized alive by the Lamb (19. 19-21) he and the false prophet are not killed¹ (in which particular they are expressly contrasted with their followers: “the rest were killed”), but they are “cast alive into the lake of fire,” where they still are a thousand years later. Now no mortal body could thus endure that fire, which suggests a non-mortal bodily nature.

*(Hercules.)

¹ The R.V. at II Thes. 2. 8 says that the Lord Jesus shall “slay” the Lawless One. The verb is *analisko*, and in N.T. is found in this place and Luke 9. 54 and Gal. 5. 15 only. In the two latter places the R.V. renders by “consume.” The variation throws the passage into conflict with Rev. 19. 20. The word does not mean to kill, but to consume, and so in Greek was commonly employed of using up one's money. The Beast will be consumed, destroyed, without being killed physically.

3. When Samuel came up he had a form and garment which Saul, from the description given by the witch, readily recognized as being that of Samuel. This suggests that the soul retains in the death state a psychical covering closely resembling the material body lost at death. May not Antichrist appear in *such* a form, like to his former mortal body? Also the normal resurrection body of our Lord bore visibly the marks of His wounds, and was recognizable by those who had known Him in the flesh. In resurrection the wicked dead *may* be similarly clothed, with one or other of these coverings.

In view of these considerations, whatever may prove the fact as to Antichrist, it is not required that we believe him to be properly *re-incarnated*, no plain suggestion being made of a body of flesh or being necessary to the case.

In such a psychical form it would be easy for the Satan-deceived earth-dwellers to regard the Beast as having become a demi-god, such as the heathen commonly regarded deified heroes, and thus he would be readily accepted when he sits in the temple of God at Jerusalem setting himself forth as God (II Thes. 2. 4).

4. The duration of his supremacy is forty-two months, three years and a half (Rev. 13. 5), a time, times, and half a time. This seems here to be marked as "one hour," meaning only a very short period in comparison to the ages of Satan's kingdom that culminate in this brief dazzle and eclipse. But the Beast's whole career, during which he fights his way to supremacy, will be much longer.

5. The ten kings who will exalt him to be their overlord (17) had formed their league before his rise, for it is among the ten horns that he first appears, as an eleventh and little horn (Dan. 7. 8). It does not say that they had not reigned before they exalt the Beast, but that they had not come to their kingdom at *John's* date. Verse 17 says, on the contrary, that "they give their *kingdom* unto the Beast," which therefore they must have held or they could not surrender it to him.

There *will* come an effective league of nations, and of nations that have descended from the fourth great kingdom of prophecy. This is certain; for it is in the mind of God that the Beast shall rise thus to world domination. It is part of the divine over-ruling of the wicked unto the accomplishing of the words of God.

6. The Beast and his kings shall enter deliberately upon a war against the Lamb. There will be avowed hostility to Him in this character of the Lamb. Already nations are deriding and decrying Him because of this nature, as the One who displayed gentleness and silent self-surrender, permitting that He be led as a lamb to the slaughter. This is the very antithesis to that fierce, relentless, conscienceless spirit of ambition advocated by such as Nietzsche, and developed logically from the doctrine of Evolution that the weak *ought* to be crushed out for the betterment of the race. It was in England that this philosophical egg was laid and hatched. The bird was reared to full growth and fierceness in Germany; and in two bloody wars it has returned to its first nest to gorge upon the vitals of England. If organized religion must suffer with the rest from its ravages, it has only to mourn that its official leaders so largely petted and pampered this bird of prey because, forsooth, "Science" (falsely so called) praised its beauty and they could not endure to be thought "unscientific." Unless, indeed, some of them joined the atheistic in fostering it for the deliberate purpose of destroying Christian faith.

Christ teaches the exact contrary to this cruel and false, yea, satanic doctrine. He says that all *real* improvement is reached by self-sacrifice, not by self-assertion. This has been

widely and openly and violently repudiated by very many leaders and followers in different countries, which is a distinct muttering of the storm which the Wild-Beast will raise against the Lamb.

It is a notable spectacle this of a lamb faced by a huge wild beast, and of a little flock of sheep in the midst of a pack of wolves. But the Lamb will conquer; the Wild Beast will fail. And in that day they shall share the triumph of the Lamb who are "with Him," who are on His side in the fight, are His followers; who fight now by facing the wolf in the spirit of the lamb, suffering even unto death, as the Lamb of God did here. It is the meek that shall inherit the earth for which the wild beasts contend. To this suffering and this glory they were "called" (I Pet. 2. 19-23; 5. 10); and from among the many of the called these were "chosen" (Mat. 22. 14), were picked men, selected as those on whom the Lamb, their Leader, knew He could depend in the war that seemed often a defeat. They were "faithful," proved such by patience in suffering, in being unwearied in well-doing, in holding fast His word when the many disregarded it, in confessing His name when the vast majority scorned or hated it. These, and these only, have the promise of conquering with Him in His final and complete victory over the Beast and the Dragon.

Thus far the Beast. Every picture of him in Scripture leads to the same end, his collapse, disgrace, and doom, for "the words of God shall be accomplished" (17). And they who follow him must share his judgment, as certainly as they who follow the Lamb shall share His glory.

(To be continued)

BRITISH-ISRAELISM (*continued*)

Chapter V.

FALLACIOUS ARGUMENTS

Passing from basic objections and facts we will consider some of the arguments advanced in support of the British-Israel theory.

1. *The alleged prophecy of Jeremiah.* About a century B.C. there was written an account of Jewish affairs which we know as the Second Book of Maccabees. It contains in ch. 2. 4-8 a piece of fiction used by sundry British-Israel writers as if it were authentic history. It reads as follows:

It was also contained in the same writing, that the prophet [Jeremiah] being warned of God, commanded the tabernacle and the ark to go with him, as he went forth into the mountain, where Moses climbed up, and saw the heritage of God. And when Jeremiah came thither, he found a hollow cave [a cave dwelling], wherein

he laid the tabernacle, and the ark, and the altar of incense, and so stopped the door. And some of those that followed him came to mark the way, but they could not find it. Which when Jeremiah perceived, he blamed them, saying, As for that place, it shall be unknown until the time that God gather His people again together, and receive them unto mercy. Then shall the Lord show them these things, and the glory of the Lord shall appear, and the cloud also, as it was showed unto Moses, and as when Solomon desired that the place might be honourably sanctified.

The term "same writing" refers to a story given just before, that "it was found in the records" that to those being carried into captivity to Babylon Jeremiah gave some of the sacred fire of the temple. Of this the inspired histories give no account, and it is to be noted that the writer gives no hint as to the names of these records or of their authors.

The present story declares that, by a special divine admonition, Jeremiah commanded the tabernacle, the ark, and the altar of incense to follow closely after him while he took the really considerable journey down the mountains of Judea, across the Jordan, and up the long and steep ascent of Pisgah in Moab. Certainly this was a more remarkable pilgrimage than when these heavy articles were carried through the deserts on the shoulders of the Levites or in their wagons.

In the *Speaker's Commentary* on this place Canon Rawlinson wrongly assumed that the tabernacle in question was that made by Moses. This is a mistake. That tent was brought by Joshua to Shiloh (Josh. 18. 1; etc.), and afterwards was removed to Gibeon (II Chron. 1. 3, 4); but the ark, after being sent back by the Philistines, never returned to the tabernacle but was taken by David from the house of Abinadab direct to Jerusalem, where he spread for it a tent (I Chron. 15—16. 1). It was *this* tent, with the ark, that Solomon took up to the temple at its consecration (II Chron. 5. 3-5). But though this structure was no doubt small and light as compared with the heavy boards and coverings of the earlier tabernacle, it is an interesting spectacle to watch it and the ark and the altar floating after the prophet at the slow pace at which he must have tramped those forty laborious miles, with one or two nights on the way.

The inspired narratives will not allow this story. It is stated specifically (1) that some of the vessels of the temple were taken from Jehoiakim and carried to Babylon (II Chron. 36; 7). (2) that at the later capture of Jehoiachin the Chaldeans "cut in pieces *all* the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of Jehovah," and this spoil was carried to Babylon (II Kin. 24. 13, 14); and (3) at the final destruction of Jerusalem "*all* the vessels of the house of God, *great* and small . . . all these he brought to Babylon.

And they burnt the house of God " (II Chron. 36. 18, 19). Taken together these statements involve the removal or destruction of *all* the contents of the temple, and do not allow of the tent (if indeed it had not gone to pieces in the course of the four hundred years), the ark, and the incense altar being spared in the general holocaust.

This strictly incredible story is accepted by some British-Israelites for no other reason than that they wish by hook or by crook to get the ark of the covenant to Ireland ! But the very story they use to assert the preservation of the ark forbids the notion that Jeremiah later transferred it to Ireland, for it recites his statement that it would remain in the unknown cave where he had placed it until the time of Israel's restoration to the favour of God at His appearing in glory.

Happily other British-Israel writers are too sane and fair to accept this rash use of the Maccabean fable.

2. *The Stone of Destiny*. But all the many writers we have read build upon the equally fabulous notions they avow concerning the stone which now rests in the Coronation Chair at Westminster Abbey, London.

According to them this stone is beyond question the very stone that Jacob used for a pillow at Bethel when journeying from Beersheba to Paddanaram and which he set up the next morning as a memorial pillar (Gen. 28. 11-18). This was about 1760 B.C. Questions at once arise. The Coronation stone is 26 inches in length, $16\frac{3}{4}$ in breadth, and $10\frac{1}{2}$ in thickness. Let any one try to sleep on a solid pillow nearly a foot thick and he can judge for himself whether it be restful. Let any one who has seen an Oriental sleep with a stone for a pillow say if it was any thicker than will fit the angle of the head and shoulder. Why should a man trouble to move a stone over two feet long and nearly a foot and a half broad when a short round stone would better suit his purpose ? And could a flat, broad stone be rightly described as a pillar ? The most frequent sense of the Hebrew word used is "statue," "image," or "obelisk" (Ex. 23. 24, and nineteen other places). It is translated "pillar" in thirteen places. (In A.V. of Ezek. 26. 11 "garrisons" is found, but R.V., uniformly with the other places, gives "pillars.") No one would describe a broad flat stone as a "pillar."

But nothing will daunt a confirmed British-Israelite. It is confidently affirmed that when later Jacob returned to Bethel he thenceforth carted with him this bulky stone on all his further migrations, including that to Egypt. It was to this stone that he referred, in his prophetic utterance upon the latter days, as "the Shepherd, the stone of Israel" (Gen. 49. 24). This stone he bequeathed when dying to Joseph as a priceless heirloom, and this was the "rock" that accompanied Israel all through the forty years wanderings in the

desert and which gave them water (I Cor. 10. 4); for this stone it was that Moses smote and from which copious streams gushed forth. It matters nothing that on both occasions that which Moses was to strike or speak to is described as a "rock," a rock large enough for Jehovah to stand upon it, not a stone of less than three square feet in area. It matters nought that this rock upon which the Lord would stand was also sufficiently large for Moses to strike it. Nor does it count that these rocks were of flint (Deut. 8. 15), whereas the Coronation stone is of sandstone, a non-flinty formation.

We are further assured that this stone was the king's pillar in the temple of Solomon by which the kings stood to be crowned (II Kin. 11. 14), and by which Josiah made a covenant. This stone is the "pillar" which is to be lacking in Israel until the latter days and they return unto Jehovah (Hos. 3. 4). But *where* is it to be preserved during the long interval from Hosea to that coming national restoration? Jeremiah's cave being mythical, wherever can it be? This is no problem at all to the British-Israelite, and thereby hangs a truly marvellous tale.

When Jeremiah was forced by the captains to go with them to Egypt he took with him two daughters of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (Jer. 43. 6). The sacred history does not say they were only two, but British-Israelites know this and can even give their names, Scota and Tamar Tephi. It seems that Jeremiah conveyed to Egypt Jacob's pillar, and presently escaped thence to Spain and on to Ireland, taking with him the king's daughters and Jacob's stone! We are told that for many and many a century a colony of Danites had been settled in Ireland, and we are further assured that the then king of Ireland (six centuries B.C.) was descended from the royal tribe of Judah. He married Tamar Tephi, from which union have come the subsequent sovereigns of Scotland and England to the present time, who therefore are all Israelites!

In A.D. 503 Feargus the Great, of the royal Irish line, crossed the sea to west Scotland, won a battle and was proclaimed king. He had the Stone of Destiny fetched from Tara, county Meath, the royal centre of Ireland, and was crowned upon it. It was removed thence to Scone, where later Scottish kings were crowned upon it. Edward I (A.D. 1296) robbed Scotland of this priceless object and took it to Westminster, since when all British sovereigns have sat above it to be crowned. All this is held to be proof positive that the royal house of England is descended from the kings of Judah and the British race is the people of Israel!

The assertion that Jacob's pillar became the Stone of Destiny at Tara, the royal residence of ancient Ireland, and that upon it the kings were crowned, finds contradiction in the article "Tara" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Ed.

xiv., vol. xxi., 86). Speaking of the flat-topped mound which was the great place of gathering, it is said that, "On this (but not in its original position) stands a pillar stone, said to be the stone of destiny on which the Irish kings were crowned." It is really most inconsiderate of this stone to stand there in open contradiction of the British-Israel claim that the stone on which the kings were crowned is now in London.

For this strange story of Jacob's stone, and of Jeremiah and his journey, we are offered mainly pure suppositions, supplemented by some ancient Irish traditions, which, of course, may be accepted by the credulous but scarcely admit of being tested historically. These traditions have it that Jeremiah was accompanied by a servant named Bruch (obviously Baruch !), and that he had with him a large box. Tradition fails us as to the contents of this large box, but British-Israelites supply this defect : it must certainly have been Jacob's stone ! or, perhaps, as others fain would have it, it was the ark of the covenant ! May we respectfully but equally positively affirm that the contents were heavy warm clothes which, with prophetic foresight, Jeremiah had provided upon leaving the heat of Egypt for the cold north ! If it be objected that such heavy clothing would not be obtainable in so hot a land as Egypt, then it is certain that he must have found it in Spain, and have had the large box made there. In Spain they dress in sheepskins, called *zamarra*. Even a schoolboy can see that this is a variant of *Samaria*, Here is strong proof presumptive that the Spaniards also are Israelites by descent !

In the first paragraph of this discussion, Pember has remarked that no great scholar had received the British-Israelite theory. Our considerable reading of their literature has not disclosed any historian of note who confirms it. They quote various writers as endorsing this or that detail, but no one of rank among the learned seems to have adopted the theory itself. Once or twice there is mention of the historian Sharon Turner, a writer of the early nineteenth century. His *History of the Anglo-Saxons* has long since been superseded, and more recent historians do not mention it. But in any case he gives no support to British-Israelism. As far as I observed, he approaches the theme only once in his three lengthy volumes named, and this in only a footnote which is brief and scornful. It is footnote 7 on p. 150 of vol. I, and it reads : "The *Vetus Chronicon Holsatia*, p. 54, says the Danes and Jutes are Jews of the tribe of Dan ! and Munster as wisely calls the *Helvetii*, *Hillvitae*, or Jutes of the hills."

These are examples of one of the most conspicuous of British-Israelite arguments, even the frequent, strange, and precarious adaptations and explanations of names. Thus

*Saxons equals Isaac's sons*¹. That some ancient Irish folk were called *Dananns* is quite sufficient proof that they were *Danites*, descendants of Jacob's son Dan! That these, according to tradition, were in Ireland many centuries before Jeremiah arrived there, explains why Deborah, seven centuries before Jeremiah, complained that "Dan remained in ships." It shows beyond doubt, not only that the Danites were seafarers but, even so early, they had sailed as far as Ireland and settled there! Obviously no more is required by Deborah's words than that the Danites had ships and had coastal trade or fishing. The port of Joppa was in their territory. Again, that the ancient name for the Welsh was *Cumri* is because they were descended from *Omri*, the idolatrous king of the northern kingdom. That the ruling class in Japan are named *Sumarai* is because they once lived in *Samaria*, and, like the English and Americans, are Israelites. Then *Saracens* means *Sarah's sons*.

Such manipulation of names causes wonder that no British-Israel writer seems to have noticed a striking proof that the Irish *Dananns* must have originated in the Middle East, because (with but a slight and quite unimportant change of one letter) the common name for an Irishman stands squarely in the middle of the common name for Assyria, *MesoPATamia*!

This forcing of strange meanings on to names is ancient. Leading Roman writers like Tacitus, Cicero, and Pliny "credited such absurdities as that the Jews had come from Crete (Mount Ida—*Idaei*—*Judaei*)." (Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1, 65). It is like the basis for the view that "Gog" in Ezekiel 38 points to Russia and Germany, because Rosh in form and sound is somewhat like to Russia, Meshech to Moscow, Tubal to Tobolsk, and Gomer to Germany. We need to bear in mind the words of a British Museum expert that "Mere similarity of sound is a most uncertain guide" (R. E. Poole, in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article Phut, vol. II, 86g).

The recent course of the British empire must surely cause these good people to pause and wonder. In 1928 M. H. Gayer issued a book of 144 pages entitled *The Heritage of the Anglo-Saxon Race*. It was published by the principal British-Israel publishers, The Covenant Publishing Company, Ltd., London, and reached a third edition in 1941. On pages 111,

¹ Webster's Dictionary: "Saxon, from seax, a knife, short sword, dagger." "Of all the tribes of the German race none was more cruel than the Saxons. Their very name, which spread to the whole confederacy of Northern Tribes, was supposed to be derived from their use of a weapon, the seax, a short one-handed sword." (*A History of the English Speaking Peoples*. Winston S. Churchill—Cassel, London, 1956, Vol. I, 57). "Saxons. The term has been derived by etymologists from the *Seax*, a long knife or sword, which was one of their ordinary weapons." (*The History of England*, Thomas Milner. R.T.S.).

112 an American writer is quoted as follows : " England and America give laws to almost the whole world . . . the Anglo-Saxon race are extending an all-controlling influence over the entire earth," which was held to be proof that God was fulfilling to them His promise that Israel shall dominate the nations. But since then England has renounced sway over India, Burma, Ceylon, Egypt, and Palestine, and her influence in the Middle East is weakening. In prestige and wealth England has seriously declined, greatly enfeebled by two exhausting wars. It is still more foreboding of ill that in public morals the downward course is even more marked, which is yet more painfully true of the United States.

For British-Israelism " Ephraim " means Britain and " Manasseh " the United States, and the writer quoted added that " In due time Manasseh and Ephraim will be joined, BECAUSE MANASSEH MUST RETURN TO ISRAEL." At the time of writing (1957) this is very unlikely. Moreover, British-Israel writers stress that the birthright belongs to Ephraim, according to Jacob's blessing (Gen. 48. 13-20). There is no apparent likelihood that America will concede first place to England.

We have here a sample of the simply reckless statements that these writers will make in support of their assertions. In place of the Anglo-Saxon race extending an all-controlling influence over the entire earth, the fact is that in Russia and China alone nearly a third of the population of the earth is marshalled by its rulers against the whole concept of life as known in the West. If the Western lands and peoples are indeed the kingdom of God described by the Hebrew prophets, then Scripture must mean pretty much the opposite of what it says.

It is a psychological feature worthy of study how intelligent men are ready to accept as proof statements which are highly questionable. For long the British-Israelite publishers named issued a paper entitled

The LONG LOST CHAPTER of the ACTS OF THE APOSTLES containing the account of Paul's journey in Spain and Britain, also a remarkable prediction of Britain's glorious inheritance.

Translated by C. S. SONNINI from an original manuscript found in the archives of Constantinople, presented to him by the Sultan ABDOUL ACHMET.

With Notes and Comments by the late T. G. Cole.

The value attached to this remarkable document is shown by its being reprinted in the official organ of the Movement " The B.I. Quarterly," March 1953. It is treated as evidence that Paul and companions visited Spain and Britain, passing on to Belgium, Switzerland, and Illyricum.

Verse 10 states that on Ludgate Hill, London, where St. Paul's Cathedral stands, " At even the Holy Ghost fell

upon Paul, and he prophesied, saying,

Behold in the last days the God of peace shall dwell in the cities [that is, of Britain], and the inhabitants thereof shall be numbered; and in the seventh numbering of the people, their eyes shall be opened, and the glory of their inheritance shine forth upon them. And nations shall come up to worship upon the Mount that testifieth of the patience and long-suffering of a servant of the Lord.

The Editor emphasized this verse by printing it in italics, and the comment is that

“No one can fail to see that this prediction has had a striking fulfilment; the magnificent edifice which stands on the site of Mount Lud bears the Apostle’s name, and has been the meeting place for men of other nations who have come to worship before the Lord.

It is then stressed that the first census of these Islands was taken in 1801 and the seventh in 1861, at which time the nation came to the knowledge of its glorious inheritance because “the British-Israelite movement began about that time!”

But even were there more and more striking coincidences, what shall be said of the reliability of this document when verse 13 tells us that

certain of the Druids came unto Paul privately, and showed by their rites and ceremonies they were descended from the Jews which escaped from bondage in the land of Egypt, and the apostle believed these things, and he gave them the kiss of peace.

It was well known at that time, as it still is, that the rites of Druidism included ghastly human sacrifices. It is surely certain that those Druids could not have persuaded Paul that their ceremonies were derived from the time of the Exodus, especially seeing that Moses expressly and repeatedly condemned and forbade human sacrifices (Deut. 12. 31; 18. 10). It is past belief that he gave the kiss of peace to such degraded savage men.

The document further states (verses 18-23) that after much preaching and toil Paul and his fellow-labourers passed into Helvetia, and came unto Mount Pontius Pilate, where he who condemned the Lord Jesus dashed himself down headlong, and so miserably perished. And immediately a torrent gushed out of the mountain and washed his body broken in pieces into a lake. And Paul stretched forth his hands upon the water, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, O Lord God, give a sign unto all nations that here Pontius Pilate, which condemned thine only-begotten Son, plunged headlong into the pit. And while Paul was yet speaking, behold there came a great earthquake, and the face of the waters was changed, and the form of the lake like unto the Son of Man hanging in agony upon the cross. And a voice came out of heaven,

saying, Even Pilate hath escaped the wrath to come, for he washed his hands before the multitude at the bloodshedding of the Lord Jesus. When, therefore, Paul and those that were with him saw the earthquake, and heard the voice of the angel, they glorified God, and were mightily strengthened in the spirit.

Here is the fatally false doctrine that Pilate has escaped the wrath to come because he washed his hands before the crowd, though he immediately thereupon judicially murdered an innocent man, and later on murdered himself. Thus a man can be saved from the judgment of God by a hypocritical ceremony, without any repentance or faith. We are asked to believe that this was announced by an angel from heaven and accepted by the writer of the epistle to the Romans !

The " B.I. Quarterly " goes on to offer eight " points in favour of the genuineness of the manuscript," though it has before declared that "*the authenticity of it cannot be vouched for*" (their own italics).

Surely only minds obsessed and blinded by a theory can offer such a document which carries its falsity on its face, as serious ground for upholding their views. Their writings abound in unwarranted assumptions, fallacious reasonings, and misapplications of Scripture. It would require a vast treatise to deal with them in detail. The basic ideas and principles of the theory being false, so of necessity will be the outworking. We have sought here to lift into relief the most vital matters and we earnestly desire that these fellow-believers and diligent students of God's words should be disabused of their mind-blinding theories before the coming developments of world affairs, under the judgments of God, shall bring their castle in the air to collapse and ruin. To be counting upon the opposite of what will come courts overwhelming confusion of mind, with serious peril to faith and to strength to endure unto the end of this darkening age and to the coming in glory of Israel's King.

GEORGE BOWEN OF BOMBAY

Saint, scholar, musician, preacher, editor, this choice man of God served in the gospel for long years in Bombay. His name was as ointment poured forth when I was in India in 1909 and it is still revered. " The momery of the just is blessed." Among other labours he edited an English paper, *The Bombay Guardian*, to which he contributed choice Bible studies. These were issued in book form, and are a rich treasure for those happy enough to have them. The following extracts are taken from the three books.

LOVE REVEALED ; Meditations on the Parting Words of Jesus with His Disciples in John 13 to 17.

If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. John 15. 10.

The love of the Lord Jesus Christ is expressed in His commandments as well as in His promises and invitations. To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is to believe that His commandments are expressive of His love. When He gave to the man with the withered hand the command to stretch forth his hand, it was His love that found utterance. So also when He told the lepers to go and show themselves to the priests. When He told the disciples, in the latter part of this very evening, Watch and pray, it was in order that they might not enter into temptation. They found it more convenient to seek relief from sorrow in sleep, so quickly did they forget His word, "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love." There is not anything that so disastrously retards the progress of the great body of Christians as their unwillingness to accept of the commandments of Christ as expressions of His love. They believe that in order to maintain their peace of mind they must give their principal attention to the promises. But every great blessing is borne to them by two cherubim—one a promise and one a command.

We would affectionately say to the Christian who has been long feeding upon the promises, "Christian, do you know that, in answer to your prayers, there is in a certain place a large accumulation of blessings waiting to be appropriated?" "No," he says, "I knew nothing of it; where are they, pray?" These accumulated blessings are in the commandments. As often as you shut your eyes in presence of a command of the Saviour, you shut your eyes to an exquisite gift sent down to you from the Father of mercies. The two cherubim of whom I spake are twin cherubim, inseparable. They came to Abraham once. The one said, "Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred unto a land that I will show thee;" and the other said, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee." Search and see: from the patriarchs to the apostles, from the apostles to ourselves, there was ever one undivided mission to these twain.

Keep yourselves in the love of God, says Jude. How may we do this? By keeping the commandments of the Lord Jesus. Let us, then, turn to these commandments with all eagerness of expectation, giving them, instead of the cold looks with which we have too often greeted them, a friendly welcome, a kiss of love.

The first commandment which meets us as we set out in this new search for the treasures of Christ's love is this: "*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" We may have been accustomed to view this as a promise. It is nevertheless a command. It is the command of Christ that the heart of the believer be kept free from trouble. "How," you say,

“ can this commandment be constantly obeyed ? I have had some experience as a servant of Christ, and I have not found it possible to keep the heart for ever free from trouble.” The answer is, that you have not given due heed to the commands of Christ, and therefore trouble has from time to time invaded your heart. Had you kept His commands, you would have had His love diffused in your heart, and in the presence of that love every trouble as it crosses the threshold, no matter how proudly, must quickly be dwarfed and covered with confusion.

We come to another command : “ *Believe Me that I am in My Father, and the Father in Me* ”—believe that there is omnipotence along with Christ’s love, and that the love of Christ actuates Him who sitteth upon the throne of the universe. Let every act and word and suffering of Him whose life and death are portrayed in the gospel be to you an expression of the love of the Father, and let the providential government of God reveal to you the wisdom and grace of Him who is Head over all things to the church.

Behold yet another commandment—“ *That ye love one another.*” Keeping this, we shall abide in His love. Is there not yet a large remainder of obedience to be rendered to this command ? May we not make vast progress in this direction ? Let us understand that to be making progress in this is to be advancing in the knowledge of Christ’s love to us. There was one who counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. You may be sure that he sought this excellent treasure in the observance of Christ’s command, *That ye love one another.*

“ *That ye should do as I have done to you.*” Do not dislike this word “ do.” You cannot exist without doing something, and it were vastly better that your doings should emanate from the will of Christ than that they should simply proceed from your own capricious will. That you may abide in the love of Christ, do according to the example He has left you—wash the feet of His disciples, prefer their interests, their pleasures, their comfort, their honour, to your own ; be last of all, and servant of all. Oh how much of the love of Christ you have suffered to be locked up from you ! how much you might have done for His people that you have not done ! The Christian is not more truly constituted a servant of Christ than he is a servant of Christians. “ Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

“ *Even as I have kept My Father’s commandments, and abide in His love.*” And on another occasion, “ The Father hath not left Me alone, for I do always those things that please Him.” As man, Jesus abode in His Father’s love by keeping His commandments. “ He learned obedience ; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation.” He took upon Him the nature of a subordinate—our own

nature ; a finite soul and human body, like ours, only without sin ; He was made under law. He kept His Father's commandments and abode in His love, and He gives us the ability to keep His commandments and abide in His love.

It is fact that the same blessed Spirit that dwelt in Jesus, leading Him to keep His Father's commandments, dwells in His people now. You will say, perhaps, that the material that He has to do with is very different from that which He operated on in Christ. This objection might have weight if the Spirit of God were not God the Spirit. When once the idea of omnipotence is presented, the depravity of man's moral nature ceases to be available as a plea for imperfect service. Because we are utterly depraved we are commanded to abide in Christ and to find all our life in Him. "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (because the word of God is the channel by which the perfect love of God is to flow into his soul ; the whole word is that perfect channel ; half of the word availeth not) ; "hereby we know that we are in Him."

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we boldness toward God : and whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."

DAILY MEDITATIONS : October 8th.

Let all things be done unto edifying.—I Cor. 14. 26.

On successive Sabbaths, having a definite object in view, we visit various churches. We sit down with the people of God of a certain denomination, hear the sermon that is preached, and observe the worship that is rendered to God. Again, we worship with those of another denomination. We notice many points of difference in their mode of celebrating divine worship and seeking their own edification ; but at length we come to a worshipping body whose customs are so fundamentally different from those of the churches previously visited, that the differences among the latter appear to be quite trifling in comparison.

In the church that we have now stumbled upon in an out-of-the-way place (in the Epistle to the Corinthians), instead of one man officiating for all, while all sit silent save when they sing or make common responses, and where everything is arranged to exclude as much as possible anything like spontaneousness, we find that when the members come together, "every one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." One, two, or three, speak in an unknown tongue ; and another interprets. Prophets speak, two or three in succession. If anything is revealed to another that sitteth by, the first holds his tongue.

May we not learn from this that the Holy Spirit loves a larger liberty than is accorded by our arrangements ? We

cleave to them as though they had been imposed by the solemn and unalterable decree of the great Head of the church : and a proposition to depart from them is regarded almost as treason against Christ. It is singular, however, that the apostolic church should be completely defunct to us, as regards the force of its example in these matters. There were some great abuses in those early churches ; think you that they were the greatest conceivable abuses ? Is it not possible that the apostle Paul, coming into one of our staid and orderly churches would look upon the whole of the decorous and tasteful service as one unmitigated abuse ? He would, perhaps, say, Is the Holy Spirit dead, that you make no provision for His manifestation ? Is there no communion of the saints in the assemblies of the saints ?

THE AMENS OF CHRIST (pp. 94-98).

Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."—Matt. 11. 11.

The popularity of John was apparently declining. Of the multitudes who had once gone to the wilderness to see and hear him, few now occupied themselves about him. They had expected more from his ministry. There was something about him that impressed and stimulated their imaginations. In fearlessness, devotion, and self-denial, he seemed to them another Elijah. They remembered how Elijah had singly met all the prophets of Baal and all the host of the idolatrous king, and in the name of Jehovah had triumphed over them all. Their country was now subject to an idolatrous power ; the engrossing thought among all classes was, Who shall deliver us from the hateful rule of these Gentiles ? John the Baptist bore the unmistakable stamp of a prophet of the most high God ; what more likely than that God had raised him up for the very purpose of breaking this detested yoke ? Evidently, he had all the qualities needed to inspire confidence, and lead to victory the sacramental host of God. But when his influence is at its height, he suddenly but quietly vacates it. He makes way for another ; and who is that other ? Jesus of Nazareth, whose voice is not heard in the streets, who is no agitator, whose manifest aim is simply to deliver men from their sins and teach them how to suffer. The great excitement regarding John the Baptist passes away. Little hope now of national enfranchisement from him ; is he not Herod's captive ? And what is this he is now doing ? Sending to Jesus to know if He is indeed the Coming One, or only another forerunner.

Perhaps even the disciples would have judged this not the fittest moment for an eulogium on John : would have rather judged some reproof of his vacillating thoughts to be demanded. But the magnanimity of Christ rises above this.

That the course pursued by Jesus should appear strange to John was natural enough ; John shows his entire deference to Christ by submitting his perplexity to Him ; let Christ speak, this shall suffice. Happy are they who bring their doubts and their perplexities to Christ. Unto such He says : To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. He gives to the messengers of John just the evidences that he gave to everybody else ; some works that God had designedly left unfinished, and which all the universe were challenged to finish and could not, Christ with His creative fiat, finished ; the blind saw, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the dead lived.

Both the disciples and the multitude expected of Jesus that He should now say something about their late idol John the Baptist. Our Lord speaks first of the altered state of the people's minds regarding him. Was there any reason for this ? Had John changed ? His circumstances were changed, but he was faithful to the mission which he had received. If they had been disappointed in him, it was because of their erroneous expectations. The inconstancy was theirs, not his. He was a man of unbending integrity, not a reed shaken with the wind ; he was a man of self-denial, not to be won from the path of duty by the offers of a king, not a lover of soft raiment ; there is then nothing wonderful in the fact that he should be in a dungeon. Had he been of a more pliant temper, had he been more selfish in his aims, his popularity would probably have remained. Is he a prophet ? More than a prophet ; in fact, a greater hath not risen among those born of women than John.

He is Elijah ; he is more than Elijah ; more than Moses ; more than Isaiah. What constitutes the dignity of a prophet ? That he is brought near to God, and commissioned to reveal God. But surely Moses and Isaiah were brought near to God. Yes, but John came nearer. If the Lord seen by Isaiah high and lifted up, and compassed by adoring seraphim, had left the throne, descending its steps in the form of man, and hand in hand with Isaiah, without seraphim or visible glory, had gone to Isaiah's house to dwell with him, that would have been a more wonderful manifestation. To know God in Christ is the highest of all privileges accorded to man ; and this privilege was pre-eminently that of John, among all the prophets of the old dispensation. "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord who exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth ; for in these things I delight."

Men imagine that the great Temple of Fame which they have reared is destined to stand for ever. Have not all nations and all ages been associated in the construction of it ? Have not the wisest and most cultivated of all times constituted a never-ceasing assembly to determine who shall have statues and altars and tablets in this sublime Temple ? All around

the bases of these statues and these obelisks are there not piled the reverent testimonies of successive ages? Is there not a power in the glance of the very statues sufficient to dishearten any who should dare to lift his voice for their overthrow? The whole human family, the accumulated authority of all mankind, all majesty, and honour, and glory of this world, watch about the enshrined and glorified of this Temple, and strike terror to the heart that would reverse the judgment of all time. So think the worshippers of this world's heroes.

But the still small voice that came from the lips of Jesus eighteen centuries ago is destined to shake to pieces this Temple of Fame, and to cast from their pride of place all these statues. "Among them that are born of women a greater hath not risen than John the Baptist." And if any should propose a statue to John, John himself says: "He must increase, but I must decrease; He that cometh from above is above all; he that is of the earth is earthy, and speaketh of the earth; I am not worthy to unloose the latchet of His shoes." "Thou alone art worthy to receive glory, and honour, and power; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed unto God by Thy blood men out of all nations, and kindreds, and tribes, and tongues."

AN IMPORTANT TEXT (13, part II).

PREVAIL TO ESCAPE, Luke 21. 34-36.

1. *Two Promises of Escape.*

We take up now the second conclusion reached in the former paper, namely, that escape is possible from the dread End events of which the Lord had been speaking: "that ye may prevail to escape all these things that shall come to pass."

The *opening* event is mentioned in verse 12: "Before all these things they shall lay their hands on you, and shall persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake . . . (17) and ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake;" or, as in Matt. 24. 8, 9: "All these things are the beginning of travail [pangs]. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all the nations for My name's sake;" and see Mark 13. 8-13.

1. This persecution will rage against persons who bear the name of Christ; nor will they bear it vainly, for they will be prepared to suffer even unto death rather than deny that Name. Therefore they are Christians. Jews as such will not own Jesus as Lord until they see Him in glory at His descent to destroy Antichrist (Zech. 12. 9, 10).

2. The persecution will be universal, and it will be at a time when Israel will have its synagogues and be in a position

to persecute Christians. This has not been the case since A.D. 70, but is a forecast of what will yet come to pass in Palestine.

The *concluding* event of "all these things" in view will be that they shall "see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (ver. 27).

It seems that there will be an earlier persecution instigated by the Harlot Babylon (Rev. 17. 6), prior to the Beast reaching supremacy, but this does not seem to be included in the Olivet prophecy or to be covered by the promised escape. The assurance given by Christ is that escape can be secured from all these events He mentioned; therefore this escape must be effected before that second persecution which ushers in these events.

As we saw in the former paper, this word "escape" describes complete exemption from the events; but inasmuch as the rule of the Beast and the persecution will be strictly universal, affecting "all the nations," must not the escape be by removal from the earth? How else can it be effected? This is made plain in other scriptures.

Rev. 3. 10. The letter to Philadelphia is addressed to believers who had kept Christ's word and not denied His name (ver. 8). These too had faced and defeated opposition from the "synagogue of Satan" (ver. 9). To such resolute and victorious followers the Lord gave the promise (ver. 10):

Because thou didst keep the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of trial, that hour which is to come upon the whole inhabited earth, to try them that dwell on the earth.

Here again is a strictly universal affair, for it affects the whole inhabited earth: how then shall any be "kept out of it" but by removal from the earth? The promise is not that they shall be given moral strength to endure that time of testing, but that they shall be kept out of it, not be kept in or through it. "Inhabited earth" (*oikoumene*) cannot here have the limited Roman meaning of the territory of that empire, for its connected equivalent here is simply "the earth," and moreover, there will be Christians dwelling outside the ancient Roman territory.

The same verb (*tereo*) and preposition (*ek*) come together in John 17. 15, where the Son said to the Father: "I do not request that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them (*tereo*) out of (*ek*) the evil one." The earth is the physical sphere of the believer: to be taken out of it would imply physical removal from it. The Evil One is the moral sphere which envelopes the unbeliever: "the whole world lieth *in* the Evil One" (I John 5. 19). They are *in* him and he is *in* them, "the spirit that now worketh *in* the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2. 2). He is the moral atmosphere that inspires the wicked. From this environment the disciple can be entirely preserved. (On

John 17. 15 see Westcott). The Evil One is to him an outside foe to be fought, but is *not* the sphere or atmosphere *in* which the inner man lives and against the poisonous atmosphere of which he must seek to survive, if possible. Therefore John directly adds : “ we are of God . . . and we are *in* Him that is true, *in* His Son Jesus Christ ” (I John 5. 19, 20).

Thus to be kept out of the time of testing does not mean to survive its poisonous influences, but not to encounter them, by having been removed from the earth which is the physical realm of the Evil One and of the persecution he will again inspire.

Surely this is the first and natural force of these two promises of the Lord, in both English and Greek.

2. *Two Pictures of Escape.*

These two verbal promises are confirmed by two symbolic prophecies.

Rev. 12. In this vision there are four persons or groups of persons—a woman, a male child, a dragon, and a company described as “ the rest of the woman’s seed.” (ver. 17).

The dragon is identified as the Devil and Satan. He is shown at first as acting in heaven, but is presently cast out to the earth. This is part of the events that John had been told were to take place later than when he was shown the vision (ch. 4. 1 : “ I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter ”). Eph. 6 had already shown that Satan’s forces were active in the heavenly regions thirty years after the ascension of Christ. Rev. 12 shows that this situation was continuing another thirty years later again. Every spiritual Christian knows that this is still the case.

Therefore the circumstances of this woman and her family do not refer back to Mary and the early years of her son Jesus, but picture events still future. Jesus was not caught away to God’s throne directly upon His birth. He did not escape the fury of the Devil, but was attacked again and again and finally hounded to death.

This woman’s condition answers to that of the people of Christ at the End times. John had heard the Lord describe the onset of those times as “ the beginning of travail pains ” (Matt. 24. 8) : now he notes that this woman is in the last stage of travail pains and that this man child is then brought forth.

The woman is seen in heaven, arrayed with the glories of heaven, at the same time that she is on earth in travail and hard beset by the dragon. It is only the church of God that is both heavenly and earthly at once, seated in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 2. 6) and at the same time engaged on earth in spiritual and outward conflict with Satan’s hosts.

The identity of this male child is disclosed by the feature that he “ is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron.” This is a dignity promised to the conquerors of this Christian age (Rev. 2. 26, 27) and to none others of the saved. That he is

caught away to *God* and to *His throne* shows that this is not the rapture of saints mentioned in I Thess. 4, for these will be taken to meet the *Lord Jesus* and this *in the air*, not in the upper heavens. Christ will then have left the throne and descended to the air.

Upon this male child being translated to the throne Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven. Since this has not even yet taken place the events must be yet future. Upon Satan being ejected from the realms above, and restricted to the earth, he is filled with fury and at once attacks the woman and then the rest of her family (12. 13; 13. 1). For this last purpose he brings up the Beast to be his agent in chief. The chapter division is to be ignored, and the statement is to be read as in R.V. Thus there sets in that period of frightful persecution of the disciples of Christ which He foretold as to be the worst days that earth has ever known or ever will know.

Plainly the male child and the rest of the woman's seed are one family, but the former "escape all these things that shall come to pass," for he is removed to the throne of God just before Satan is cast out of heaven and the events of the End begin.

The promise of Christ is that those who escape shall "stand before the Son of man." Until the end of that period the Son of man remains at the right hand of God, superintending the affairs of that period (Rev. 4 and 5 on to the events of ch. 19). It is to that high realm that the male child is taken. The Lord does not descend to the clouds to fetch him, but he is taken to the throne where the Lord will still be.

Rev. 14. This vision, with its six scenes, reveals the same identical sequence of events as in ch. 12.

The period of the Beast and of his persecution of the saints is seen in scene 4 (ver. 9-13). The "saints" are Christians for they "keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." This corresponds to the course of life of the Philadelphian disciples who had kept Christ's word and had not denied His name (Rev. 3. 8).

Scene 3, directly preceding the era of the Beast, announces the fall of Babylon the great. This is amplified in ch. 17 which tells that the Harlot religious system, which commenced of old at Babylon and will finally return there, will be destroyed by the Beast and his confederate kings in order that he may reach supremacy (Rev. 17. 16, 17).

Directly before that destruction of the Harlot Babylon is scene 2 (ver. 6, 7), in which an angel announces that the hour of God's judgment is come. This indicates precisely that the final stage of this age has been reached, the End time is at hand.

Before this crisis, scene 1 (ver. 1-5) describes a heavenly vision. Certain persons, who had been "purchased out of

the earth ” and from “ among men,” come into view and are described as “ firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb.” If a purchaser should say, “ I bought these things out of the market, from among the many articles that were there,” it would be plain that he was not still in the market but had taken his purchases elsewhere. Thus these redeemed firstfruits are shown as on “ Mount Zion ” and “ before the throne.” In every place in *Revelation* “ before the throne ” refers to the heavenly world.

This scene corresponds to the “ church of the firstborn ones ” who “ have come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem ” (Heb. 12. 22) ; and it corresponds also to the male child being caught up to God and to His throne just before Satan is cast out of heaven and brings the Beast on the scene on earth.

It answers also to the promise of Christ in Luke 21 that those who escape the End events shall “ stand before the Son of man,” because these firstfruits in Rev. 14 are “ with the Lamb ” on Mount Zion. Their identity, like that of the male child, is revealed by reference to the promise to the faithful overcomers in Philadelphia. These were to be marked with the names of (that is, to be associated publicly and permanently, as a pillar or obelisk in a temple) with the new Jerusalem, with the Son of God, and with His Father ; and the firstfruits are seen on Mount Zion, and they bear on their foreheads the names of the Lamb and of His Father. (Note the R.V. insertion “ having His [the Lamb’s] name.”) These are the only two occurrences of these three names together.

In scene 5 (ver. 14-16), the next after that of the Beast, the Son of man is seen on a white cloud reaping the now fully ripe harvest of the earth ; and in

Scene 6 (ver. 17-20) He is pictured as treading the winepress of the wrath of God outside the city (Jerusalem). This is amplified in ch. 19. 11-21, where the Word of God descends from heaven and destroys the Beast and his armies, where the same figure is used, the treading of a winepress.

These six scenes are based on an agricultural figure—firstfruits, harvest, and vintage, scenes 1, 5 and 6. In early summer the Jew was to gather from the cornfields a sheaf of ears that might be ripe early. This was taken away to the temple at Jerusalem and presented to God as *firstfruits* (Lev. 23. 9-14). The great summer heat would follow and ripen the rest of the crop. This *harvest* was removed only to the garner on the farm. By then the *vintage* would be ready, and the grapes were not removed elsewhere but were trodden in the press in the vineyard. The scorching summer heat was used by Christ as a picture of tribulation because of the truth (Matt. 13. 6, 21). This will wither unrooted plants, but ripen the rooted, as in scene 5.

Just as the male child and the rest of the woman’s seed were one family, but the former escaped the End days

whereas the latter passed through them, so are firstfruits and harvest from the same sowing in one field, but the former escaped the fiercest summer heat while the latter were ripened by it. Thus the firstfruits escape the tribulation under the Beast, being already before God in heaven : the harvest is taken only to the clouds (I Thess. 4. 16, 17) : the vintage is crushed on the earth.

Similarly the Lord is shown in three situations. First at the throne on Mount Zion (scene 1) ; second, after the period of the Beast, on the white cloud near the earth (scene 5) ; lastly on the earth (scene 6).

3. *The Escape Conditional.*

Thus there are two promises of escape from the dread events of the End and two pictures of that escape. Seeing that it will be only a comparatively small number of believers that will be affected, and at only one point of time in the course of perhaps two thousands of years of the history of the church of God, these four scriptures may be regarded as ample testimony on the subject. And the heaviest possible emphasis is placed upon the moral conditions required for the escape.

Luke 21 stresses the great care needed lest the heart be choked with earthly cares or indulgencies, inducing watchlessness, and so being caught unawares by that day of Satanic attack and deception. Ceaseless watchfulness will be indispensable and constant prayerfulness. These conditions will enable the Christian to "prevail" to escape.

The older Greek text read *kataxiotheete*, to be accounted worthy. That reading stressed that the believer could not take for granted that he would escape : he had to be found worthy to do so. The reading now accepted is as R.V., *katischuseete*, prevail. In Jeremiah 15. 18 the Septuagint reads: "Why do they that grieve me prevail against me?" In Ezekiel 3. 8 God assured the prophet that "I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy victory to prevail against their victory."(LXX) The word is used very frequently in this sense of overcoming in conflict. In the New Testament it is found in the comforting assurance that the gates of Hades shall not prevail to hold the godly dead in captivity, that is, when the hour for their resurrection shall have come. Its only other use is to picture vividly a raging mob clamouring to Pilate for the crucifixion of Christ and beating down his reluctance ; "and their voices prevailed" (Luke 23. 23).

It is only by such divinely given resolution and strength that the believer can triumph against the powers of darkness : is only thus that any will prevail to escape the End days. This same attitude and victory are stressed as the condition upon which the Philadelphian saints will be kept out of that hour of universal testing : "Because thou didst keep the word of my patience I also will keep thee out of that hour of

trial.” The male child is all but seized by the angry dragon, but he is born amidst distress and danger and is caught away to the throne of God. The firstfruits are declared to have kept themselves undefiled, as a virgin for her Bridegroom. They had followed the Lamb unswervingly along His path of self-sacrifice. “In their mouth was found no lie,” though by some prevarication they might have avoided severe treatment by their persecutors : “they are without blemish,” and thus were fit to be presented to God in His temple. Lev. 1. 3 : Phil. 2. 15-18.

It is certainly true believers that are thus warned and encouraged, for such a life of purity and devotion is not possible to others. Plainly the moral power of these promises is great. Such a prospect cannot but promote in those who heed it the utmost care to be holy as their Lord is holy. On the contrary, to reject such searching demands will necessarily induce indolence of soul, carelessness of conduct, and prevent the believer from being without blemish. Being then caught in the snare of the Fowler, the possible escape from the last dread days will be missed, and only the great heat of the great Tribulation will ripen such for the garner. Thus the enduring of the wrath of the *Beast* will prepare the believer for removal from the earth to the cloud before the wrath of *God* bursts forth against His foes at the descent of the Word of God to destroy the *Beast* and his followers. But they might have escaped this ordeal had they been ripened by the earlier trials that will lead up to the days of the End.

“Since I must fight if I would reign,
Increase my courage Lord :
I’ll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy word.”

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

The Autobiography of Richard Baxter (Dent, 1925, pp. 109, 110).

Whereas in my younger days I never was tempted to doubt of the Scripture or Christianity, but all my doubts and fears were exercised at home about my own sincerity and interest in Christ, and this was it which I called unbelief ; since then my sorest assaults have been on the other side, and such they were that, had I been void of internal experience and the adhesion of love, and the special help of God, and had not discerned more reason for my religion than I did when I was younger, I had certainly apostatised to infidelity (though for atheism or ungodliness my reason seeth no stronger arguments than may be brought to prove that there is no earth or air or sun).

I am now, therefore, much more apprehensive than heretofore of the necessity of well grounding men in their religion, and especially of the witness of the indwelling Spirit ;

for I more sensibly perceive that the Spirit is the great witness of Christ and Christianity to the world. And though the folly of fanatics tempted me long to overlook the strength of this testimony of the Spirit, while they placed it in a certain internal assertion or enthusiastic inspiration, yet now I see that the Holy Ghost in another manner is the witness of Christ and His agent in the world.

The Spirit in the prophets was His first witness ; and the Spirit by miracle was the second ; and the Spirit by renovation, sanctification, illumination, and consolation, assimilating the soul to Christ and heaven, is the continued witness to all true believers. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of His (Rom. 8. 9) ; even as the rational soul in the child is the inherent witness or evidence that he is the child of rational parents. And therefore ungodly persons have a great disadvantage in their resisting temptations to unbelief, and it is no wonder if Christ be a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Gentiles foolishness.

There is many a one that hideth his temptations to infidelity because he thinketh a shame to open them, and because it may generate doubts in others ; but I doubt the imperfection of most men's care of their salvation, and of their diligence and resolution in a holy life, doth come from the imperfection of their belief in Christianity and the life to come. For my part I must profess that when my belief of things eternal and of the Scripture is most clear and firm all goeth accordingly in my soul, and all temptations to sinful compliances, worldliness, or flesh-pleasing do signify worse to me than an invitation to the stocks or Bedlam ; and no petition seemeth more necessary to me than " Lord, increase our faith : I believe, help Thou my unbelief."

THE RELIGIOUS CURRENTS OF ANIMISTIC PAGANISM

(From the German of Erich Sauer)

A glance at general religious history shows that we have to distinguish three great groups of religions :
the primitive religions of uncivilised primitive races,
national religions, and
universal religions (Islam and Buddhism).

Whether we now picture the religions of the primitive peoples of Asia, or those of the Africans, Indians, or any other primitive people, we shall always find three conceptions to be clearly distinguished from one another :

1. a monotheistic under-current (i.e. belief in a supreme God) ;
2. polydemonism (i.e. belief in many demons and spirits of nature) ; and

3. veneration of the dead, which results from belief in an after-existence.

BELIEF IN THE ONE SUPREME GOD

It is very remarkable that, although all paganism is darkly remote from God, yet in spite of all mythological overgrowths and obscurations, the idea of the one supreme God has not been lost to these peoples ; indeed, that from the times of original revelation the monotheistic conception of God has remained in much purer and clearer form among the inferior primitive races, especially the Africans and Indians, than is the case with the civilized nations.

One single example out of many. The Eve (Togo, West Africa) have built to their Mavu in the royal city of Anglo a house where he has his priests and is worshipped yearly with sacrifices. The monotheistic idea of God is so pure with this people that missionaries have been able in translating the Bible to render the word God by Mavu, without any fear that thereby false notions might be aroused.

BELIEF IN DEMONS AND SPIRITS OF NATURE

It is actually a fact that the entire pagan world has retained the notion of a good supreme God. But alas ! how grossly distorted and faded is this belief. " God has no time to trouble with us," say the poor oppressed people. In Uganda (at Lake Victoria) it is said that the supreme god Katonda has retired to his dwelling and has confided to the spirits the rule over the world and mankind. The same notion recurs everywhere. Thus man has no longer any living relationship to God ; and paganism's lie deludes mankind, that the good God does not need to be worshipped, for He does only good and never evil ; but on the other hand evil spiritual powers must be appeased by prayers and sacrifices. Calculating egoism has usurped the place of grateful devotion, and fear that of confiding love. Worship of God has become demonolatry and devil worship, and a legion of demons have interposed themselves between the supreme God and man.

Once it was otherwise. The nations knew the one great living God who rules throughout the worlds and directs them all with infinite goodness and supreme wisdom, even Him who dwells above the stars and yet reveals Himself to the throbbing heart within the human breast. But the devices of their heart had become vain, and they no longer acknowledged the Lord of the world in His works but rather degenerated to the corruption of mythological thought, which led them to animism, the belief in the animation of nature (Rom. 1. 18 ff.).

Let us make this clear. Man moves, bestirs himself, and acts ; to all his actions he is instigated by some feelings and thoughts stirring within him. From this follows the natural conclusion that there is no movement or action without the volition of the inner ego. Now man sees in nature everywhere

life and movement—in majestic storms, in the rush of torrents and seas, in the swirl and roll of waves, in the spark emitted by a stone when struck ; and he knows from himself that there is no motion or act apart from the volition of the indwelling soul. But what else does this signify, when transferred to nature, than that in these movements intelligent powers are operative who think, will, and feel just as man does ?

So nature is imagined as animated by spirits ; and as natural phenomena too frequently encounter man with superior elementary forces, so he looks up full of veneration, dread, and trembling to the spirits of nature revealing themselves therein and seeks to propitiate them with sacrifices and prayers. Thus arose the dreary animistic philosophy. Human intellectual life was transferred to the things and phenomena of nature, and proceeded via the humanization of nature to the deification of natural phenomena ; and now in sun, moon, and stars, in thunderstorms, in the blustering gale, in the water of seas and rivers, briefly, everywhere there dwell sinister, superhuman, mysterious spiritual powers.

The wicked spirits are those who do all evil ; they lurk on the roads, hide in the woods, alarm sleepers, indeed all illnesses are nothing else than enchantments of these hostile powers. Hence protection, by means of amulets, is sought against them. Stones, bits of string, pieces of serpent's hide, and similar things are hung round people. An African chief even had a man burned alive (!) in order to use his ashes for spells. Such superstition is directly promoted by the Mohammedans, who engage in a regular trade to Africa with Mohammedan amulets, strips of paper with words from the Koran, and pieces of the Mecca carpet which is taken away annually.

VENERATION OF THE DEAD

A flood of misery and corruption has come over the nations through belief in demons. Yet this Satanic enslavement under the lie of animism does not suffice ; the wretched condition of these heathen is aggravated, extended, and increased by the veneration of the dead, which is found in all peoples of heathendom and is a mistaken inference from belief in survival after death. Like pale monotheism, belief in survival after death is to be considered as a remnant of the original revelation. Moreover it is confirmed to the child of nature by repeated phenomena of daily occurrence. A negro or Australian aborigine stands in front of his friend who has just died. Where has continued the mental force of the personality which in life accomplished such great things ? Where is the breath of life which has manifestly fled from the body no longer breathing ?

One pictures life in the world of spirits as simply a continuation of earthly life. This signifies that the departed spirits have the same needs there as in the life here below.

Then it is the duty of those surviving them to make provision for such needs through sacrifices and prayers. Woe to the living who have neglected to do so ! The spirit of the deceased will wreak pitiless vengeance for the negligence. Consequently as in polydemonism, so also in the worship of ancestors and heroes the leading motive is fear. In the veneration of the dead a second power of darkness has allied himself with the repulsive belief of demonism, to drive the anguished heart anew into the fetters of fear.

POWER OF THE PRIESTS

All these ideas are nourished by the religious and spiritual leaders, or rather let us say, seducers of the people. They are looked upon as being the appointed heralds of the will of the spirits, as those who maintain contact with that world. Thus nearly everywhere in animistic paganism the priest's power is greater than that of the chief, for by his prayers and oblations he invokes the deity and thereby superhuman help, which of course is of much greater consequence than the efforts of chiefs, which after all are only human.

As every illness in the entire demonic realm of peoples is held to be a consequence of enchantment, it is the priest who has to undertake the healing by raising the spell through some means or other. This is now a very profitable business for the "medicine man." Quackery and humbug, cruelty, lies, and fraud dog our steps, even if it cannot be denied that the priests frequently do actually know well how to cure certain maladies, which fact always strengthens anew their prestige and their power.

AND WE ?

In spite of all the brilliant progress of missionary achievement there are still immense areas in Africa and South America, in the lands of Islam, in Japan, and India, on which no messenger of Christ has ever set foot, where the bread of life has never yet been given to the hungry and the water of life has never yet quickened those thirsting after God. The darkness of a moribund pagan world is terrible, but is not the indifference of so many children of God still more terrible? Let us therefore awake, and co-operate in the work of our coming Lord and Saviour. According to the words of Jesus, to spread the good news is our life work.

ABIATHAR

A DIFFICULTY REMOVED

David entered into the house of God when Abiathar was high priest, and did eat the shewbread (Mark 2. 26).

It has been objected that our Lord was guilty here of a historical blunder, inasmuch as Ahimelech, not Abiathar, was the high priest who gave the holy bread to David (I Sam. 21 ; 22).

To this it may be replied that, looking back on so remote an incident through the long vista of a thousand years, it was natural to locate the event in the days of Abiathar, seeing that his father, Ahimelech, appears in the history on only that solitary occasion, being shortly murdered by Saul ; whereas his son thereby became automatically the high priest, and as high priest continued to figure prominently in the history of David for over fifty years.

But there is another factor of weight, worthy of the more attention in that it appears to have been unnoticed. This is the exact force of the term *archiereus* used by Christ and translated "high priest."

This prefix *arch* is better represented by *chief* priest, as may be seen in its most prominent English use, *archbishop*. It were not enough to say that the bishop of Canterbury or of York is a high bishop, for those other bishops who sit in the House of Lords are of high rank ; but these two are *chief* bishops, having rank and rule above all other bishops. The Greek word is in fact frequently translated "chief priests."

It is of interest that this title was not in use in Israel during all the earlier period of their national life. It appears first in the history in the days of Jehoshaphat (B.C. 898), six hundred years later than the consecration of Aaron (II Chron. 19. 11 ; 24. 6, 11 ; 26. 20). Four and a half centuries again later (B.C. 457) it is applied to Aaron (Ezra 7. 5). Eighty years later (B.C. 445), in Nehemiah's list of those who returned from Babylon (Neh. 12. 7), there is the significant change to the plural : "These were the chiefs of the priests." The LXX give here *hoi archontes ton hiereon*. For this distinction in rank the way had been prepared. Seventy years earlier, at the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, the narrative had spoken of "Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest" (II Kin. 25. 18 : Jer. 52. 24).¹

In the Septuagint (say B.C. 200-150) our term *archiereus* is found only once (Lev. 4. 3), where it is applied to Aaron ; that is, the LXX followed the usage of the later period, not the ancient Hebrew that was before them, which read simply "priest."

In the Apocrypha the term is found fifteen times, showing the usage in the second century B.C. It is always in the singular number, and refers to the various chief priests in Israel during the Maccabean period. The histories show (1) that these holders of the office were not of the true chief priest's family ; (2) that foreign rulers arrogated the power to appoint or recognize or remove the chief priest ; (3) that in those troubled times the chief priest was not only the spiritual leader of the people, but also both the civil head and the commander-in-chief of the forces, himself leading the

¹ The usual approximate dates are here followed.

battles.

It is against this Biblical and historical background that the use of *archiereus* in the New Testament and by Christ must be considered. Grimm-Thayer Lexicon quotes Schurer as authority that by this time the term was applied, not only to the actual chief priest, but to priests who had held that office and been removed, with members of a few prominent families from which the chief priest was still selected. Annas is called *archiereus* though his son-in-law Caiaphas was the actual chief priest (Luke 3. 2 : Acts 4. 6 : John 11. 49 ; 18. 14). Therefore the plural form " chief priests " is common in the New Testament, being found 66 times. This usage continued to at least A.D. 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed, as is seen in Josephus, who refers to " Ananus, the ancientest of the high priests ; " mentions that " Matthias . . . was one of the high priests ; " and speaks of " the high priests Joseph and Jesus " (*Wars*, IV. iii, 7 ; V. xiii, 1 ; VI. ii, 2).

It was therefore in full accord with the customary usage of His time that the Lord styled Abiathar *archiereus*, a chief priest. It is important that in Mark 2. 26 the best manuscripts omit the definite article (as R.V.) ; so that Christ did not say that Abiathar was " the " chief priest, for his father Ahimelech was this at the time of David's visit ; but Abiathar was " a " chief priest, and very shortly " the " chief priest. It was strictly accurate for the Lord to say that David ate of the shewbread " when [at the time that] Abiathar was a chief priest." Nor is there need for the alternative suggestion that possibly Mark misrecorded Christ by making Him mention Abiathar and not Ahimelech.

A possible reason for Abiathar being mentioned has been suggested above ; but whether this be the reason or not, does not affect the accuracy of our Lord's statement.

PAGES FROM AN ORDERED LIFE (13)

EGYPT 1914, 1915 (*continued*)

The tent meetings continued until May 24th, 1914. It was now full mid-summer heat. The climate suited my wife well, but our girlie of nine years drooped like a flower without water. Miss Ely lovingly took tickets for them to London, and they sailed from Alexandria on the 28th. I saw them off. The steamer took some three quarters of an hour leaving the berth ; they on deck, I on the quay, looking at each other, but too far to speak. It was a trying farewell.

On June 4th Miss Ely left for Switzerland and on the 23rd Mr. McClenahan followed. As mentioned, I remained to shepherd the group of young men, Copts, Moslems, a Greek or two, and others, whose hearts the Lord had touched, and most of whom had been immersed in His name. For twelve centuries the Moslems, the ruling race, and their

Coptic subjects had nourished bitter hatred, racial, political, religious, for Copts are nominally "Christian," though for the more part as wicked as Moslems. It was a deep joy to see children of God from all these races walking together in love and breaking bread at the one Supper of their one Lord. One of the Coptic young men, who had been converted a few years before, and whom I had known in Port Said, was my devoted helper in scouring the city for Moslems I might wish to track, and for translating for me into Arabic. He has continued a zealous disciple and worker until now. Nothing of native animosity survived the working in him of the love of the Spirit.

We held regular meetings in a hired room in a large house in Shubra, not far from the central Railway Station. To these there came a Coptic student, Ibrahim Bishara. He was a gentle, attractive youth. For quite a while I did not converse with him, but on Thursday, June 25th, 1914, while an Egyptian was speaking, he left the room, and the Voice said in my heart, go after him and talk with him. In the court of the house, under the graceful palms, by brilliant moonlight, we spoke together, and in a few minutes he was rejoicing in assurance of acceptance by God in Christ.

Presently he said : " But, Mr. Lang, what am I to do in my home and school ? " I knew what he meant. The atmosphere of his home was very probably poisoned with wrangling and cursing. The conversation of his fellow-students would be disgusting and lust-provoking. How shall a youth with a new longing to be pure be pure ? I spoke as follows :

" Ibrahim, you know now that Jesus Christ is your Saviour and that God has forgiven your sins, do you not ? "

" I do tonight. "

" How do you know anything about these matters ? " He thought a moment and answered, " From the Bible. "

" Yes ; God has taken care that we should have no other channel of information concerning His Son. Now the Bible says that Christ died for our sins, and it promises that he who will rely upon Christ shall be forgiven his sins. You have believed on Him and your sins have been forgiven, and in your heart you have peace with God ; is this not so ? " He assented heartily, and I continued.

" So that the promise of the Bible has been fulfilled in your experience. Well now, the same Book tells us of another Divine Person who came into this world after the Son of God had returned to heaven. He is called the Holy Spirit of God. He did not come to atone for our sins because the Son of God had done that completely. He came for this reason, among others, that He might give to us the moral strength of the Lord Jesus, so that we may become like Him, pure in heart and clean in life. Now you have never seen the Son of God, yet the promises

of the Bible as to those who trust Him have been made good to you. And you will not see the Spirit of God, but exactly as you have accepted the promises concerning the Son of God and they have been fulfilled, so you are to believe the promises concerning the Spirit of God, and His work *in* you, and they also will be fulfilled to you."

He pondered a little, and then said, with simplicity and decision : " I see ; *that meets my case.*"

Such presenting to the newly born soul at one and the same time the work of both the Son of God and the Spirit of God is apostolic (Acts 2. 38). The Christian gets nothing but what he takes by faith. If he does not know of the promised gift of the Spirit of Christ he cannot accept the Spirit by faith, for faith can exist and act only upon a promise of God.

To tell the converted that he does automatically receive the indwelling of the Spirit by being born again is contrary to both Scripture and experience. That indwelling can occur at the moment of a first faith in Christ (Acts 10. 44) ; but often it does not do so, as witness the first disciples, who believed on the Son of God unto eternal life while He was with them, yet did not receive the Spirit till after Christ's ascension. So also the many who believed when Philip preached at Samaria, but did not receive the Spirit till Peter and John came among them (Acts 8. 14-17). So also Saul of Tarsus, who did not receive the Spirit until Ananias visited him three days after his conversion (Acts 9. 9, 17) ; and those twelve disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus (Acts 19. 1-7).

The reception of the Spirit by faith in the promises is as much part of the good news as is the reception of Christ by faith. As certainly as the joy of pardon is experienced by faith, even so, and as distinctly and as consciously, is the presence and energy of the indwelling Spirit to be experienced by faith.

When the first World War broke in August 1914 I saw the mercy of God in my loved ones having gone betimes to England, so saving her and her people from anxiety about each other. Yet in fact Egypt was probably the quietest country involved. The British officials managed affairs to general advantage. I know the sensation of sitting in a land expecting invasion ; but the Turks had attacked and been repulsed before we knew of it in Cairo. It was known earlier in London.

Through this period, I lived upon the almost daily bounty of God my Father. Possessing all things in Christ I had little or nothing in kind. Yet food and lodging were enjoyed. Miss Ely paid the rent of the rooms which I occupied so that we should have them for the next winter service. My

own living expenses averaged 16/- a week. For food I had bread, fruit, eggs, water, and twice a week an ordinary evening meal at the Russell Soldiers' Home in Cairo. This diet suited me well. My brain was never clearer. The severe heat caused me to pass the days in the cool of my rooms. No one called, so I had whole days of prayer, meditation, reading, and writing. During that six months I read more books than in any other six months of my life. It was then that *Firstborn Sons* was written, though it was not published till many years later, after further reflection had deepened my conviction that its teaching was Scriptural.

Can God prepare a table in the wilderness? (Ps. 78. 19). It is deeply important for gospel workers from England to bear in mind that their God is not dependent on English money. During the first seven months of 1914 sums reached me from Egypt, South Africa, Canada, and India, as well as England; of the total less than a third came from England. Directly war was declared at the beginning of August 1914 all foreign exchange ceased. Therefore gifts of money from England ceased. Here was a new and serious emergency. During the months of January to August money in hand had been reduced to sixpence, a penny, and once to nil. But always the need had been met. By the beginning of September I had fourpence. But on the 6th of that month abundant help arrived. Miss Ely's kind heart had pondered the need, but she was blocked in Switzerland, nor would banks grant remittances. But she remembered that W. L. McClenahan had money lying at call with a large *commercial* house in Cairo. She wrote to him in England and asked him to send an order on that money for £50. But it took three days for the firm to find so much English money. To meet this God had moved a friend in England to send a postal order for 5/-. This was payable at any post office in the Empire, and thus food could be bought and tram fares were met for the three days.

But more. I wished to send some of this to my wife in England. How could this be done at such a time? I felt guided to ask the Treasurer of the American Mission if perchance they had money lying in England which they could not get out. They had, and were most happy to give me a draft on this in exchange for twenty golden sovereigns. "Is *anything* too hard for the Lord?" Thus in a time of great stress, and contrary to custom, money was sent from a poorer land to a richer. He who waits *only* on God gives Him opportunity to show that He is the God who does wonders.

Late in the autumn Mr. McClenahan returned and we put up a tent well out in the Shubra district of Cairo and evangelized there. But British troops having camped in

thousands between Zeitoun and Heliopolis, the tent was brought there, and we and the Logans, of the Egyptian General Mission, worked at nights among these lads. Many were grateful for the quiet hours and quiet talks in that small and dimly lit tent at the far end of the camp. Presently the Y.M.C.A. was appointed the official controller of religious work among troops. Worldly methods were introduced which curtailed, and virtually nullified, our purely spiritual work, and we returned to our labours for Egyptians.

At this time there came often a young man, a Copt. He was sincerely desirous of salvation, but mourned that he *could* not believe, greatly as he longed to do so. It occurred to me quite suddenly to ask if he had any contacts with spiritism. He replied that his brother was a medium and that he often attended the seances. I pointed out that were a strong man to grasp firmly the upper arm of a child, just below the shoulder, the child would be unable to use the arm. Similarly, he, by going on to the Devil's territory, had given opportunity to an evil spirit to grip and suspend his faculty of faith. Was he sincerely willing to be relieved of this bondage? He affirmed emphatically that this was fully his desire; he longed to trust in Christ. By the authority of the name of the Lord Jesus I commanded the spirit to depart from its victim, and forthwith he became a definite believer, and eunuch-like, went on his way rejoicing.

Has such a case a bearing upon the ancient controversy as to the bondage or freedom of the human will? It would seem that bondage to sin may in measure be broken by the will of man in even the unregenerate, as when a heavy drinker facing ruin and shame, and his loved ones with him, by a supreme effort of the will breaks that fetter and walks soberly. But if the will is paralyzed by a demon it cannot act freely until released by a superior force, yet thereafter the liberated *can* exercise his will and believe on Christ unto salvation, present and to come.

December 12—17, 1914, was spent at Port Said. I had finished what work the Lord seemed to require and felt guided to return to Cairo on a certain train. I had no money at all, but went round and said farewell to friends, the last being Mr. Locke of the Seamen's Rest. I had left his house and was already round the corner on the road to the station when he came hurrying after me, put into my hand just enough for the ticket, saying, "I think the Lord means this." I thought so too, and thanked the giver and the Giver.

It was a change from our work in the city to take horse now and then and visit untouched Moslem villages in the Delta. Entering one it was asked if they had any Christians there. Yes, they had one, and led us to him. He was the Greek shopkeeper, who helped to make them more than ever

icious by selling liquor ! Thus did the only " Christian " they knew encourage them to break one of the few salutary rules of the Koran, that which commands Moslems not to use intoxicants. What a subtle triumph of Satan to get the name of the Holy One degraded by putting it upon *nations* and so upon unholy individuals.

These visits gave excellent occasion for watching and admiring my friend McClenahan in purely Egyptian surroundings. In English and American company he was the most silent man I ever knew. I have seen him hold a long " conversation " with a visitor, that is, the other doing *all* the talking and he contributing grave nods of his head or expressive movements of his hands. At length I came to think that my silent friend would have much less than I to regret when giving account to Him who has laid down this test as operating in His court, " By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned " (Matt. 12. 37).

But seat W. L. McClenahan in the village hall with the omdeh and his elders, or in the goats' hair tent of the rough Bedawi, and he was all animation and they were all attention, while Arabic poured forth as a torrent whereas his English was but a trickle. He had lived and moved among the villagers in many parts and for so long that they understood each other well ; and he had straightened out their tangles and reconciled their squabbles until they had given him the heavenly title Abu Salaam, the father of peace ! A handful of such men are more real benefit to a land than are all its statesmen and all its soldiers. I watched the 3rd Coldstream Guards entrain at Cairo for the 1914 front in France. There was much waving and cheering, and in but a few weeks the melancholy tidings that these and tens of thousands more had fallen in battle. Such is war, glorious, horrible, futile ; but " blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called sons of God," " and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace " (Matt. 5. 9 : Jas. 3. 16) ; though in this world of strife such sowing is often hard work and dangerous.

Returning from one of these visits to villages we had to cross a piece of water in a barge. I was holding the heads of two horses and as we reached the bank a British voice said, " Let me have one horse," and a soldier led him off the barge. My companions rode on while I chatted a few minutes with the lads. By the time I started it was nearing sunset, and in the gloaming sandy tracks look much alike and I missed the road. My Arab horse, wanting his friends, sped fast, but before long he, as well as I, sensed that we had lost our way, and he slackened his pace. The dusk showed only far stretching sand and scrub, with nothing to indicate direction.

The prospect of spending the night thus, with a restive horse, was not pleasant. But He Who saw Hagar in the

wilderness and sent guidance, had His eye on me and sent guidance. Riding slowly I happened on an old Egyptian on a donkey, a rare circumstance, for the Eastern is seldom out in lonely places in the dark, unless he be a robber. He got down and salaamed. "Feyn el Materiye?" I inquired, "Where is Materiye?" He got on his donkey and went forward. It was interesting to note how my intelligent and proud Arab steed was content to follow slowly his humble relative, the ass. Presently the aged man dismounted, pointed to lights twinkling in the far distance, and said, "Materiye."

Whether the high-spirited horse knew the name of his town, or whether he saw the distant lights, I do not know, but immediately he became so eager and restive that it was with difficulty I kept the saddle; I could not get my hand into my pocket, but was carried away so quickly that, to my great regret, I could not leave my deliverer a coin to show my gratitude or a Gospel. Of this point I ought to have thought in advance when jogging along quietly, and have been prepared.

Before long I came up with my good friends and the horse with his. We were both content. My companions seemed so blissfully satisfied with each other that there was no need to explain my delay. Not long after this they were married, of which pleasant prospect I did not then know.

The months passed quickly in such strenuous and congenial labours, and the burning heat of midsummer returned. On Thursday 17th June 1915, I was sitting at dawn on the verandah looking over the deserts and looking up to God, when suddenly the Voice said distinctly in my heart: "This, and that, and the third purpose of your coming here are finished, now you can go to England." I announced this at breakfast, left Cairo on July 3rd, and Port Said on the 15th, on the Japanese S.S. "Hirano Maru." Shipping was scarce and it was remarkable to get a berth so soon. German submarines were about, and the ship sailed at night without lights. But God preserved us from attack.

On July 21st, 1915, I reached my father's house in north London at 11.30 p.m., whither my dear wife had come to meet me. We all rejoiced together and gave thanks to the Preserver of all men, our Father of mercies.

(To be continued)

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