



GRACE TRUTH

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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Sowing and Reaping

by ANDREW BORLAND, M.A.

Distribute the good seed as oft as you may,
And God who is faithful your work will repay,
But if not in life time the harvest you see,
Your labour in heaven rewarded will be.

The Master as Sower example has set,
And those who have followed can never regret
The time and the patience, the toil and the pain,
They've suffered in sowing new triumphs to gain.

Wise sowers have travelled o'er all the wide earth
With precious seed baskets well knowing their
worth ;
To earth's remote corners wherever men live
They've carried the message which new hope can
give.

With Gospels and booklets the seed we may sow,
And watered with prayer we trust it will grow.
The enemy Satan the truth may oppose,
But God by the Spirit can vanquish our foes.

We may speak on the doorstep to those who may
call,
And seed we thus scatter on good soil may fall ;
Or as we do business a word we may speak ;
And when we thus witness lost souls we may seek.

Then scant not your sowing by word or by book,
And for divine blessing most hopefully look ;
But blush not to witness wherever you be ;
The Master in heaven your efforts will see.

But if empty-handed the Saviour you meet,
What loss you will suffer at His Judgment Seat,
For oft by His Spirit He's urged you to speak
A word in His honour lost sinners to seek.

The Person and Programme of the Holy Spirit

by SAMUEL JARDINE, Belfast.

THE SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER

"The Extent of His Operations"

(John 7. 47; 14. 16-18, 26; 15. 26-27; 16. 13-15; Romans 8)

AT this point in our meditations it should be quite clear that there are INITIAL and UNALTERABLE blessings of the Spirit which are the birthright of ALL the Children of God. Of these we have discussed the regeneration, the indwelling, the seal, the earnest and the first-fruits of the Spirit. Later, we hope to consider the baptism in the Spirit which properly belongs to the work of the Spirit in the Church but which is also basic and unrepeatable. Our next step is to trace the streams of grace which should flow from this common source, the presence of the Spirit in the believer's heart.

Let us weigh carefully the pregnant words of our Lord Jesus when He stood and cried to Jews in Jerusalem in the great day of the feast (i.e. of Tabernacles), when there would be a general assembly of the worshipping multitudes: "If any man thirst let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)". From this statement a number of important propositions can be adduced:—

1. The Holy Spirit was to come in unprecedented fashion. He who previously had come upon men would dwell within them.
2. He could not be present in this way until the earthly mission of the Lord Jesus had been attested by His reception into Heaven. That is, the glorification of "the Crucified" by the Father.
3. He would thence forward inhabit every child of God and FAITH would be the sole condition of that indwelling.

4. His presence would make possible a life and experience of the fulness of blessing.
5. That such a life of outflow and outreach to others was to be the normal and not the extraordinary in Christian experience.

Our Lord's reference to "the scripture" leads naturally to the enquiry "which scripture"? The writer is of the opinion that Ezekiel 47 was in His mind, as no other seems to fit the case so well. Although "the rivers" of this pictorial prophecy forecast the fulness of millennial blessing yet it is quite conceivable that what will then apply universally should now be experienced individually, in this day of the Holy Spirit. Waters from the Temple, waters by the south side of the Altar, waters to the ankles, waters to the knees, waters to the loins and waters to swim in, are all highly suggestive of the Spirit's varied ministry. Looking at "waters" here as emblematic of the Spirit of God, we can see in picture the source of the great Gift. "Waters issued out from under the threshold of the House (the Temple) eastward." See John 15. 26, "The Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father." "The waters came down . . . by the south side of the Altar" suggest the Calvary-cost of the Gift. The measured stages of the waters in turn suggest a walk in the Spirit, "waters to the ankles"; prayer in the Spirit, "waters to the knees"; strength by the Spirit, "waters to the loins"; and the fulness of the Spirit, "waters to swim in"—the Spirit in complete control. Here are very practical lessons which we hope to develop later; suffice to say just now, that this is a complete answer to the barrenness, prayerlessness and powerlessness that are so characteristic of many Christians to-day, and which are the exact antitheses of our Lord's desire and design for us.

Christ promised His disciples "another Comforter", that is, another of the same kind. One who would be to them all that the Lord Jesus would have been had He continued with them in physical form. "His Other Self" is the descriptive phrase which someone has aptly coined for the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. How sorely the followers of Christ would miss their absent Lord! but the loving presence and Christ-like functions of the Spirit would relieve and comfort their orphaned hearts. Four times He speaks of "the Comforter". Literally (Parakletos) "one called alongside to help". Translated "Advocate" in 1 John

2. 1, we have the idea of a gracious and able Helper who would espouse the believer's cause and be immediately available in every possible circumstance. Three times in this upper room discourse He is referred to as "the Spirit of truth", and in giving these titles to the Spirit our Lord was making reference to both the character of His great Representative and the nature of His ministry. This is amplified as He gave an outline of His activities.

1st. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14. 26). "The Spirit of truth" was to instruct these disciples and to revive in their memories the words and teaching of their Lord and Master.

2nd. "He shall testify of Me" (John 15. 26-27). The focus of all **Truth** is the Lord Jesus Christ, and is the touchstone of all that claims to be of the Spirit (John 14. 6). It is noticeable that the testimony of the disciples is immediately introduced—"And ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with Me from the beginning". Their's too was Christo-centric testimony empowered by "the Spirit of truth".

3rd. "He shall guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine and shall show it unto you." "All things THAT THE FATHER HATH ARE MINE: therefore said I, that He shall take of MINE and shall show it unto you"(John 16. 13-15). In the first of these ministries He is **TEACHER**, in the second He is **WITNESS**, in this He is **INTERPRETER**. The scope of the Spirit's resources are too important to be lightly passed over. "All things that the Father hath": this is a wealthy treasure-store, to be explored and enjoyed. It all belongs to our Lord, and the Holy Spirit unfolds to God's people the unlimited riches of our peerless Lord. When in the Spirit's light we see light what a foretaste of future glory is ours! What an enrichment of our minds and hearts! "He shall guide you into **ALL TRUTH**" (John 16. 13). The vast circumference of truth includes facts that are awe-inspiring and heart-searching as well as those that are cheering and constructive. God has ordained that every event of time and eternity should revolve around one Sacred Person and so every part of divine revelation in the written word magnifies the living **WORD**, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Creator and Sustainer of the vast universe (Col. 1. 16-17); He is the Revealer of the Father (Matt. 11. 27); He is the Lamb of

God, the sacrifice for sin (John 1. 29) ; He is the King who will bring universal peace and righteousness to this distracted world (Isaiah 9. 6-7) ; He is the Judge who is to be honoured by men even as the Father is honoured. All the keys of destiny have been entrusted to Him. The apprehension of all this Christo-centric truth is only possible where the blessed Paraclete has come in to renew, to indwell and to illuminate. It remains, however, to remind your heart and mine, dear reader, that the sharing of the secrets of God is conditioned by a conformity of mind and will to the great Interpreter. "His secret is with them that fear Him" (Psalm 25. 14). "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6. 3). "The pure in heart shall see God" (Matthew 5. 8) and they are truly "blessed". "If any man willeth to do His will, He shall know of the teaching whether it be of God or whether I speak from Myself" (John 7. 17). Truth obeyed is truth enlarged.

4th. "He shall shew you things to come" (John 16. 13). This further promised activity of the Spirit of truth like the other three was implemented in the men who became channels and custodians of New Testament revelation. Peter and John for example tell us much of future happenings, a realm to which only the omniscient Spirit had access (2 Peter 3) ; (The Revelation of Jesus Christ). All this causes "the blessed hope" to glow warmly and brightly in the truth-enlightened heart. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3. 20-21).

When we pursue our theme in the letters of the New Testament we find "the rivers of living water" flowing freely in both the writers and their teaching. Romans 8. 1-27 is a shining example of this. The general theme of this soul-thrilling passage is the God appointed means of deliverance from "the body of this death" for all who are already delivered from condemnation (8. 1). Eighteen times (R.V.) the Holy Spirit is referred to and in all we see how intimately He is involved in our needs and intensely active on our behalf. Here we can trace Spirit-emancipation, Spirit-disposition, Spirit-direction, Spirit-confirmation and Spirit-intercession. Based upon the solid foundation of Christ's great purposeful incarnation and satisfaction to God the Apostle answers his own question in this five-fold way which we develop in the next issue. (To be continued)

Mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens

by the late WALTER SCOTT.

Matthew 13.

The Seven Parables Divided

VERSE 36 introduces a natural and unforced division of these parables. The first four were spoken to the multitudes at the sea shore; then the Lord goes into the house, and gathers His new family around Himself. He is about to unfold the inner secrets of the Kingdom, and which none but disciples could enter into and enjoy. He also declares in full the meaning of the tare field, then utters the remaining three parables.

THE HID TREASURE (Verse 44)

Having had the **outward** aspect of the Kingdom witnessed in the abnormal growth of what is now Christendom in the parable of the mustard tree, we then find in that of the leaven that the **within** of the professing body is utterly corrupt. Worldly greatness, and inward corruption seem the fundamental ideas in these two parables. Then the two which follow—the treasure and pearl—afford us aspects of the Kingdom from God's point of view. The Kingdom is not all evil, as these two latter parables shew.

The fifth parable is the treasure hid in a field. We have the Divine explanation of the term **field**; it signifies the world (v. 38). In the second parable it is "his field", here, it is simply a field. He does not say to whom it belongs. The whole creation, the world included, belongs to Christ on the simple ground that He created all (Col. 1. 16; Heb. 1. 2), but if He had dealt with a fallen world as Creator only, judgment must have followed as a matter of course. Here, however, He takes the field as its purchaser, having shed His blood to possess it. What a price to pay for a morally ruined world! He buys the field. He does not buy the treasure, but He buys the pearl. The field is purchased for the sake of the treasure hid in it. To confine the treasure to **Israel** and the pearl to the **Church** is a mistake. Without doubt, the pearl sets forth the Church in its costliness, unity, and value to Christ. In this we are happily agreed. But the treasure hid in the field, signifies **all** the redeemed. Others beside Israel were hid in the world. All **hid** in the field are clearly embraced in the thought of the treasure—every

saved soul from Adam to the end of time. Another point of exceeding interest in this briefly related parable is the joy of the Lord in His purchase. In this the Lord is presented as a Finder, and in the following one as a Seeker. He finds the treasure; He seeks the pearl.

It is highly important for the understanding of this parable, that we clearly distinguish between "redemption" and "purchase." Creation—heavenly and earthly—is purchased, but its redemption is future, as we read—"until the redemption (future) of the purchased possession (present)" (Eph. 1. 14). Again, redemption is future, as in Romans 8. 19-23, while the purchasing has been effected (2 Peter 2. 1), the price—the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1. 19). Here, then, we have the field—that is the world (v. 38) bought for the sake of the treasure in it. "Hid in the field." All saints are "treasure" to whom? To the eye and heart of our God. Christ by His Cross bought the field, giving "all that He hath," more He could not give, nor do; on the Throne He will possess Himself of the treasure—all believers in their preciousness to God. He has "hid" the "hid" treasure, for there are two hidings in the verse. First, hid in nature's darkness, then sought and found, and again hid by the finder, till the day of public manifestation (Col. 3. 3). The parable takes us no further than the hiding of the treasure. But what a happy completion. The treasure belongs to Christ. It is His wholly and exclusively. (To be continued)

Some Aspects of the Cross

by JOHN M. COWAN, Motherwell.

THE CROSS OF JESUS (John 19. 25)

THE CROSS OF CHRIST (1 Cor. 1. 17; Gal. 6. 12; Phil. 3)

THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST (Gal. 6. 14)

THE DISCIPLES' CROSS (Luke 9. 23)

FOR some considerable time I have felt the tremendous importance of being able to distinguish the things that differ. Each single truth in the fulness of its application has quite a number of different aspects, and, to know the fulness of the truth, one must acquaint oneself with all its aspects and to be able to place them in their proper perspective.

There is the possibility that one could become acquainted

with one aspect of a particular truth and be convinced in one's own mind that this is the whole of the truth, while another may have grasped one of the other aspects of the same truth and have become similarly satisfied that this is the truth in its entirety. This then has oft-times led to bitter arguments as to which was right and is the proof of the Proverb that a little knowledge is, and can be very dangerous indeed. This always reminds me of the two men who were arguing very contentiously as to the colour of the chameleon. This chameleon is a little reptile of the lizard type, which has the peculiar property of being able to change its colour to suit the particular background it happens to be upon. Each of these individuals had seen the chameleon upon different backgrounds and, before the argument could be satisfactorily settled, it required a third party to explain that they were both right, but because of a lack of a full knowledge of the creature their contention might have brought them to the bitterness of blows. This, then, would remind us that each aspect of any truth has its own particular background and to become divinely educated into the fulness of that truth in its different contexts in order that a comprehensive understanding of its fulness may be acquired.

This, then, would bring us to the subject we are about to consider and, as its different aspects are collectively consolidated, we may be able to arrive at a fulness of apprehension as to the fulness it contains.

THE CROSS OF JESUS

The Cross of Jesus, then, presents to us the Cross historically, its reality, with all the awfulness and actuality of the sufferings endured. Hebrews 12. 2 brings before us something of this aspect of His Cross, how that He endured the cross, the shame despising: Oh the fulness that these brief statements contain for us: He endured: Patiently and Persistently; He suffered for sins, the Just One, for us, the unjust ones, even on to a cross death. The Cross of Jesus then directs us to the agonies endured, His sufferings with all their bitternesses and their griefs. The agonising quivering of sensitive flesh as the nails are driven through His hands and feet: the terrific jolt as the cross is uplifted and dropped into its socket in the rock; His dislocated joints, the tearing of tender flesh, the taunts, the shame, the spitting; the slowly moving day, the awful heat, the aggravating thirst, the torment, intense, intolerable, abandoned by His

friends, deserted apparently by His God, as, into the denseness of the darkness alone He entered, to experience the awfulness of being forsaken; when God made Him to be sin for us, Him who knew no sin, in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Oh my soul it was for thee, praise Him then with joyful lips as with sweetest sadness we sing our songs Divine.

Such then is the Cross of Jesus, outwardly expressed and testified to by human eye and lip. These were His outward sufferings, but what about His inward sufferings: when it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, when He put Him to grief, when He made His soul a trespass offering for sin. These inward agonies that far outweighed His external sufferings, hinted to us in the Prophetic Scriptures and in the Psalms—no wonder then that the writer to the Hebrews said, "Let us consider Him who endured." Consider Him in the quietness of our contemplations and, as we muse, the fires of kindled affections will blaze up, in an upsurge of deepest devotedness and worship because of Him. (To be continued)

Notes on the First Epistle of Peter

by the late Wm. RODGERS

WE have shown how Peter, when endeavouring to carry out in these epistles the Lord's injunction to feed His lambs and sheep, makes frequent references to what he had "seen and heard" during Christ's earthly ministry; and how, because of this, his writings contain many links with the four Gospels. We have also noticed that, in pursuance of his further object of comforting the saints under fiery trial and suffering, he shows that the promises and privileges formerly given to Israel are but a shadow of higher and greater ones now possessed by themselves; and that, in doing so, he supplies another series of links, this time with the Old Testament scriptures.

But the fact, already pointed out, that he is writing, not to converts of his own, but to saints the greater part of whom had been brought to Christ through the agency of Paul and his fellow-workers, would suggest that Peter has yet another purpose in mind; and the more carefully his epistles are studied the more clearly will this purpose come into view. He is writing to confirm these saints in the truths which they had already learned, and to assure

them that his own teaching was on the very same lines as that of his great fellow-apostle. What need there may have been for this we can judge from the many references made by Paul himself to the mischief wrought by Judaizers, who evidently sought to associate the names of Peter, James and others, with their activities, and to belittle Paul and his teaching by contrast with them and theirs. See 1 Cor. 9. 1-6; 2 Cor. 11 3-5; 12. 11-13; Gal. 2. 6-9; 6. 12-14; etc.

Looked at from this angle, one can see deeper significance in such passages as 1 Peter 1. 12 (R.V.) where

"THEM THAT PREACHED THE GOSPEL UNTO YOU" are described as announcing the very things which prophets of old not only had foretold, but had searched into with intense interest, as had also the angels; and verse 25 of the same chapter, where the statement that "the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" is followed by "and this is the word of good tidings WHICH WAS PREACHED UNTO YOU". Light is thrown also on the reference at 2 Peter 3. 16 to Paul's epistles as being on the same plane with "THE OTHER SCRIPTURES"; and on 1 Peter 5. 12, where the mention of Paul's fellow-worker Silvanus, the bearer of the epistle to them, as being "a faithful brother UNTO YOU," is followed by the words, "I have written unto you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD: STAND YE FAST THEREIN" (R.V.).

Now in this connection also we meet with a series of links, even more numerous than those in the two groups already spoken of, between 1st Peter and the Epistles of Paul; and as might be expected, the closest parallels are with Ephesians, which like 1 Peter itself was written to saints in Asia, of which province Ephesus was the capital city. So great indeed is the

SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE TWO EPISTLES,

that one might think of Peter as having just turned from the reading of Paul's letter to sit down and write his own. To display this likeness adequately would require the quoting of many entire passages from each of them, but the mention of a few points of resemblance must suffice.

Each epistle begins with a majestic description of our salvation, in which it is attributed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; is traced from our election right

through to our inheritance ; and is shown to be secured by the precious blood that has been shed for us. In both of these the expression, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" appears word for word the same. In the second chapter of each, the Church is pictured as a great temple in process of erection, of which Christ in both is described as "the Chief Corner Stone"; and in the same chapters reference is made to what the saints were "in time past" (See Eph. 2. 2, 11 and 1 Peter 2. 10). In each epistle we get instructions on the reciprocal duties of husbands and wives, servants and masters; in each we find a paragraph on spiritual gifts and their exercise (See Eph. 4. 7-16 and 1 Peter 4. 10, 11); and each in its concluding chapter dwells upon our conflict with the Devil (See Eph. 6. 11-17 and 1 Peter 5. 8, 9).

Compare, too, the references in each letter to our calling (Eph. 1. 18; 4. 1-4; etc.; with 1 Peter 1. 15; 2. 9; 5. 10, etc.); to the veiling from saints of a past dispensation of truths which are now made known (Eph. 3. 5 with 1 Peter 1. 10, 11); to the interest taken by angels in these matters (Eph. 3. 10 with 1 Peter 1. 12); and to the subjection of these heavenly beings to Christ in His resurrection (Eph. 1. 20, 21 with 1 Peter 3. 22). Perhaps also attention should at this point be drawn to the likeness between

PETER'S MESSAGE TO THE ELDERS

in chapter 5. 1-4 and Paul's address to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20. 17-35 ("Feed the flock of God . . . taking the oversight . . . not for filthy lucre's sake," as compared with "Take heed to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God . . . coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel").

Another epistle with which one might expect to find associations is that to the Galatians, since the province of Galatia is also one of the five to which 1 Peter is directed in its opening verse. From a number of these we shall here point out but two. The words of 1 Peter 2. 16, "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God," seems to be a semi-quotation from Gal. 5. 13, "Ye have been called unto liberty, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." And the expression

in 1 Peter 3. 6 (R.V.), "Sarah . . . whose children ye NOW are," appears to be based on the "allegory" of Gal. 4. 22-31, which ends with "So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free."

But it is not alone with Paul's letters to Asiatic churches that these connections exist. There are quite a number of them with Romans, the epistle in which Paul's doctrine of the gospel is unfolded more completely than anywhere else; and here, too, the similarity is at times so close as to suggest Peter's previous acquaintance with the other apostle's letter. Compare, for example,

THE TEACHING OF BAPTISM

in Rom. 6. 3-7 with that in 1 Peter 3. 21 to 4. 3, noting especially the two statements, "He that is dead is freed from sin," and "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." See how a couple of passages from Isaiah 8. 14 and 28. 16, which have been joined together as if one in Romans 9. 33, are separated and explained in 1 Peter 2. 6-8. Compare Rom. 13. 1-7, on subjection to "the powers that be," with 1 Peter 2. 13-17, and note particularly the repetition of the unusual idea of "praise" from the authorities for well-doing. Finally, compare the passage on spiritual gifts in 1 Peter 4. 10, 11 with the one in Rom. 12. 6-8, to which it is more closely allied than to the Eph. 4. 7-16 passage already mentioned.

Two other groups of links between Peter's epistles and the other Scriptures remain for consideration, those between 1 Peter and James, and those between 2 Peter and Jude. In both cases the connection is very intimate, and quite as remarkable as any that we have yet examined. Of the latter we may have occasion to speak when dealing with the apostle's second letter; and as for the former, we shall at present merely point a few of the more striking parallelisms.

Compare the references to "joy" in "temptations" or trials, and to the outcome of these trials, in James 1. 2, 3, 12 and in 1 Peter 1. 6, 7. Note how both writers make use of the illustration of the fading flower of the grass, in James 1. 10, 11 and 1 Peter 1. 24. Compare the mention of the new birth in James 1. 18 and 1 Peter 1. 23. In each instance it is attributed to the Word of God, and in each it is followed by an exhortation to lay aside certain evil things, and to receive more of that Word.

See how, in James 4. 6 and 1 Peter 5. 5, both quote the Septuagint Greek rendering of Proverbs 3. 34, "God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble"; yet in James 5. 20 and 1 Peter 4. 8, Peter follows James in making use of the expression "cover a multitude of sins," which is a partial quotation, not of the Greek, but of the Hebrew of Proverbs 10. 12. (To be continued)

The Epistle to the Philippians

THE EPISTLE OF SACRIFICE AND JOY (Continued)

by R. WOODHOUSE BEALES

Chapter 2.

THE exhortation which follows, even as an exhortation preceded, concerns working out our own salvation, and again it is not the soul's eternal salvation which is in view, but that of the life. This idea of working out is to be found in 2 Cor. 4. 17 and 7. 10, and the thought of fear and trembling, lest we should miss the mark is seen in 1 Cor. 2. 3; 2 Cor. 7. 15; and Eph. 6. 5. Do we thus fear? The result will be seen as in verses 15 and 16.

This working out is not so much the thought of working out what God has worked in, but more in the way of working out a problem. Paul himself was not with them, nor could help them in this, except by exhortation but they were left to work it out themselves. This salvation would include that aspect of it having regard to humility and unity of mind, for the outcome was to be the "willing" and "doing" of His good pleasure, not that God would will and do, but that they would. This would be His work in them. "The more we have of Christ in our hearts, the less room for self" (R. C. Chapman).

Was there a possibility that there might be murmurings and disputings in Philippi? If so, they could hardly be looked upon as "blameless and harmless, children of God". Blameless is not faultless, that will be ours in a future day when we are "like Him" but we can be blameless in ourselves and in our walk and harmless to others, which denotes being "unmixed, unadulterated, pure, simple."

A crooked and perverse generation were looking on, they are in darkness as we once were and need the light to shine. How can the saint do this unless he is walking

worthy of his calling? Again the apostle is looking forward to the day of Christ when rewards will be apportioned, crowns gained or lost, but in this case the apostle transfers this to himself to strengthen his appeal (v. 16).

"Ye shine" or "shine ye" as lights or luminaries, like the fixed stars, not having their own radiance but reflecting light bearers, those heavenly bodies by which mariners (see Acts 27. 20) and migratory birds (see Jer. 8. 7) steer their courses, the former learning to do so, the latter by inbred instinct, some travelling some 1500 miles thereby. This is silent testimony, that of the life, but then there must be the audible "holding forth the Word of Life", a direct effort to win others, backed up by the life of the believer. See Rev. 21. 11, 23. The city has the glory of God and her radiance is like a stone most precious and nations walk in her light. Happy prospect!

As to Timothy Paul has no man likeminded who will care for them rather than for himself, unlike others who seek their own things, but Timothy had proved himself in his service with Paul. He had doubtless sacrificed much in going out with Paul when a young man and had suffered many deprivations with Paul about which the apostle speaks when writing to him, but he had proved himself when sharing with Paul in the ministry.

Here Paul gives a unique commendation of this faithful young fellow servant who would be "genuinely anxious" for their welfare. He stands head and shoulders among the "all" who seek their own things and not the things of Christ. He hopes to send him to them who on his return will bring Paul further news of them.

Then the next sacrifice for Epaphroditus had nearly lost his life to serve Paul and them. Yea, he had thrown it away or gambled it (such is the word). He had brought their gift to Paul and stayed to serve him and in so doing endangered his life in some way. His "heaviness" was not because of his sickness but because they had heard of it and had been distressed. He too was home-sick and in heaviness (the word used of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane) indicating a shrinking from pain or grief, but his being spared was also a mercy for Paul. Here is a balanced view of sickness and healing, and no suggestion of Paul's gift of healing, but this whole passage needs writing in letters of gold (vv. 25-30).

REVIEW by the EDITOR (Continued)

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY

General Editor : G. C. D. Howley.

Contributing Editors : F. F. Bruce ; H. L. Ellison.

Obtainable from Messrs Pickering and Inglis Ltd. Price 50/-.

THE Commentary still lies on my desk and I propose to first of all introduce a number of direct quotations from it. Let us remind ourselves again that the preface of this book states: "All the contributors to this volume are associated with the churches of the Christian Brethren; but it is no part of our aim to express a denominational point of view". I presume that the General Editor looks upon the Christian Brethren as a denomination and means that the views expressed are not necessarily the views of that body of Christians. How very true this statement is. There are indeed many views expressed therein which differ from and are contrary to that which is generally accepted by the vast majority of Christians who are wrongly designated by that name.

Matthew 24 is one of those chapters that is dealt with in a way that would not be acceptable to most of the saints in assembly fellowship. The following are quotations from page 167.

'The Destruction of Jerusalem (15-22). Cf. Mark 13. 14-20; Lk. 21. 20-24. Some may allow themselves a double reference here both to A.D. 70 and the Antichrist. It is often forgotten that this is bound up with a questionable interpretation of a number of O.T. prophecies. Furthermore, if this double interpretation was intended, it is hard to see why Jesus did not give some hint of the fact. the desolating sacrilege: It would have been preferable to keep 'abomination of desolation' (so Phillips and NEB) as a conscious quotation of Dan. 9. 27; 11. 31; 12. 11, but 'the appalling abomination' (Beasley-Murray, Tasker) is better. This almost certainly means the Roman army; cf. the paraphrase in Luke 21. 20.'

'The loud trumpet call (31) links with 1 Thess. 4. 15f. To see in v. 31 merely the Church liberated by the fall of Jerusalem for its true task of evangelism (Tasker) shows merely the extremes to which the straitjacket of a theory will bring one.'

'The Time of the Coming . . . It is not permissible to equate the fig tree with the Jews; it is never so used elsewhere.'

Mark 13 is also dealt with in a manner with which most would not agree (page 197).

Mark 13. 14a: *'the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be' . . .* When, therefore, the Christians in Jerusalem saw the Roman legions investing their city'

'the fig tree puts forth its leaves', the Christians in Jerusalem would be able to foretell the time of the sacking of the city, and the dawning of the glorious era beyond.'

We are amazed at the interpretation given to verse 26 :

"And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory". The commentary says (page 197): "a description, so it is here maintained, of His acting in judgment against Jerusalem . . . It is to be recalled that Jesus had denoted the destruction of the Jewish State as a divine 'coming' earlier that same day, in His statement of Mk. 12. 9". We submit that if all the promises concerning our Lord's coming were explained away in this manner, we would be left without the joyful expectation of His coming altogether. The contributor shows that he believes that this coming took place in A.D. 70 and refers to the destruction of the Jewish State, by the way in which he handles verse 27: "And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven". He says, "The assertion of verse 27 may relate to the increased impetus of world-wide evangelism which would follow the events of A.D. 70".

The contributor dealing with 1 Cor. 15 follows the interpretation that is common to many of the other contributors (see page 413) and associates 'the last trumpet' with passages that refer to the appearing thus giving the impression of a Tribulationist interpretation. He writes, '*the last trumpet*: The final manifestation of God to man in his earthly condition. . . . See also Mt. 24. 31; 1 Th. 4. 16; Rev. 11. 15.'

I turned only recently to 2 Corinthians chapter 5. 1-10 (page 425) and it was truly like a draught of fresh air, like cold water to a thirsty soul—a real gem amongst so much that is grieving in the commentary. I do not know the contributor, David J. A. Clines, but his exposition of this passage is really clear and soul thrilling. His use of the word 'Parousia', which of course is perfectly correct, instead of the word 'Rapture', makes it impossible for me to detect whether he believes the coming of the Lord for His saints will be before or after the Great Tribulation, but his handling of the passage has the right ring about it. It smells extremely sweet.

One is grieved however by the way in which a large part of the book of the Revelation is handled. The contributor seems more than anxious to fit what most of us think are prophecies concerning the future into events that surrounded and followed the year 70 A.D. In this he has a common approach with those who contribute the outlines of Matthew and Mark.

Teaching as to the Great Tribulation is strange (page 646).

'This *great tribulation* is different from that of 2. 22, from the 'hour of trial' of 3. 10, and from the wrath against which the elect are sealed in verses 3-8; in all these places it is divine judgment against the wicked that is in view. It must also be distinguished from the tribulation predicted in Mk. 13. 19, which fell on Judaea and Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The tribulation of our present passage is the persecution of the followers of Christ which broke in such intense malignity in John's day and continues until the ultimate triumph of Christ.'

We wonder what the writer means by this comment on Rev. 19. 20-21 (page 661). We do not know!

'*thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with brimstone* (20)—John's symbol for 'the second death' (cf 20. 14; 21. 8). With verse 21, these words emphasize the completeness of the overthrow of the enemies of God. From first to last Rev. is the book of the triumph of Christ. It was by no material weapons, but by the power of the gospel, that Christ conquered the pagan Roman Empire; by that same power He has continued to conquer in history, and will conquer to the end. The analogy of Scripture discourages the idea that Christ, having conquered thus throughout preceding ages, will change His weapons for the final struggle and have recourse to those which He rejected in the day of temptation in the wilderness.'

We pause and wonder as we read on page 663 'Revelation 20. 15):

'*if any one's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire*: It is curious exegesis that would infer from this that all who appear at the last assize are assigned to perdition. True, those who have committed apostasy and worshipped 'the image of the beast' have no place in the book of life (13. 8); but the dead who stand before the throne include all mankind from earliest days. The scene which John paints here, with its vivid and sombre hues, is unforgettably impressive; it is not intended to gratify curiosity about eschatological details but to challenge the reader with a reminder of the One to whom the final account must be rendered.

*O may we stand before the Lamb,
When earth and seas are fled
And hear the Judge pronounce our name
With blessings on our head!*

Is it only those who have committed apostasy and worshipped 'the image of the beast' who have no place in the book of life and consequently are thrown into the lake of fire? What about 'the fearful and unbelieving'? (21. 8). And is it true that the dead who stand before the throne include

all mankind from earliest days ?

Surely the Lord's people of this age—the members of the body of Christ—will have been raptured and will have been manifested before the Judgment Seat of Christ long before even the Millennium begins to run its course. Does the writer mean that those who have been forgiven, justified, placed beyond condemnation while living in this world and who have ultimately been changed, raptured, glorified, reviewed, and have reigned with Christ 1000 years, are after that to be brought before the Great White Throne with 'its vivid and sombre hues' to be 'judged according to their works' ? Or does the writer believe in one final universal judgment? If so, this is certainly not accepted 'brethren' teaching.

I could go on making quotations from this commentary on prophetic subjects. The more I examine it the more grieved I become. What a pity such a work was ever published. And yet a book like this could have been a great help to the Lord's people. It is evident that the majority of the writers that touch upon prophetic subjects have given either a tribulationist or even an A-millennialist interpretation of the passages with which they deal. The two groups that these men represent form a very small minority amongst the assemblies of the Lord's people. I wonder what the General Editor of the work believes on these matters. One would presume that as General Editor he chose his associate editors whose beliefs on prophetic matters were already clearly known. The other writers from whom we have quoted seem mostly to belong to the same school (there are some exceptions of course). Were they deliberately chosen because of their beliefs or is it by accident that they happened to believe these unacceptable things. May I ask our very dear brother what he personally believes concerning the Lord's coming and events in the future as outlined in the New Testament Scriptures. One cannot help reminding him that he is not only Editor of this commentary but is also the Editor of that worthy magazine "The Witness", and that the former editors were men who believed and fervently taught the truth of the Rapture—the pre-tribulationist coming of our Lord Jesus for His saints.

I propose now to leave prophetic themes and in future issues to point out some of the strange things that the commentary teaches relative to Church Matters and finally to look at the way in which the Epistle to the Hebrews has been handled, especially what it teaches relative to the impeccability of Christ in Hebrews chapter four.

A. M. Salway Hoeking

The Gospel of John

(Notes taken during Ministry Meetings conducted by Mr. H. BELL (Jarrow) in Apsley Hall, Belfast).

THIS Gospel occupies a most unique place in the Word of God—without it we could not properly understand the New Testament.

In Matthew, Mark and Luke we find the Lord pursuing a work relative almost exclusively to Israel.

In John we have expressions like

Ch. 1. 10. He was in the world.

Ch. 3. 16. God so loved the world.

Ch. 8. 12. Light of the world. etc.,

nations. Christ came to fulfil the promises to Israel but and thus we can understand Paul writing to the Gentile was rejected by them. John shows that it was ever in the mind of God that Christ should be the Saviour of the World (John 4. 42).

The Epistles speak of the Son of God—so does the Gospel of John. If we want to know that the Epistles are inspired we turn to John, e.g., “The Holy Spirit shall guide you into all truth” (16. 13).

THE SON SEEN AS THE

1. Revealer of God—in the Gospel—Worship to Father.
2. Revealer of Father—in the Epistles—Fellowship with Father.

1 John FELLOWSHIP with Father and Son (1. 3).

2 John FELLOWSHIP in the Home.

3 John FELLOWSHIP in the Church.

The Book of Revelation is a necessary counterpart of the Gospel, e.g.

LAMB OF GOD AND SIN John 1. 29.

LAMB ON THE THRONE Rev. 22. 3.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD John 8. 12.

LIGHT OF HEAVEN Rev. 21. 33.

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER John 7. 38.

PURE RIVER OF WATER OF LIFE Rev. 22. 1.

SHEEP IN HAND OF SHEPHERD John 10. 28.

STARS IN HAND OF SOVEREIGN Rev. 1. 20.

JOHN IN LORD'S BOSOM John 13. 23.

JOHN AT LORD'S FEET Rev. 1. 17.

John's message is of the SON OF GOD—

The FULNESS OF DEITY

e.g. John 1. 1 God was the Word. (literal rendering)

John 20. 28 My Lord and my God.

Certain outstanding features of the Gospel.

Seven times Lord says "I AM"—

Divine title of the Divine One.

Seven Miracles (Signs) before the Cross—

Perfection of Diety.

One Sign after Cross—7 plus 1 equals 8—

Resurrection Number.

John does **not** record BIRTH—

Divine One had no beginning.

John does **not** record TRANSFIGURATION—

Divine One is always glorified.

John does **not** record LORD'S SUPPER—

Divine One is always present.

(Supper speaks of Lord's absence)

Chapters 1-7 Emphasis on GOD.

Chapters 8-14 Emphasis on SON OF GOD.

Chapters 15-21 Emphasis on HOLY SPIRIT.

Chapters 1-7 Son in relationship to the Father.

Chapters 8-14 Son in relationship to His disciples.

Chapters 15-21 Son in relationship to the World.

The Hope of His Coming

by the late J. R. CALDWELL.

"I will come again and receive you unto Myself"

(John 14. 3)

OUR "Forerunner" has gone to prepare a place for us, and then to come again and receive us to Himself. It is for this hour we are taught by the Spirit to wait and to be ever in readiness—at once the end of our trial and conflict, and the consummation of our joy and glory—the spoiling of death, and the grave, and Satan, of their prey, and the crowning triumph of the Lord Jesus.

Prior to this—the return of the Lord for His Church—we have no intimation that any event must necessarily take place. Indeed the language used in reference to this—

The Hope Set Before Us

—is not at all consistent with the theory that an extended course of prophetic events must first be fulfilled.

It does not seem, after the resurrection and ascension

of the Lord, that in any case (with the one exception of Peter, whose death and the manner of it were foretold, 2 Peter 1. 14) the writers of the Epistles anticipated death otherwise than as a mere possibility.

Their immediate prospect is the Coming of the Lord; death is never contemplated as a necessity, not even as a probability. Thus, when the Lord in answer to Peter's inquiry regarding John, said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee," no one ever dreamt that Christ's coming meant John's departure by death. Immediately the saying went abroad that "that disciple should not die."

Again, where the Apostle Paul is referring to the Coming of the Lord, he uses the third person in relation to the saints who should have fallen asleep, and the first person in relation to those who should be alive at His Coming. Thus, in 1 Thess. 4. 15, "We who are alive and remain—**them** which are asleep." Again, in 1 Cor. 15. 52, "**the dead** shall be raised and we shall be changed". Clearly showing that Paul regarded it at that time as quite possible that

He Might Remain unto the Coming

of the Lord, and consequently never die, but be "**changed**."

Moreover, such expressions as—"to wait for His Son from Heaven" (1 Thess. 1. 10); "From whence also we look for the Saviour" (Phil. 3. 20); "Looking for that Blessed Hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2. 13); "Waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1. 7); "That ye may be sincere and without offence till the Day of Christ" (Phil. 1. 10); "Preserved blameless unto the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5. 23), show very conclusively to a mind unbiased by a preconceived theory, that neither death, nor the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy was in Scripture times regarded as of necessity to precede the Coming of the Lord.

But in opposition to this view, it has been urged that the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written to correct the mistaken impression of the Thessalonian saints that the Lord's return was imminent, and to show that certain events, involving the expiry of a considerable period of time must first take place. But is this really

the teaching of 2 Thess. ? Is the "Day of Christ" of 2 Thess. 2, the same as the Coming of the Lord of 1 Thess. 4 ? Is not the one

A Hope of Unalloyed Blessedness,

and the other a prospect of great dreadfulness ? Is not the one that by which they were to be comforted, and the other that which they could but exceedingly fear ? How then can the "Coming of the Lord" and the "Day of Christ" be one and the same event ?

But in order to a right understanding of this chapter it is necessary to observe that the word in verse 2, rendered "at hand", ought as all the best critics agree, to be rendered "present." It is thus translated in Romans 8. 38 ; 1 Cor. 3. 22 and Gal. 1. 4, and undoubtedly has this signification here also.

Evidently they had been troubled and shaken in mind by some deceiver, who, personating the Apostle, had sent them word, or written to them that they were actually in "the Day of Christ," and that consequently, instead of being caught up to meet the Lord as they had been taught to hope, they were left to pass through the unprecedented tribulation and anguish of that day.

The "Day of the Lord" is an expression often used in the Old Testament, and by reference to the Scripture where it occurs, it will be seen at once what reason they had to fear being left on earth to pass through that period. (See Isa. 2. 12-22 ; 13. 6 ; Joel 1. 15 ; 2. 1-3 ; Zeph. 1. 14-18 ; Amos 5. 18-20).

To reassure their hearts, and

Confirm them in the Hope

that from the first they had cherished, was the real object of the Second Epistle.

There the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him is distinctly marked off from the course of events necessarily to precede the Day of Christ. **That day** would not come until many things had taken place, but **the Lord** might come and they be gathered to Him at any moment.

Such is still the attitude in which the saints are called to stand, a waiting, watching, expectant people, longing for the shout that shall summon them aloft to be forever with the Lord. Reprinted from "The Witness," 1938.

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