



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

***“Whom *h*aving not seen,
ye love”*** *1 Peter 1 : 8*



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COMMITTEE'S REPORT

OUR EXPECTATION

O BRIGHT and blessed hope !
When shall it be
That we His face, long loved,
Revealed shall see !

Oh ! when, without a cloud,
His features trace,
Whose faithful love, so long,
We've known is grace;

That love itself enjoy,
Which, ever true,
Did, in our feeble path,
Its work pursue !

O Jesus ! not unknown,
Thy love shall fill
The heart in which Thou dwell'st,
And shalt dwell still !

Still, Lord, to see Thy face,
Thy voice to hear;
To know Thy present love
For ever near;

To gaze upon Thyself
So faithful known,
Long proved in secret help
With Thee alone;

To see that love, content
On us flow forth,
For ever Thy delight,
Clothed with Thy worth.

Nor, what is next Thy heart,
Can we forget;
Thy saints, O Lord, with Thee
In glory met,

Perfect in comeliness
Before Thy face,
Th' eternal witness, all,
Of Thine own grace.

Together, then their songs
Of endless praise
With one harmonious voice
In joy they'll raise !

J. N. DARBY

THE COMFORTER

by J. G. GOOD

We are indebted to the Upper Room ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is recorded for us, in John's Gospel chapters 13-17, for illuminating teaching regarding the Holy Spirit. It should be observed that the period covered by chapters 1-12 is about three years, by contrast chapters 13-17 record the events of one evening. So concerned was the Lord Jesus, about the spiritual well being of those Whom He loved, He desired that they should be marked by clarity of vision, and a settled peace of mind, as far as future events were concerned, and having this knowledge imparted, they would be able to rest fully in His promises! The questions of His own were prompted by genuine fear and doubt, in turn these were answered, frankly and fully, and with tenderness and compassion, the answers revealing the magnitude of His love.

The Distinct Personality and Diety of the Holy Spirit, are truths which should be grasped by every believer. In this day and age, there is so much spurious teaching abroad on this subject, it behoves us to rest on the revelation of the Word of God.

Our present study has this end in view, that the doctrinal truth, and the related practical implications, might become real to every child of God. There are three references in the New Testament, relative to the person of the Holy Spirit, which could profitably engage our hearts and minds:

1. *The Great Indweller in the Believer (John 14:17).*

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is *Personal* to every believer, the words of the Lord Jesus are emphatic, verse 17 "and shall be in you." The teaching of the letter to the Ephesians re-iterates this truth, in chapter 1:13 "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," again in the following verse, the Holy Spirit is "the earnest of our inheritance." Again in chapter 4:30 of the same epistle, "ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." The 'sealing' carrying the thought of ownership, security, and destination. The 'earnest' reminding us of the surety or pledge of our inheritance. Not only is the Holy Spirit *Personal* to every believer, but this indwelling is also *Permanent*, verse 16 "that He may

abide with you for ever," what a comforting truth! It is impossible for a believer in this dispensation to pray as David did in Psalm 51 : 11 "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." This is a truth to lay hold upon, that the Holy Spirit will be with us to the end of the journey, until we see Him face to face! How solemn it is therefore in view of this indwelling, that the quality of life is such that the Holy Spirit is not 'grieved,' caused pain and distress by our actions, see Ephesians 4 : 30. Again, perhaps applying more to the gatherings of the saints, "Quench not the Spirit" Ephesians 6 : 16, there is a grave danger of thwarting the impulses of the Spirit of God, and substituting a dry mechanical order of things in which the Holy Spirit has no place! In view of this tremendous truth we need heed the injunction, "Be filled with the Spirit" present tense, 'now,' this condition of soul, is not for the favoured few, but is possible for every believer. The Baptism of the Spirit, was a once for all act, taking place at Pentecost, the filling of the Spirit is a repeated act. Ephesians 5 : 18.

2. *The Glorious Instructor of the Believer (John 14 : 26).*

The ministry of the Holy Spirit to the believer is fourfold, firstly, *Instructive* verse 26, "He shall teach you all things" would this link us with the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Prophets, the excellence of the typical teaching of this section of the Word of God, thrills the heart of the believer, speaking of Him, who is the anti-type of every type, the substance of every shadow! Secondly, verse 26, *Recollective*, "bring all things to your remembrance" here we are reminded of the four Gospels, three quarters of which are composed of the words of the Lord Jesus. Might well Luke preface the Acts of the Apostles with these words "of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach" Acts 1 : 1 "and there are also many other things which Jesus did" John 21 : 25. Thirdly, chapter 16 : 13, *Directive*, the Epistles of the New Testament, revealing the truth of the present ministry of the Great High Priest, the glorious truth of His Coming again expounded, and the unveiling of the truth of the Church which is His body, not forgetting the local aspect of this truth. Fourthly, chapter 16 : 13, *Predictive*, "and He will shew you things to come" pointing us to the book of Revelation. What a blessing it is to be free from confusion relative to coming events on earth and heaven. So much

instability springs from a failure to put in perspective the dispensations, outlined in the Scriptures, detailing for us the plans and purposes of God. See II Tim. 2 : 18, not a denial of truth but a displacement of truth was enough to derail some saints!

Divine Instructor, Gracious Lord,
Be Thou for ever near,
Help us to love Thy sacred Word,
And view a Saviour there!

3. *The Groaning Intercessor for the Believer. Rom. 8 : 26.*

“But the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” there are three Groaning things in this chapter, verse 22, the Creation Groans, in verse 23, the Christian Groans, and in verse 26, the Comforter Groans. Chapter seven of this epistle would remind us of our manifold infirmities, and of the constant fight with the flesh, and the evil propensities within, it is against this background, that the ministry of the Holy Spirit, is realised in our experience. Do we not see the Divine attributes of the Holy Spirit in this verse? Firstly, His Omnipotence, “helpeth our infirmities,” this deals with our impotence, secondly, His Omniscience, “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought,” this is the answer to our ignorance. Thirdly, we are reminded of His Omnipresence, “the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us” this would take care of our insufficiency. What a revelation to us, that we have a Divine intercessor, the third Person of the blessed Trinity! We have no record of prayer being made to the Holy Spirit, neither have we scriptural authority to pray to the Son, search the Pauline epistles, for example, Ephesians 3 : 14 “I bow my knees unto the Father.” God the Father is the Object of our Worship, God the Son is the Subject of our Worship, and God the Holy Spirit is the Power of our Worship. Let us recognise that we come through a Mediator, the One Mediator the Man Christ Jesus. I Tim 2 : 5.

To all our prayers and praises,
Christ adds His sweet perfume,
And Love the censer raises,
Their odours to consume.

TRUTH FOR YOUTH IN II TIMOTHY

by J. B. HEWITT (Chesterfield)

- In Chapter 1 He **STIMULATES** our Faith.
In Chapter 2 He **STRENGTHENS** our Confidence.
In Chapter 3 He **STEADIES** our Conduct.
In Chapter 4 Be **STRONG** in the Lord.

CHAPTER ONE

LOYALTY IN SUFFERING

1. *Communion with God* 1—2 Paul a Surrendered Man.
Chosen by the Lord (1a) Controlled by His Will (1b).
Cheered by Promise (1c) Conscious of Resources (2).
2. *Concern for His Son* 3—4 A Sympathetic Man.
Thankful Prayer (3a) Faithful Prayer (3b).
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3. *Courage in Service* 5—7 A Spiritual Man.
Remember your mother's example (5).
Remember your master's endorsement (6).
Remember your maker's endowment (8).
4. *Confidence in the Gospel* 8—12 A Satisfied Man.
The Testimony of the Gospel (8) Truths of the Gospel (9)
The Triumph of the Gospel (10) Transmission (11)
The Trust and Thrill of the Gospel (12)
5. *Continuance in Truth* 13—14 Paul a Sure Man.
Hold to the pattern of health giving words (13)
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6. *Curiosity to Duty* 15—18 A Slighted but a Sustained Man
Unreliable Friends (15)
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'BE A SUFFERER FOR THE GOSPEL'

CHAPTER TWO

LOYALTY IN SERVICE

- His Duty to Himself 1—7 Faithfulness to the Lord.
His Duty to the Truth 8—14 Faithfulness to His Word.
His Duty to the Church 15—26 Faithfulness to His Name.

1. *A Call to Courage* 1—6 Exhortation.
A Son and a Steward 1—2 Loving Obedience.
A Soldier 3—4 Fearless Endurance.
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2. *A Call to Consideration* 7—15 Encouragement.
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Remembering His Lord v. 8.
Charging All Saints v. 14.
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5. *A Call to Christ Likeness* 24—26 Expression.
The Bondservant v. 24 His Behaviour.
His Manner v. 24 His Method v. 25.
His Motive in Ministry v. 25.

‘BE A STEWARD OF THE GOSPEL’

ANCIENT PROPHECIES FOR MODERN NEEDS

by H. H. SHACKCLOTH

One of the historic practices of the evangelical tradition has been to use any prophetic utterance which may in any sense foster the Spirit of Worship in the church. This is especially true when the occasion gives prominence to the sufferings and death of the Saviour.

One example of the kind of usage we have in mind occurs in Lamentations 1 v. 12 'Is it nothing to you,' asks the prophet, 'all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger.'

The pedantic critic will object that this and similar passages in no way relates to the Saviour's sufferings. He will point out that the last chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy is an adequate and final key to the verse.

We readily admit that it was because of Jodah's sin that God permitted Nebuchadnezzar's armies to ravage the temple at Jerusalem. As the prophet says 'the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions' (Lam. 1 : 5).

The record of the plundering of the structure and ornamentation of the Temple makes nauseating reading, as does the removal of the precious vessels of the sanctuary, which were looted for the vainglorious purposes of the invading ruler. All this, in the first instance, provided adequate reasons for the prophet's outburst of grief.

Having granted this much, we are still faced with the fact that often the early writers recorded incidents, or statements, which were later quoted in the New Testament as fulfilments of prophecy : which superficially at least relate to entirely different sets of circumstances. The critic's weakness lies in his inability to recognise the prerogative of the Holy Spirit to be the final arbiter in the interpretation of Scripture.

A notable example of this usage is afforded from a quotation in Hosea in which the prophet recalls God's mercy to Israel at the time of the Exodus (ch. 11 v. 1). Matthew quotes this verse when Joseph and Mary and the infant Saviour are recalled from Egypt by God, upon the death of Herod, quoting the words, 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying 'Out of Egypt have I called my Son' (Matt. 2 : 15).

In his monumental work 'The Great High Priest' Adolph Saphir comments on this same problem, as follows—

"We see from the Acts of the Apostles, that they saw, as it were, the whole edifice of scripture in the grandeur and symetry of its structure. Now they were

full of light. Those very men who before were not able to understand what they saw with their own eyes, still less to comprehend His words, remembered and understood now that all these things happened that the Scripture might be fulfilled (John 2 : 22; 20 : 19). The infallible instructions of the Son of Man were brought back to their remembrance by the Great Teacher's aid, and shall we not therefore attain the greater value, and the greatest importance, as well as the most implicit and docile faith, to the explanations given in the Acts of the Apostles, in the Epistles, and in the Revelation, of quotations from the Scriptures? we are bound by a blessed tie to their interpretations. (Follows a footnote)—

“Notwithstanding, many plausible objections to and limitations of this assertion I cannot think and say otherwise! I believe also in the inexhaustible, many sided, and eternal meaning of Scripture *above the capacity and measure of the prophet*, or of any individual or any period of the church. This has been expressed by Stier as “Vollsinn,” and by another in the quaint and somewhat paradoxical sentence—whatever Scripture *can* mean, it *does* mean.”

—Pages 78/9, American Ed. 1902.

This approach to Old Testament prophecies can do nothing but enrich the quality of our worship, rightly applied, since it opens up to us vast areas of revelation which might otherwise be denied us.

To revert to our original citation, as we progress from there to the third chapter of Lamentations, we discover further thought provoking, not to say, spirit stirring examples of prophetic utterances which are conducive of deeper worship in the church. This also holds true for so much that we find in the Old Testament. Often the poetic structure of the books of Wisdom adds a wealth of meaning to the message; here, especially, our thoughts can range beyond the context to the enrichment of the Spirit of the worshipper.

It is evident that the Holy Spirit does not necessarily use all the contents of a passage in the application of this principle. Selected verses and even phrases are adequate for His purpose. Nor is it required of us to strain our

interpretation to include the entire context of the quotation.

In this we may simulate the many New Testament examples of applied prophetic fulfilment. The final test of all ministry in the Church is that of edification. Paul stresses this in I Cor. 14 when chaos had ousted edification.

Our Lord Himself as He traversed the Emmaus road leaves us the most authoritative precedent for our plea. For 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.'

Sometimes the message is clear beyond any cavil, as for instance 'In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them, in His love and in His pity He redeemed them' (Isa. 63 : 9). In other cases the test must be simply 'Does it reveal something concerning Himself?'

We have perforce confined ourselves to the sufferings of the Saviour, but an equally faithful field exists in every aspect of His Glorious Person and work, for our profit.

In the rising generation of young men can be convinced of the value of applied prophecy as a contribution to the Churches worship, the result will be equally as positive as it was when those two Disciples by Emmaus exclaimed, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures' (Luke 24 : 32).

“PHILEMON” OR “FOR LOVE’S SAKE”

Philemon 9. "Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee . . ."

This letter of Paul to Philemon is the one strictly private letter of his to survive the years, and yet in another sense the letter is not 'strictly private' for although its main subject matter is between the one to whom it is addressed and the one concerning whom it is written, *yet the church is involved*. for it cannot be imagined that the letter would be withheld from "the church in thy (Philemon's) house"—that same church to which Paul wrote at the same time as this letter to Philemon.

Set aside is the writer's apostolic dignity and fatherly authority and we see one believer speaking to another with

Christian courtesy and love. True, he makes certain claims upon Philemon, but not with the voice of authority, unless that authority be the authority of love.

It must be emphasised that any appeal to Philemon is also an appeal of the Church at Colosse.

An outstanding point of interest in this letter of less than five hundred words is that apart from the mention of his own name, he mentions ten others by name—seven in Rome and three in Colosse—in addition to the ‘church’ in the house of Philemon, and to the bare mention of their names he adds a testimonial—brief, but revealing, and over each of the eleven members of this ‘faith team’—this ‘mini-portrait’ gallery—can be written “for love’s sake.” The ‘centre’ of this team is Onesimus—the one concerning whom the letter is written.

Before looking at the reasons for this letter, it will be of advantage to look at the pen portraits given by the Apostle. We take them in the order in which they occur.

(1) *The writer of the letter, Paul*, needs no introduction. What is recorded in this letter is, perhaps, just one of many similar incidents in his life, and even in this matter of individual approach, he is true to his reputation as the Apostle of the Reconciliation. “Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5 : 9). From him flowed, by the grace of God, and grace of his Lord, Jesus Christ, love. His one hatred, sin. Indeed, “the love of Christ” was his constraining power (II Cor. 5 : 14). We see the meaning of this ‘constraint’ in Luke 4 : 38 where Peter’s mother in law was ‘taken’ (or, pressed) with a great fever.

Here, he describes himself as “a prisoner of Jesus Christ” (or, more correctly “Christ Jesus”—that is, He Who humbled Himself). A favourite expression.

In Ephesians 3 : 1, he is “the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles” and in 4 : 1, “I therefore the prisoner of (or IN) the Lord.”

In II Tim. 1 : 8, he exhorts, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner.”

True in a typical sense, but how much more true of his spiritual experience. Imprisoned by, and in, his Lord, Jesus Christ; a willing prisoner in bonds; a bond slave of the Lord

Who had humbled Himself. "For love's sake"—for their sake. The physical imprisonment was a mirror of his spiritual experience.

(2) *Paul's associate in writing, Timothy*, a young man who he links with himself in six out of his ten letters to the churches; his "dearly beloved son" (II Tim. 1:2) and a "man of God" (I Tim. 6:11). One who worked "the work of the Lord" (I Cor. 16:10). A man who 'cared' (Phil. 2:19), and who was capable of tears, (II Tim. 1:4). Who preached the gospel (II Cor. 1:19) and was a 'workfellow' (Rom. 16:21); "Faithful in the Lord" (I Cor. 4:17). All "for love's sake." Here, he is simply, "brother" (omit 'our'). How much is involved in this term 'brother'! One reading suggests that he was THE brother.

(3) *Philemon, who received the letter*, of whom nothing is known outside of this letter, but see how Paul addresses him—"Our dearly beloved, and fellow labourer." Separated by many miles, yet, "fellow labourers." See how Paul speaks of his "love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints . . . we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother." Thus, with the simple word, 'brother,' Philemon is linked with the Apostle and with Timothy, and with all saints.

(4) *Apphia, our 'beloved.'* Possibly the wife of Philemon, and there is no doubt that she is included in the commendation of the Apostle.

(5) *Archippus, "our fellowsoldier"*—possibly Philemon's son. He, too, is included in the commendation of the Apostle. The letter to the church at Colosse—in Philemon's house—also has a word for Archippus—"Take heed to the ministry that thou hast received IN THE LORD, that thou fulfil it" (Col. 4:17). In other words, "Be sure to do all that the Lord has given you to do." Note that the ministry, or service, was received IN THE LORD. Tradition makes Archippus a bishop of Laodicea. We pause to recall the link of the church at Colosse with that at Laodicea. (Col. 2:1; 4:16; and cf. Rev. 3:14-22).

In that separate letter to the church in the house of Philemon there was also a commendation for these "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." They too were com-

mended for their faith and love but Paul and Epaphras were worried about the two churches—perhaps because Epaphras was instrumental in forming the church at Colosse for there was error in the air. There were “speculations as to the Godhead and the outgrowth of emanations from it; to create a separation between those who believed themselves perfect in this higher knowledge, and the mass of their brethren: and, above all, to obscure or obliterate the sole divine mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ.” This letter was a warning. As it is to us, for even in these enlightened days we see rifts between those who consider themselves more enlightened than their brethren. But in this personal letter to Philemon there is no mention of anything which might cause dispute. What a day both for Philemon and the church when these letters arrived, carried by Tychicus and Onesimus.

(6) *Onesimus* of whom there are two things written. He had been ‘unprofitable’—but he was now ‘profitable;’ a play, in the Greek, upon his name. Again, apart from tradition, nothing is known of him outside of this letter.

Was he a thief? An idler? We do not know. What we do know however is that he ran away from the godly atmosphere of Philemon’s house and the church therein, and put a good one thousand miles between Philemon and himself. In Rome, by the grace of God, he met the Apostle and was ‘born again,’ and confessed his sin to him.

Paul sends him back home with this letter and the letter to the church. Onesimus is his son, ‘begotten in bonds,’ a ‘brother beloved.’

(7) *Epaphras, ‘my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus’* who in the letter to the church Paul calls ‘our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit’ (Col. 1:7-8. “A servant of Christ . . . always labouring fervently for you in prayer” (4:12). Tradition makes him a bishop of Colosse. “For you; one of you; labouring for you; ministering Christ.” “For love’s sake.”

(8) “*Marcus, my fellow labourer.*” His mother Mary was a friend of Peter (Acts 12), (and he may have been the young man of Mark 14). Otherwise, John Mark, he was author of the Gospel which bears his name. In Acts 13 he is with

Paul and his cousin Barnabas upon the first missionary journey. Later, for some reason, Mark left Paul and Barnabas at Perga in Pamphylia and returned to Jerusalem. Still later at Antioch, Barnabas wished to take Mark with them upon a second journey. Paul refused to have Mark and they parted company. Col. 4 : 10-11 reveals that they had been reconciled, and they were now 'fellow labourers' and still later, Timothy was exhorted to "Take Mark, and bring him with thee : for he was profitable to me for the ministry." If Mark was indeed the young man in the Garden of Gethsemane then he must have been the source of the record of the scene in the Garden when the disciples slept. Was it such a memory which made him a 'fellow labourer?'

(9) *Aristarchus* "my fellow labourer"—who at Ephesus during the rioting of the silversmiths was dragged with Gaius into the theatre : accompanied Paul to Jerusalem and to Rome (Acts 27 : 2). Was he in the shipwreck at Melita? Not only was he the 'fellow labourer' but in the church letter he is the "fellow prisoner."

(10) *Demas*, "my fellow labourer" who is mentioned with the others in the church letter (Col. 4 : 14), but how sad it is to read in the letter to Timothy (II Tim. 4 : 10) "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world (the present age as against the world to come)." How sad to lose a 'fellow labourer!' A different love here!

(11) *Luke*, "my fellow labourer" the "beloved physician" of the letter to the church (Col. 4 : 14), author of the Gospel which bears his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles. Companion of Paul on much of the Apostle's journeyings, and including the shipwreck. What pathos we see in the word of Paul to Timothy (II Tim. 4 : 1), "Only Luke is with me."

What giants these men were! What hardships they endured! What a fellowship theirs was! Fellow labourers; fellow soldiers; fellow prisoners; brethren in Christ; what a warfare they fought! These were just a handful of the church builders who, like the wall builders of Jerusalem (Neh. 4) were "they that builded the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon. For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded."

These were men who in their lives fulfilled the royal law, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. 6 : 2).

Not only within the confines of the "church in thy house" but in that greater fellowship which stretched from Rome to Colosse and on again to Jerusalem we see the **RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE**—they were 'fellows'—'partners.'

The Apostle writing to the church at Corinth (I Cor. 13) prefixed his song of love with, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." The love of the church at Colosse was such that it stretched a thousand miles! "Hearing of thy love and faith which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward **ALL** saints;" (v. 5). This **REPORT OF LOVE** was not just sounding brass of a tinkling cymbal, but (playing upon the word) something that was heard in Rome.

Notice how their love is described—it is "love and faith **TOWARD** the Lord Jesus, and **TOWARD** all saints." An outward and onward movement with an end in view—first the Lord; then the saints. This is the **PROGRESS OF LOVE**—a passing on, and the Apostle prays that this "fellowship of thy faith (the passing on of, and the interchange of, that faith) may become effective (work powerfully) by the acknowledging (sure knowledge) of every good thing which is in you in Christ."

This love is—in a sense—not for the world. This is genuine love toward the Lord Jesus Christ and toward the saints, and the Apostle continues his prayer for the forwarding of their love and faith because, says he, "I have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed (given rest) by thee, brother." The direction of his prayer changes from the inclusive to the personal, it is to "thee, brother." See what this onward flow of love does. It brings the **REJOICING AND THE REFRESHING OF LOVE** in ever increasing circles.

It is to this love Paul now appeals. Knowing of the love which existed at Colosse he has freedom of speech in Christ to command, but he will not command but rather appeal to that love. He does take the opportunity of reminding Philemon of his (Paul's) age, and that he was a prisoner of Christ Jesus. A prisoner, but with freedom, he appeals

for someone who Philemon had no doubt given up for lost—Onesimus. Philemon would know what Paul meant by speaking of Onesimus as his 'son'—begotten in my bonds. Onesimus had been born again! Wonderful news to Philemon, his family, and the church.

Onesimus, unprofitable as servant and as slave, but now "a brother beloved," both in the flesh and in Christ.

We notice how Paul respected the law. Minded to keep Onesimus at Rome "that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel" (v. 13) he knew that Onesimus was still the property of Philemon, and so Onesimus had to return to Colosse. This would test Philemon's reaction. Would his love prevail over his wrong? Would he indeed give a free will offering of his forgiveness? Would **THE REQUEST OF LOVE** be turned away?

"Perhaps" says Paul, "because of this, he was separated from you for a little while, so that he might come back 'for ever'." A servant no longer, but linked in the Lord for time and for eternity. Such is the **REFORMATION OF LOVE**.

"As you would receive me, so receive Onesimus" (v. 17), and further, "Charge any debt he owes you, to me. I will repay it." How like his Lord!

"But I will not speak of what you owe me—your very self."

"You have given joy and refreshment of heart to so many others, will you now do the same for me—in the Lord? "Let me have profit of thee in the Lord." **THE RECOMPENSE OF LOVE**. Yes, the love of Philemon, though many miles separated him from Paul, gave the Apostle full confidence in the obedience of Philemon to his plea for Onesimus—not only in the bare essentials, but beyond! This is **THE RESPONSE OF LOVE**.

The letter closes with a request that a lodging might be prepared for Paul in the hope that the prayers of the company at Colosse would be granted them. Here, finally, is the **REASSURANCE OF LOVE**.

Christianity gets its character **from the present position of Christ**: and determines, therefore, the believer's position on earth—heavenly. It is the great aim therefore of Satan to **obstruct** the truth of the **personal presence** of the Holy Ghost on earth.

A HEART TO POSSESS

- An OPEN heart for Him to enter,
(Acts 16 : 14; Rev. 3 : 20)
A TRUE heart for Worship, (Heb. 10 : 22)
A WHOLE heart for Devotedness (Psa. 119 : 2; 10; 34)
A FIXED heart for Steadfastness, (Psa. 112 : 7)
A BURNING heart for Communion, (Luke 24 : 32)
A PERFECT heart for Pleasing God, (Psa. 101 : 2)
An OBEDIENT heart for Service, (Rom. 6 : 17)
An ENLARGED heart for Sanctification (2 Cor. 6 : 11)
A PURE heart for a Blessed Experience, (Matt. 5 : 8)
A POSSESSED heart for the Lord, (Eph. 3 : 17)
An ESTABLISHED heart with Grace, (Heb. 13 : 19)
A BROKEN heart for the Lord to be near (Psa. 34 : 18)
A CONTRITE heart, God will not despise (Psa. 51 : 17)
A CLEAN heart, God is good to them (Psa. 73 : 1)

—J. EVANS.

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by Dr. JOHN BOYD

3 : 18—4 : 1 HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

v. 18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,
Paul now proceeds from the general application of the above relative relationships to their application to particular individuals. He sets before different persons their duties as Christians in various family relationships. A like exhortation is found in Eph. 5 : 22—6 : 9, though there slightly enlarged.

Similar lists are found in other epistles—I Peter 2 : 13-20 defines political relationship; II Tim. 2 : 1-10—social relationship; I Tim. 2 : 8-15—ecclesiastical relationship; I Tim. 6 : 1-18—personal relationship.

In the original Greek the various persons addressed in this section are prefixed by the definite article, which before the nominative case has the force of a vocative—a calling, or commanding; it defines the persons intended. Six classes of Christians are mentioned—paired into three different

relationships. One of each of the three pairs has a duty of submission to perform—wives (v. 18), children (v. 20), servants (v. 22). The corresponding persons in the couplet have also a duty set before them—husbands (not to be bitter); fathers (not to discourage their children); masters (not to forget righteousness).

Wives are enjoined to submit themselves to their husbands. The A.V. adds the word 'own'—not in the original text here, but found in the Greek text of the corresponding injunction in Eph. 5 : 22, Tit. 2 : 5, I Peter 3 : 1, whence it is possibly inserted here. Does this suggest that some of the Christian wives had unbelieving husbands (I Peter 3 : 1), and they were inclined to obey the assembly elders rather than their unconverted husbands, whom they had married before being born again? Paul teaches where their responsibility lies. Peter shows the possible outcome of obeying this injunction—the conversion of the husband.

The husband is the head of the wife, and therefore must be in general control (Eph. 5 : 23).

as it is fit in the Lord. The verb here is in the imperfect tense, suggesting that this state of affairs was fit, and still is fitting. It was the edict of God at the first, after the Fall, for the man to rule the woman (Gen. 3 : 16), and has not been abrogated. It is even more fitting now, when the woman has acknowledged the Lordship of Christ (v. 17).

v. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Love must be the over-riding principle in the christian home, even on the part of the husband. It is his responsibility to his wife, who is subject to him, to show his love for her.

The christian home is seen as a replica of the relationship between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5 : 23). As the Church is subject to the Lord so must the wife be to her husband (v. 18). But the relation of the husband to his wife should be a copy of the attitude of Christ to the Church—an unfathomable love that caused Him to give Himself up, even to the death of the Cross.

To emphasise further the nature of the husband's love for his wife, he must never be bitter against her, even though, if not born again, she may have given him occasion to retaliate, because of her constant nagging, and lack of

submission to his wishes. He must show love, as did Christ, even to those that reviled and despised Him; his love should follow the pattern of his Lord's. This reminder to love his wife is all the more necessary if the husband is given to display undue respect for his fellowmen in the world, and be inclined to change his demeanour when he arrives home, as so commonly happens.

v. 20 *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.* This exhortation is to children who are believers. They must obey all their parents' commands. The word here translated 'obey' is lit., to listen under, that is, looking up to, paying good attention to what is said. This is well-pleasing, a word nearly always used in relation to God.

The words 'unto the Lord' are really a translation of Greek words meaning, 'in the Lord.' They would suggest that the obedience of believing children pleased God, as becoming disciples who were one in the Lord. Such obedience suggests that they were acting in close communion with the Lord. Compare a similar expression in I Cor. 7 : 39, 'only in the Lord,' that is, only as the Lord would authorize. The Lord would amply repay such obedience by permitting them a long and happy life (Deut. 5 : 16).

v. 21 *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.* On the other hand the fathers are exhorted not to produce in the hearts of the children those very conditions that would cause contention and disobedience.. Some Greek versions use a word that implies making the children angry, as in Eph. 6 : 4, by vexatious compulsions. The suggestion is that often the responsibility for right relations in the family depended much on the father's attitude to the children. The word translated 'discouraged' is here its only use in the New Testament, and implies loss of spirit, or of courage, that is, disheartenment on the part of the children; they find obedience to be difficult.

v. 22 *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh;* The word for servants here is lit., bondservants. The duty of slaves to masters is dealt with here at greater length than any of the other two dutiful relations, that is, of wives and children. Possibly this was due to the fact that Paul was sending along with this letter to the Colossians

another shorter letter, which dealt more specifically with the subject of the duty of a slave to his master, viz., of Onesimus towards Philemon. As Paul sent this letter, and that to Philemon by the hand of Onesimus (4 : 9), it would seem as though the apostle had instructed Onesimus personally, and then Philemon by this letter as to the relationship of slaves and their masters.

Paul particularly emphasises that the duty of a slave is to a master in the flesh. Bondservice, as such, has no part in the relationship of believers one to another (v. 11), but if the slave had belonged to a believer as his master before he had been converted, his duty to him still remains the same (I Cor. 7 : 20-21). Obedience and attention to the master are the paramount consideration in such conditions.

The injunction in this section is not to be confined to the days when slavery was generally recognised, but would apply also to-day to any relationship between an employer and an employee.

not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; This would suggest that the bondservant had a greater responsibility when he was born again. His service was not merely that of one who kept his eye on his master, to see if he was being watched, and only worked then. This was the custom of the men of the world—keeping up an appearance of working, so as to please his earthly master only.

but in singleness of heart, fearing God : As a Christian slave he had a higher duty; he did not merely work to please another man; his mind was set upon one purpose—to fear the Lord, and to please Him, that ever saw and knew what he was doing; he was ever conscious of the Lord's eye upon him.

The R.V. changes the end of the verse to 'fearing the Lord,' implying that his real 'Master' then was Christ. He was Christ's bondservant (1 Cor. 7 : 22 R.V.), a higher bondservice than that of any fleshly relationship. This Lordship of Christ is emphasised in 3 : 22—4 : 1.

v. 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; The believer's bondservice to an earthly master must be as if he reckoned all service was being done unto the Lord Jesus Christ, not merely to a fellowman.

Two different Greek words are translated 'do' here, (1)

'*Whatsoever ye do,*' that is, any human activity that a slave would be called upon to perform, (2) '*do it,*' describes the way the work is done—putting energy into it, further emphasised by the word '*heartily,*' lit., out of your soul. Work for his master should be the result of servile compulsion, but putting his whole heart and soul into it, just as he would perform any service for his heavenly Master, to whom he was so much indebted. He was not merely serving another man. The Lord Jesus was also being served. Masters according to the flesh were but the Lord's overseers. The Lord is the believer's real Master.

v. 24 *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance:* Paul would remind the bondsman that in the Lord he has a Master who will faithfully give a reward for service rendered to Him. The word here translated 'reward' is lit., an exact repaying of what is due. That reward will be incorporated in the inheritance of the saint.

The bondsman is aware that he has no entitlement to a reward from an earthly master, but as a believer he has an inheritance reserved for him in heaven (I Peter 1 : 4). He may be a bondsman of a man on earth, but he is the Lord's freeman (I Cor. 7 : 22), with an inheritance in heaven, to which any reward earned on earth will be added (II Cor. 5 : 10). Service done for his heavenly Master down here will receive a reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3 : 14).

for ye serve the Lord Christ. After conversion, the slave of a man, in addition to being God's freeman, is God's bondsman (Rom. 6 : 22). In all his faithful service down here for whatever master, he is serving the Lord as bondsman, and from Him he will receive a reward, in contradistinction to what human masters do.

v. 25 *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done:* Note the change found in the R.V. margin, from the A.V. rendering; it does not say, he 'shall receive *for* the wrong which he hath done', as in A.V., but, 'he shall receive *again* the wrong that he hath done.' It would seem as if Paul still has in mind the Judgment Seat of Christ, before which all believers, slaves and freemen, will be made manifest. There each one will receive the things done, lit., through, by means of the body (II Cor. 5 : 10, R.V. margin). This is not the receipt of rewards,

but of the character that has been manifested at the Judgment Seat. It is given back to us—to wear for eternity. Possibly this is the same figure as the fine linen, in which we shall be arrayed—‘the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints’ (Rev. 19 : 8 R.V.). The fine linen of some saints will be brighter than of others, ‘according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad’ (II Cor. 5 : 10 R.V.). We shall receive a character just according to what we have done—according to the nature of our work; if good, ‘whatsoever good thing that each one doeth, the same shall he *receive again* from the Lord’ (Eph. 6 : 8 R.V.); if bad, ‘he that doeth wrong shall *receive again* the wrong that he hath done’ (Col. 3 : 25 R.V. margin). Note particularly the use of the word ‘again.’

This verse would teach bondservants, and indeed all servants, that their every work, well or poorly done, will be taken into account; it should be an incentive to them to give good service, in that which is being done primarily to the Lord.

and there is no respect of persons. Lit., there is no accepting the face—thus expressing the impartiality of God in His judgment of men. To each slave would be given a reward suited to his service (v. 24).

This would be guidance to Onesimus as to his future life and work, in returning to Philemon. God would not assess his service differently because he had been born again. Rather should he serve his old master more faithfully because of his regeneration—the better to please the Lord, his new Master. He was a bondservant, and should continue so to serve.

“BRETHREN FACING A CRISIS”

This is the title of an article by Bill Spencer which appeared in a Christian Magazine. It is a report of the Annual Men’s Conference at Swanwick this year. I have only a photocopy of the article, and I do not know the Magazine from which it comes. Can anyone help with information about (1) The Magazine, (2) The Conference, please? I hope to Review the article in May-June issue of Assembly Testimony.—The Editor.

NOTES BY THE COMMITTEE

Be still my soul! Thy God doth undertake
To guide the future as He has the past:
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake.
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

As we enter another year, it is with deep sorrow and regret that we record the Home-call of our esteemed brother and member of our Committee, Mr. James Henry Mayhew. The Lord was pleased to call His servant to be with Him in the glory on Lord's Day, 14th January, 1979. His service in the Lord's work extended for sixty-one years. He was a great help to us by his counsel from time to time, and he was always willing to help the production of this magazine from its beginning. We know we shall miss him in many ways, but the God he knew remaineth, and will "undertake to guide the future as He has the past." Kindly remember his wife Nellie, and his sons Willie and Jim in your prayers. They are all in fellowship in our assemblies.

Readers will appreciate that we need your prayers now more than ever. Our need of our God's guidance and help increases, but we are glad we have the same God Whom Abraham trusted, Jehovah-Jireh, the "Lord will see, or provide" (Genesis 22:14).

We thank all those who remembered us in their prayers during the past year. We trust the Lord will add to their number.

We also thank all those who showed their practical fellowship with us throughout another year. For all this great kindness we express our gratitude in our Lord's worthy Name.

To those who contributed papers we express our heartfelt thanks. This service means long hours of devoted study which only the Lord can estimate, and we know He will gladly reward our beloved contributors for their labour of love in a soon-coming day.

It is also our desire to thank all those who help in distribution. We are glad to ensure that whoever desires can have a copy free, but to ensure that there is no waste, the help of our distributors is of great value as they inform us of necessary amendments from time to time.

Again we thank the Lord for the help of our Honorary Editor. His is a big responsibility. His service in the ministry of the Word demands much of his time, and in his many journeys at home and overseas he constantly needs the preservation of our faithful God.

Like our Editor, our brother Glenville, "in journeyings often," in the ministry of the Word, needs our prayers. For his help in the correspondence connected with the magazine we offer our sincere thanks.

NEW READERS ARE HEARTILY WELCOMED. We are pleased to supply, post paid, copies of future issues on request, in the will of the Lord. Always state **number** of copies required. Quantity can be amended at any time of the year. Please use **BLOCK LETTERS** for name and address, with postal code. Back numbers are also available, although many are now out of print.

Where possible, endeavour to obtain copy through the assembly parcel. Bulk despatch saves postage and time. Since this magazine is available through the free-will offerings of the Lord's people, it is the **RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL TO AVOID WASTE AT ALL TIMES.** Kindly introduce the magazine to others. Continue to pray for us.

"Above all things have fervent charity (R.V. 'love') among yourselves."

There is power for the present. There is no quality of Christian character which follows faith that is so completely necessary and so alarmingly lacking as in the quality of love. It is the premier virtue and the pinnacle purpose of the Christian.

Love possesses different qualities. This love is not just sentimental gush. It is called "fervent," and the word "fervent" has a different meaning here than when used elsewhere in Scripture. When the New Testament speaks of a "fervent spirit," it implies "to boil." But when it speaks here of a "fervent love," it means to be "extended" or "stretched out." But how shall love be extended and stretched out? There are two ways: First, by **forgiving** (v. 8). Second, love can be extended by **giving** (v. 9). Love gives a practical demonstration.—ROY L. LAURIN.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

***“Whom having not seen,
ye love”*** *1 Peter 1:8*



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HIS PRESENCE

Matt. Ch. 28 : 20

To know His Presence with us,
Is all that we would crave,
That His Power our strength might be,
To succour and to save.

Many are the foes we face,
As we journey on,
We need daily supplies of grace,
To cheer and be our song.

The Great High Priest on high,
He knows our every need,
As Son of God His Power is nigh,
And no foe dare impede.

Soon shall we hear His voice,
Calling from earth away,
Causing our spirits to rejoice,
In that grand perfect day.

To see His Face and beauty,
As round Him we will throng,
No longer thoughts of duty,
But one spontaneous song.

—J. G. Good

MARY OF BETHANY

by J. G. GOOD

The home at Bethany was favoured by the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, this did not grant immunity from the sorrows common to man, neither did it cancel out the traits of character possessed by Martha and Mary, this is evident from Luke 10:40. Again it was the individuals resident in Bethany which made Bethany what it was to the Lord Jesus, there was a place in their hearts for Him, He was a welcome guest, the centre of attraction.

There was nothing artificial in the behaviour of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, in the home in the presence of the Lord, natural dispositions fully displayed. God never intended that we should surrender up our personality, to conform to a man-made ideal, but that learning in the school of grace, would bring a willing submission to His will.

We shall look at the three references to Mary in the Gospels, and see the order and growth and what the ultimate end should be and will be when we see Him face to face.

The Posture of the Pupil (Luke 10:38)

Learning

It is significant to note the place given to this incident in this chapter, following the parable of the Good Samaritan, surely only those who have had the Jericho road experience have the desire to sit at His feet to hear His word.

Martha was cumbered by much serving, would it be right to assume that service apart from sitting will always be cumbersome. The only acceptable service is that which springs from sitting in His presence, we must wait before Him expectantly in private, before we can witness effectively in public. David slew a bear in a private place before he slew Goliath in a public place. Far too many young believers are reversing this order, and see public service as their goal, at the expense of imbibing the teaching of the Master, in the quiet and secret place. There can be no substitute for that which is personally appropriated at His feet, however rich the ministry of the Word at the gatherings of His people, and this is important, but to know as individuals the joy of His presence, being taught of Him, is on a higher plane. It is in this atmosphere that a restful spirit is cultivated, a scarce commodity to-day, "In eaning time

and harvest thou shalt rest" (Exodus 34 : 21), the two busiest seasons of the year, and yet the command is given to rest, of course we must distinguish between lethargy and rest. Activity is necessary, is it the product of occupation with Christ? This is by choice not by chance, "Mary hath chosen" may we do likewise!

The Prediction of the Pilgrim (John 11 : 21) *Leaning*

The words of Martha in verse twenty-one, repeated by Mary in verse thirty-two, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" the trust and confidence which emanates from this statement, death could not abide in the presence of the Lord of Life. Without hesitation we have a recognition of the blessing which must accompany His presence, irrespective as to the depth of sorrow through which His people may pass, the bitter waters are made sweet, Marah becomes Elim, when we know His presence with us in the trial.

Again we see perfect submission to His will, no murmurings or questionings as to the delay, verse 6. How often we would dictate the time and length of our particular trial, "He knoweth our frame" (Psalm 103 : 14), and the pressure required to produce fruit for His glory (see Isaiah 28 : 27). The dealings of God with His people are a proof of His love for us, (Hebrews 12 : 6), will we faint under it, or despise it, or be exercised by it, the trial producing the desired result, "The sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God."

The Privilege of the Priest (John 12 : 3) *Loving*

There is a climax reached here, the end product of past experience, "They made Him a feast." The Instruction of Luke 10, the Submission of John 11, is followed by the Appreciation of John 12. The more we learn of Him, the greater our trust becomes, this in turn leads to a touching of the heart's affection. Would the 'feast' suggest that the weaning process had been accomplished, that the fear and dread of death had been removed and answered in resurrection? The spikenard was Precious in terms of cost, it was Personal to Mary no doubt being kept for a special occasion, being Pure in its composition, the word used is 'genuine,' again it was Pungent as to its aroma, "and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." Finally,

Mary was acting Prophetically in her application of the ointment, "against the day of My burying hath she kept this."

If there is a lesson to be learned, it is this, that spiritual discernment and intelligence are acquired by communion with Him, consequently leading the child of God to acquiesce in all God's dealings with him, knowing without doubt that our good is in view, and that the consummation will be occupation with Him! May this be more true of all of us, that our ears will be attuned to hear His voice, our minds will be submissive, and lastly our hearts will be affected and that our worship will find expression in our lives for His glory!

With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow,
Were lusted with His love,
I'll bless the Hand that guided
I'll bless the Heart that planned,
When throned where Glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land.

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

(A BRIEF OUTLINE ONLY)

by WILLIAM BARR, Cumbernauld

INTRODUCTION

In the four Gospels we have—The *Foundation* of the Gospel
In the Book of Acts we have—The *Furtherance* of the Gospel
In the Roman Epistle we have—The *Facts* of the Gospel

In this Epistle we have the initial and fundamental teaching regarding the believer justified before a Holy God, on the righteous basis of faith in Christ and His finished work and enjoying the liberty and blessings of salvation through the Person and Ministry of the Holy Spirit.

SUMMARY

1. Chaps. 1-3—The *Demand* for the Gospel.
2. Chaps. 4-8—The *Doctrine* of the Gospel.
3. Chaps. 9-11—The *Dispensations* and the Gospel.
4. Chaps. 12-16—The *Demonstration* of the Gospel.

FOUR OUTLINES

1. Chaps. 1-3—The Gospel and the *Sinner*.
Chap. 1—The *Repulsive Sinner*.
Chap. 2—The *Respectable Sinner*.
Chap. 3—The *Religious Sinner*.
2. Chaps. 4-8—The Gospel and the *Believer*.
Chap. 4—The Gospel *Explained*.
Chaps. 5/7—The Gospel *Experienced*.
Chap. 8—The Gospel *Expressed*.

or

Chaps. 1-11—*The Gospel of His Grace*.
Chaps. 12-16—*The Grace of The Gospel*.

(Note—The significant verses at ch. 5 : 12 '*wherefore*,'
ch. 8 : 1 '*Therefore*' and ch. 12 : 1 '*. . . therefore*.'

Three Problems to be put right re. the believer.

- Chap. 5—The *Headship* of Adam.
- Chap. 6—The *Principle* of Sin in the Flesh.
- Chap. 7—The *Demands* of the Law.

(All answered in the Person and Work of Christ and our
identification with Him !).

3. Chaps. 9-11—The Gospel and *Israel*.
Chap. 9—*The Purpose of God* in Election.
Chap. 10—*The Preaching of the Gospel* and Salvation.
Chap. 11—*The Position of the Gentiles* and Testimony.
4. Chaps. 12-16—The Gospel and the *Assembly*.
Chap. 12—*Living Sacrifice*.
Chap. 13—*Loyal Subjects*.
Chap. 14—*Liberal Saints*.
Chap. 15—*Like-Minded Society*.
Chap. 16—*Loving Servants*.

TRUTH FOR YOUTH IN II TIMOTHY

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

CHAPTER 3 — LOYALTY AMID SIN AND SHAME

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Apostasy in political life v. 4, in religious life v. 5.

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His Devotion was Strong, His Character Delightful.
His Distressing Circumstances v. 11a.
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A Call for Diligence

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Their Versatility constructive, preventative, restorative and
educative v. 16.
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'DO STAND FOR THE GOSPEL'

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Be Relevant—Convince, Rebuke, Exhort.

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2. *The Serious Conditions v. 3-4 Look at Your Surroundings*
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Full Proof."

4. *Paul's Sterling Character v. 6-8 Live Like Me.*
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v. 7 The Past—His Striking Verdict on Three Things.
v. 8 The Future—His Sublime Vision of The Prize.

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Luke—The Abiding Brother.
Mark—The Appreciated Brother.
Tychicus—The Able Minister. Carpus—Assisted Paul.
Alexander—The Adversary—An Attacking Brother.

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He was assured v. 18. He adored his Lord v. 18c.

7. *His Salutations in Christ v. 19-22 Do Not Linger,
Come Soon.*
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v. 22a An Ever Living Friend.
v. 22b A Lasting Friend—Grace.

'DO SPREAD THE GOSPEL'

Errata: Jan./Feb. issue (No. 159) page 6. 2 Timothy chapter 1.
Item 6 should read CONSTANCY TO DUTY (not 'Curiosity').

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by DR. JOHN BOYD

CHAPTER 4

v. 1 *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal;* The treatment of the slaves by their masters is now considered. This exhortation is to converted masters. They should render (R.V.), lit., hold near to, show on their part what is right and fair. The word 'render' is in the

middle voice, and suggests what the masters should do as their responsibility; they should deal righteously and equitably with their bondservants. As the servants must *do* what is right (v. 22), so should the masters *give* what is right. As the bondservant has a duty to serve his master, so the master equally should show the servants love.

Paul possibly has his own moral here—a message to Philemon as to how he should treat Onesimus. If Onesimus comes back to resume his bondservice, so should Philemon acknowledge Onesimus' conversion, and treat him as a 'brother beloved' (Philemon 16).

knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. The Lord is Master, both of the bondservant and of his owner. The latter should take his pattern from his heavenly Master, in righteous and equitable dealings with his bondservants (3 : 24).

v. 2 *Continue in prayer*, Paul now gives some exhortations with regard to holy living, dealing with it both in THE INNER LIFE (vv. 2-4), and THE OUTER LIFE (vv. 5-6). First, he deals with prayer, seven aspects of which are mentioned here.

(A) *Perseverance in Prayer.* Paul exhorts the Colossians to continue in this exercise, or as the R.V. has it, to 'continue steadfastly in prayer.' It is the same word in the original language as is found in Acts 2 : 42, where the disciples 'continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.' The word translated 'continue' comes from a root meaning, 'to be strong, to endure' (Heb. 11 : 27), and is intensified by a prefix meaning 'towards,' that is, to persevere in, to be continually steadfast in prayer.

and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

(B) *Thanksgiving in Prayer.* They must also watch in prayer, that is, to be on the alert, to be wide awake in it. Prayer is an exercise that demands thought and fixity of purpose. The believer does well to take this lesson to heart, because of his natural indolence in prayer; he forgets so easily, especially in the matter of thanksgiving.

Paul declares his own example (1 : 9-12); he did not cease to pray for them, and included in his prayer thanksgiving (1 : 3, 12). In writing this epistle, thanksgiving is uttermost in Paul's mind; he refers to it in all four chapters

(1 : 3, 2 : 7, 3 : 15, 4 : 2). Prayer should begin and end with thanksgiving; at the start it is the expression of confidence in God's readiness to answer; at the end it reveals the gratitude for answered prayer. Thanksgiving is the summit of prayer, the gratitude for a joyful communion with God, the expression of final appreciation.

v. 3 Withal praying also for us,

(C) *Prayer for Preachers.* 'Withal' is an adverb, suggesting 'at the same time.' The apostle infers that whilst they were occupied perseveringly in prayer, they should think particularly of those who preach the gospel. Paul possibly had in mind those whom he mentions in the epistle as preachers of the Word—Timothy (1 : 1), Epaphras (1 : 7), Paul himself (1 : 23), and Archippus (4 : 17). He felt that they had a great honour conferred upon them, but it was also a great responsibility, and one that could not be discharged without the prayer support of the children of God.

Let us remember to bear up before the throne of grace those who are active in seeking the salvation of men, not forgetting the missionaries. They need prayer, for without God's help their preaching would be in vain. May those who preach the gospel be like Paul, who felt greatly the need of the prayers of God's people, and was not ashamed to ask others for their assistance. Preaching is not a one-man job.

that God would open unto us a door of utterance,

(D) *Prayer in Difficulties.* Paul realised that there were many hindrances to the preaching of the gospel. Satan is ever active in this respect, but it is comforting for the saints to remember that God can overcome the adversary of His people. Prayer can reach the throne, and move the hand that controls the world. Paul would covet their prayers for the free, unhindered presentation of the Word of God by the preachers of the gospel mentioned in the earlier part of the verse.

Let us appreciate the mighty power of prayer that lies to our hand, to remove the obstructions in our pathway.

to speak the mystery of Christ,

(E) *Prayer for Results.* The apostle now shows his aim in seeking a door of utterance. 'To speak' is the infinitive of purpose, and Paul's desire was not merely that he should have an opportunity to preach, but that he might present to

men the mystery of Christ. This was the stewardship that God had given to him, and to the ministers of the gospel of God's redeeming love through Christ; it was the divine scheme for man, embodied and revealed in Christ; it was Christ in them, the hope of glory (1 : 27).

That this result should be accomplished in men, Paul sought the prayers of God's people. Let us ever keep before us in prayer the great objective of the gospel, that the name of Christ be glorified, and souls saved, to be indwelt by Christ down here, and experience with Him the eternal glory.

for which I am also in bonds :

(F) *Prayer for those in Bondage.* That he might fulfil the purpose of his stewardship Paul had suffered affliction. Even then he was bound in chains in a Roman jail, because he had preached the gospel (1 : 25-27). As he thus suffered his heart went out to the many in like affliction. He asked for the prayers of the Colossian believers for all such. He would exhort them, and us to-day, to 'Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body' (Heb. 13 : 3).

v. 4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

(G) *Prayer for Freedom.* This request of Paul's was subordinate to the request for an open door of utterance. Instead of being in bondage, he desired freedom for the public manifestation of the gospel message, as was incumbent on one so called as he had been—to preach it boldly.

v. 5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without. Paul continues his exhortation to holy living, by dealing with the Christian's OUTER LIFE, his life as seen by his fellowmen. He divides it into two sections—HIS WALK (v. 5), and HIS TALK (v. 6). Paul is following his Lord in this division of the Christian life. We believers often speak of an 'out and out' Christian life, but the Lord spoke of an 'in and out' life (John 10 : 9). So does Paul—IN, to pray, and to commune with God (vv. 2-4); OUT, to preach, and to manifest the new life to men.

The apostle has in mind particularly the impression the Colossians should make on unbelievers—"toward (in their relation with) them that are without," that is, those outside the family of God. Before these the believer ought to walk

wisely. 'Walk' here implies the whole daily round of life, in all its aspects.

This is a most important matter, especially in regard to the conversion of the unbeliever who is often more convinced by the believer's life than by his words. Wisdom is needed, in order that the right effect might be produced. How the believer lives before the unsaved has a profound effect in the matter of his salvation; it may be helped or hindered. It is tragic to think that one's character before men may mean all the difference as to whether a person will spend eternity in heaven or in hell. Love shown to a neighbour, or satisfaction manifested in the countenance, proclaim that in Christ Jesus there is something to be desired. On the other hand, if the believer is churlish, or easily provoked, he does not commend Christ as the Saviour of sinners. Thus we children of God do well to consider our walk, and so live that we present the Lord Jesus Christ as worthy of the sinner's trust.

redeeming the time. 'Time' here means a season, or an opportunity (Gal. 6 : 10). The word translated 'redeeming' is in the middle voice, and implies, 'buying for oneself,' or as the R.V. marg. has it, 'buying up the opportunity.' It means making most of every suitable opportunity, as they present themselves, to bring the unconverted neighbours to the knowledge of salvation. This is wherein real wisdom is evident, for wisdom is that innate ability that senses the true and the good.

v. 6 *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt*, Paul now deals with the second section of the believer's OUTER LIFE, that is, HIS TALK. It should be marked by grace, or graciousness. Compare the Lord's words in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4 : 22). The Christian's words should be spoken in such a way that they will be well-pleasing to those without; it is part of the wise walk; they should appeal, but not offend; they should profit, and not be characterised by vanity.

The believer's speech should also be seasoned, lit., fitly prepared. This is suggested as right and proper for the preacher, and so for all the children of God. They should seek out acceptable words, upright words, words of truth (Eccl. 12 : 10). This is done with salt—a figure of that which gives flavour to food, and prevents it from corrupting. So salt is here used metaphorically for words that are

gracious, and for communication that is not corrupt—foolish talking, jesting (Eph. 5 : 3), falsehood (Col. 3 : 8-9). Such prepared words will be good for edification, and will minister grace to the hearers (Eph. 4 : 29).

that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. The word 'know' is an infinitive, the infinitive of purpose (v. 3)—to know how to answer, lit., to separate out for oneself the reply for EACH MAN (R.V.). Each man should get an answer appropriate to his need and question. This would be the function of the seasoning with salt. It has reference to Lev. 2 : 13—'with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.' The believer's words to those without should be as an offering to God, to which the salt of gracious wisdom must be added.

(To be continued)

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

by the **LATE JAMES SCOTT** (written over 50 years ago)

That a time of unparalleled distress will come upon the world is the solemn testimony of the prophetic Scriptures. There are six definite references to it; four of which have to do with the Jews, one with the Gentiles, and one with the Church.

JACOB'S TROUBLE

The first of these we will find in Jeremiah 30 : 7 : "Alas ! for that day is great, so that none is like it : it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it." The reference is unmistakably to the Jews, for they alone, at that time, will represent the seed of Jacob, the ten tribes being still in exile do not come into view until after the coming of the Son of man. This we gather from Psalm 73, which, in its prophetic setting, goes beyond the Jews and takes in all Israel. It is not a question of being received "to glory," as in the authorised version, for no one will participate in heavenly glory after the Rapture, with the exception of the martyred companies mentioned in the Book of Revelation. What Asaph doubtless wrote was, "Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and after the glory, thou wilt receive me" (v. 24, Darby's Translation—see Zech. 2 : 8). The Jews will be restored by the glory (Zech. 12 : 10), whereas Israel, the ten tribes, will be received after the glory.

A TIME OF TROUBLE

The next Scripture we have to consider is in Daniel 12 : 1, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." Daniel being a Jew, there can be no question as to who his people are; and it is with them that the Spirit of God is occupied in these Scriptures. Nor are we left in doubt as to when this prophecy will have its fulfilment. The previous chapter brings us to the time of the end when the self-willed king will usurp the throne of David (v. 36), and in conjunction with his ally, the Roman prince, will put a stop to the worship of Jehovah in the temple, and set up idolatry in its stead (chap. 9 : 27). It was to this our Lord referred when He uttered that solemn warning : "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet (chap. 12 : 11), stand in a holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains . . . for there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24 : 15-21). There can be no question but that the reference is to the same time as Daniel 12 : 1, for it is impossible to describe two separate occasions in precisely the same words—"such as was not . . . nor ever shall be."

WHITHER ZIONISM?

It must be clearly understood, if we are to avoid confusion, that the translation of the saints to heaven has taken place some time prior to this; and that many of the Jews have previously been returned to Palestine in unbelief, and with no repentance towards God, for the crime of Calvary. The Zionist movement, as we understand it, is purely political ; God is not consulted, Even when this movement assumes a national character, and a strong maritime power comes to their assistance (Isa. 18), God is still seen to be outside of it all : "For so Jehovah said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will consider in my dwelling place like a clear heat in sunshine, and like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest" (v. 4). Men foolishly imagine that they can do without God, so they have to learn their folly by bitter experience, for only disaster awaits

them (vv. 5, 6). Instead of the Jewish commonwealth being owned by God we have Him describing them as the people of His wrath: "Ho, Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets" (Isa. 10 : 5, 6). Having gone back to Palestine unrepentant and without God they will fall an easy prey to the worse condition predicted by our Lord when the evil spirit of idolatry that characterised them in the past, will return in an intensified form, and their last state be worse than their first (Matt 12 : 45). Seeing they refused Him Who came in His Father's name they will the more readily receive him who comes in his own name (John 5 : 43). "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders (wonders of falsehood), and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (II Thess. 2 : 9-12). Such is the predicted end that awaits highly favoured Christendom and the Jewish people, notwithstanding their boasted enlightenment and the "assured results of scholarship." Were it not that men are "willingly ignorant" it would be difficult to account for the slovenly-mindedness that prevails in regard to the coming apostasy and its awful consequences. The day of reckoning is fast drawing near when God will answer men according to their folly: "And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day" (Isa. 2 : 17). Here, again, in Daniel 12 : 1, we are assured that a remnant will be preserved for Millennial blessing, "every one that shall be found written in the book."

THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS

The next two Scriptures which deal with the Great Tribulation are found in the account of our Lord's Olivet discourse as recorded by Matthew and Mark, and for our present purpose may be treated as one. It was the enquiry of the disciples as to the Lord's coming, and of the end of the

age, that gave the occasion for this wonderful unfolding of the future, particularly in reference to the Jews. The angel Gabriel informed Daniel that "Unto the end wars and desolations are determined" (Dan. 9 : 26, Scofield, marg.), and this is further confirmed by our Lord when He says : "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars . . . all these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24 : 6, 8). They were, however, specially warned of the coming great distress, that will come upon the Jewish people, then back in their land, as we have seen. Although these warnings were addressed to the disciples it is quite evident that the remnant of the future is in view, hence He says : "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in a holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains . . . for there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matt. 24 : 15-21). Thus our Lord confirms the account given by Daniel, that it will be a time of trouble such as was never known before, nor will the like even occur again. The word "tribulation" comes from the Latin "tribulum," which was a kind of triple flail used by the Romans when threshing their wheat. Consequently the time of trouble we are considering will be the "great threshing time."

Doubtless the Jews who are returning to Palestine are under the impression that their sorrows are nearing an end : whereas God, in a providential way, is but gathering them in to the threshing floor. It must not be forgotten that He has a "controversy with his people," both for idolatry and the murder of His Son. Men would like to forget the foul crime enacted at Calvary but God never can; and that awful prayer uttered in the presence of Pontius Pilate, "his blood be upon us and on our children," will yet have a more terrible answer than anything they have ever experienced in the past. It was no mere figure of speech when the Baptist declared concerning the Coming One : "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matt. 3 : 12). The "flail" of judgment will do its work in separating the chaff from the wheat, when the ungodly will be consigned to eternal perdition, and the righteous gathered for millennial blessing when, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass" (Psa. 72 : 6)

Nor will highly favoured Christendom escape in the day of righteous retribution, for "in the end of the age, the Son of man will send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 13 : 40-42). Such will be the portion of every false teacher, and the end of every false system.

A COMMON ERROR

We learn from Daniel 9 : 27 that after the Jews are reinstated in their land they will enter into a covenant of seven years with the Roman prince of that day, who is identical with the first Beast of Rev. 13 and the little horn of Dan. 7. This would seem to be followed by a period of comparative calm until an event of sinister importance occurs in the heavens : "And there was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceived the whole world : he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Rev. 12 : 7, 9). While this gives occasion for jubilation in heaven it is of evil omen to the earth : "Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time" (v. 12). This coincides with the determined effort on the part of the Beast and the false prophet to substitute idolatry for the worship of Jehovah; and this in turn ushers in the Great Tribulation. "And he (the Roman prince) shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease" (Dan. 9 : 27). There is nothing in this about his breaking the covenant, as is commonly taught; the covenant is a purely political instrument, for mutual advantage, between the head of the revived Roman empire and the leaders of the Jewish commonwealth, and according to Isaiah 28, it will remain intact until it is annulled by the direct judgment of God : "Wherefore hear the word of Jehovah, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem. Because ye have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it

shall not come unto us; for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves . . . Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet : and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it” (vv. 14-18). Nor are we left without corroborative testimony, for this coincides with the predicted judgment of the last phase of Gentile dominion, as revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, when the stone cut out of the mountain without hands will fall with crushing effect upon it, and it becomes as the chaff of the summer threshing-floors (Dan. 2). We have further testimony to the same event in Rev. 19 where John sees “the Beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army . . . And the Beast was taken and with him the false prophet . . . These both were cast alive into the lake of fire . . . and the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse” (vv. 19-21). Doubtless the Psalmist had these tremendous happenings in view when he exclaimed : “Why do the nations rage, and the peoples meditate a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against his Anointed,” but Omnipotence can afford to smile at the puny efforts of the creature to thwart Him in His purposes, for, “He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh : the Lord shall have them in derision” (Psalm 2).

If the Roman prince does not break the covenant he will, nevertheless, oppress the nation, and persecute the godly remnant who refuse to “worship the beast” or his “image” (Rev. 13). It was to this our Lord referred in that solemn warning : “When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in a holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains” (Matt. 24 : 15, 16). The setting up of this image will be the signal for instant flight on the part of the faithful for there will follow the most bitter persecution the world has ever known : “There shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be, and except those days should be

shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (vv. 21, 22). He who has said to the raging sea: "Thither shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed" (Job 38 : 11), has mercifully set a limit to that time of sorrow which we are considering. According to Daniel's account that time will be limited to "a time, times, and a half," that is, three and a half years, corresponding to the last half of the seven years covenant. In Rev. 11 : 2 where we have the cruel heel of the Beast upon the holy city, the time is described as "forty and two months;" but when the faithful witnesses are in view the very days are numbered," a thousand and two hundred and threescore days" (v. 3).

(to be continued)

THE FLYING EPHAH

ZECHARIAH 5 : 5-11

Zechariah was post exilic, contemporary with Haggai, Malachi followed two generations later, to complete O.T. Canon.

Summary of Zechariah—Ch. 1 v. 1-6—Introduction.

Ch. 1 v. 7 to Ch. 6—Visions.

Ch. 9 to 14—Prophecies

All the visions refer to the future, including this in Ch. 5 : 5-11. Fulfilment looks on to the time of the End. The subject is the cleansing by judgment of the restored people in the land of Israel, with world-wide consequences.

1. Zechariah 5 : 1-4 is the 6th Vision of the curse that goeth forth.

2. Zechariah 5 : 5-11 is the 7th Vision of the Ephah that goeth forth.

The former (6th) deals with sin in practice (guilt) in theft and perjury.

The latter (7th) deals with wickedness (lawlessness) from which former arises.

Zechariah 5 : 5-11—We have Zechariah's two questions, the angel's answers viz.—

1. WHAT?

1. This is an Ephah that goeth forth.
2. This is their resemblance through all the earth (or land).
3. This is the wickedness.

2. WHITHER?

1. To the land of Shinar—Babylonia—Iraq—(Gen. 11 : 2).
2. To build it an house.
3. To establish and set it there upon her own base.

Verse 5 : Ephah—3 measures, as Matthew 13 : 33; Gen. 18 : 6; Judg. 6 : 19; I Sam. 1 : 24.

Ephah in O.T. like bushel in N.T. would stand for commerce.

Verse 6 : “This is their resemblance”—The Ephah stamps its character on all and everywhere, and illustrates a universal condition.

Verse 7 : “This is”—yonder was.

“Talent”—perhaps circular weight as lid of cylindrical Ephah, but talent is measure of quantity, as Ephah is of capacity.

Verse 8 : “Wickedness”—Literally the wickedness. LXX lawlessness. It is “the mystery of lawlessness.” “He cast her down”—apparently the woman tried to escape, the angel “cast” her back to the Ephah and “cast” the weight upon the mouth of the Ephah.

Verse 9 : “Two women came out”—or came forth into the stage or range of vision. Compare verse 5 where angel also “went forth” or “came forward.”

“Stork” is an unclean bird.

“Wind”—the power of Satan who is prince of power of the air. (Compare “between the earth and heaven”).

Before the Babylonian exile God’s complaint against Israel was against her idolatry. Later when agriculture was left for commerce His complaint was against commerce’s besetting Sins of theft (unlawful gains) and perjury (untruthful dealings in men, money and merchandise).

Universally, mammon, (industry, commerce, trade, and its consomitants) are on the Throne, and dictate policies everywhere, and the makers of Mammon are very often Jews.

It would seem clear that a Godless Mammon with humanitarianism, false peace, luxury and pomp is fast becoming the religion of the day everywhere. In this Mammonism apostate Christianity and apostate Judaism will join hands.

Shinar (Babylon, Babel) the scene of the original organised rebellion against God, will once again be the scene of a worse rebellion, compare Rev. 18, the woman sitting compares with the woman seen in Rev. 17.

As businesses have the houses founded or established in such a year so this Mammon will have it's "house" and be "Established" and "set" with it's base in Shinar.

I believe there are yet many prophesies against Babylon which remain to be fulfilled. Babylon is the Devil's Headquarters (base) of anti-God, anti-Christian religion, politics, and economics and culture.—SELECTED.

JESUS CHRIST — AND HIM CRUCIFIED

by **EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth, Devon**

The tone in which Paul writes in his Epistles to the various Churches provides a clue to the spiritual state of the particular church addressed. To the Philippians, for instance, he makes no mention of his apostleship, re-iterating the theme of rejoicing and writing with much warmth of affection. By contrast, to the Corinthians, amongst whom were those who questioned his authority, he finds the necessity of emphasising that he is an apostle by the will of God and that the things he writes are the commandments of the Lord. In the First Epistle we find a verse (2 : 2) which provides a key to the state of the Corinthian Church, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

The great truths of Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, what might be termed 'over Jordan' Epistles, were equally the heritage of the Corinthian saints, as indeed they are ours to-day. But this self-imposed restriction of the apostle is itself an eloquent commentary on the state of carnality found at Corinth. They were as yet "babes in Christ," fed with milk and not with meat (I Cor. 3 : 1-3). Nevertheless, this phrase "Jesus Christ and Him crucified" to which Paul

was confining his knowledge and ministry at this time, was and is basic and crucial as providing the foundation for the building up of the believer on spiritual lines. As the title "Jesus Christ" is usually employed in relation to His present position as risen and ascended, so this title "Jesus Christ" has its own connotation and unique importance. It portrays in its use the kind of Manhood which is of another order, entirely according to God, distinct and different from the Adamic, yet found in One here truly human. We read "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever" (Heb. 13 : 8) and again Paul's use of this title "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3 : 11). The purpose of God is to people heaven with men of this order who shall eternally speak to Him of His beloved Son in Whom He ever had supreme delight.

In our verse (2 : 2), the apostle significantly adds to the title "*and Him crucified.*" He is not here "laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God" (Heb. 6 : 1) nor doubting that their sins were forgiven. He is bringing to bear upon them the application of Christ's crucifixion to them as believers. It is a feature of Paul's teaching which cannot be over-emphasised. He himself understood deliverance from all that marks the man after the flesh, perhaps more than any other. Not only was he delivered from gross wickedness as unconverted, but that kind of man, even if cultured as was Paul, well versed in the Greek classics, will not do for God. It is thus that Paul stresses, after Christ died "and was buried" (I Cor. 15 : 4) : that man (representatively in Christ) has to go out of sight.

This line of teaching runs right through the writings of the apostle and is indeed peculiar to Paul. So thoroughly clear is he personally as having judged in himself the man "after the flesh" that he is able to write with contemptuous satire of two of its features, Jewish legalism and Greek wisdom. In this vein he even uses such expressions as "the foolishness of God" and "the weakness of God" (I Cor. 1 : 21-25), over against their vaunted wisdom and strength. To have "died with Christ," he associates others with himself, but crucifixion is a more extreme and drastic aspect of the death of Christ. Nevertheless Paul, this time using only the first person singular, is able in the depth

of his own exercise and experience to say "I am crucified with Christ" (Gal. 2 : 20). In this same Epistle he later adds "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (6 : 14).

"BRETHREN FACING A CRISIS"

Following my request in the last issue of "Assembly Testimony" for information about the Annual Men's Conference at Swanwick this year I have received a large number of helpful letters together with copies of various magazines that have carried a report of the conference. So many letters have been received that it would be impossible for me to reply and thank you individually. I am glad to know that I have the prayerful support of so many of the Lord's people and I thank you all warmly.

The magazines in which reports appeared were :

'EVANGELISM TODAY' (No. 80) November 1978 (page 8).

'CHURCH OF ENGLAND NEWSPAPER' (No. 4416) October 13 (page 2).

'CRUSADE'—an abbreviated report.

'REDEMPTION TIDINGS' (Official Organ of Assemblies of God) calls the four speakers 'Men of Metal.'

'BRITISH WEEKLY.'

'THE PRESBYTERIAN HERALD'—January 1979.

'BUZZ'—November 1978.

'ALIVE' which includes a photograph of those attending with the caption 'The delegates at Swanwick Conference, drawn from all parts of Britain.'

Was there any report in 'The Harvester,' 'The Witness,' 'The Believers Magazine,' 'Precious Seed' and 'Assembly Testimony?' These are the five assembly magazines—I shall be glad to have copies of any reports they made of the conference please.

I am informed that because of the interest shown in the conference the convenors are intending to produce a full report. I shall anxiously await a copy of this, there may be a difference between what was actually said and what was reported to be said. When I receive this I shall proceed, (if the Lord will).

Certain questions I should like to put, however, are :

- (1) Who are the Convenors of the Conference?
- (2) Who gave the impression that this conference was of major importance? Annual Weekend, and weeks of meetings are held in various parts of the country, but the brethren who

convene them do not create an atmosphere of vital and national importance. How about **Eastbourne, Bournemouth, Ayr, Largs, Exmouth, Larne, Lurgan, Llanfairfechan, Bicester, Aberdeen, Kilvarock**, etc., etc. How about the **London Convention and Harley Street Conference in Glasgow**. These are all of equal importance and would appear to be more profitable.

- (3) How was the impression given that those attending were delegates. Delegates must be delegated. They must represent something or someone. Who delegated these men? Who do they represent? Do they represent the Assembly to which they belong? or the overseers of that assembly? Or were they just there as interested individuals, representing no one but themselves?
- (4) Why was Bill Spencer there? Is he a believer? Is he in assembly fellowship? Was he invited? Was he present with the understanding that he was reporting? Was his report submitted to and agreed by the convenors.

I repeat I shall value the prayers of the Lord's people in dealing with this matter. The Lord bless you all.—THE EDITOR.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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BRETHREN FACING A CRISIS

HOME!

"I'm going Home!" What blessed thoughts
This tender word conveys
For nowhere on this earth is found
A sweeter, happier place.
No matter where on earth we dwell
In tent or mansion fair
What draws us to this hallowed spot
Is this—our love is there!

Though humble be our dwelling place
We would not change with Kings—
For wealth or fortune cannot buy
The happiness Love brings
What matter though the furnishings
Be rather old and bare
We would not change for anything
They're wealth beyond compare.

The care-worn weary traveller
Who o'er the world must roam
Knows nothing more enchanting
Than the blessed light of Home.
The child will cry and languish
Of "illness" he will moan
But the root of all the trouble
Is a longing to be "Home!"

And after hours of travail
Throughout a busy day
The peasant with a cheerful heart
Will wend his homeward way.
Free from his toil and labour
He can with pleasure rest
For Home is the place we grumble most
And yet are treated best!

Oh blest anticipation!
According to His Word
There is a Home prepared in Heaven
For those who love the Lord.
No home on earth is like it
Nor can with it compare
For every one is happy
Nor could be happier there.

No sin or shame or sorrow
Shall mar that Home so bright
Where Jesus is 'tis Glory
And joy and peace and light.
Oh, how our hearts are yearning
To see His lovely face
To hear His voice so gentle
To be in His embrace.

We'll worship and adore Him
The Lamb for sinners slain
And sing His praise for ever
No more to part again.

***"I go
to
Prepare
a
Place
for You"***

—John 14. 2.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by DR. JOHN BOYD

CHAPTER 4 : 7-9—PAUL'S AFFAIRS

v. 7 *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you*, Paul now deals with practical matters in the sending of this letter to the Colossians. His messenger was Tychicus, but he had more work for him to do, namely, (1) to inform them of how Paul was faring, (2) to comfort their hearts, (3) to accompany Onesimus, and help him in his reconciliation to Philemon, the master whom he had defrauded and deserted (Philemon 16-18). *who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord*: Paul had a good opinion of the ability of Tychicus for these tasks; he had been his fellowtraveller, an Asian (Acts 20:4), possibly from Ephesus (II Tim. 4:12). The apostle calls him 'a' or rather, 'the' (R.V.) beloved brother. The definite article indicates that he was well-known as such by the church. Paul also designates him '*a faithful minister*' of the Lord, on behalf of the churches, and one who with Paul had faithfully served the Lord as a willing bondservant.

v. 8 *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate*, The R.V. changes this rendering to a translation of what is found in the earlier manuscripts, 'Whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our estate.' The most important purpose in sending Tychicus was as stated in v. 7, that they might learn Paul's state, which is repeated here. For such a task Tychicus was well fitted.

and comfort your hearts; Paul had a constant desire to comfort the churches, especially Laodicea and Colosse. He felt assured that the message brought by Tychicus concerning the Lord's presence with him, and his welfare, would encourage them to continue in the faith, and bind them together in love (2:2).

v. 9 *With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you*. Paul commences here to commend Onesimus to the assembly at Colosse. He was now a brother, whom Paul had led to the Lord. In this mention of Onesimus there is no reference to his previous defection, merely 'one of you.' But the apostle refers to the Roman believers'

appreciation of him as, 'a' or rather, 'the' (R.V.) faithful and beloved brother, that is, one well-known as such (v. 7) by the saints there, in the short time since his conversion.

They shall make known unto you all things that are done here. Onesimus is set before the Colossians as one with Tychicus, to acquaint them of the relationship that existed between him and the saints at Rome.

CHAP. 4 : 10-14—SALUTATIONS FROM PAUL'S FRIENDS

v. 10 *Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas,* Paul now sends salutations from saints in Rome to the Colossian believers. The first salutation comes from Aristarchus, who was from Thessalonica. He had gone with Paul to Jerusalem, and later to Rome (Acts 27 : 2). He is here called Paul's fellowprisoner, a title also given to Epaphras in Philemon 23, whilst there Aristarchus is merely called a fellowlabourer. What this term 'fellowprisoner' implies is difficult to ascertain. It may have been a voluntary sharing of the apostle's imprisonment, by various companions at different times.

Mark joins with Aristarchus in this salutation. He is John Mark, the cousin (R.V.), a word loosely used for a nephew or cousin, of Barnabas. He had accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13 : 5, 15 : 37). How he had arrived at Rome we are not told, but apparently he had been restored to fellowship with Paul, and had met with him in the capital city.

(touching whom ye received commandments; if he come unto you receive him;) Paul had previously commended Mark to the Colossian church. We are not told when. Whether or not he had been with them before this letter was written is not clear.

v. 11 *And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision.* Jesus Justus is included with Aristarchus and John Mark in the greeting. All three are designated as Jewish believers.

These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me. These three were the only Jewish Christians, who had preached the gospel with Paul at Rome, and had given him any consolation by their help.

v. 12 *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you*, Epaphras had possibly been saved through Paul's preaching, and had brought the gospel to his native city, Colosse. Paul calls him a bondservant of Christ, a fellowbondservant with himself (1 : 7). He was then with Paul at Rome, whither he had brought to him the news of the Colossians' welfare. The Colossian believers would be cheered by his greeting.

always labouring fervently for you in prayers, The fact that he had brought the gospel to them, and continued in the prison to wrestle in prayer for them, gives point to Paul's title for Epaphras, 'a fellowservant of Christ with him' (1 : 29).

that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Epaphras' desire for them was that they should be thoroughly instructed in divine things, and be fully persuaded in all the will of God, that is, to know the will of God, and be determined to carry it out to the utmost of their ability. How the faithful spiritual father cares for the progress of his children in the faith !

v. 13 *For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you*, Paul had seen, and now bears witness to Epaphras' labour for their sakes, to produce this desired result.

and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Epaphras apparently occupied himself, when at home, with evangelising not only Colosse, but the two neighbouring cities as well. It would seem that the word of the Revisers, 'labour,' better fits the description of the activity of Epaphras than the 'zeal' of the A.V. He was a man of unceasing toil, and of agonising prayer.

v. 14 *Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you*. Luke first comes to our notice in the Acts of the Apostles (note the 'we' 16 : 10). This was some short time after Paul had suffered from the stoning at Lystra (Acts 14 : 19). It may be that he gave medical attention to Paul at that time (Gal. 4 : 13-15), for it would seem that the churches to which the Epistle to the Galatians was written included those around Derbe, Lystra and Iconium. Paul designates Luke as lit., 'Luke the physician, the beloved one'—two epithets that indicate his personal relationship to the writer of the Acts; he was Paul's medical attendant, and also very dear to him on this account.

Nothing is told us here of Demas, but in Philemon 24 he is described at that time as a fellowlabourer of Paul. Later Demas defected from Paul, and turned towards the world (II Tim. 4 : 10). (To be concluded)

"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4 : 11).

"Godliness with contentment is great gain" (I Tim. 6 : 6).

True contentment is the gift of God, and not the certain effect of anything upon earth. It is as easy without wealth as with it; in fact, it is more often the possession of the poor than the rich. The heavens give forth refreshing rains and abundance of sunshine without pipes, conduits or human devices. Happiness and comfort flow immediately from God Himself, as light issues from the sun, as the rain descends from the clouds. The cheering rays of the sun penetrate alike the hovel and the mansion. Every man is contented or discontented as the temper of his mind is transformed and controlled by the Spirit of Christ, or the spirit of the restless world.—WORDS IN SEASON.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

(1) The Inspiration of Scripture

* Continued

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

Unfolds a Divine Plan, Eph. 1 v. 8-10; John 20 v. 31. The Scriptures reveal the processes of redemption; how man fallen, corrupt and condemned can be reconciled, forgiven and restored in Christ.

In the Pentateuch the foundation principles of redemption are revealed; in the historical books the external historical development of redemption in the chosen nation, in the poetical books the internal spiritual development of redemption in individuals; in the prophetic books God's future purposes concerning the Kingdom. The New Testament follows on, dealing with the fulfilment of God's purposes in Christ and in His Church, a heavenly people. Dr. Griffiths Thomas puts it thus : "In the Pentateuch the revelation of God to His People, in the Gospels the revelation of Christ

to His Church, and in Acts to Revelation the realization of Christ in His Church.”

Reliable in its Prophecies, Luke 24 v. 25-27; Psalms 2, 22, 40, 110. The first general prophecy is found in Genesis 3 v. 15, which is the seed of the Old Testament Messianic idea. Some other prophecies in Genesis are found in chapters 12 v. 7; 13 v. 15; 17 v. 7; 22 v. 18; Compare these with Gal. 3 v. 16, 29. There are clear predictions of Christ's birth and birthplace, Isa. 7 v. 14; Mic. 5 v. 2; Matt. 1 v. 21; 2 v. 6, His flight into Egypt, Hos. 11 v. 1; Matt. 2 v. 15, His residence in Galilee, Isa. 9 v. 1-2, Matt. 4 v. 14-16. The Calvary Psalms are most impressive and instructive. Psalm 22 gives a detailed version of the whole scene of the crucifixion, at least ten New Testament counterparts are here. Study Psalm 31 v. 5, and Luke 23 v. 46; His condition on Calvary, Psa. 31 v. 9-18 with 2 Cor. 5 v. 21. Psalm 38 gives the cry of the suffering Saviour, v. 11 with Luke 23 v. 49. Note in this Psalm verses 3, 5, 7 R.V., 10. Psalm 40 is an utterance of Christ, compare v. 6-8 with Heb. 10 v. 5-7, and His passion is depicted in verses 12-17. Psalm 41 v. 9 is referred to in John 13 v. 18. Psalm 69 vividly portrays the Saviour, v. 4, 9, 21, and the New Testament fulfilment should be searched out. Psalm 88 predicts His cry of despair, v. 1-6, the approach of death and the wrath of God, v. 7, 16, 17, and His anguish, v. 14, 15. As we read these accounts our hearts bow in adoring worship.

Exposes Man's Failure and Sin. The ruin of humanity from Genesis 3 onwards is a dark depressing picture, see Gen. 6 and 7; Psa. 14; Isa. 53 v. 3, 6; Rom. 3 v. 9-20; 5 v. 6-7; Col. 1 v. 21. Man stands condemned at the bar of God, a slave of sin in helpless and hopeless captivity to the law of sin and death, Eph. 2 v. 1-3; 1 John 5 v. 19 R.V.; Job. 42 v. 5-6; Isa. 6 v. 1-5. The hope of humanity is in Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection, ascension and exaltation. His death is referred to 175 times in the New Testament. His death and resurrection are the theme of the Gospel, 1 Cor. 15 v. 1, 3, 4; Gal. 1 v. 4; 2 v. 20; 4 v. 5; 1 Pet. 3 v. 18; 1 Tim. 2 v. 6; 1 John 2 v. 2; Rom. 5 v. 18 R.V.; Rev. 5 v. 9-10 R.V.

Saves the Soul, Jas. 1 v. 21-23; 1 Pet. 1 v. 23; 2 v. 2. It demands obedience, Deut. 17, 19, 20; supports life, Deut. 8 v. 3; Matt. 4 v. 4, it comforts, Psa. 119 v. 82; Rom. 15

v. 4, rejoices the heart, Psa. 19 v. 8; 119 v. 111. It should be believed, John 2 v. 22, known, 2 Tim. 3 v. 15; appealed to, 1 Pet. 1 v. 16, read and searched, Isa. 34 v. 16; John 5 v. 39; 7 v. 52; Acts 17 v. 11. May we love it exceedingly, Psa. 119 v. 97, 113, 159, 167, delight in it, Psa. 1 v. 2, hide it in our hearts, Psa. 119 v. 11, and let it dwell richly in our hearts, Co. 3 v. 16.

Throughout the Scriptures we are pointed to Christ and the things concerning Himself.

In the Pentateuch Christ *typified* or Christ *announced*.

In the Psalms Christ *vivified* or Christ *acknowledged*.

In the Prophets Christ *prophesied* or Christ *anticipated*.

In the Gospels Christ *crucified* or Christ *arrived* and *atoning*.

In the Acts Christ *glorified* or Christ *acclaimed*.

In the Epistles Christ *magnified* or Christ *alive* in the saints.

In the Revelation Christ *satisfied* or Christ *abiding* through all ages.

* Continued from November/December, 1978. The editor was visiting California assemblies and this was unfortunately overlooked

The essence of sin is found not so much in any particular act or word, as in the disposition to do that which is wrong, or speak that which is wrong. Sin is deeper than sinning. Sin is the root, and sin is the fruit. We are told that "sin is the transgression of the law." The Revised Version reads, "Sin is lawlessness," which is a little closer to the original idea. Sin is not simply the transgression of the law, sin is the disposition to transgress, it is the will. God sees that will in every sinner's heart, and takes not so much account of the outbursts of a sinful will in conduct as of the existence of the sinful will behind the conduct. Even before the word is spoken that is wrong, there is the disposition which is opposed to God, the will contrary to His will.—DR. A. T. PIERSON.

THE LETTER FROM JUDE

It is very fitting that this short letter written by Jude "the brother of James" (probably James "the Just," our Lord's kinsman according to the flesh—hence Jude is also a kinsman, as well as a bonds slave of his Lord)—and which takes its readers back in thought to the Book of Beginnings—Genesis—should itself be an introduction to the Book of the End—Revelation—in which the prophetic word of Enoch is seen to be fulfilled.

Of the similarity of this epistle of Peter's second epistle, or of the similarity of both letters to the apocryphal book of Enoch, it is not the purpose of this note to pursue. Nor is any question raised as to the authenticity of the letter. It has been accepted as part of the canon of Holy Scripture and as such is a subject for thoughtful study—especially, as already stated, in view of its place within the canon.

The letter is written in a series of 'triplets' (which are noted as we proceed) and its object is to exhort the "beloved in God" (one version of v. 1) to contend for the faith—a faith being undermined by those who denied God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 1. *"Jude, the bondslave of Jesus Christ, and brother of James."*

Triplet No. 1. Name, description, relationship.

The term "bondslave" or "bondman"—also used by Peter and by Paul—was one which, in the world of that day, meant long, arduous, continuous, and not always pleasant, service. To the Jew, Exodus 21 : 2-6, would remind them that if he loved the Lord, and would not "go free," he should serve Him "for ever"—for life—and in complete obedience to, and complete dependence upon, Him.

"to them that are called, beloved in God the Father, and preserved (or kept for Jesus Christ)".

Triplet No. 2. Called, beloved, kept.

Note the position of the beloved, "IN God the Father, and KEPT for Jesus Christ.

"elect of God, holy and beloved" (Colossians 3 : 12).

"kept by the power of God" (I Peter 1 : 5).

"called according to His purpose" (Romans 8 : 28).

v. 2. *"mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied."*

Triplet No. 3. Mercy from God to man; hence peace between God and man; hence love of all towards all.

Linking triplets 2 and 3 we have, "Called by God's mercy; preserved in peace; beloved in love."

God is not niggardly in His grace, His mercy, His love, or His peace; each is multiplied over and over again to His called ones.

Multiplication may also refer to "begetting," i.e. love will beget love.

v. 3. *“Beloved, using all diligence (or, having it laid upon my heart) to write to you concerning our common salvation, I had need to write to you, exhorting you to contend (or, fight in defence of) for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.”*

We are told that the word “contend” means to stand over a thing to fight in its defence. Cf. the builders upon the walls of Jerusalem. (Nehemiah 4 : 16-18). Fighting as well as building.

Jude has an important matter—a burden—resting heavily upon him; it was imperative that he write, but who the immediate recipients of his letter were we do not know. This we do know, however, it comes to all who have been “set apart” by God the Father, and who are preserved in Jesus Christ. It comes to “the saints.”

What had been delivered to them could not be changed. It was like the “one sacrifice for sins,” and as our sanctification, “for ever” (Hebrews 10 : 4-17). The word “delivered” has the force of something “handed over.” Given into custody for safe keeping.

Remember how the law dealt with the question of things delivered “unto his neighbour to keep?” See Exodus 22 : 7-15.

Why was this exhortation necessary?

v. 4. *“For certain men came in stealthily, who were of old written down beforehand (their judgment was foretold in ages past) for this sentence (i.e. that which follows), impious, changing the grace of our God into wantonness, and denying the only Master, our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Romans 1 speaks of those who “changed the glory of God into an image” and “changed the truth of God into a lie” (vv. 23, 25). One of the fruits of sin is “change.” And how subtle are these “changes.” As subtle as those who crept in—true agents of the one who crept into Eden’s garden—the serpent, “more subtle than any beast of the field.” (Gen. 3 : 1). Cf. “beast” Jude 10.

Galatians 2 : 4 “false brethren unawares brought in to spy our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus . . .”

II Peter 2 : 1 “false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them . . .”

“Our God,” “Our Lord Jesus Christ,” “Our liberty.”
Not their’s.

v. 5. *“But I would remind you, though ye have all (once for all, as v. 3) known (or understood) all things, that JESUS, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, in the second place destroyed them that believed not.”*

Those to whom this letter was originally addressed were not now being instructed, but rather reminded of that which they had previously been taught. “Jesus” is a strongly evidenced reading, and if correct, then it would appear as if Jude identified the Lord Jesus Christ with the Angel of Jehovah.

Numbers 14 : 35, “I the Lord have said, ‘I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against Me : in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die’.” This is the great disaster that befell Israel. Cf. Deuteronomy 1 : 35. In Exodus 23 : 20 God had said, “Behold, I send an Angel before thee . . . beware of Him, and obey His voice, provoke Him not . . . for Mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in.” At the border of the land, Israel refused to go in (Numbers 14). Cf. I Corinthians 10 : 4, “. . . they drank of that spiritual Rock that went with them (Margin); and that Rock was Christ.” A double reminder of the power of God; firstly in mercy, for He brought them out of Egypt. Secondly, in judgment, for they were destroyed in the wilderness.

v. 6. *“And the angels who kept (same as v. 1) not their own first state (domain, principally, rule, power, dignity) but left their own dwelling (the Greek word occurs only here and II Corinthians 5 : 2 where it is translated as the “HOUSE not made with hands eternal in the heavens”) He hath kept (as v. 1) in eternal bonds under gloom unto the judgment of the great day.”*

Jude is, once again, reminding his readers of what they already knew and (as Peter does) draws their attention to the examples of God’s judgment upon the angels who had sinned, and the fate of Sodom and Gomorrhah. Peter wrote, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus, and delivered them into chains (or, dens) of gloom, reserved unto judgment.”

Note : Tartarus occurs only in II Peter 2 : 4 (translated

'hell'); in Greek mythology was the deep abyss below Hades, where the giants were imprisoned.

The irruption of fallen angels was the subject of a Jewish tradition, as we see in the book of Enoch to which reference has been made; and to which Josephus the Jewish historian also refers, (Antiq. 1 chap. 3) but it is to Genesis 6 we turn. "The sons of God (LXX 'angels') saw the daughters of Adam that they were fair." *

* The Editor is aware that this is an interpretation with which all will not agree, he prints it however for the interest of the Lord's people.

The nature of their fall is clearly stated: "they left their own estate"—their spiritual body, and the time of their fall was in the days of Noah (I Peter 3 : 20; II Peter 2 : 7).

The sin of the angels was as that of Sodom and Gomorrha (Jude 7). Notice the "great day"—only here and Revelation 6 : 17—"For the great day of His wrath is come." Whose wrath? That of the Lamb.

v. 7. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them in like manner having given themselves to fornication, and having gone astray after other flesh, are set forth as an example, undergoing the penalty of eternal fire."*

Triplet No. 5. Egypt, the angels and Sodom and Gomorrha.

The "keyword" is "rebellion"—Israel in the wilderness gathered together against God; the angels; the cities of the plain.

In passing, are the words of Eliphaz (Job 4 : 18; 15 : 15, 16) a result of a knowledge of the rebellion and fall of the angels? "He putteth no trust in His servants (i.e. in heaven); and His angels He chargeth with folly . . . He putteth no trust in His holy ones; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight; how much less one that is abominable and corrupt, a man . . ." And did this necessitate Hebrews 9 : 23? "It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens be purified with these sacrifices; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these."

Perhaps "folly" might be added to "rebellion."

v. 8. *"Yet in like manner these also (those of v. 4) in their dreamings (cf. Acts 2 : 17, "dream dreams"), defile the flesh, reject lordship, and speak evil of (insult, scoff, blaspheme) glories (the heavenly or unseen principalities and powers (?)"*

Triplet No. 6. Defile the flesh; reject lordship; speak evil of glories.

“Yet”—despite the warnings examples in Israel in Egypt and the wilderness; Sodom and Gomorrhah and the angels. We pause to emphasize the depth of folly seen in the redeemed people of God; in vile Sodom; and among the angels. And these sins had crept in unawares!

Why “dreamers?” Written to those who were the called ones, but perhaps chiefly to Jewish believers, what would this word convey? “Certain men . . . impious, changing the grace of God into wantonness, and denying the only Master, our Lord Jesus Christ . . . these dreamers of dreams.”

The law said, (Deut. 13 : 1-5), “If there arise . . . a dreamer of dreams . . . saying, ‘Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them’ . . . that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death; *because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt . . . so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee.*” Cf. Balaam, to whom the epistle later refers; Jeremiah 23 : 25-32; Zechariah 10 : 2;—“The diviners have told false dreams.” The doom of the dreamers (v. 4) is foreshadowed in the law. The word for “dreamer” used in this passage is that used by the LXX version of Isaiah 56 : 10, “His watchmen are blind : they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark : sleeping (or, dreaming), lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough . . .” So that those who had crept in unawares were “dreamers” of the false kind; ignorant and slumbering in their sins. “His watchmen”—whose? Whose but those of Israel.

The fifth column avoids the sleeping watchmen, whether in Eden’s garden, Israel, or the Church.

v. 9. “Yet Michael (*the prince of the people of Israel—Daniel 10*) the archangel (*only Michael has this title*) (Cf. *I Thess. 4 : 16; Daniel 12 : 1*) when disputing with the Devil he reasoned about the body of Moses, did not dare to condemn him with scoffs (or, bring against him a judgment or railing, or use insults—Gr. “blaspheme”) but said, “The Lord rebuke thee’.”

“Moses died in the land of Moab . . . and He (God) buried him in a valley . . .” (Deut. 34 : 5-6).

“ . . . death reigned from Adam to Moses . . . ” (Rom. 5 : 14).

Moses is seen in resurrection upon the mount of the Transfiguration (Matthew 17).

So many attempt to do what the archangel did not even dare to do! But Michael and his angels will meet the Adversary again! (Rev. 12). Cf. Zechariah 1 : 1-2, “Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, ‘The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan . . .’”

“BRETHREN FACING A CRISIS”

I have received a very courteous letter from Mr. A. G. Bamford, chairman of the conveners of the Annual Men’s Conference at Swanwick. He tells me that Bill Spencer is the editor of “Evangelism Today.” He is a believer, a Christian journalist, but I do not know if he is in assembly fellowship. The report that appeared in the various magazines was Bill Spencer’s own account of what was said. His report was not seen by any of the conveners until it appeared in the press.

Mr. Bamford rightly suggested that any review that I intend to make should be based on the printed report which should soon be available and not on Bill Spencer’s review. This, as I stated in the last issue, has always been my intention. The report will need almost a line by line review. I shall value your prayers.

I have however in my possession tapes of four of the addresses, one each by the four speakers. I must say that I am both alarmed and deeply distressed by some of the things that they said, especially as two of the speakers are editors of two influential assembly magazines.

Any wishing to obtain the Printed Report (I suggest all elder brethren should read it—you will be able to check what I say and will also be aware of the dangers arising) will be able to obtain it from Henry T. Walter, Ltd., 26 Grafton Road, Worthing, Sussex. (Price ?).

THE MANNER OF SOME

“The manner of some” is to stay away
From the Table spread on the Lord’s own Day;
A dinner hot or an hour in bed—
Such are the things they prefer instead.
“I met a friend and he hindered me”
Can any friend such as Jesus be?
He said “This do” and can they forego
Thus giving Him joy, Who loves them so?

By "The manner of some" when the Gospel's told
You would think their hearts were very cold;
It has no music to charm their ear,
Or sure they would come its message to hear!
And yet by that Gospel their souls were saved.
Unless, as I fear, they are self-deceived;
To have no care for the tidings glad.
And yet to believe them is terribly sad!

"The manner of some" is never to see
The place where prayer is wont to be,
Where saints together approach the throne
Is where, alas, they are never known.
Yet where in petition the saints agree
"I am in the midst of two or three"
Are the Saviour's words, and the promise is plain:
But those who don't ask, what can they obtain?

"The Manner of Some" when the Word is read
Is to do some other business instead.
When Truth is ministered by the Lord
Through His servants they never hear a word.
Too busy, too careless, they come not nigh,
So the streams of blessing pass them by.
What wonder they weary are and lean
Yet many such too often are seen.

"The manner of some," when they can spend
A holiday month or even week-end,
Is to choose some spot where none are found
To gather together on scriptural ground.
Yet many a "two or three" would be
Delighted a brother's face to see;
But no! they rather prefer to choose
Some other place and fellowship lose.

Can such be Christians, saved by Grace,
And of God's spirit the dwelling-place
Of one another members too—
Yet never acting as members do
Forgive them, O Lord; but let them be
A solemn warning also to me—
Lest I permit these trivial things
To hinder the blessing obedience brings.

"As the manner of some" is "Forsake not" saith He.
"Assembling together" though but "two or three"
His presence is promised; the promise is true;
The joy of His Presence is rapturous and new.
Then prove it my Brother, my Sister, be there—
Assemble together for praise and for prayer;
The blessing will follow, and glad we shall be
All waiting together our Saviour to see.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

by EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth

It is a very blessed thing to know God as a Saviour God and the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, for which we give thanks continually. However, the apostle Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians states, 'Some have not the knowledge (are ignorant) of God: I speak this to your shame.' (15 : 34). These words are, of course, addressed to Christians: they refer to a true inward knowledge and understanding of the nature and character of God. They raise a question as to how far and in what degree this is true of 'some' Christians to-day. The question is not merely academic but will be found to have a profound effect on our walk and manner of life as Christians. This is shown by his word to the Ephesian believers, contrasting their walk with that of Gentile unbelievers, 'But ye have not so *learned* Christ and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus.' (Eph. 4 : 20, 21). Earlier (v. 13), referring to the end in view of the ministry by the gifts to the church from her ascended Lord he states 'Till we all come (arrive at) in the unity of the faith and of the *knowledge of the Son of God* unto a perfect (full grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'

It is a subject to which Paul repeatedly returns in his Epistles. Indeed, so important to him is this feature of entering further and further into the understanding of the Person of Christ that his estimation is (Phil. 3 : 8), 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.' This knowledge is obviously something more than the initial knowledge of Christ as Saviour and Lord and is in fact an expanding and progressive understanding of the Lord Jesus and thus of God, for all that is to be known of God is centred and confined essentially in Christ. Something of the depth of Paul's own personal entry into these things can be measured by his words to the Philippians, to whom he wrote with such warm feeling, 'But MY God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.' (Phil. 4 : 19). So John tells us 'No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him (i.e. God),' (John 1 : 18).

The Old Testament also bears witness to the importance of our subject: we are told that both Noah and Enoch walked with God. We can well imagine what blessed intercourse with God they enjoyed. Jehovah Himself says of the response for which He looked, 'For I desired mercy (loving kindness) not sacrifice; and *the knowledge of God* more than burnt offerings.' (Hos. 6 : 6). How much greater our privilege since God has come so near to us in the Person of His Son: so we sing—

Thy Heart, our God, made known—all, all is told;
The glory of Thy love, all time before,
He to our raptured hearts doth now unfold,
And moves our souls to worship and adore.

O circle of affections all divine,
The foretaste of eternity's bright scene,
Where all the glories of His love shall shine,
In everlasting joy and peace serene.

Thou speakest, Lord, of Him Thou hast revealed,
Thy Father, Whom Thou lov'st, His glory Thine,
Thou, His eternal joy, Thyself didst yield
To bring to pass His thoughts of love divine.

The desire and prayers of Paul for the Colossian saints is expressed in these words 'that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and *increasing* in the knowledge of God.' (Col. 1 : 10). Such a verse makes clear that this increase is closely related to our walk and conduct and to a growing fruitfulness in the service of God. How then is this increase in knowledge to come about? Obviously, the study of the Person of Christ as portrayed in the four Gospels plays its part, but even more relevant is the daily occupation and communion with Christ and with God. This linking of the features which are to mark ourselves with those which we have seen in fullest expression in our Lord Jesus Christ is emphasized by Peter when he says 'But grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' (II Pet. 3 : 18). All the help we need in such exercises is assured to us as we move consciously in the gain of the indwelling Spirit of God, ungrieved and unquenched.

This help of the Holy Spirit is beautifully illustrated in Genesis chapter 24. Abraham's servant, who 'ruled over all that he had' (figurative of the Spirit) is commissioned to

seek a bride, Rebecca, for his son, Isaac. We may be sure that the subject of their conversation as they journeyed across the desert was the bridegroom (even as the Spirit delights now to unfold to the bride of Christ all the glories of the true Isaac). What communications would pass between the servant and Rebecca as he furnished her with the gold, silver, clothing and precious things suited for presentation to the bridegroom, until his final word 'That is my master,' and she became his wife. So we sing as the church nears the end of the journey in this scene—

We wait the consummation
Of Love's own work divine,
And now, in adoration,
We joy that we are Thine.

Our experiences in this waiting time are all ordered of God for the increase of our knowledge of Himself and of Christ and we learn how true the verse—

In the desert God will teach thee,
What the God that thou hast found,
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound.

And we find at the end of the journey as we reach the Father's house—

There no stranger God shall meet thee,
Stranger thou in courts above,
He, Who to His rest shall greet thee,
Greeted thee with a well-known love.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

by late JAMES SCOTT (continued)

A TRIUMPHANT COMPANY

Having looked at the Scriptures which deal with the great tribulation in relation to the Jews, we have now to consider one where Gentiles only are in question. In Rev. 7 we have 144,000 Israelites sealed for millennial blessing; then John sees a great multitude which no man can number come out of "all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues." We must not confound this company with the church, or heavenly saints, for they have already been translated, and

John sees them on thrones at the beginning of chap. 4. But if they are neither Israelites nor Christians, who are they? That is just the question put to the apostle, and which he is unable to answer: "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" John seems to have had no difficulty with the elders whom he saw on thrones in chap. 4: nor about the sealed Israelites at the beginning of chap. 7 but here we have a vast company which he is unable to identify: "And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them (spread His tabernacle over them). They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any (burning) heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed (shepherd) them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (vv. 14-17). The point of special interest to us in this article is, that they are Gentiles who have passed through the Great Tribulation, and John sees them emerge a triumphant and victorious company.

We have now to consider whether this is a heavenly or an earthly people. That they belong to the former class seems so evident, that many of our brethren consider there is not even room for discussion. One learned writer has declared that if the language does not refer to heaven it would be difficult to imagine language that would do so. We might reverse the statement and throw the onus of proof upon our erudite friend; but unfortunately for this purpose he is no longer with us. The fact that they are "before the throne" (v. 9) might seem conclusive, were it not that we find language of a similar character used to describe a moral position. When the angel Gabriel rebuked Zecharias for his unbelief, concerning the child that was to be born, he said: "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God" (Luke 1:19), though at that moment he was in the temple in Jerusalem. Again when Elijah asked Obadiah to go and call Ahab his master, he assured him that, "As Jehovah

of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself to him to-day" (I Kings 18 : 15). And have we not been reminded, again and again, that when the high priest, on the day of atonement, sprinkled the blood seven times before the mercy seat it was to give us (typically) a righteous standing before the throne? But it will be asked, did not John see the throne in heaven? (Rev. 4 : 2). Yes, and such is its position meantime in relationship to the world, and God is known as the "God of Heaven." To Nebuchadnezzar it was said, "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory" (Dan. 2 : 37). In the kingdom age it will be otherwise; for when referring to the millennial temple He addresses the prophet thus : "Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I shall dwell in the midst of the children of Israel" (Ezek. 43 : 7). And if this Gentile company are to have, as we firmly believe, the status of Levites in the kingdom (Isa. 66 : 21), where would we expect to find them serving if not in the temple where, as we have seen, God will have His throne?

It is distinctly stated that this company, "come out of great tribulation," but there is not even a hint that they have been translated, which must of necessity take place if this scene is in heaven, as some maintain. Seeing that the Rapture takes place before the tribulation, and that every living saint will be "caught up," it is obvious that this theory calls for a second translation; a contingency which Scripture knows nothing of, and any suggestion as to their having been martyred, and subsequently resurrected, is equally unfounded.

Not only is this company said to have come out of the Great Tribulation, and to have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, but it is added : "therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple" (v. 15). John says that he saw no temple in the holy city; for it requires none : "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. 21 : 22); but Ezekiel gives us a full description of a magnificent temple yet to be built in Jerusalem, and where, as we have seen, God will have His throne (chaps. 40-43). Consequently there need be no difficulty about this saved company of Gentiles serving God in His temple. Further, we would like to ask

those who sympathise with the learned brother, who is so positive that the language here can only refer to heaven, how they account for the terms "day and night" occurring in this connection; seeing that these ordinances have to do with earth, and not with heaven? Moreover, it is expressly stated in reference to the latter that, "There shall be no night there" (Rev. 22 : 5). But it may be asked, how can it be said of a people on earth, that "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any (burning) heat. For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall feed (shepherd) them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Chap. 7 : 16, 17). Seeing we have practically the same statement in reference to Israel in the kingdom age (Isa. 49 : 10), why should there be any difficulty when saved Gentiles are in question? We have already drawn attention to the use of the terms "day and night" which are only applicable to earth, but what of the "sun"? It is said that the sun shall not light on them, nor any burning heat. Here again, we suggest that such language can only refer to the earth, with which the ordinances of sun and moon are set to function (Gen. 1 16, 18); while heaven, we are told, has no need of them. "And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it : for the glory of God did lighten it," and again, "they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light" (Rev. 21 : 23; 22 : 5).

Further we are told that, "He that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them" (chap. 7 : 15, R.V.). Obviously such a merciful provision is not required in heaven where, as we have seen, there is neither "the sun . . . nor any burning heat." That it is for earth is evident for the same provision will be made for Israel, who, unquestionably, are an earthly people; "And Jehovah will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night : for upon all the glory shall be a defence (canopy). And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and rain" (Isa. 4 : 5, 6). It will be the wilderness provision over again, though doubtless in a fuller measure; and, as we have seen, it is one in which this saved company of Gentiles will share.

We have now to consider the Church in relation to the Great Tribulation. The only Scripture which deals definitely with this subject is the epistle to Philadelphia where it is expressly stated that, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3 : 10). We have seen that the Jewish remnant, and the great company of saved Gentiles, will be preserved in the midst of the fiery trial, as the three faithful Hebrews were in Babylon; but here we have a company who won't even be in it, for they are to be kept from it. Obviously it is one thing to be preserved in the time of trouble, and quite another to be kept out of it; and not only out of it but from the hour which denotes a point of time, and this can only be done by taking them out of time into eternity. This is exactly what our Lord promises to do : "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14 : 3). We are reminded of how in a past day, ere the judgment fell upon the antediluvian world, God kept His faithful witness from it by translating him; while Noah and his family were left to go through it, though distinctly preserved. It is not difficult to see that Enoch is a type of those who will be raptured before the tribulation, and that Noah represents the remnant who will pass through it.

Nor will it do to draw a distinction between the hour of temptation, and the great tribulation; and to say that while the Church will be kept from the former, she must nevertheless pass through the latter. Assuming, as we are asked to believe, that the temptation referred to, is the setting up of the "abomination of desolation" in the holy place, and the faithful being kept from bowing the knee to it; that would come very far short of meeting the requirements of the Scripture we are considering : "I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world" (Rev. 3 : 10). As we have seen, an hour is a point of time, and if the Church is on earth at all, when the image of the Beast is set up, then it definitely follows that she has not been kept from the hour of temptation. What then becomes of the promise? It is a poor exchange, to barter the blessed hope for the day of wrath. It has been suggested to us that the "hour of temptation" may commence as soon

as the false king is accepted; while as yet his words are "smoother than butter" and no danger threatens (Psa. 55 : 21).

There is yet another aspect of this question, for the exponents of it are by no means agreed among themselves. As we have seen, there are those who contend that the whole church goes through the tribulation; while others, with more show of reason perhaps, teach that though Christ will indeed come for His saints before that time of sorrow, only those who are ready, or watching, will be taken, and the remainder left to share with the ungodly the horrors of that awful time. As for being ready, it ought to be apparent that this does not depend on our faithfulness, but upon the merits of Christ's atoning sacrifice; and that the Father's love, and house, are the birthright of every child: "Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1 : 12). But, it will be asked, does not the parable of the ten virgins teach that it is those that are ready who go in, while the others are denied admittance? Yes, but the contrast is not between the watchful and the unwatchful saints, but between those who have oil in their vessels and those who have none. The oil is the well-known symbol of the Holy Spirit, and we are distinctly told that, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8 : 9); how then could he hope to get in? But is it not said that at the coming of Christ "one shall be taken, and the other left" (Matt. 24 : 40); and if so, does it not point to a partial rapture? Unfortunately for those who think so, the rapture is not in question in this and kindred Scriptures; but the coming of the Son of Man, when He will "gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13 : 41). At the coming of the Lord for His saints, those taken are for heavenly glory, while those left will have judgment; but at the coming of the Son of Man those taken are for judgment, and those left are for Millennial blessing.

We venture to suggest that much of the confusion that exists concerning this most important and solemn event would be avoided if due consideration were given to what is known as dispensational teaching, and the Jewish setting of the Olivet discourse. If the church, or any portion of it, has to go through the tribulation, and is only caught up to

meet the Lord as He is coming out of heaven to take His Kingdom, then it surely follows that the saints in question never enter heaven at all, seeing that they return with Him on His mission of conquest. What then becomes of the Father's house and the many mansions to which He promised to take us? And what of that all-important manifestation at the judgment seat of Christ: and the Bride's preparation for the consummation of all her hopes; and the marriage of the Lamb? Events which must of necessity take place in heaven. The system we are considering would seem to make no provision for these most momentous events. How then is it possible to "Comfort one another with these words" (I Thess. 4:18), if we have nothing but the horrors of the tribulation in prospect?

*"But, Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait;
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!
Blessed hope! Blessed rest of my soul!"*

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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HETERODOXY AND ORTHODOXY

In days of movements Ecumenical,
Some call their Churches Evangelical :
Making their standing an enigma ;
Losing their separation's stigma.

Thus mixtures of religion, zealous,
Offend our God, the Just and Jealous:
And link the "few," in separation
With heterodox amalgamation!

What God marked out in isolation
Becomes a harbour of negation:
The "twos and threes" once gathered to Him,
Assumes a testimony 'gainst Him.

His promised Presence in their Meetings
Becomes a place of formal greetings:
While, in a hostile world, its status
Lends ammunition, them to hate us.

When riches were of all things absent,
And piety and pity present;
God's Saints knew naught of Halls extensive :
Nor titles queer, nor names expressive.

Then, through a close, and up a stairway
Sufficed their meagre wealth, their poor pay;
Yet then, a Heaven on Earth they relished,
Communion sweet and true they cherished.

Could we but capture in declension
That honoured title, sweet to mention:
The "Gospel Hall," where Christians muster,
The Lord is there, in undimmed lustre!

—John Campbell : Larkhall. 7-2-79

THE BRETHERN FACING A CRISIS

CONFERENCE SUBJECT "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

"This conference of Brethren has no official standing, has been arranged annually by a group of conveners (none of whom has any representative capacity)." These words find themselves in the first page of the Introduction to the Report entitled "Where do we go from here." We are told also that this theme meant "the future of the Brethren." Again we are informed that "the Report in no way attempts to provide a formulation of policy . . . the speakers were free to interpret their topics as they wished and no papers were vetted or compared with each other beforehand . . . The Conveners, therefore, accept no responsibility for the opinions so freely expressed . . ."

I trust that everyone both within the assemblies and outside (including the editor of 'Evangelism Today') will carefully note these statements "NO official standing" — "arranged by conveners in NO representative capacity." In other words the conveners (though men with a care for the Lord's people) have no authority! The Speakers are chosen by them and have no authority. The men who were present were there as individuals only—not as representatives, and the things said and the report now printed is in no way an expression of current thought in the assemblies—it has no authority!

It is a pity then that the conference took a subject which appeared to be authoritative, and that the impression was created that those present were delegates. Surely this is why so many denominational magazines were pleased to give space to the article "Brethren Facing a Crisis." If the conference had no official standing how could the speakers speak on behalf of WE (the Brethren) and say where they are wanting us to go from here?

Why did the conveners see it necessary to publish a paperback volume like this report? (It would hardly be an economical proposition to produce under 3000 copies and would cost a lot of money) Are they not continuing the impression that this conference was of unusual importance, that the

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utterances of the speakers, and the contributions of the brethren present, should be printed in a volume for future reference and guidance? Is it not really trying to tell the 'Brethren' where they should go from here? You may be sure that the way marked out is the way we shall NOT go.

I note too that "the conveners accept no responsibility for the opinions so freely expressed." I accept that completely, but would point out that in choosing the speakers, the conveners chose the mold and knew what line the speakers would take. One could name 50 other teachers of God's word who if they had been asked to deal with these subjects would have answered in an entirely different way, and consequently the questions and comments would have been entirely different. Did the conveners not know the views of these brethren on "inter-denominational activities," "women's ministry," "salaried ministry," etc. You would not have far to travel in English assemblies to find good men completely opposed to the views held by these men. Did you not want them to say these things?

Is not this a further attempt to bring in the principles that were suggested at the "High Leigh Conference" entitled "A New Testament Church in ——" some years ago?

Do not the conveners realise that while they may have 270 and more men present at Swanwick (and others who wanted to come and were disappointed) who believe the things taught (for there do not seem to be any strong objections in the Questions and Comments Section) the vast majority of those in assembly fellowship do not want and will not have this "New Brethrenism."

Certainly the "Brethren are Facing a Crisis"—it is the one caused by the Swanwick conference. We do not shut our eyes to the weakness of assembly testimony, to the lack of growth, to the lack of interest in God's word by many young folk, we are also aware that some of those who claim to be leaders are trying to lead the saints to disobey God's word. The need of the hour is not to depart from God's ways to become more like the denominations around us, but in humility and confession to abandon our worldliness, our selfishness, our carnality, our disobedience and

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get back to God and His word.

“Let the wicked forsake his way; and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”—Isaiah 55. 7.

My dear, dear brethren, may the Lord give us grace to return.—A. M. S. GOODING.

WHAT WOULD A SWANWICK ASSEMBLY BE LIKE ?

by A. M. S. GOODING

I have examined the addresses given at Swanwick by the four speakers who were F. ROY COAD (Editor of “The Harvester,” prime mover in launching the “Christian Brethren Research Fellowship”).

Dr. MICHAEL GRIFFITHS (General Director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship).

VICTOR JACK (Counties Evangelist).

G. JOHN POLKINGHORNE (Editor of “The Witness”) and from these I have tried to build up a picture from the kind of assembly procedure suggested of what meetings would be like if these ideas were implemented.

(1). BREAKING OF BREAD.

Communion Service (page 50) in Evening (page 37) *Service must not be mournful* because at the moment it is — “most mournful service ever attended”

“attending a memorial service”

“too melancholic, we sit in deathly silence”

“singing slow and ponderous—no music”

“over concentration on the physical sufferings of Jesus”

“somewhat sombre and sad tone of the service”

“the worshippers are often inhibited and somewhat dull and uninspiring.” (pages 33 and 34).

The new suggestions are

“We should remember we are celebrating a victory, the greatest triumph of all time”

“We need to be involved in joyful praise”

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“The congregation should be involved in worship, vocally, musically and bodily”

“The Psalms have 15 different instruments used in praising God (including loud clashing cymbals)”

“We ought not to restrain those who wish to worship lifting up there hands to God” (page 34)
and of course, don't forget

“No over emphasis on the Physical Sufferings of Jesus”
—that's mournful, sombre, sad! (and yet ‘We show the Lord's death’—so says the Word of God—Ed.)

We need to crowd out the cocoons of tradition and formality and let the Spirit of God set us free to praise God with infectious joy and grateful worship.

No prayers steeped in the Levitical Offerings, or intricate typology or profound expositions of Scripture (page 34)

No leading theme suggested by an opening hymn (page 35)

Begin with an exposition of Scripture which exalts Christ and glorifies God (3 Lord's Days out of 4 ministry by the same man* (pastor chosen by the overseers and paid) the other Lord's Day in the month some one chosen by the pastor. Different portion to be expounded each time — the worship would follow from that by either brethren or sisters, and therefore long silences and lengthy prayers would give place to helpful ministry and meaningful worship. (pages 35 and 55)

The leading of the Spirit does not seem to be of major importance. (page 54).

THE MINISTRY MEETING

A full-time Pastor and part-time associates to be formally publically installed. (page 55)

A local man could be selected or a man from elsewhere, no trial sermons (no preaching match) or maybe there is a suitable man and we could have him trained. (London Bible College, etc.)

He would perform 75% of the ministry, other brethren could perform at the Lord's Supper and the prayer meeting.

* I suspect this could be a woman for the conference was informed that 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 were not applicable to us today! — Ed.

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The pastor should look out for suitable talent and encourage it

While the teaching body (pastor and associates) should meet for prayer and consideration of their ministry, they should be subject to the guidance and control of the local overseers. (What about the guidance of the Spirit of God and the Lordship of Christ?).

Adequate Salaries. Both the full time pastor and his part-time assistants have to be paid. (paid well—for you only get what you pay for) Big Churches could provide help for smaller ones or the small churches could share a pastor.

Training—more than academic education or Bible college is needed (though this is essential!) but also an apprenticeship system. Besides initial training the Pastor should have refresher courses to up-date him. And on top of that all his expenses should be paid while training and he should be allowed 'Sabbatical Years' (It sounds to me like an excellent profession! — The difficulty is that you can't find a single hint of anything like it in the Word of God. It says "Not for filthy lucre"—Ed.) (page 56 and 57)

Visiting Ministry not to be totally despised, but their visits are to be the exception rather than the rule. They are at present employed (I like that, they don't 'perform' like the new pastors do! — Ed.) on a 'wandering minstrel' basis—too many are virtually self appointed, untrained and out-of touch with current realities (Some of course are excellent) We grossly underemploy them (Whose fault is that, Sir? —Ed.).

But I will not weary you any more this month. I shall in following months examine the suggestions made by the speakers in the light of the word of God—I shall value the prayers of all who love the right ways of the Lord.

I would suggest that elder brethren purchase the Report, so that you are aware of the dangers that have arisen and also that you might be able to check for yourselves whether what I report is true. You can obtain the Report entitled "Where do we go from here?" from H. E. Walter, Ltd., 26 Grafton Road, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1QU, England, at £2.95p. (post paid).

PROVISION FOR SPREADING THE LEAVEN OF SWANWICK

“What I want to say

Firstly, about the question of teaching and training. There is a proposal for holding short-term Bible-schools on a regional basis. It is envisaged that these Bible-schools could last from one to six weeks with gifted teachers and lecturers in certain specified areas. It is presently under discussion. Secondly, in terms of full-time workers. A list has been compiled of assemblies needing full-time men and of men who are wanting to engage in a full-time ministry and looking for an assembly. So, if anyone wants to engage a full-time man, it might be possible to do so, because there is a list in existence. Thirdly, on the aspect of training. The Christian Brethren Research Fellowship at their next annual meeting will be concentrating on the whole theme of leadership, including the roles and types of leadership and what is involved in leadership within the assemblies.” (page 116/117).

The report does not say who was the author of this statement. Is it a statement on behalf of the conveners of the conference? Or was it made on behalf of the speakers? Was it an official leak from either of the editors as to the activities of their respective magazines and publishers? Or is it C.B.R.F.? It sounds as though its authoritative. Who are the people who have taken upon themselves such a task? Who actually made this statement? Would it be possible to have a copy of the list please?

“W. E. VINE” or SWANWICK ?

Is the Scriptural Assembly Possible Today?

There was in the early part of the last century a wide spread movement by which large numbers of God's people were able to free themselves from the shackles of human tradition and to meet together in conformity to those principles which the Scriptures set forth. That movement arose,

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not in one locality, nor from a single centre from which it spread. On the contrary, in various places Christians met together under the guidance of the Word of God, independently of any knowledge of what was simultaneously going on in other places, itself an evidence of the work of the Spirit of God, and of the absence of human propaganda and organization.

It is always possible for people to conform to the truth; and a deep significance lies in the fact that owing to the world-wide circulation of the Bible, companies of believers in different lands have been led by the Scriptures to return to apostolic teaching apart from human agency and instruction.

WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT SETS FORTH. The New Testament makes clear that under apostolic teaching no single minister was appointed to conduct the worship of God's people, or to administer the sacraments. Such things are conspicuous by their absence. According to I Corinthians 10. 16 it is "the bread which we break . . . the cup of blessing which we bless." There is no such paradoxical arrangement as the communion rail, no such ritual as the reception of the elements from a minister or priest. The Spirit of God acted in the churches to provide spiritual gifts of elders or overseers in a single gathering, to take oversight, Acts 20. 17, 28, and other spiritual gifts. The work of the Holy Spirit in this respect is clearly set forth I Corinthians 12. 4-11. He divides "to each one severally even as He will."

The teaching of I Corinthians 14, 26-33, shows how a gathering should be open for one and another to lead in praise or to edify the company under the direction of the Spirit of God. To this the ministerial system is definitely opposed and constitutes a quenching of the Spirit. Many gifts which might edify the Church are rendered inactive. Numbers of believers are shut up in their pews week by week listening to sermons, and are like paralysed members of a body. *A veritable return to obedience to the revealed will of God would constitute a reformation that would revolutionize the denominations of Christendom.*

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The Question Answered—That there are failures, imperfections, and delinquencies among those who are seeking to follow the Word of God affords no grounds for the supposition that it is impossible to get back to its teaching. The existence of evil affords a ground for humiliation before God, and for a rectification according to the revealed mind of the Lord.

To endeavour to counteract failure by following the tradition of men is only to turn from one evil to another. Two blacks do not make a white. One error cannot be corrected by the pursuit of another.

W. E. Vine, M.A., taken from Church Doctrine and Practice (p. 46) published by "Precious Seed."

Read also the twin volume by the same publishers "Treasury of Bible Doctrine."

RESIDENT PASTOR, MINISTER, OR BISHOP? WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES ?

by A. J. LAST

It has often been emphasized that the Tabernacle was built "according to pattern." Instructions given to Moses, recorded in Exodus chs. 25, 26, 27, were carried out accurately in chs. 36, 37 and 38. In ch 39, the phrase "As the Lord commanded Moses" occurs ten times.

Similarly, the plans for the Temple were given to David, and passed on to Solomon to implement. "And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit." I Chron. 28. 12, and verse 19 says "All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

But where is the Tabernacle today? Where is the Temple? There is no trace of the Tabernacle, and the ruins of Herod's temple are seen on the top of mount Moriah. These buildings, the Tabernacle, and the Temple, are no longer in existence, and yet their plans were given by God, and obedience was demanded in every detail of their building. Today, each believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a member of that company which He calls "My church" of which He says

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“And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matt. 16. 18.

And has not the Lord given written patterns for the establishment and maintenance of such a spiritual building? If such instructions were given relating to buildings which were to pass away, and from which His Glory would depart, surely He has given plain and unambiguous instructions for that which shall never pass away.

A favourite phrase of the Apostle Paul in his church letters is “To put you in remembrance” and without doubt, a constant ministry of the principles of gathering is most necessary today. Not only the principles of the Book, their scriptural foundation, but also the terms used in scripture, which so often have become tainted with their use in Christendom.

One of the spheres where this is most apparent is the use of Biblical terms as (1). “Apostles and Prophets.” (2) Bishops, elders, overseers, deacons, ministers, servants.” and (3) Evangelists, pastors and teachers. A constant statement of the scriptural import of these terms, divorced from the normal popular conception of their meaning would save assemblies from further departure from the “pattern” and halt the growing clamour for a “full time Pastor” Israel passed that way, and insisted on a king, to be like the nations, but in so doing they rejected God. I Sam. 8, 1-9. Alas, we have already organised out the activity of the Holy Spirit, are we now going to reject Him altogether?

The terms used in the scriptures to describe those who seek to “feed the flock of God” I Peter 5, 2 can be classified into three groups.

1. *Apostles and Prophets.* Eph. 4. 11. These no longer exist, since the scriptures are completed, and no further revelation from God as inerrant as the Bible will be given.

2. *Elders, overseers, bishops, deacons, servants, ministers.* These are those whose responsibilities and activities are solely local in the assembly in which they are in fellowship.

3. *Evangelists, pastors and teachers.* Those who are gifted by the Lord, which gift is exercised both in local assembly and in wider areas as the Lord may lead.

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1. *Apostles and Prophets.* Eph. 4. 11.

Such are not operative today, in the sense of being used by the Holy Spirit to convey His truth, which truth has become part of our New Testament. According to I Cor. 2. 13, not only were the truths inspired, but the very words with which they conveyed the truth. No one can claim that ability today. In Heb. ch. 2. 3. we read of the "great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." That is, those who heard the Lord imparted what they heard to those who had never actually heard Him. Similarly in 2 Tim. 2, 1 and 2. "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

2. *Elders, overseers, Bishops, deacons.*

The original word for overseer and bishop is the same, meaning to oversee or to watch over. The word elder means an older person, one who is mature, not so much relating to age, but rather the opposite to "a novice" I Tim. 3. 6. With these meanings of the terms it is readily understood from Acts 20, that they refer to the same persons. In v. 17 of that chapter the apostle calls together the elders at Ephesus, and in v. 28 says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood."

The character and qualifications of bishops are listed in I Tim. 3. 1-7. It will be noted that scripture nowhere elevates these brethren to a hierarchy, which would divide the flock into bishops and laity, but they are among the flock. Peter says (ch. 5. 1 and 2) "The elders which are among you," and "Feed the flock of God which is among you." What harmony exists in such a company. The elders are among the flock, and the flock is among the elders. In no way can these names suggest an elevated position, distinctive dress or an elite class. When the apostle writes to the assembly at Philippi, he addresses the letter to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons." Notice the order, saints, bishops, deacons.

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That quotation has brought in one more term under this second heading—deacons. In the New Testament, that word is translated deacons three times, servant seven times, and minister eighteen times.

It has often been taught that Acts ch. 6 gives us authority to appoint deacons. But does it? The word deacon does not occur in Acts 6.

Surely what the apostles are doing here is not appointing an office but a task. These seven men were already servants/deacons/ministers, and as such the apostle asked them to see after the widows, while they themselves continued in the preaching of the Word of God. Certainly they did not appoint servants of the Lord, they were already that, and later in the Acts it is seen that two of them, Stephen and Philip were evangelists also.

Human qualification or secular calling does not qualify a brother to be a bishop, overseer, or elder, for the Holy Spirit makes such. Acts 20. 28. Neither are deacons appointed, but are men "full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" with the qualifications of I Tim. 3. 8-10, who may be entrusted with a specific responsibility in the care of an assembly.

Such men as are described by these four terms are local in their work for the Lord.

3. *Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers.*

These terms appear in Eph. 4. 11, which are gifts which the ascended Lord has given unto men. Men thus gifted by the Lord (v. 8) are themselves gifts to His body (v. 11. 12) for the express purpose of "Perfecting the saints, the work of the ministry and the edifying of the body of Christ." The "some" of v. 11 is for the benefit of the "all" in v. 13. "Till we all come to the unity of the faith."

An *evangelist* is one whom the Lord has gifted to evangelise; to spread the news of the Gospel. That gift may be used in the district of the local assembly or in a wider sphere. In the village, town or city, where ever and when ever the Lord leads. It may be that a person seeks to evangelise "full time" and therefore seeks commendation from the local assembly. Such commendation, however does not constitute that person an evangelist, he is that before commendation. The commending of Paul and Barnabas

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from Antioch (Acts 13, 1 and 2) did not promote them to teachers and preachers, for that they already were, but they were released from the local company to engage in wider fields of service.

Pastors and teachers (Eph. 4. 11) suggest that these gifts were resident in the one person. The word pastor is translated thus only once in the New Testament but seventeen times as shepherd. That is the obvious meaning. Again, as with evangelists, this gift is used in local assembly responsibility and in wider spheres. An evangelist, shepherd, teacher is not confined to the local assembly in the exercise of the gift from the Risen Lord, but the overseer, bishop, elder and deacon (servant, minister) can only act in such capacity in the meeting in which he is in fellowship.

Scripture teaches clearly that there are shepherds (pastors) in a church, but not pastors of a church.

Equally clearly does scripture teach each assembly is answerable to the Lord for all of its activities, and never to a central oversight.

To form elders into a central oversight, thereby extending their sphere of overseeing, beyond that of the local assembly, or to instal a resident pastor over a company of believers, thereby restricting the gift of shepherding to a pastor, and stifling the exercise of the rest of the local brethren, are actions which deviate from the pattern set out in the New Testament, especially the Acts, Corinthians and Ephesians from which we have quoted.

The scripture in I Tim. 5. 17/18 "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour" has been used sometimes as a basis for payment to elders, which of course is the first step to a paid pastor. Should an elder use time in the care of the assembly which causes his business or work to suffer, then he should be reimbursed by receiving perhaps an honorarium. That is to assume that the meaning of "Honour" means financial aid. If that is so, then double honour must mean double remuneration.

Even if such interpretation is allowed, it is not scriptural permission for a paid pastor, because the elder as we have seen, is local in administration, whereas a pastor is such all the time and in all places. It is not what he does, but what he is.

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If an elder is to be rewarded for his teaching, who decides which elder qualifies for such reimbursement? Who makes the distinction between those who rule well, and those who do not? Which character of work in an elder's responsibility is under scrutiny? Who decides the standard of living to which an elder is entitled? These, and many other questions spring to mind, as well as the obvious problem of elders disbursing assembly funds to elders.

Is not this interpretation dividing the elders into parties? Those who rule well and those who do not. Those who have employment from which they can get "time off" for assembly matters and those who cannot. Or possibly between elders who are employees and elders who are employers, in which case secular position intrudes into the spiritual care of the flock.

Is not the interpretation of this scripture simply, that no elder, nor indeed any member of a local assembly is left uncared for, certainly not to starve, hence the ox that does the work receives food, and the labourer is worthy of his reward (Luke 10. 7) or as the related passage in Matthew 10. 10 says "The labourer is worthy of his meat," and that is in the context of making no provision for material things.

In the U.K. conditions it is doubtful if any elder suffers material loss through assembly work. Assuming an average ratio of one elder to every ten believers in local fellowship, with at least some of the elders retired from secular employment can we really say that it is impossible for the flock to be tended, watched and spiritually fed and visited. In these days of a forty hour week, ease in travelling and all the other amenities, our pastoral care should be infinitely better than that of say 80 years ago, and yet that was when the assemblies flourished.

How thankful we should be for the scores of elders in various assemblies, especially in the smaller ones, who faithfully continue week after week, and year after year in dedicated service to the local company, in both spiritual and practical work for the comfort of the Lord's people. Let us honour those who "have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." I Cor. 16. 15.

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

by Dr J. BOYD

CHAP. 4 : 15-18 — PAUL'S PERSONAL SALUTATIONS

v. 15 *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea*, Paul now sends personal greetings, and messages to various individuals. He salutes, first, the brethren that formed the church at Laodicea, a town in the Lycus valley, near to Colosse. Paul had not apparently visited it (2 : 1).

and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. It is difficult, from the varying manuscripts, to decide if Nymphas was the name of a man or a woman. Some refer to the church in '*his*' house, inferring that Nymphas was a masculine name; others give the adjective as '*her*' house, as though Nymphas was the name of a woman. But the older manuscripts give the adjective as '*their*,' suggesting that Nymphas was a man's name, the head of the house in which the brethren in Laodicea met.

v. 16 *And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans;* Paul gave instructions that, after the letter to the Colossians had been read by them, it should be sent to, and read by the Laodicean church. Because of the proximity of one church to the other, both were exposed to the same false teaching; both needed the same admonitions.

and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. There was no epistle directly addressed to the Laodiceans in the New Testament canon. The letter to which Paul now refers was possibly a circular letter sent to all the churches in the Lycus valley, going to other churches first, then to Laodicea, and finally to Colosse. Note that Paul calls this other letter, the letter '*from*' Laodicea—the preposition describing the route the letter would take before reaching Colosse.

The epistle Paul possibly had in mind was the so-called Epistle to the Ephesians. This would be a circular letter. The words in Eph. 1 : 1, '*at Ephesus*,' are not found in the older manuscripts. This circular letter, which contains very similar teaching to that in the Epistle to the Colossians, may have been intended for all the churches in the Lycus valley. All would be afflicted with the same trouble. All needed similar instruction, that is, the admonitions of the

'Ephesian' letter. It was brought to them also by Tychicus, at the same time as the Colossian Epistle (Eph. 6 : 21).

The circular letter would naturally be delivered first to Ephesus, as being the main city in the valley, and possibly the largest church of the seven. This would explain why someone added the words, '*at Ephesus,*' in Eph. 1 : 1. It was also the nearest city to Rome, whence the latter had come. As Colosse was at the other end of the valley, the letter might have failed to reach the church there, so Paul was particular about it being read by the Colossians, to complete the circuit.

v. 17 *And say to Archippus,* Paul had a special message for Archippus, possibly the son of Philemon, who lived at Colosse, and whom Paul had led to Christ (Philemon 2, 19). The apostle calls Archippus a fellowsoldier, most likely a young man, energetic, but slightly unreliable. Paul writes, "Say to Archippus," speak definitely to him this message in unmistakable language.

Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, Paul wants Archippus to pay attention to the work which the Lord had given him to do. He must needs attend to spiritual things, not to the passing pleasures of the world. '*The ministry*' was the particular gift he had received from Christ (Eph. 4 : 7). Most believers know what this gift is, but we need to stir it up (II Tim. 1 : 6), because the Lord has called us to it. It is a sacred trust, a solemn obligation; with it we serve, not men, but Christ; to Him we must give answer.

that thou fulfil it. This ministry Archippus must needs fulfil; he must complete it, see it through to the end. Thus he needed perseverance.

This is a message so much needed by young believers to-day. How many at the start run well, but later grow indolent, through engaging in other, worldly pursuits. We are not told what was this ministry given to Archippus. Scripture is silent, in order that we all might take the exhortation to ourselves, and each fulfil to the utmost the task the Lord has allotted to us.

v. 18 *The salutation by the hand of me Paul.* This is Paul's final, personal salutation to the church at Colosse. Thus he usually finished his epistles, of which the main part had been written by an amanuensis.

Remember my bonds. Paul reminds the Colossians of his bonds, not to evoke their sympathy, but to remind them of the seriousness of the appeal. Even in his bondage he felt he must needs write this epistle to them.

Grace be with you. Amen. This is Paul's own signature. The shortened salutation, commending his readers to the grace of God, and written by Paul's own hand, was a token of the genuineness of the letter (II Thess. 3 : 17-18).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

(2) THE HOLY TRINITY

by **J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield**

We must approach all these subjects with reverential awe, and in utter dependence upon the Spirit of God, to reveal to us the mind of God on these matters. The Holy Scriptures are our only source of information, so ponder over all passages referred to in these studies.

The word "TRINITY" is not a Bible Term but it is Bible Truth and the interpretation of Bible Teaching. "It is derived from the Latin word "TRINITAS" which is derived from the adjective "TRINUS" meaning "THREE-FOLD" or "THREE IN ONE" or the One which is three, and the three which are One."—A. A. Hodge.

SOME FALLACIES

"**ARIANISM**" which contends that the Godhead consists of One Eternal Being, Who in the beginning created in His own image a super-angelic being, His only begotten Son, who thus became a kind of secondary God with the power to create. He was the beginning of the creation of God. The first and greatest creature created through the created Son was the Holy Ghost. This attack on the Deity of Christ is answered in John 1 : 1-4; Col. 1 : 15-17.

CHRISTADELPHIANISM says that God is One Power, the incarnate Father by whom all things have been created. Jesus Christ born of the Virgin Mary through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, by whom He became Son of God. This system makes Christ a created being, and denies the personality of the Holy Spirit. See Prov. 8 : 22-31; John 1 : 18; 14 : 16-17.

MILLENNIAL DAWNISM makes Christ before His earth life a created and superior Angelic being, during His earth life a mere man, and after his earth life, God. See John 1 : 2; 8 : 28; 17 : 5; Rev. 1 : 8, 17, 18, for the eternal Being of the Son.

SCRIPTURAL FACTS

The Trinity expresses the Divine Mystery of three Persons in the unity of One Godhead. It can be expressed as One God without division in a Trinity of Persons, and Three Persons without confusion in a unity of essence. "His Eternal Power and Godhead" (Rom. 1 : 20). Dr. Handley Moule writes, "The One God stands in Scripture really and absolutely alone as the free personal cause, the Creator, of all material and spiritual existence; as its true reason, not only of origin but of continuance in being; as its supreme and entirely Just Lord, Lawgiver and Judge."

The Deity of Scripture is One Being—the One sovereign, eternal, almighty; the Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe. Gen. 1 : 1; Read Deut. 4 : 35, 39 with Rom. 1 : 20; Exod. 15 : 11; Deut. 6 : 4; I Kings 8 : 60; Psa. 47 : 7; Isa. 40 : 12, 13, 18, 28; 44 : 6; 45 : 22; Rom. 11 : 33-36; 16 : 26-27.

God alone exists in the form of God and this unity is insisted upon in Old and New Testaments, Deut. 32 : 39; II Kings 19 : 15; John 17 : 3; I Cor. 8 : 4; Gal. 3 : 20; I Tim. 2 : 5; 6 : 15-16.

The Oneness of the Godhead is altogether unique, and implies a unity of the eternal Content ineffable, absolute, God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity. Neither confounding the Persons nor separating the substance. While God is One, it is in another respect Three; three eternally harmonious Wills, Agents, Persons. Each has as His nature the entire Divine nature; each is truly God.

It has been set forth thus—"One God without division in a Trinity of Persons and Three Persons without confusion in a unity of essence." Author Unknown.

There is One God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, and one Holy Ghost, I Cor. 8 : 6; Eph. 4 : 3-6. Names of God prove plurality of persons, ELOHIM is a plural noun accompanied by a singular verb. e.g. "God is good." Sometimes it is the plural of majesty or to indicate that the living God comprises the totality of powers within Himself. Plural

pronouns are used of God, proving plurality of Persons, Gen. 1 : 26; 3 : 22; 11 : 7; Isa. 6 : 8; Dan. 2 : 11; 4 : 8; 5 : 11; John 14 : 23; 17 : 11. Three self-acting persons—The Lord God, the Messiah and the Holy Spirit are referred to as anointing, blessing, sending and doing things for one another Isa. 11 : 2; 42 : 1-7; 48 : 16, 17; 59 : 21; 61 : 1, 2; 63 : 1-14; Zech. 12 : 10.

The Theophanies of the O.T. in which are emphasised a distinction of persons in the Godhead, though the persons revealed is the Second person of the Godhead—the Eternal Son, John 1 : 18. e.g. Hagar in Gen. 16 : 7-10, 13; here the Angel of the Lord is clearly identified with the Lord (Jehovah) in v. 13. In Gen. 18 : 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, one of the three men clearly identifies himself with Jehovah. In 19 : 1 only two come to Sodom, One has remained behind v. 27 with 18 : 22, 33.

In Judg. 2 : 1-2 R.V. the “Angel of the Lord” distinctly says “I” did what Jehovah did. See also Judg. 6 : 11-14; 19-24 R.V. Consider other passages—Josh. 5 : 15; II Sam. 7 : 14; Psa. 2 : 7; Isa. 48 : 16; Micah 5 : 2; Hag. 2 : 4-7. All these passages indicate a plurality in the unity of the Godhead; the unity of the infinite God in Trinity.

The whole of the Divine nature is in each Divine Person simultaneously and eternally. Think of the plural benediction Num. 6 : 24-26, and the threefold ascription of praise, Isa. 6 : 3.

SPIRITUAL FEATURES

The co-ordination of the Trinity in the scheme of redemption as well as in creation is a fruitful study.

1. The *Form* of God’s blessing is threefold, Num. 6 : 24-26.

2. *Intimation* of the Lord’s anointing as Man for service in Isaiah. The voice of the Spirit 11 : 1-9; the voice of God in 42 : 1-4 and the voice of the Son in 61 : 1-3; find an answer in Matthew, Mark and Luke’s Gospel. See the Servant songs for similar teaching.

The Lord’s character in ch. 42 with Mark; His calling in ch. 49 with Luke; His consistency in ch. 50 with John; His credentials in ch. 52 with Matthew.

3. *Identification* of the Son of God to John the Baptist. John 1 : 32-34 at the Lord’s Baptism, Matt. 3 : 16, 17.

4. *Redemption’s Plan*. The Father elects and calls, the

Son redeems by His Blood, and the Spirit sanctifies, 1 Pet. 1 : 2; Eph. 1 : 3, 4, 7, 13, 14.

5. *Redemption Accomplished.* God judges sin in the Saviour, Matt. 27 : 46. The Son of God gave Himself, Gal. 2 : 20 through the Eternal Spirit, Heb. 9 : 14; and acceptable to God, Eph. 5 : 2.

6. *Resurrection of Christ.* 1 Cor. 6 : 14; John 2 : 19; with 1 Pet. 3 : 18.

7. *Commission* of the disciples in Matt. 28 : 19-20. All believers were to be baptized in the Triune name (singular) and to observe the commands of the Lord.

8. *The Salvation of God* is a threefold work, II Thess. 2 : 13; Tit. 3 : 4-6; Eph. 1 : 13.

9. *The Coming of the Spirit.* The Father sends the Holy Spirit, John 14 : 16, 17, 26; in answer to the request of the Son. The Spirit is also sent by the Son, 15 : 26 with 20 : 22; Luke 24 : 49; Acts 2 : 33.

10. *The Sanctification* of believers by God, Jude 1; by the Lord Jesus, Heb. 2 : 11, and by the Spirit, I Pet. 1 : 2.

11. *Source of Eternal Life;* from God, John 17 : 2; the gift of the Son, John 17 : 2; 10 : 28; Rom. 6 : 23 and from the Spirit, Gal. 6 : 8.

12. *Supplying Gifts* to the Church, from God, Rom. 12 : 3; the gift of Christ, Eph. 4 : 7; shared out by the Spirit, I Cor. 12 : 11. They function in the Church under the three Persons of the Godhead, I Cor. 12 : 4-6.

13. *Spiritual Worship,* John 4 : 23, 24; Phil. 3 : 3; I Pet. 2 : 5; Gal. 4 : 6.

14. *Benediction* given in the name of the Trinity, II Cor. 13 : 14. There are other portions suggesting spiritual truth, I Cor. 6 : 19; Eph. 2 : 22; 3 : 17; I John 2 : 27.

SIMPLE ILLUSTRATIONS

In the "O.T." we have the revelation of God, the Father—this takes away our infidelity.

In the "Gospels" we have the revelation of God, the Son—this takes away our sin.

In the "Acts" we have the revelation of God, the Spirit—this takes away our hardness of heart.

Man himself is a trinity—body, soul and spirit. Assailed by a trinity of evil, the world, the flesh and the Devil.

The Three Principal Jewish Feasts. The Feast of Tabernacles Lev. 23 : 34 is associated with God the Father, Rev. 21 : 3. The Feast of Passover Ex. 12 : 17, redemption by Blood—the Son, I Cor. 5 : 7; I Pet. 7 : 19. The Feast of Pentecost Ex. 34 : 22, Lev. 23 : 34, reminding us of the Spirit, Acts 2 : 1-4.

May the boards of the Tabernacle help us to see the grace of the Lord Jesus—the silver sockets, the bars to the unifying Spirit, overlaid with gold—to the love of God, Exod. 26 : 15-29.

THE LETTER FROM JUDE

(continued)

v. 10. *“But these (the certain men of v. 4 and the dreamers of v. 8—being one and the same) scoff (or sneer) at the things they do not understand; but what they do understand naturally, as the irrational animals (brute beasts), in those things they corrupt themselves.”*

Cf. v. 8. “scoff at glories.”

“They do not understand”—No effort to understand; no intuition.

“They do understand”—By attention to, or by instinct.

What they see, they understand; what they do not see, they do not understand, and even what is understood is abased—to their own ruin.

v. 11. *“Woe unto them! for they went in the way of Cain, rushed (poured out in streams) after the error of Balaam for reward (or hire) (Numbers 22 : 7; Deut. 23 : 4), and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”*

Triplet No. 7. The way of Cain; the error Balaam; the gainsaying of Korah.

What is the way of CAIN? In Hebrews 11 : 4-6 it is lack of faith. In I John 3 : 11-12 it is lack of love coupled with evil works. In Genesis 4 it is “and Cain went out from the presence of the Lord.” No hope? Notice Cain’s first recorded word was, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” A lesson to be learned here.

BALAAM? Here we have his error; II Peter 2 : 12-16 his way; Revelation 2 : 14 his doctrine.

His error? Knowing the mind of God for blessing, he sought to curse and in doing so forgot the love of God for His people. Cf. Numbers 22 : 34; Deut. 23 : 4, 5; Nehemiah 13 : 1-2.

His way? Knowing the mind of God, he went his own way (Numbers 22 : 32).

His doctrine? Knowing the mind of God, he placed stumbling blocks in the way.

And KORAH? Open rebellion against those who had the rule over them (Numbers 16). Envy of Moses and of Aaron the saints of the Lord (Psa. 106 : 16). Levelling against Moses the same accusation as had been levelled against him in Egypt (v. 13). But it was not so much against Moses and Aaron that they murmured, but against the Lord (v. 11). Each, an example; each a tragedy. Cain, an ignored sin offering; Balaam, ignored warnings; Korah, an ignored leader and high priest.

v. 12. *“These (again the same people) are hidden rocks in your love feasts, feasting with you without fear, posturing themselves, clouds without water, (rainless clouds), carried about by winds; autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.”*

Jude pours out his invective against “these”—sunken rocks, rainless clouds, fruitless trees; sea, sky and earth; men full of danger, holding no promise, and fruitless in themselves. We remind ourselves that these men are ungodly men who turn “christian liberty into licence;” who deny the Master and Lord Jesus Christ. With a commentator we note I John 2 : 22, “He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.”

v. 13. *“wild waves of the sea; foaming out their own shame; wandering stars (planets) for whom has been kept the gloom of darkness for ever.”*

Cf. Isaiah 57 : 20, “The wicked are like the troubled sea . . . whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

Planets wandering through limitless space. Dead worlds.

v. 14. *“And to these also Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord came with myriads of His holy ones, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all the works of impiety which they did impiously, and of all the harsh things which impious sinners spoke against Him’.”*

Notice to WHOM Enoch prophesied—"these;" notice the tense—"The Lord Came"—the event seen, even in those early days of Biblical history, before it comes to pass—an event yet future.

Enoch the seventh from Adam was contemporary with Adam for some 308 years; walking with God, after the birth of Methusaleh, 300 years; "and he was not; for God took him." (Gen. 5 : 22-4).

Adam had walked with God—for how long we do not know—but by transgression fell, and what remorse must have been his as he watched Enoch take his place in that walk; what remorse when he saw the havoc caused by the fall. Enoch, in a measure, restored that which he did not take away—a walk with God. And he walked with God for 300 out of the 365 years of his life—a witness of the increasing wickedness of the world, and of that world which was yet (to him) future. Hence his word of prophecy.

(to be continued)

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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SONSHIP ETERNAL

Dawned there a day when He, ever began to be
What He now is, and will be forever?
Deep in the Virgin's womb; wrapped round with
natal gloom,
Did He begin to be? - Say of Him never!

Whence sonship's origin ; linked with the sphere of sin
Questioned by sinners; can Saints discover
Barefoot and bowed head; dare we the quest begin,
Raptly to pry within, this Ark uncover?

If He began to be, Son in Humanity,
Christ needed Mary e'er Son He could be!
Profound profanity, implied impiety,
Infernal infamy; from which we flee!

Constant and endless be, ever His Deity.
E'er time began, never from Sonship free.
Son from Eternity, Son in Humanity,
Son to Eternity, He'll ever be!

John Campbell, Larkhall

SWANWICK CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN

Review by the Editor

"WHERE IS HERE" and "UNITY"

The same speaker was responsible to give an address on both these subjects—"Where is Here?" and "Unity." One would feel that he was ideally fitted to deal with the second subject seeing that he is an extremely kind man with a very wide interest in caring for folks who find themselves to be in need, far and near. I note that he is associated with caring for aged servants of God when they are no longer able to continue their service for the Lord. A perusal of various issues of "The Harvester" will confirm that its Editor is a man who has deep convictions about "doing good to all men especially those of the household of faith."

His address on 'Unity' is indeed strange, commencing as he does with a reading from Acts 17 : 13-31, which reading, as far as I can see, has no connection with the subject. I presume that the conveners had in mind unity amongst the people of God and this must have been somewhat disappointing to them. Our brother commences with the subject of unity of mankind and wandered on to the subject of unity of saints. He is evidently more concerned about inter-denominationally caring than the unity of the Spirit. Only in the last few moments of his address did he concern himself with the unity of the companies that this conference calls "The Brethren." With reference to the local churches (which I presume means the companies with which he is supposed to be associated) we have such expressions "Paul . . . did not mean . . . that if anyone differed they were to throw him out! I once had that put to me as the interpretation of the verse by someone with 'exclusive' thinking" (page 70): and again, "We all know the sort of troublemaker that exploits the cry of 'unity' to enforce his own narrow conscience on the local church. That's not the sort of unity we seek. That can have disastrous consequences." * (In between he gives a reference to Amos 3 : 3—his quotation from R.V. is, of course, right. Amos is doubtless thinking of meeting and walking with someone in the wastes of

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Tekoa). Altogether in this paragraph of 24 lines he makes three jibes at the assemblies. Unity with the World?—Yes. Unity with the denominations? — Yes. But what about Unity in the Assemblies? — Would the following statements promote unity?

The following is from the same speaker when his subject is "Where is here?"

"I am going to construct a deliberate parody, to point a lesson. First, we say, the church must be organised in accordance with the Scriptural pattern. We rarely ask first what guidance there might be in Scripture as to whether there is intended to be such a pattern, and if so of what kind it may be. Instead, we assume that we must imitate the early churches as closely as possible. Here is a good verse for our purpose—Acts 2. 42. That 'obviously' means that we must have four sorts of meetings! — teaching meetings, fellowship meetings, breaking of bread meetings and prayer meetings. (You notice how that word 'meeting' creeps in!) But how are we to conduct them? Well, of course, Scripture is a little more difficult on that point (except for 1 Corinthians 14, and even there you have to be careful because of all that talk about tongues), so in the absence of clear Scriptural indication we shall do exactly what father and grandfather did—and anything else must be 'out'. God, of course, must be bound to bless us if we do that, because we are being 'obedient to the Scriptural pattern': and, of course, we can have nothing to do with anyone who does anything else. So a strait-jacket is made: and because we killed off our old fashioned Bible readings through sheer incompetence, we do not have even the amount of participation or fellowship they provided for our membership. We just sit all our folk down and preach at them (even in our prayer meetings!)—and take care to let them know that we shall judge their faithfulness to God by the extent to which they come along for regular punishment. The Breaking of Bread, of course, is a little different (1 Corinthians 14 sees to that—although admittedly the Breaking of Bread is not actually mentioned in the chapter; and watch out for the tongues, though the bit about women is good)—but we can soon freeze out anything 'unseemly', and rapidly

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reduce even that most delightful and sacred of experiences to a repetitive weariness.

And the angel of our church is weeping his heart out." (pages 7 and 8)

"Brethren, far from being some special and wonderful Divine Act, are only one manifestation—even if a rather idiosyncratic and 'johnny-come-lately' manifestation."

(page 3)

"Or do we, however unintentionally, on the other hand, seem to them to be carrying on an activity to perpetuate ourselves, trying by all means to win additional members for our 'club'?" (page 5).

If I slightly altered the statement made by our brother, above * I would be considered to be unkind, but it would be equally true. "We all know the kind of troublemaker that exploits the cry of "unity" to force his latitudinarian conscience (or lack of conscience) on the local church. That's not the sort of unity we seek. That can have disastrous consequences."

Let me also add that the Swanwick Conference which we are reviewing, with its proposals is more likely to cause dis-unity in local assemblies than anything that has taken place in the last 50 years. Note page 96 of the report "It is wonderful to talk about unity but I do fear that even some of the things that we have been speaking about during this conference might indeed result in further divisions among us and, I believe, we have to pray very much about this."

Then again, is not the "Christian Brethren Research Fellowship" in which our brother has a fatherly interest—a fellowship within a fellowship. It includes some who are in assembly fellowship—it excludes others! A fellowship within a fellowship is therefore a division. Its papers and seminars are but for the few—it not only divides (maybe with the best of intentions) but also creates suspicion. This is not Unity—neither does it tend to Unity. Would it be appropriate to say "Physician heal thyself"?

On page 7 this speaker seems to have something against "meetings" and yet the Word of God instructs "Not for-

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saking the assembling of yourselves together” and the Lord Himself said “Where two or three are gathered together in My name.” Meetings are scriptural, five kinds at least are found in the New Testament Scriptures and instructions with regard to them are given. While good works to saint and sinner are commendable we must remember that the assembly is God’s cultivated plot, God’s building, God’s Temple. What the assembly is to God is of primary importance.

Notice again this unnecessary statement “the very structure of our churches (or lack of structure) . . . stultifying effect on any new initiative, or the inbuilt inertia in our decision making processes: in an inability to bring forward or retain effective leadership; and especially in the tragic way in which the structure seems to throw up petty foolishness in church discipline and ridiculous local quarrels. We often suffer from a double dose of the British Disease.”

It should be noted that the speakers at the conferences had varying subjects, some of which were “Where is here?” “Leadership,” “Ministry.” Is it not strange that the three speakers who I suppose would claim to be teachers (the other was an evangelist) all arrive at two subjects—“Clerisy” and “Women’s Ministry” — Normally in dealing with the three subjects speakers would not have hinted at the one, and of course the other was nothing to do with their subjects.

We heard these topics before (at “High Leigh” where different men put forward similar ideas) but the speakers are becoming bolder now. I feel sorry for the present speaker here, for the editors of the report have left out quite a bit of what he had to say. Among other things they have left out (1) his best admission, and (2) his weakest reasoning—I quote lower down from tapes taken at the conference.

The speaker admits the accuracy of the relevant passages (1 Timothy 2 and 1 Corinthians 14) and acknowledges that the statements are made with apostolic authority and are to be taken seriously. Excellent, my brother,—to take these passages seriously you simply have to obey them. He then proceeds to try to convince his hearers (or was he trying to convince himself—I don’t think he was successful in

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doing either) that while the word of God is perfectly clear and plain these particular passages do not apply to us in our day and to our circumstances. They only apply to that far distant day and to their own contemporary circumstances. So the speaker adds

“Nevertheless, the interpretation and application of those statements, which includes decision as to their scope and, notably whether they apply outside their immediate historic context, is part, not of the original statement, but of our personal responsibility. This is something that gives us not a moment’s worry in relation to most of the Scripture, but seems to puzzle us inordinately here. In exercising that responsibility we are entitled to take into account both other scriptures (such as 1 Corinthians 11. 5 and Acts 21. 9) that tend in the opposite direction, and also general biblical principles. It is a serious responsibility. Do we have sufficient reason, from these Scriptures alone, for deciding that the Holy Spirit does not wish us today to act differently; for denying the exercise of gifts manifestly given to a large proportion of the membership of the church.”

This kind of exposition seems to be acceptable to those gathered at Swanwick but contains certain fundamental mistakes.

- (a) It presumes that the word of God was only given for those who lived in Apostolic days. It was to be taken seriously by the saints in Corinth for the statements were made with Apostolic authority. These statements however are not for us today, so we are left without the instructions of the word of God in our day. The God who caused the Apostle to write instructions for that day has made no provision for us. In fact Mr. Coad’s “God is too small”—not big enough to know the conditions of the twentieth century and to make the necessary provision. But, my dear brother, our God is bigger than that. We believe He knew all about the days in which we live and that His word is quite sufficient for all time, until the end of the age. We believe the two passages must be taken seriously by us—and we are determined to obey them.

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- (b) The speaker seems to believe that I Corinthians 11 and Acts 21 : 9 contradict I Corinthians 14 and I Timothy 2—they “tend in opposite directions.” Let me say that the Word of God does not contradict itself, it is one harmonious whole. “The Spirit in the Word, as John Knox said to Queen Mary, is never contrarious to Himself”—F. F. Bruce. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man : but holy men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost.” 2 Peter 1 : 21-22 (R.V.).
- (c) He also presumes that the Spirit of God will lead God’s people in our day to do differently to what is taught in the Word of God. Does the Spirit of God contradict Himself? Is not the Word of God a final revelation. Has God not spoken finally. We believe that what is being done in accordance with the word of God today is of God; and anything that is being done today that is not in accord with the word is NOT of God, is direct and often deliberate disobedience—and should be repented of.
- (d) Again, another presumption, seems to be that God has given gifts for women to use and that we are denying them the exercise of their gifts. Our brother makes the mistake that is common amongst clever men. He mistakes natural gifts for spiritual gift. The word of God distinguishes between Natural Ability and Spiritual Gift. The Lord has not given gifts, and the Spirit of God has not distributed gifts for anyone to use to disobey God’s word. If one has spiritual gift the one who has received such gift should be exercised to find where it can be used in obedience to the Word of God.

Let all take particular note of the words of the Apostle as he closes I Corinthians 14. “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

Before I close, let me include the two points mentioned above, viz. (1) His best admission and (2) His weakest

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reasoning— On page 10 the 17th line, after the word 'debatable,' the speaker said "some have argued that they mean just chattering, I think probably not, with good reason" I presume he meant that some argue that the word "speak" means just chattering. I'm glad you had the courage to say "I think probably not." Your friends, many of them have said it so often that they begin to believe it's right—I wonder why the report left that statement out? I quote what two worthy veterans of the past say on the subject—

"To the cavil that 1 Cor. 14. 34 was a temporary and local veto laid on Corinthian women only to subdue their irreverent spirit of chattering, it is enough to draw attention to the solemn claim made in the immediate context that the things Paul was writing are not the jaundiced prejudices of an embittered bachelor but the commandment of the Lord. Moreover, the things he enjoins on the Corinthians are in line with his directions to other Christian churches (I Cor. 14. 37; 7. 17; 11. 16; 14. 36)."

J. B. WATSON, (Former Editor of 'The Witness')

"The prohibition here is said to refer to 'chattering.' The greek word used occurs frequently in the New Testament, but never, in the sense of 'to chatter.' In this very chapter it appears 24 times—22 times clearly relating to ministry. Let the student attempt to substitute the word 'chatter' in any of these and he will immediately perceive the resulting absurdity, verse 29 for instance! Besides, would not the chattering of men be equally reprehensible? Why the restriction on sisters only."

—Quote from "New Testament Church Principles" by A. G. Clarke.

This word here translated "to speak" (and similar words) is used in a great many places in the New Testament Scriptures. It is translated as "preach," "say," "speak," "talk," "tell," "utter," but never "chatter." It is used not only relative to members of the assemblies of God's people in this age. It is used of God, of Angels, of Moses, of Abel, of the prophets and is there not a similar word used when the Lord Jesus is addressing His Father in John 17? Would any dare to suggest that our adorable Lord was chattering

REVIEW OF SWANWICK CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN

to His Father in the irresponsible way as some would suggest that the women in Corinth were doing—"Far be the thought!"

The second point (2) His weakest reasoning—see page 10, lines 32/33. Here the speaker said: "When our Lord said 'As I have washed your feet ye ought to wash one another's feet' most of us have not the slightest hesitation in applying it in a symbolic way. When Paul says 'Greet one another with a holy kiss (in fact I think he says it 7 or 8 times in his letters) our Italian brethren double it up and give you two kisses, we just shake hands, don't we? No problem over the application there. No exercise of conscience." I say again what weak reasoning, no wonder the editors of the report left it out. The two passages mentioned are so obvious in their meaning. What connection have these two passages with the subject on hand and the two passages our brother is trying to explain away from our consciences?

- (1) I Corinthians 14. 37—"a commandment of the Lord"—In the same section as the instruction to "Remember Me"—Do you spiritualize the bread and the cup away (like 'washing feet' or 'holy kiss' above) or do you literally take bread and wine (or was that only for that time and in Corinthian conditions—after all the rest of the Epistles do not mention the Lord's supper).
- (2) "Let them be in subjection, as also saith the law." Is there in the 'washing feet' and in 'the holy kiss' a reference back to the authority of Old Testament instruction.
- (3) In I Timothy 2. 13, notice that the Spirit of God goes back again to the Old Testament to show that what is taught is according to divine principle from the very beginning — Adam's priority in Creation and the woman's priority in the transgression.

In both passages the apostle's instruction are perfectly clear. Difficulties only arise when one is not willing to obey the Word of God.

The official report of Swanwick Conference entitled: "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE" is published by H. E. WALTER LTD., 28 GRAFTON ROAD, WORTHING, BN11 1QU, England. Price £2.95.

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LETTERS FROM SWANWICK

15th March, 1979.

Dear Mr. Gooding,

'Assembly Testimony' asks for the name of a magazine with an article entitled 'Brethren Facing a Crisis.' This was in a copy of the November issue of 'Evangelism Today' containing the article which is mentioned. Bill Spencer is the editor. He was present at the September 1978 Conference at Swanwick as a Christian journalist. His account was his own, and not seen by any of us until the paper appeared. His quotations are accurate but selected and the impression given is not a whole view of the Conference. That will appear in a few days in a book to be published by Henry E. Walter Ltd., 26 Grafton Road, Worthing, Sussex.

I would suggest, if I may, that any review in Assembly Testimony should be of the book rather than the article. Conveners would be grateful for a copy of the relevant issue of Assembly Testimony, when it appears.

May the Lord bless our common endeavour for the well-being of the Brethren.

Yours warmly in His service,

A. G. BAMFORD

Chairman of the conveners
of the conference.

10th July, 1979.

Dear Mr. Gooding,

Thank you for arranging the despatch to me of six copies of 'Assembly Testimony' in which you make reference to the conference at Swanwick in September 1978 under the title "Brethren Facing a Crisis."

I do not know whether you will have received my earlier letter (copy enclosed) in which I gave information regarding the publication of the Report of the conference, which I felt would be more helpful to you than the brief articles which had appeared in some Christian journals and magazines. If you have been able to obtain a copy of the Report entitled "Where do we go from here?", I am sure you will be able to see what was said and discussed more representatively. If you have not been able to obtain a copy please do let me know and I will arrange with the publisher for one to be sent to you straightaway.

The Report will give you details of the names of the conveners and also information about the programme planned for this year's conference.

REVIEW OF SWANWICK CONFERENCE OF BRETHREN

While we would consider that any conference which responded to the question put would be an important one, we did not seek to establish the **relative** importance of this conference in the context of other activities by fellow-believers in other places at other times. The assessment of profitability will be truly made only by the Lord Himself.

The status of those who attended is clearly defined in the printed Report, which confirms what has clearly been indicated in the conference's literature down the years. We pass no resolutions; we make no decisions. None of those who attended the conference was either a delegate or a representative. Each came as an interested individual, representing no-one but himself.

In order to clarify the position for your readers, my fellow conveners and I believe it would be helpful if my two letters were published verbatim in the earliest possible issue of 'Assembly Testimony.'

I have no doubt that we share the ambition that the churches with which we are so happily associated will grow and develop in ways which are to the praise of His glorious grace.

With warm greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Yours sincerely,

A. G. BAMFORD

The following extract from page 166 of "Where do we go from here?" is taken from a short address by the conference chairman (Mr. Alan G. Bamford). It tells us a little bit about the writer of the two letters printed above.

"It is my privilege to live and work in one of the very influential centres of Christian belief, practice and mission in this country, namely Selly Oak Colleges, in Birmingham. It is a truly ecumenical setting—some people call it *the* ecumenical centre of the British Isles. Even further, at a meeting in Hamburg last Easter, as representatives of various aspects of the work of the colleges, we were told by representatives of European Churches and Missions that they saw "Selly Oak" as the European and an international ecumenical and mission training centre. In the midst of all this, one has the unique privilege of living and working with Christians from about fifty countries who also represent the most amazing range and variety of ecclesiastical experience and practice; just about every shade of the spectrum from Quakers to Roman Catholics."

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This may all sound very good to the group gathered at Swanwick, and our dear brother is no doubt an excellent man with outstanding qualifications. To be the principal of Westhill College no doubt fits him to be chairman of the Conveners of the Swanwick Conference of Brethren. However we do well to remember that the assemblies of the Lord's people are by no means "ecumenical"—the very word has become obnoxious to us. We certainly have no intention of working with Quakers, and Catholics and those in between.

Was not there a conference at Swanwick some years ago on this very subject? Was there not a representative of the British Council of Churches (or was it the World Council?) present? Let it be clearly understood, the assemblies are not interested in "Going in" — they "came out."

* * * *

The last line of the Report states on page 168—
"The conference closed with a united recital of The Grace."
—Whatever is that? Capital 'T' and capital 'G'. Is this some new ritual?

VARIOUS TRANSLATIONS OF I CORINTHIANS 14. 34, 35

The various translators apparently find no difficulty in translating—they agree and what they say is perfectly clear.

"Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." (A.V.)

"Let the women be silent in the assemblies; for it is not permitted for them to speak, but let them be in subjection, as also the law saith. But if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in an assembly." (W. Kelly)

"Let [your] women be silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak, but to be in subjection, as the law also says. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is a shame for a woman to speak in assembly." (J.N.D.)

"As in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but

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should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church." (R.S.V.)

"As in all congregations of God's people, women should not address the meeting. They have no licence to speak, but should keep their place as the law directs. If there is something they want to know, they can ask their own husbands at home. It is a shocking thing that a woman should address the congregation" (N.E.B.)

"As in all the congregations of the saints, women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church." (New International)

"Let your women keep silent in the assemblies, for it is not permitted to them to speak; on the contrary, they should be obedient, as the law also says. But if any wish to learn they should ask their husbands in their own houses, for it is scandalous for women to speak in a public meeting." (Ferrar Fenton—Modern English)

"Your women in the assemblies let them be silent, for it hath not been permitted to them to speak, but to be subject, as also the law saith, and if they wish to learn anything, at home their own husbands let them question, for it is a shame for women to speak in the assembly." (Robert Young—Literal)

"Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak: but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law. And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church." (R.V.)

"As in all the churches of God's people, the women should be quiet in church meetings. They are not allowed to speak; as the Jewish law says, they must not be in charge. If they want to find out something, they should ask their husbands at home. It is a disgraceful thing for a woman to speak in a church meeting." (Good News for Modern Man)

"Your women must abstain from speaking at church meetings. They are not authorised to speak in public: they must be submissive—just as, in fact, the Mosaic law enjoins. If they desire to put any questions, let them ask their own husbands at home. It is not decent for a woman to be addressing a public meeting." (Arthur S. Way)

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"Let women be silent in church; they are not allowed to speak. They must submit to this regulation, as the Law itself instructs. If any have questions to ask, they must ask their husbands at home, for there is something indecorous about a woman's speaking in church." (J. B. Phillips).

Here are just a few of the available translations (there are of course a multitude more)—but these are sufficient to show that translators are in agreement on the silence of women in church gatherings—Notice what the Spirit of God says of the idea of women speaking—"It is a shame," "It is shameful," "a disgraceful thing," "not decent," "Indecorous," "shocking," "Scandalous" — This should be sufficient for anyone who really wants to please the Lord.

* * * *

I have received from Dr. John Boyes, Chairman of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship, two papers read at a Seminar held at London Bible College in early June. One by Prof. F. F. Bruce and the other by Miss Mary Evans (lecturer in London Bible College). I shall print these at a later date and show how unscriptural they really are.

DOES PRAYER SANCTIFY DISOBEDIENCE ?

The following quotations are from pages 148 and 149 of Swanwick Report—

"CHANGE FROM TRADITION"

"A rethink of the traditional interpretation of Scripture relating to the behaviour of women in the assembly, dress and vocal expression has become necessary, in my experience, due to obvious examples of real spiritual maturity in the lives of known women."

What a contradiction of God's word "If any man think himself spiritual let him acknowledge the things I write are the commandments of the Lord (I Corinthians 14. 37). My brethren I do not know who put this question but I do know that according to this verse he is not a spiritual man, I also know that women who disobey God's word are not spiritually mature. But more—Other expressions alarm me—
(1) "If after prayerful review a decision is made to allow

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- women to pray or participate in Bible Reading Discussions.”
- (2) “The elders proposed after very careful prayer and consideration of the Scriptures, that women should be permitted to take part in the prayer meeting and also in prayer and Bible reading and announcing hymns at the Breaking of Bread.”
 - (3) “It is very difficult for a spiritual woman in that situation to take part (i.e. when some don’t agree)” (Spiritual women never take part! — Editor).
 - (4) “We left the subject for our own private deliberations and prayer for 6 months — when we went round the table we were of one mind entirely” (i.e. that women should be allowed to take part).

Do these brethren really think that women who want to disobey God’s word are spiritual—Is disobeying what the Spirit caused Paul to write, an evidence of Spirituality?

Do they think that prayerful review of the subject, or careful prayer and consideration make their departure from God’s word more acceptable?

Do they think that six month’s prayer sanctifies their disobedience?

Do they think they need to pray for guidance when the word of God is absolutely plain? When God has said it, you do not need to pray for guidance but for grace to obey.

“Behold to obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams.” —I Samuel 15. 22.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

THE HOLINESS OF GOD

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

The Holiness of God signifies His absolute separation from evil. God is perfectly, absolutely, essentially and effectively holy.

In Scripture He is frequently styled “The Holy One;” holiness is the very excellency of the Divine nature, “He is glorious in holiness” Exod. 15 : 11.

God is called “The Holy One of Israel,” over twenty-five times in Isaiah and frequently in Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

“God is Holy,” means “God is absolutely pure.” Trace the references to the word “holy” in your concordance and study its implications. The truth that God is holy is the fundamental truth of the Old and New Testament. The attribute of holiness gives glory and harmony to all God’s attributes.

CLEARLY DECLARED

The Holiness of God is incomparable. Exod. 15:11. “There is none holy as the Lord” 1 Sam. 2:2. It makes Him as quite different and distinct from all His creatures. Ps. 99:3; 103:1; Isa. 6:3; 40:25; 1 John 1:5.

DECLARED PLURALLY by the Father, by the Son and the Spirit. Read Isa. 6:3 with Isa. 63:10; with John 17:11; 1 John 2:20; Acts 3:14; Eph. 1:13. The character of God is the standard of holiness Lev. 19:2, with Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 1:15,16. He calls us to be like Himself.

DECLARED PROPHETICALLY “Sing unto the Lord” Isa. 12:5,6; 57:15; Habk. 1:12,13. The seraphim in Isa. 6:2, not only celebrated God’s holiness, but His plans for redeeming fallen man. God’s infinite holiness made Isaiah conscious of his deep sinfulness v. 5. No man can see God without holiness. Heb. 12:14.

DECLARED PLAINLY Lev. 11:45; 20:7,26; Psalms 15:1; 60:6. His holiness is such that He cannot overlook wickedness and dishonesty Micah 6:7-13. Holiness must punish wrong worship Lev. 10:1-3; and wrong practice 2 Chr. 26:16-21; Psalms 5:4-6. Holiness is the rule of His actions Psalms 145:17.

DECLARED PRAYERFULLY Psalms 22:3; John 17:11; 1 Thess 5:23.

DECLARED PRAISEFULLY Psalms 99:1-3; 99:5; 97:12; 108:7; 110:3; Rev. 4:8 with Isa. 6:3. Each seraph had six wings. Four of the six were used in reverent worship. What an endless theme for our worshipful adoration.

CONSTANTLY DEMONSTRATED

Seen in GOD’S DESIRE FOR SAINTLINESS Lev. 10:3. God is to be served with fear. Psalms 2:11. Because God is holy the utmost reverence become our approaches unto Him Psalms 89:7. “Worship at His footstool” Psalms 99:5. Like God we should love righteousness Psalms 11:7; Matt. 5.

6; I Tim. 4. 7,8. Yet what His holiness demanded, His grace has provided in His Son, Eph. 1. 7.

HIS DENUNCIATION OF SIN Gen. 6. 5-7; Psa. 5. 4-6; Prov. 3. 32, 33; 15. 26; "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord." "If Thou Lord shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord who shall stand" Psa. 130. 3; 143. 2; Habk. 2. 12, 15, 16; Zeph. 1. 2-12; Nahum 1. 2; Titus 3. 3; Rom. 8. 7,8; 1 John 3. 8,9.

HIS DEMAND FOR SEPARATION Lev. 20. 6,7; 1 Sam. 7. 3,4; Psa. 19. v. 8,9,13. Sin severs all communion with a holy God. A righteous life and a holy walk are essentials to fellowship with God. Matt. 5. 8; 1 Cor. 6.11.

The positive side in Luke 1. 74,75. We need a new awareness of the presence of God, this brings an awareness of sin. Luke 5. 8. We must serve God with reverence in character and conduct as becometh godliness. Eph. 4. 32—5. 2; 2 Cor. 6. 17,18; Titus 2. 11,12. There must be separation from the wicked. Num. 16. 21, 26; Gal. 1. 4.

IN DEVOTED SERVICE We should "go, tell, how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Mark 5. 19. Those who know God best want to love and serve Him. The Lord is dishonoured and grieved by our failure to respond willingly to His call to service. "Yield yourselves unto God" Rom. 6. 13; 12. 1. Our lives should commend the Gospel to others 1 Thess. 2. 10; 5. 23; 2 Thess. 3. 3-5; 2 Tim. 2. 21, 22; Titus 3. 8.

CONTINUALLY DEMANDED

Beware of the sin of materialism Isa. 5. 8; This is due to a wrong emphasis and evaluation of creature comforts. Instead of evaluating them in a proper relationship to God, the Giver of these blessings, we often place these benefits ahead of God. Jas. 2. 14-16 warns against an empty religious profession. We are commanded to imitate holiness Lev. 11. 44, 45; and praise His holiness Psa. 30. 4.

In Personal Life we should follow after holiness Heb. 12. 14; and have fruit unto holiness Rom. 6. 22. The new nature of God's creating, shows itself in a just and devout life. Eph. 4. 23,24.

In Home Life. In Israel's direction — look, the words, "remember," "observe," "teach" are continually emphasized in relation to family life. Deut. 4.9,10; 6.4-9; Lev. 27.14.

In Social Life. Holiness is seen in loving our neighbour and walking honestly. Rom. 13. 9-13; 14. 16-18. Living like Christ and being renewed in our mind Eph. 4. 20-24.

In Prayer Life. We have an especial obligation to pray for all in authority. 1 Tim. 2. 2,8, and do it from pure motives, and a clean heart. Psa. 139. 23,24.

In Business Life. Prov. 11.1; Rom. 12. 17; Mal. 2. 10; Col. 3. v.22-25; Eph. 6. 5-7. Industry, honesty and integrity are the hall marks of a Christian life. All moral uprightness has its source in an ethical and infinitely holy God. Secularism is that attitude of heart that ostracises God from everyday affairs of life.

In Assembly Life. Acts 5. 1-11; 1 Cor. 5. 1-7,13. The Church needs to remember that she has a holy God in the midst.

* * * *

Study other Attributes of God; His Supremacy, Sovereignty, Faithfulness, Patience and Wrath.

THE LETTER OF JUDE

(continued)

Into a world where death reigned (Gen. 5) and amid all the wickedness of that world which preceded the Flood—not only preceded, but also precipitated the Flood, Enoch is outstanding. Twice in this chapter of death it is recorded that Enoch walked with God, and this walk was not his only characteristic for not only did he walk with God, but the walk was well pleasing to God (Heb. 11:5). A true state of communion out of true faith. Further, out of that communion arose the hope of His coming—"Behold, the Lord came . . ." And God did, indeed, come for Enoch. "He was not for God took him."

Is it mere coincidence that the messages to the churches in the Revelation of our Lord are preceded by this great object lesson which we see in Enoch? True it is that the Church awaits the coming of the Lord for His saints as distinct to His coming with His saints—as Enoch saw it, but nevertheless the Lord is coming, and in Enoch we see the true attitude of heart necessary for, and preparatory to, and antioipatory of, His coming.

The great message to the Church was, and is, "Behold,

I come quickly, and My reward is with Me . . . " (Rev. 22 : 12) and again we see the object lesson of Enoch's faith, "He that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11 : 5-6).

So then, we see the great character of Enoch shining out from the darkness of his day. He believed God; He sought to know more of Him for He walked with Him; He looked for His coming and witnessed to that coming; His translation was confirmation of the coming of the Lord, and of His judgments. Said Paul, "For me to live is Christ . . ." (Phil. 1 : 21), and again, "See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." (Eph. 5 : 15). Irenaeus wrote, "Enoch also, pleasing God without circumcision, was God's ambassador to the angels, although he was a man, and was received to heaven, and is preserved until now as a witness of the just judgments of God. For the angels by transgression fell to earth for judgment, while a man, by pleasing God, was raised to heaven for salvation." (Interesting—not necessarily true!).

v. 16. *"These are murmurers (Greek—'ogongustes'—an onomatopoeic word—i.e. a word based upon the sound emitted), complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks great swelling words, admiring the person for the sake of profit."*

Triplet No. 8. Murmurers, complainers, walking in their own lusts.

Remember the opening words of the Apostle's song of love? (I Cor. 13)? "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Complainers—those discontented with their lot.

Boasters—"Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters . . ." (Rom. 1 : 30).

Paying lip service—as Balaam to Balak.

v. 17-18. *"But ye, beloved, remember the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they said to you that in the last time there shall be mockers (scoffers), walking after their own lusts of impieties."*

This verse again makes us aware of the appropriate

position of this letter, for the 'last days' are in view.

v. 19. "*These be they who are setting apart (creating divisions), sensual, having no spirit.*" (? Holy Spirit).

"These"—notice that the three occurrences (Triplet No. 9) introduce three sections—vv. 12-15; vv. 16-18; and v. 19, and it has been suggested that they describe respectively, those who follow in the way of Cain, the error of Balaam and the rebellion of Korah.

"Sensual"—Greek *pychi*—i.e. ruled by human reasoning and human affections—not rising above the world of sense.

v. 20-21. "*But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith (which 'these' would deny), praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, awaiting the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto life eternal.*"

Keep yourselves unto life eternal.

Triplet No. 10. Praying in the Holy Spirit; keeping in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By these is the building erected upon the faith foundation which 'these' would destroy.

The faith once delivered to the saints (v. 4) is now "your faith" and further, it is a "holy faith."

Praying in the Holy Spirit—He Who "makes intercession for us" (Rom. 8) "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us His Holy Spirit."

"God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (I John 4:13-16).

"By prayer in the Spirit, we are kept in the love of the Father, for the mercy of the Son." (A Commentator).

That same mercy for which men besought Him—"Thou son of David, have mercy on me."

v. 22. "*But some convict when they contend (dispute) with you.*" Or perhaps, "*Some convict when they are in doubt.*"

v. 23. "*And others save, snatching them from the fire; and others pity in fear, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.*"

Triplet No. 11. Convict, save, pity.

The last clause—"and others pity in fear" is not in the A.V. but is shown in other versions.

Some save by eliminating their doubts.

Others, snatch as brands from the burning. (Zechariah 3 : 2; cf. note on v. 9).

The rest, pity, but in pitying, fear (I Cor. 5 : 11; I Tim. 5 : 22; Titus 3 : 10, 11).

v. 24-25. *"Now to Him Who is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you blameless and exultant in the presence of His glory; to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, might and authority, before all time, and now, and to all the ages. Amen."*

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Triplets 12 and 13. Glory, Majesty, Might; Past, Present, Future.

Before time began; through time, and when time ceases—from eternity to eternity—glory, majesty and might belong to God and are ascribed to Him through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This doxology is a shout of triumph. God will perform that which ungodly men would seek to frustrate.

We repeat the sevenfold duty seen in vv. 20-23—a duty which is included in the opening exhortation that we 'contend for the faith'—

Build upon the faith;

Pray in the Spirit;

Keep in the love of God;

Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Convict those in doubt;

Others save;

Others pity.

Enoch's walk impossible? He walked with God, and God took him.

Enoch's God is our God, and He is able to guard us from stumbling (in our walk) and to set us blameless and exultant in the presence of His glory.

He is able.

JUSTIFICATION

by W. W. FEREDAY

It was a great moment for his own soul, and fraught with immense consequences for many others when Luther learned from God that justification is by faith alone. For centuries the mass in Christendom had groaned under the mistaken notion that only by toilsome works and the observance of

religious ordinances could men hope to stand ultimately in the favour of God. The truth was all along enshrined in the Scriptures, but somehow the eyes of men were holden that they could not see it.

To justify a man is to reckon him righteous. Against such an one no charge can ever be brought; before the throne of judgement he stands acquitted for ever. To justify one who has committed no offence is a simple matter, of which every magisterial bench in the world is capable. But to justify a sinner is another matter altogether; this presents a problem that only God can solve. Both Job and his friend Bildad long ago raised the question, "How can man be just with God?" (Job ix. ; xxv.); both having before their minds the fact that man is fallen and guilty. Their question found no definite answer in Old Testament times; for this, as for the solution of many another riddle, men had to wait until God sent forth His beloved Son. "But now," says the Apostle, "the righteousness of God is manifested" (Rom. iii. 21). It is offered "unto all," and it is "upon all them that believe." Its foundation is the blood of Christ; which, shed once upon the cross of Calvary, has answered all the claims of the throne of God in regard to the sins of all God's people, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Christ's resurrection is the token before all eyes that God's righteous claims have been satisfied. The Man who bore my sins in His own body on the tree is now sitting on the throne of God without one of them. For Him, condemnation is past for ever; and in Him every believer is justified from all things. The believer possesses in Christ a life which is characterised by resurrection-power, and to which no charge of sin can ever be attached. This is what is meant by "justification of life" in Rom. v. 18. From such a vantage ground the Christian is able to challenge all his foes: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33-34). The very righteousness of God, so dreaded by the guilty, becomes the safeguard and boast of the justified.

The Apostle James has been thought to contradict in his epistle the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith. Even Luther failed to reconcile the teaching of the two inspired writers. Whatever difficulty the reader may find vanishes immediately the fact is grasped that Paul is occupied (in Rom. -iii.-v.) with the justification of the ungodly, while

James (in chap. ii) speaks of the justification of the godly. The one is before God and the other is before men. God justifies the ungodly on the principle of faith; it is of grace alone, works being altogether excluded: the godly justify themselves (i.e., their confession) before men by their good works, hence the statement of James ii. 18: "I will shew thee my faith by my works." A life abundant in good works naturally results from the possession of a living faith; when the works are lacking, we may well doubt the profession of the lips.

No man could well be more occupied with self-righteousness than Saul of Tarsus, but there came a day when God revealed Christ to His soul, and Divine righteousness in Him. From that moment all human efforts and advantages became in his eyes as loss and dung; his glorying henceforward was in Christ alone.

Satan makes choice of such as have a great name for holiness to do his work; there is none like a live bird to draw other birds into the net. Abraham tempts his wife to lie—"Say thou art my sister." The old prophet leads the man of God out of his way.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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OUTSIDE THE CAMP

(Tune : Airs of Salvation 21)

Outside the camp unto Thy dear name,
Draw me, O Lamb of God,
Far from the world with its sin and its shame,
Hallowed is every sod.
Outside the camp, 'tis a lonely place;
Outside the city wall;
Here on Thy breast let my soul ever rest,
Outside the camp with Thee.

Outside the camp unto Thy dear name
This is Thy word I see,
Unto that name, then I share in His shame
Privileged place to be.
Feasting on Christ, His reproach to share;
Tempt not my soul away
Nought can compare with the blessedness there,
Outside the camp with Thee.

Outside the camp unto Thy dear name
Blest gathering place for me,
Banner of love from Thy presence above
Draw forth my soul to Thee.
Shame on my soul that I ever sought
Inside the walls to dwell,
Riches of grace, gazing here on Thy face
Outside the camp with Thee.

Outside the camp unto Thy dear name,
Lord, may I here be found
Weaned from the world, with its pomp and its fame
Resting on holy ground.
Outside the camp in Thy company till
Earth's little day be done
Then face to face, all Thy mercies to trace
Inside the veil with Thee.

—The Gospel Hymn Book.

TWO MORE ADDRESSES—

“LEADERSHIP” and “MATURITY”

“LEADERSHIP” (pages 13 to 25).

The speaker who had this subject allocated to him began his address with a list of words used in the letters to the different churches, which he considered had some connection with Leadership. He asserted that these names describe “church officers.” Where is that in the word of God—this expression is not used among the assemblies of God’s people. Why is it that these men are so well acquainted with terms used “outside” rather than “within”?

Thereafter our brother proceeds with a rather impressive list of words with the original Greek words and their meaning. I am sure the listeners must have been impressed by such a display of knowledge—though one wonders whether many would retain much of it for very long (now that it has been printed in the report it is both useful and profitable). The surprising thing is that at the foot of page 15 these words are found :

“I have taken some time on this, but it seems necessary because it is possible to be so dogmatic about what we see as “the Scriptural pattern.” In fact there seems to be no one single pattern, but, instead, a variety of nomenclature, according to culture. There is always some kind of leadership, but what you call it does not seem to matter. We should notice the great cultural flexibility in the word of God : it may help us to be more charitable to others who call their leaders by different names.”

The inference seems to be that all this variety of names the Spirit of God has used is meaningless—all referring to the same thing and the same kind of persons—“Church Officers”!—The names chosen are just according to the culture of the various peoples ! So today we have “Pope,” “Archbishop,” “Archdeacon” and at the lower level “Reverend,” “Vicar,” “Rector” and of course General and Lieutenant, etc., all according to background and culture—it doesn’t really matter. The Scripture contains “words that the Holy Spirit teacheth.” Our brother has told us the words, given the meaning ; if he had interpreted them in their context his message would have been most instructive

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and edifying, but he uses his amazing knowledge to teach us (1) not to be dogmatic (2) that there is no Scriptural pattern (3) to be more charitable to those who call their leaders by different names. In fact one concludes after examining three pages that the main point was to suggest that there is no Scriptural pattern in the New Testament Scriptures. We could not disagree more!

There are several references to Phoebe — “a deacon, which is, incidently, masculine” (page 13) also “The most interesting of all is Phoebe, not only called ‘diakonos’—the office of a deacon, but ‘prostatis’: had she been a man the word would have been translated, ‘leader, protector, patron’ . . . instead we meet the very weak translation ‘helper’ and ‘succourer’ for which usage there would seem little or no evidence whatever. The text would bear the translation ‘she was designated by me a ruler of many.’”

I wonder why other translators failed to find that meaning in the original text? Here are a selection.

Weymouth: “She has indeed been a kind friend to many, including myself.”

R.S.V. “She has been a helper of many, including myself.”

New International: “She has been a great help to many people, including me.”

Phillips: “She has herself been of great assistance to many, not excluding myself.”

N.E.B.: “She has herself been a good friend to many, including myself.”

Conybeare and Howson: “For she herself aided many, and me also among the rest.”

A. S. Way: “Many there are whom she has shielded from suffering, myself among the number.”

Twentieth Century: “She has proved herself a good friend to me and to many others.”

J.N.D.: “She hath been a helper of many and of myself.”

Notice how these versions translate the word: ‘Kind friend,’ ‘helper,’ ‘great help,’ ‘great assistance,’ ‘good friend,’ ‘aided,’ ‘shielded from suffering,’ etc. Nothing about ‘leader’ at all, and of course the subject of the address was ‘leadership’—so there is really no connection between Phoebe and the matter being considered.

But also take note of our brother’s remark “If she had

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been a man, the word would have been translated . . .” Does he seriously suggest that all the various translators of the New Testament had such a bias against women that they deliberately wrongly translated this verse? Has he the necessary scholarship to allow him to say that reliable scholars, both past and present, who have translated these words have either been ignorant or deceivers? When so many translators agree surely one should be slow to disagree? Again he says the word means ‘leader,’ ‘protector,’ ‘patron.’ Was Phoebe Paul’s leader? Was he led by a woman? Was Phoebe Paul’s patron (one who protects, gives influential support to, sometimes protects in return for certain services). The word “protector” could fit the context, but the A.V. “succourer” is equally good and is more expressive.

As with the former speaker the subject led to the subject of Women in the assembly (I wonder why?). One feels sorry for the “sister I know very well, brought up in the assemblies, who said frankly ‘I do not want my daughter to grow up in a church which silences half its members.’” (page 22). May the Lord be graciously merciful to her, lest her desire become true.—Such words said in defiance of God’s word can return again with bitter tears.

Now see this quotation from page 22.

“But does the word of God teach what we have thought it taught” (this sounds very like “Hath God said?”—Editor). “I will not take time now to show that the usual proof texts can be understood properly in their contexts to mean other than the traditional interpretation, and my view of Scripture will not allow me to sweep such Scriptures under any alleged cultural rug.”

However he does sweep the passages under the rug—for the next thing is a quotation from James Hudson Taylor, and no reference to the usual proof texts! He does say however

“Biblical Truth ought to feel right. Our traditional attitude to the role of women does not, to many of us, nor to many thoughtful and spiritual women in the assemblies.”

So it is not a matter of what the Scripture says, but Does it feel right?—May I submit that whether it feels right or not depends whether one is Spiritual or not. If the person is Spiritual the ‘traditional attitude’ will feel right.—“If a

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man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.”

The general impression that I gather from this address is (1) the speaker has a good knowledge of the original text (2) that in spite of his knowledge he is completely confused on the subject of women’s participation in the local assembly (unwillingness to obey leads to that state) (3) that because he is not clear about it, no one else could be, or should be and (4) therefore no one has a right to be dogmatic, and refuse to allow conduct in the assembly which is contrary to the plain teaching of the word of God. I suppose the term he uses on page 17 would be his attitude to those that oppose these new ideas—“a little man with a big Bible who has no status in the outside world and compensates for it by trying to be a petty ruler in the local assembly.”

It appears that the end product of the address was to (1) bewilder the hearers with a display of knowledge (2) to cast doubt on the traditional interpretation of God’s word. Then (3) to encourage God’s people to disobey those plain passages.

An old strategy indeed. (1) Hath God said? (2) Ye shall not surely die. First implanting doubt as to what God has said and then contradicting it. I am absolutely certain that my brother would not want to do that.

“I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 11. 3.

MATURITY

After an introductory passage Dr. Griffiths proceeded to use the Philippian epistle as a base for his paper, interpreting his subject as ‘Growth and Progress’. In his address he says some excellent things, but, after four pages the subject of ‘women in the assembly’ comes up again! I wonder why? It isn’t his subject! He states of Euodias and Syntyche “they seemed to share with the apostle and Clement and others in Gospel ministry” What does that mean? He adds “There are many sisters in our assemblies who are frustrated because there is no opportunity for them to develop spiritual gifts in the assembly.” (page 77) So I

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presume he means that these two women engaged in preaching the Gospel along with Paul. There are plenty of other ways of labouring without having to disobey God's word.

On page 78 there seems to be a suggestion that (1) we should have an impact on the secular world by taking active part in politics (2) Our young people might follow the example of a group in Singapore and produce a Christian Musical on the life of Paul (page 79) and (3) the subject of Christian Unity is handled in an excellent way but is spoiled by "closer links with Christian Churches of other traditions than our own"—the third Swanwick aim—Inter-denominationalism.

(4) Under the heading 'Growth in realistic missionary outreach' he spoils a good section by "We ought as assemblies to train more workers and send more of them when trained as missionaries" and he follows this up with the idea of a young brother and his wife being fully supported as full-time workers in a Singapore assembly—So he arrives at another Swanwick objective—Full-time local workers with adequate salary.

Now the final note. This address was apparently the closing address of the Conference (with the exception of the Chairman's concluding address).

"We have met together over this weekend for conference. Is this just more talk or will it lead to action? Are we going to work out the solution to the problems of the assemblies with fear and trembling? Do you really care enough to act? Unless we are convinced from the word of God, by the Spirit of God, that we are commanded to make progress and unless we want that progress with all our hearts, I am afraid that we will not go anywhere from here. Instead, we will become the discarded sectarian dregs of a human movement that began with a clear Biblical vision but lost its sense of direction and purpose, before it arrived at the Biblical destination. May God grant that we may regain the Biblical vision and the Biblical desire to press on to maturity.

"As a final word of encouragement, it will not be necessary to change the whole Brethren movement to achieve that." (page 85). (Bold type the editor's).

It would appear that this last sentence quoted is incomplete. Where is the final word of encouragement? Bill

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Spencer in his article in "Evangelism Today" adds the missing words "just their own." With this idea the final call has point.

The conveners of the conference are at great pains in their introduction to point out that there was nothing official about the Swanwick conference—'no official standing, not delegates.' In this they are right, but does this speaker think so. Take notice of his words. (Bill Spencer calls it "the final plea.") It is like a national or party leader rallying his troops for the battle, or his party members before a political campaign! It sounds good, thrilling, moving—the "trumpet is not giving an uncertain sound"!

But wait, notice the word 'WE' eight times. 'We have met together', that must be the 270 or more 'Men of Swanwick.' Then 'We will become the discarded sectarian dregs of a human movement that began with a clear Biblical Vision'—that must be the co-called Brethren movement. So WE are the Men of Swanwick and WE is the Brethren movement! Notice WE are going to endeavour to put right the problems of the assemblies. This speaker talks as though this gathering represented the brethren movement, but it didn't! Not officially. The Men of Swanwick are not the Brethren Movement—nor the representatives of the assemblies.

Finally the speaker suggests the plan of action—Don't try to change the whole Brethren movement—just start with your own assembly.

So my fellow elders, be on the watch for the ideas of Swanwick being introduced into the local assembly, they are

- (1) Public participation of Women in assembly gatherings;
- (2) Trained Local Pastors;
- (3) Salaried ministry;
- (4) Interdenominationalism.

—A. M. S. Gooding

May I suggest again that the elders of assemblies should obtain a copy of the official report of the Swanwick Conference entitled "Where do we go from here." You may then check whether what I say is true, and also be forewarned relative the dangers of the movement. It is obtainable from H. E. WALTER LTD., 26 GRAFTON ROAD, WORTHING, West Sussex, BN11 1QU, England. Price £2.95.

THE GROWTH OF A CHURCH

**IT WAS NEVER GOD'S INTENTION TO CONCENTRATE MINISTRY
IN ONE MAN**

Reprinted from "Letters of Interest" (published in U.S.A.)
written by its Editor: James A. Stahr

In the early history of the Christian church, two cities surpass all others in importance. They are Jerusalem and Antioch.

The central role of Jerusalem in church history is obvious, for it was there the church began. The crucial role of Antioch is not as well known. It was in Antioch that the first Gentile congregation was formed.

If Antioch equals Jerusalem in historical importance, it surpasses it in offering a pattern for the future. This might well be expected, for, apart from the first few decades of its history, Christianity has always been predominantly a Gentile religion. By contrast, the church in Jerusalem was composed entirely of Jewish Christians. It had strong ties to Jewish religion. The church in Antioch never had such ties. When attempts were made to form them, it offered stiff and successful resistance (Acts 14 : 26—15 : 2; 15 : 22-31).

But more than that. The church in Jerusalem is limited as a pattern for churches elsewhere, not only because it was predominantly Jewish rather than Gentile, but also because it came into being in a unique way. Its founding nucleus was a band of men who had travelled with the Lord Jesus. As they had moved from place to place, they had shared everything. Judas Iscariot had been their treasurer (John 12 : 6; 13 : 29). The Lord Jesus had been their leader.

After the Lord had ascended to heaven (and after Judas had committed suicide), the eleven men that remained met daily for prayer in an upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1 : 12-13). Other followers of the Lord Jesus joined them, bringing the total number to about 120 (vv. 14-15). It was on this group that the Holy Spirit descended, bringing the Christian church into being (Acts 2 : 1-4; I Cor. 12 : 13).

This Jerusalem congregation was marked by two characteristics that were not passed on to churches in other communities. Both characteristics were a direct result of its unusual origin.

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The first of these was the practice of pooling financial resources (Acts 2 : 44-45; 4 : 32-35). It was simply a continuation of the way the travelling band of apostles had operated during the Lord's earthly ministry. There is no indication in Scripture that this practice was passed on to any other churches.

The second characteristic was the dominant role of apostles, who had a great deal more authority than ordinary elders.

In course of time, as the apostles died or moved away, the Jerusalem church became more like churches in other places. It is interesting to observe this change in the book of Acts. At first, leadership was provided entirely by the twelve. There is no mention of elders (Acts 6 : 2; 8 : 14). Before long other brethren had been drawn into the decision-making process, so that there were elders as well as apostles in Jerusalem (11 : 30; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4). Still later only elders are mentioned, particularly James, who was not one of the twelve (21:17-18). There is no further mention of apostles in Jerusalem.

Thus it might be said that the church in Jerusalem, rather than being a pattern for churches elsewhere, gradually adapted itself to the pattern that other churches set. The church in Antioch, by contrast, set a pattern from its very beginning. It was brought into existence by means of evangelism (Acts 11 : 19-21, 24). The converts were quickly gathered together into assembly fellowship, where they were taught the Word of God (v. 26).

Let us look at the subject of ministry in the local church. What *form* shall it take? What *voices* shall be heard in the ministry of the Word?

The assembly at Antioch gives us a two-fold pattern for ministry in a New Testament assembly. It teaches us that there should be variety of ministry, and it teaches us that there should be plurality of ministry. But it gives us no pattern of a pastor, which is the common practice in most churches today.

VARIETY OF MINISTRY

Acts 11 : 19-30 is the first of several passages relating to the church at Antioch. In these verses we find mention

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of four different types of ministry. First, of course, came *evangelism* (v. 20). When Barnabas arrived, he had a ministry of *exhortation* (v. 23). After he brought Saul, the two of them carried on a *teaching* ministry for a whole year (v. 26). Finally, when Agabus came, there was an exercise of the gift of *prophecy* (v. 28).

Variety in ministry is important to the growth of a church. People need encouragement, and sometimes rebuke. They need to be edified, and sometimes warned (I Cor. 14 : 3; Acts 20 : 31). They need to be taught doctrine (Titus 1:9), and they need to be taught the principles of Christian living (Titus 2 : 4-7).

In Antioch there was no steady diet of evangelism to the exclusion of teaching. On the other hand, neither did exhortation and teaching replace evangelism. It seems evident from Acts 11:24 that the exhortations of Barnabas to the church were thoroughly mixed with the gospel message.

A congregation that neglects teaching may grow in numbers, but not in maturity. A congregation that neglects evangelism will wonder why its deepening maturity is not accompanied by growth in numbers. And why its children grow up as nominal Christians without a genuine conversion experience.

What of the gift of prophecy such as Agabus exercised? All would agree that our churches need a ministry of prophecy, at least in the sense of *speaking forth* the mind of God. This means preaching, not just teaching.

But do we have prophecy today in the sense of *prediction*? There is considerable difference of opinion on this point. Agabus predicted a great famine, and told when it would come to pass. Many feel that the ability to make such predictions is, like the New Testament gift of tongues, a supernatural gift that is no longer being given. Others tell us that both gifts are with us today.

Unfortunately, most of the debate rages around the gift of tongues. It would be helpful if it centred on prophecy instead. When someone claims a gift of tongues, no one, including the speaker, can be absolutely sure of its source. Nor even if it is a legitimate language. But predictive prophecy is different. Let those who claim supernatural

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gifts tell us what's going to happen in respect to inflation, recession, flash floods, tornadoes, or even severe winter weather. Then we can make preparation for the aid of our fellow believers (Acts 11:29-30). And we will have convincing proof of the continuance of supernatural gifts.

On the other hand, the absence of convincing, verifiable, predictive prophecy is a pretty good indication that tongues have ceased (compare I Cor. 13:8). The two gifts receive side-by-side treatment right through chapters 12, 13 and 14 of I Corinthians. They are also linked together in Acts 2:4, 17, 18 and Acts 19:6. In fact the only places where the gift of tongues is mentioned separately from the gift of prophecy are Mark 16:17 and Acts 10:46. But the gift of prophecy is treated separately from tongues in Acts 11:27-28; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9-11; Romans 12:6; I Cor. 11:4-5; Eph. 4:11; I Thes. 5:20; I Tim. 1:18; 4:14 (not to mention pre-Pentecost occurrences like I Samuel 10:10 and Luke 1:67).

Inasmuch as the gift of prophecy receives more attention in the New Testament than the gift of tongues, is it not appropriate to look to it for proof that supernatural gifts are still given today? When we see instead that the unverifiable gift of tongues gets most of the attention in the modern charismatic movement, are we not justified in questioning the validity of the movement's claims?

PLURALITY OF MINISTRY

Acts 13:1-3 is the second passage describing the church at Antioch. It brings us immediately to the subject of plurality of ministry. It names five men who were actively ministering the Word of God in the assembly—Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen and Saul.

It was never God's intention that ministry in the local church should be concentrated in one individual! Even if he possessed the necessary variety of gifts! A "one-man ministry" might be necessary when the church is first planted, but if the pattern of Antioch is followed, others will soon be participating in the preaching.

If it appears that Barnabas was sent to Antioch to be "the minister" there, that notion is quickly dispelled when he goes to Tarsus and brings back Saul (Acts 11:22-25). If some would label the two of them "co-pastors", what

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would they call the five men in Acts 13:1? Surely this was not a hired staff, but rather a group of gifted men, some local, some from a distance, who were sharing in the public ministry of the assembly.

If we're still not convinced, we turn to Acts 15:30-40, the fourth New Testament passage describing Antioch (the third is 14:26-15:3). Paul and Barnabas, after their first missionary journey and a subsequent trip to Jerusalem, had resumed their ministry in the assembly, "teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord, with many others also" (15:35).

Who is the pastor now?

The church in Antioch had grown through variety and plurality of ministry. As it grew, the number of ministering brethren also increased, so that now it could be said that not just five but many were teaching and preaching the Word of the Lord.

NO PATTERN OF A PASTOR

Yet in spite of this New Testament pattern, most of evangelical Christendom follows the modern tradition of a hired minister, putting him in charge, not only of worship and preaching and shepherding, but all too often of church government as well.

For the person in the pew the New Testament pattern may be even further distorted. Twenty-five years ago I asked a Christian woman what church she went to. I have never forgotten her answer. It epitomizes the distance between traditional church practice and the New Testament pattern.

"I go to such-and-such a church," she replied. "He's a very good man."

The incipient editor that was within me rebelled at the grammatical shortcomings of her comment. A church is not a *he*. But I knew what she meant. She had left a middle sentence unspoken. "I go to such-and-such a church. The pastor is so-and-so. He's a very good man."

Many times since I have heard similar comments, though not expressed as vividly. The omission of that middle sentence reflects a widespread weakness in biblical understanding. It conceives of the local church, not as a fellow-

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ship of believers, but as an auditorium to which people go to hear a prominent minister. If he is replaced by someone less talented, it might be time to move on to another congregation with a dynamic preacher that suits our tastes and meets our needs.

More Scriptural thinking says: "I go to such-and-such a church. They're a wonderful group of Christians." Plurality of ministry encourages this thinking. Concentrating everything in a hired pastor does not.

It is refreshing to note a recent trend toward plurality of ministry, often given impetus by men who are pastors in traditional settings. This re-discovery of biblical practice should be encouraged by those of us who have been familiar with it for a long time. It represents a spiritual maturity that is a vital part of the growth of a church.

Read what an 'outsider' says . . .

"WHICH WAY FOR THE BRETHREN NOW?"

EXTRACT FROM REVIEW IN EVANGELICAL TIMES (Sept. 1979)

by ANDREW R. ANDERSON

"Though much that is said here has been said for the past 20 years or so, some of the suggestions are revolutionary and if put into effect in an assembly are bound to precipitate a crisis of identity ('Are they really Brethren any more?!'). One contributor makes a strong plea for the assemblies to seek out, train, and set apart men to a stated (though not exclusive) full-time preaching office in the local church. Those of us who feel that this has been a great lack in assembly-life will rejoice to see such a change of attitude, but may we sound a word of caution? Such men would need to earn the confidence, and be given the recognition, of the members — else there will be chaos worse confounded! The relationship between pulpit and pew is delicate indeed.

The open Breaking of Bread services, the centre of traditional Brethren life, is given some honest and heart-searching scrutiny. The role of women was the subject of some discussion, but the question of women teaching in the church was left open-ended. Other suggestions were even more surprising. Is the Evangelical Alliance the most obvious place for Brethren to demonstrate the oneness of Christ's

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people (pp. 95—96). Are not assemblies compromising the gospel if they associate with local Councils of Churches, as is advocated on pp.97-98?

As one who owes much to a Brethren background, the reviewer wishes the churches of that ilk the blessing of God. But he fears that, either from a sincere desire for new vitality or out of sheer frustration with the status quo, some will press to implement the many suggestions contained in the report without first searching the Scriptures to see whether these things be so.

This report will do good if it drives the assemblies back to the Bible, as the speakers and convenors clearly desire. But pity any innovators for whom it becomes their Bible!"

FORGIVENESS

The late W. W. FEREDAY

"I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Familiar words, often used by our fellow-men in the presence of God. Yet it is to be feared that many who thus speak would hesitate to assert that their own sins are forgiven, and that they stand perfectly clear before the throne of God for ever. Under such circumstances, one naturally enquires, "Whose sins do they believe in the forgiveness of?"

Certainly, there is not a soul who does not need forgiveness, though we do at times fall in with some of the ninety-and-nine just persons who judge they have no need of repentance. But they are deceiving themselves. The wise man's words are all too true: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not" (Eccles. vii. 20). The summing up of the Apostle is even more conclusive: "There is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii. 23). Such comprehensive language leaves no door of escape for any; the whole human family is brought thereby under the judgement of God. Moreover, from such a condition none can extricate themselves; no amount of human effort, as amendment of life, almsgiving, etc., can possibly purge away a single sin.

In such circumstances one's heart turns in all its helplessness to the One against Whom all our sins have been committed. In Him is mercy, compassion, and love. And there

is more. In Him is the matchless wisdom that has found a way whereby He can fully and frankly forgive the sinner, and yet retain the righteous consistency of His throne. That way is Christ, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (or mercy seat) through faith in His blood" (Rom. iii. 25). If this is the character of Him with Whom we have to do, let us away with both the pride that refuses to acknowledge its guilt, and the despair that feels its sins are too grievous to be forgiven. For some are afflicted with the one disease, and some with the other. Nearly 1900 years ago Paul made proclamation in the Pisidian Antioch—"Be it known unto you that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" (Acts xiii. 38); and the proclamation has not yet been withdrawn by the God Who authorised it. Such a welcome as the scapegrace of Luke xv. received on his return to his father is awaiting all who will return in true contrition unto our God. The kiss of forgiveness and the ring of endless love are favours He delights to bestow.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

THE GRACE OF GOD

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

'GRACE' is a great word, an all-inclusive word, because it is the word most truly expressive of God's character and attitude in relation to man. Grace is found over 150 times in the New Testament and Paul refers to it 130 times directly or indirectly. Grace was the secret of his life and the keynote of his teaching. Trace the eleven references to "grace" in Ephesians.

It comes from two or three roots in the Hebrew and Greek. The root seems to mean 'to give pleasure,' both to the Giver and to the receiver.

THE MEANING OF GRACE

It is the free, spontaneous, unmerited love of God to sinful man. Grace is first, a quality of graciousness in the Giver, and then a quality of gratitude in the recipient which makes him gracious to others, e.g. 2 Sam. 9. Grace when applied to God, the Supreme Giver, two aspects are presented:—

1. *It expresses the Divine Attitude* to man as guilty and condemned. Grace means God's favour and goodwill to—

wards us. Luke 1. 30; permanently favoured or graced Luke 1. 28. Grace is eternal; planned before it was exercised, purposed before it was imparted 2 Tim. 1. 9. It is sovereign, because God exercises it toward and bestows it upon whom He pleases—Rom. 5. 21. It comes from the throne of grace, Heb. 4. 16.

Being unmerited favour, it is exercised in a sovereign manner Exodus 33. 19; Gen. 6. 8. It is free, (no conditions required) for none can purchase it—Rom. 3.24. It is spontaneous and generous and abiding. Paul was a grace-made man, 1 Cor. 15. 10.

2. *It expresses Divine Action* to man as needy and helpless. Not only benevolence but benefaction; not solely good will also good work, Phil. 1.6. It is God's free bounty; His spontaneous gift which causes pleasure and produces blessing, Rom. 5.15; Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 4.7.

It is distinguished from mercy which is related to misery and to (negatively) non-deserving. Grace is related to redemption and to (positively) undeserving, Eph. 2.5,8. R.V.

THE MANIFESTATION OF GRACE

There is no grace in heathen religions. It comes from God through His Son, our Lord and Saviour. John 1.17; Acts 15.40; Acts 18.27; 20.24. God is the God of all grace - 1 Peter 5.10; the giver of grace Ps. 84.11; Jas. 1.17. Grace was upon Christ Luke 2.40; John 3.34. He spoke with grace Ps. 45.2; Luke 4.22. He was full of grace John 1.14,17. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of grace Heb. 10.29. The Father is the fountain of all grace, the Son is the channel of grace and the Holy Spirit is the administrator of grace.

The manifestation of grace commenced in God's purpose, 2 Tim. 1.9; is embodied in God's revelation in Christ Tit. 2.11; and declared in the Gospel Acts 20.24.

It is God's mercy pitying; e.g. Saul Acts 9.1; 1 Tim. 1.13; the Corinthians 1 Cor. 6.9-11. Grace is God's wisdom planning, before the world began Eph. 1.4; from the foundation of the world Rev. 13.8. Among the Jews a Saviour was prepared for the world and among the Gentiles the world was prepared for the Saviour. It is fully manifested in God's love providing salvation John 3.16 When Christ appeared He was the revelation of the grace of God bringing, not sending, salvation, for His character was "full of grace and truth." In Christ it is saving grace, Matt. 1.21; Eph.

2.4-7; no merit, no effort and no payment Eph. 2.9. It is sanctifying grace, suggested by the word "Christ" which means 'Anointed.' We have fulness of grace in and from Christ John 1.16; Col. 2.10. Being 'Lord' His is Sovereign grace Rom. 5.17; 14.9. Grace reigns by Jesus Christ and He has power and resources to enable us to live for Him and serve Him. Phil. 4.13.

THE MINISTRATIONS OF GRACE

There is the election of grace which is in opposition to works and worthiness Rom. 11.5,6; 2 Thess. 2.13. The latter text tells us why we are saved; and how we are saved. Like Paul we are called by grace Gal. 1.15; Rom. 8.30; 2 Tim. 1.9. Grace brings salvation Tit. 2.11, and effects justification Tit. 3.7; Rom. 3.24. It is linked with predestination Eph. 1.5,6. It is the source of faith Acts 18. 27; of forgiveness Eph. 1.7; it secures acceptance Eph. 1.6,8; gives us a standing before God Rom. 5.2; and an inheritance in Christ Acts 20.32. It gives us consolation and hope 2 Thess. 3.16.

Grace, like the Good Samaritan, not only meets the present emergency, but provides for daily and future blessing. Available to us in time of need Heb. 4.16; establishment against error Heb. 13.9. It delivers us from the dominion of sin Rom. 6.14; it is necessary to the service of God Heb. 12.28; we should grow in grace 2 Pet. 3.18; and be strong 2 Tim. 2.1.

THE MEASURE OF GRACE

It is described as great, Acts 4.33; sovereign Rom. 5.21; free Rom. 3.24; rich Eph. 1.7; 2.7; all-sufficient 2 Cor. 9.8; 12.9; and is increased Jas. 4.6; 2 Peter. 1.2. It is abundant Rom. 5.17,20; 2 Cor. 4.15; 9.8,14. God's grace is manifold; there is teaching grace for living, and sustaining grace for trials, 2 Cor. 12.9.

"Grace," says Spurgeon, "is the morning and evening star of our experience. Grace puts us in the way, helps us by the way, and takes us all the way."

MISUNDERSTANDING OF GRACE

(1) *Law*. This rule of life was revealed from God and accepted by Israel at Sinai. The law is held in contrast with the teachings of grace John 1.17. Contrast the Decalogue with Grace in 2 Cor. 3.3-16, seven things are contrasted; see also Gal. 5.18; Eph. 2.15; Col. 2.14.

False teachers who came to Galatia proclaimed a mingling of grace and law Gal. 1.6-8; 3.2,3. The law curses Gal. 3.10; grace redeems from that curse 3.13. Law says, do and thou shalt live, Luke 10.26,28; grace says, believe and live John 5.24. These are only a few contrasts. Rom. 6.14.

(2) *Works*. Salvation is by the grace of the Creator rather than by the works of the creature. Salvation by grace precludes the idea of any works either great or small, moral or ceremonial, Luke 18.10-14; Rom. 11.6 R.V.; Eph. 2.9.

(3) *Debt or Obligation*. Grace excludes the principle of debt or obligation. Salvation by grace means that God is not obligated to save Rom. 4.4,5. Salvation is always presented as a Gift, an unrecompensed favour, a pure benefit from God. John 10.28; Rom. 6.23.

(4) *Ceremonialism*. The Jewish element in the early Church was slow to abandon the law and its ceremonies, a double standard is revealed in the first council of the Church in Jerusalem, Acts 15.1-2, 5,7, 19-21; 21.19-26.

(5) *Antinomianism*. There are two dangers concerning grace; one is the danger of frustrating it, the other of abusing it. We frustrate grace when we teach that righteousness comes by keeping the law Gal. 2.21. We abuse grace when we use it to justify a life of sin Rom. 6.1,2. Grace not only reaches us as sinners but teaches us what we should loathe, how we should live and whom we should look for, Titus 2.11-13.

OUR RESPONSE TO GRACE

Having received grace 2 Cor. 6.1, we should continue in it Acts 13.43; share it Phil. 1.7; be growing in it 2 Pet. 3.18; finding it at the throne Heb. 4.16; standing in it 1 Pet. 5.12; singing with it Col. 3.16; speech ruled by it Col. 4.6. We should be enjoying it 1 Pet. 3.7; and yet expecting it 1 Pet. 1.13; be liberal through it 2 Cor. 8.19; and witnessing to it Eph. 3.8; Acts 20.24 and be glad when we see it in others Acts 11.23.

Our life is to be a Monument of Grace. All that we are, have, do and become is of grace, and we are so to live that our lives are to be to the "glory of His grace" Eph. 1.6. It should be a power in our life Luke 2.40; Acts 4.33.

Our lips are to be the Mouthpieces of Grace. We are to testify to the Gospel of the grace of God Acts 20.24;

be proud of the Gospel Rom. 1.16. It should govern our speech Col. 4.6; and enable us to sing to God Col. 3.16.

Our love is to be a Means of Grace. There is no means of grace to compare with a Christ-like spirit. God's love is only made available for others through his saints. His love in our hearts will lead to the love of others, and all our relationships will be sweetened, hallowed and transfigured. Grace will make us gracious in our dealings and enable us to avoid the spirit of hardness and severity, and manifest the spirit of forgiveness and patience.

Our Labour is to be a Messenger of Grace. Like Paul this grace is our Companion in labour and the Spirit of God endows us with the gifts of grace to minister to others 1 Cor. 15.10.

Our service is the outflow of the grace of God in the heart. Grace humbles pride, incites hope, inspires to service, and glories God.

"GRACE" - Gives us salvation Eph. 2.8; Revealed in Christ 2 Cor. 8.9; Abundant 1 Tim. 1.14; Comes from God our Father Eph. 1.2; Enjoyed by all saints Phil. 4.23.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Editor has received a large number of letters with regard to the Review of the Swanwick Conference. He wishes to thank all who have written. He regrets he cannot reply individually and space forbids printing the letters. Thank you for your interest and prayers.

"I saw also the Lord." Isaiah 6:1.

"These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spake of them." John 12:41.

Let us be assured that no man may rightly claim to be Christ's servant unless some such experience has been his; it may be a burning bush, a falling mantle, pulse and water, an almond rod or a light above the brightness of the sun, but whatever the details, the call of Christ to discipleship is always as clear as when He said to Levi, "Follow Me."

From that radiant hour, life could never be the same to the young prophet, and though he lived in storm-tossed, stirring times, it is to him that we owe many of the choicest heirlooms of faith and confidence in God, words which were first his own soul's anchorage, long before they were handed on to the Church.

—HAROLD ST. JOHN.

THE RACE OF FAITH

by J. G. GOOD

The Christian in the New Testament is viewed as an athlete, I Cor. 9-24, a husbandman, James 5-7, and as a soldier, 2 Tim. 2-4, typifying the characteristic features which should mark us, i.e. energy, diligence, and endurance. The Christian life is not passive but active, of course, there must be balance, abundant foliage on a plant must have a healthy root system, to support and sustain. Is not this the lesson which the writer of Hebrews is teaching, this race upon which we have entered is not a sprint but a marathon, therefore, healthy regulated growth, stamina, and strategy are essentials. The following references would emphasise the need for endurance, which apparently was lacking in the spiritual character of the Hebrew believers. Ch. 3-14, 6-12, and 10-36.

PROVISION FOR THE RACE

Entrance-Exclusive. The race is open to all who are in the family of God, by the new birth, having experienced salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, partakers of the heavenly calling, Ch. 3-1, having tasted of the powers of the world to come, Ch. 6-5, and being illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God, Ch. 10-32. Is there perchance a reader who desires to engage in this race as a serious competitor, but has never taken steps to enter, now is the time to start, the course is getting shorter but the end result will be the same.

Encouragement-Exemplified. This encouragement is two-fold, firstly, the witnesses of the previous chapter, the heroes of faith, who can read these exploits without being thrilled, secondly, the Great Exemplar of faith our Lord Jesus. 'Looking off unto Jesus,' the name of His humanity and humility, which tells us of His experience here as the Man among men, acquainted with our circumstances, yet sin apart. The Author and Perfector of faith, the Alpha and Omega, our path may be difficult and dark, but look at His path, 'uncheered by earthly smiles,' a path of suffering, yet marked by blessing. How wonderful, it was as 'Jesus' that he trod the path to the Cross, the dependent Man, faith unshaken, Psalm 16-8, the joy set before Him, endured, despising, set down. Would we seek another order, it is first the sufferings then the glory which shall follow, I Peter Ch. 1-11.

Endurance-Expedient. Time is the great tester of conversion, the depth of personal conviction and faith are soon manifested. Endurance is a quality necessary to succeed in the race of faith, to persevere, submission to the will of God, determination to complete the course. The New Testament abounds with references to the need for it, and examples of it as displayed in the individual. The earlier in the race, the need for endurance is recognised, the better, when tenacity and stamina can be cultivated and strengthened. Character is formed in the school of grace, each test makes us stronger, enabling us to hold fast and run with endurance. Ecc. Ch. 9-11.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE RACE

Love to Endue. The fuel or power for this race is primarily love, the paramount importance of this virtue is expounded by the Apostle in I Cor. Ch. 13, again in 2 Cor. Ch. 5-14 compelled by the love of Christ, this should motivate us in our service, energised for the race, able to recover from a set back, overcome obstacles, as we are endued with His love, we shall be supported and sustained. Not love at the expense of truth, but a love which is governed by principles of righteousness. Remember that the same Lord Jesus, who wept over the city, Luke Ch. 19-41, was the same Lord Jesus who drove the money changers out of the temple, John Ch. 2-15.

Liberty to Enjoy. 'Lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us,' the 'weights' could be the legitimate things of life, right and proper in their own place, but a weight in the race of faith. The 'sin' needs no explanation we are too well aware, or should be, of the power of indwelling sin, freedom is a must, to be effective in this race, anything which restricts our movement should be discarded, so that our running can be successful.

Legislation to Enforce. Every race has rules of entry, regarding route and distance, the Christian race has no less. 'A man is not crowned except he strive lawfully' 2 Tim. Ch. 2-5. I suggest that Acts Ch. 2-42 is the course guide for the believer. Church truth is important and should be respected and acknowledged. It is true that the Church age will be succeeded by the Kingdom age, and the promise of the Lord Jesus is to the individual Rev. Ch. 3-20, but this does not render inoperative the principles and practices

of a New Testament Church as binding on every enlightened believer nor does it exonerate those who wilfully disregard such truth.

POSSIBILITIES IN THE RACE

One who Deviated. Asaph Psalm 73. The precentor without a song, occupied with the prosperity of the wicked, the wrong object, to his own spiritual detriment. This is a grave danger to link material prosperity with spiritual health, there is nothing more calculated to stumble us in the race, than the spirit of envy and jealousy, this desire to accumulate possessions. Let us listen to Asaph, 'my steps had well nigh slipped' verse 2, when the line of communion had been restored, 'Until I went in to the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end' verse 17. A true perspective of things can only be obtained in the sanctuary, Sodom had a different meaning for Abraham, 'Abraham stood yet before the Lord' Gen. Ch. 18-22. When the object of our vision is adjusted, it is easy to say 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee' verse 25.

One who Deserted. Demas. 2 Tim. Ch. 4-10. One can detect a note of sadness in the words of Paul, 'Demas hath forsaken—having loved' the present age has appeal, and we need to see the God of glory, Ur of the Chaldees meant nothing to Abraham after this experience was his. Acts Ch. 7-2. We are in the world, but not of it, John Ch. 17-14. Let us have no love for it, I John Ch. 2-15, no friendship with it, James Ch. 4-4. and no conformity to it, Romans Ch. 12-2.

One who was devoted. Paul. 2 Tim. Ch. 4-7. Surely there is a note of triumph in the words of the aged warrior of the Cross. I Kings Ch. 20-11. Paul's fighting, finishing and keeping, were a testimony to the power, provision, and purpose of God. God is able, but there must be effort on our part, there is no place in this race for the indolent and lethargic, and there will be no finishing the course without fighting with conviction, every inch of the way must be contested. The 'faith' the revealed body of Christian doctrine was observed by Paul, the whole counsel of God, what resources, more than enough for every emergency. The

authority and sufficiency of Divine revelation was recognised by Paul throughout the race!

‘Must I be carried to the skies,
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas’

“Meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.” Prov. 20 : 19.

Nehemiah's enemies tried to weaken his hands by offering to help him in building the wall of Jerusalem; but this failed. Nehemiah was on his guard, and he refused their help. The enemy then came out in his true colours, and openly opposed the work. Satan observes the same tactics still, whenever a soul is born into the kingdom. A young convert is in great danger of being hugged to death by the caresses of the world. Satan comes as an angel of light, and would fain HELP the believer on in the divine life! Let us not be ignorant of his devices. The kindness and flattery of the world have made havoc of many who have had grace to withstand its persecution.

—WORDS IN SEASON.

RECOMMEND THE MAGAZINE TO FELLOW CHRISTIANS.

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